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Cover Picture:
Alexandre Bajbeuk-Melikian,
A Female Juggler, 1965



The National Gallery as Publisher of the "Armenian Art" Magazine



The National Picture Gallery of Armenia has acquired the right to be considered the Head Museum of the country with regard to its 84 years of existence, its rich collections of the Armenian and foreign art, its exhibiting, publishing and other activities. It is not only the place storing and exhibiting the artistic objects of value, but also a cultural center with wider functions. One of the basic functions of the Gallery is bringing art closer to people by means of exhibitions, publications, lectures, movies etc.

Meanwhile it is important that we develop the study and analysis of art, the knowledge of art, which, it must be owned, has somewhat fallen behind the process of the development of art. In this regard, of primary importance is the existence of specialized journals so as to create a domain for both the old and the new generations of art critics and writers. In this regard the Armenian National Gallery in agreement with the RA Ministry of culture is undertaking the publication of the Journal "Armenian Art". The latter was founded in 2002 in cooperation with the scholarly and

cultural Institutions, it is listed in the publication for scientific theses hosted by the Supreme Certifying Commission and distributed within the Diaspora.

It is our hope that this cooperation will both facilitate the activities of the Gallery's scholarly staff, and add new charge to the "Armenian Art" Journal, thus helping a new qualitative uplift and enlarging the audience of readers.

Paravon Mirzoyan,
Director of the Armenian National Picture Gallery

The Forthcoming Exhibitions and Events at the Picture Gallery

April 6 - May 18 the musical festival titled "The National Picture Gallery" with the participation of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Armenia

April 22 Exhibition on the Occasion of the 90th Anniversary of the Great Armenian Genocide

May 6 Exhibition on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War

May 14 International Action labeled "Nocturnal Lights", within the "Museums' Night" International Action (on May 18)

In the Program: Opening the Edgar Shahin - 130 Exhibition, Classical Spiritual Music, Performances by National Dance Companies.

In the Cinema Hall of the Gallery
each Saturday and Sunday at 12.00 - 14.30: Retro Film Show,
each Wednesday 13.00: Documentary Films on Fine Arts.

Entrance by Gallery Tickets

THE CHALLENGE OF 16 CENTURIES

In the year 2005, the Armenian nation both domestically and abroad will celebrate the 1600th Anniversary of the Armenian Writing. The forthcoming events are underway, however it can be assumed that they will be copied from the celebrations a few years ago of the 1700th Anniversary of the Armenian Christian Statehood or 100th birthday of Aram Khachaturyan. To our mind, both of them were a failure and off the point. Of course, there is also a viewpoint whereof the jubilee must be celebrated like a show on a birthday. However, the centenary-marking celebrations require more serious approach, their celebration must not be superficial but rather in-depth. That approach was shared by the noteworthy Catholicos Garegin I who used to note that the 1700th Anniversary will become the second transmigration of souls. However, it did not.

As to the 1600th Anniversary, it is to be noted that Mesrop Mashtots in his time devising the Armenian alphabet initiating the Armenian writing challenged the Armenian separation, since at that time Armenia was for the first time divided into two dependent states: one under Persia and one under Byzantium, both of them intending to assimilate their Armenian subjects. Meanwhile, the officially accepted languages of state-adopted Christianity in Armenia were Assyrian and Greek. Mashtots envisioned that the Armenian nation would remain and survive if their religion received an Armenian image, and the best means for that was to create the Armenian letters. The Missionary Priest received support from the Armenian Catholicos and King, and Through the hand of Mashtots, God awarded us the letters of the Armenian Alphabet "NEW AND ADMIRABLE BIRTHS" (Koriun).

Mashtots and his companions very soon understood the importance of this invention, since after about two decades the last Arshakuni king was dethroned and Armenia lost statehood. Subsequently, for centuries, the Mashtots writing was not only a stimulus for our uplift, but a mighty citadel for preserving the Armenian Nation.

Thus, by pushing and cutting around, the 21st century arrived, and it became clear that the efforts by St. Mashtots against annihilation of the Armenians as of today are as timely as 1600 years ago. I may want to be excused for saying that it is even more timely, for now the processes of global uniformization have become more threatening than ever. In the last 15 years the number of Armenian readers and writers has been halved. First of all, the Armenians emigrating to the CIS countries and elsewhere and their progeny are Armenian readers and writers no more. Within

the classical Diaspora, the number of Armenian speakers is dropping very rapidly (readers and writers all the more so). Although all students in Armenia learn Armenian writing, they do very little reading.

Incidentally, the Armenian letters, having for long centuries been a pledge for Armenian survival, are gradually losing their operational tension, causing huge concern.

To our mind, under this situation, the 1600 Anniversary celebration has to be used efficiently, leaving very little of what is related to form, making more emphasis on the contents.

There are rumors about a plan to erect 36 stone crosses dedicated to the letters devised by Mashtots. It is doubtful, whether it is worth while to erect a few dozen new monuments in a country having an enormous number of monuments already. Mashtots devised the letters so as to read and write translations, and so that the Armenians get to know the International jems in their native language. Today, if we should want to do justice to Mashtots, we have to continue his tradition, not to make a fetish of the letters, but rather to use them for reading and writing.

In Armenia today, having a book printed or having shoes made is a very similarly taxed business. Why not to change this imported regularity? Let the Armenian book be inexpensive and accessible to Armenians. That should be the largest gift to the 1600th Anniversary.

Another domain. Computers and the web. Why don't we armenize it at least to the measure achieved by other small but ambitious nations?

The matter is about the coding of the Armenian letters so as to use them within the e-mail environment for writing Armenian. Why don't we have computer programs for translating texts from English and other languages, like the ones existing elsewhere (now underway is an overseas-based project with miserable funding).

The Mashtots-created letters written on a material carrier is the body, their expressed written word is the soul. Without carrying this greatest spiritual value an Armenian person is faulty and incomplete. Therefore, the main mandate of the 1600 Anniversary is the survival of letters and the living language in every Armenian.

Karen Matevosyan

DANIEL ERAJISHT

Alexey Liubimov said at a radio show: I know nothing about Armenia, but Russia is in a cultural disaster. After a rise in the 20th century, we mourn the demise of the culture. As to Armenia, it has all been covered by the Media.

We shall actually identify certain points. Academician Grigor Gurzadian wrote: 99 percent of the Nation does not understand art. That is unfortunately not what they need. Each of them counts himself in that one percent. The likings of the young generation has nothing to do with art. Unfortunately, the mercenary psychology, everyone is the boss. (Hayatsk Yerevanits, # 2, 2002). By the Academician's definition, the present-day youth is devoid of any national

"Hanibal is at the Gates"

image. While the attitude of the authorities are determined as impotence, cynical disregard, and absolute irresponsibility.

Actually, it was Garegin Njdeh who said: "A culture is not culture if it is not national. A nation is not a nation if it is not cultured." G. Gurzadian, concerned with emigration, calls up: To be a country, to be a nation is an important condition to remain attached to the land.

Another radio broadcast expressed concern by Edward Hairapetian, composer: I have a fear for the Armenian classical music. Everything is being done to obliterate it.

For centuries the persecuted Armenian Nation, stateless, was able to shape and hold its culture and faith. And inversely, the church, culture, upheld the autonomy of the nation. And today we have a state which, one can say, got a gift, a ready-made nation, with its glorious culture, and all that, in front of the eyes, is being wasted, fragmented, going to the dogs, the ugly dogs.

Authorities of this country often address International organizations asking to put an end to vandalizing Armenian artefacts in foreign countries. Meanwhile, we inflict strikes on our culture ourselves.

If it goes on like that, foreigners will make more use of the Armenian culture than the Armenians themselves.

As far back as 5th c. B.C. Plato said that the best defense of a country is music - elevated and harmonic, clear and modest, rather than feminine, wild or chaotic. Prior to Plato, in another part of the world, Confucius said: Take care about the music being harmonious and elevating. Wasn't there a ban on the music of the rich? it makes

"The highest factor of education is speaking your own language. The Nation belongs to itself All things foreign go to the blazes, with their Latin letters, too."

Mr. Somebody or other goes forth with something mediocre. He is hailed by everyone else as their equal. They shout: You are one of us."

HEGEL

havoc. To avoid empty speech making. According to the Chinese philosopher, wisdom, self-neglect and courage are formed and developed by the laws of decency and music. (Confucius. Conversations. (in Armenian). Yerevan, 1991, pp. 109, 123). As to today's mass song production, it is a plague, musical sectarians, cancer of music rapidly expanding.

In different centuries that evil art was opposed to honest art and received a relevant evaluation. At the time of Movses Khorenatsi the Armenian Church used to blame the renters for body-related singing and dancing. In Europe those songs were qualified as Satan's songs. Martin Luther called them the unashamed songs, creating instead a collection of decent songs, to attract the young people.

Society today is besieged by the synthetizer-striking crazy singer assault groups. The living corpses of songs baked by Armenian, Russian, Turkish, Persian, Arabian, Negro mockeries is a Babel of voices. And all that very often occurs within the limit of a single song.

The same can be said about the relevant words of the songs. Heard in those noisy songs often are abusive words accompanied by indecent gestures. Strangely enough, one of the 20th-c. innovations is the genre of a sexual song performed by a female vocalist. (Those songs may be named venereal or physiological songs). Those songs and the like are classified as sexual excretions, drainage of unrestrained instincts. According to the variety artists E. Petrosian, M. Zadorni and V. Vinokur, suchlike songs are addressed to subnormals and the mentally handicapped, musicologist A. Troitski names them "sweets made of filth". And so, those sweets are fed to the younger generation, confusing their souls. It is as if the invisibility of music is a license to distort it and to abuse.

If the state can see this hazard but does not want to interfere, then... If the state does not see or does not understand the hazard, then...

But if the state can see and understand the hazard, but has no power to retain the culture, to defend its people, then... anyway, even animals are trying to keep their habitat clean. Of course, some things may have been done, however, in this cultural war those things remind of cosmetic renovations. It happened many times that states cloaked their defects using achievements in science, art, sports, etc. Presently, in the domain of Armenian culture there are separate flashes, but they have no popular grip or resonance, since as previously noted, the people have no demand for it, most are busy trying to gain bread, while the merry part resemble the passengers of the drunken ship going after eating and drinking as well as bodily songs and rhythmic noise.

Catholicos Vazgen of the blessed memory was convinced that the real art and music is a great strength, and if the leaders of humanity do understand that clearly, our destiny will change.

Humanity knows kings who were gifted composers. There are governmental officials even today who are musicians: Schreuder, Vitautas Landsbergis. Peter I, however was not musically educated, but he respected culture, and in addition to many other reforms he commanded that persons of nobility listen to West-European classical music once a week. Peter I invited Italians to Russia and sent some Russians to Italy. And of the nobility those who wanted to keep their beards had to pay special taxes, otherwise shave.

Reforms of this type are unimaginable in the present-day Armenia. It is not accidental that G. Gurzadian has stated that the present-day dire situation is here to stay. If the state prefers tasteless art to the good one, anti-national to national, if the same prize awards the antipodes, it is worth nothing. Therefore it is useless to expect a state support. What is the outcome?

"Ora et labora" - Pray and Work - that is an old-time call which we have to follow, too.

Education has to be provided to the "dedicated persons" among the young Armenians, according to the indications by the first Christian martyrs. Of great role is the personal example by teachers.

If a nation has no religion, culture, or art, then it has nothing to defend, since it can cede easily, merge or disperse within the mass of adversaries. A soldier has to be clearly aware of his call, of what and who he is defending. In this matter, the role of teachers and school cannot be overestimated.

Here is an estimated program to facilitate the defense of culture.

- The first impressions of an Armenian child must be the Armenian speech and its derivatives: the Armenian folk and classical music.

- It is necessary to rehabilitate the tradition of lulaby (but not recorded).

- To stop playing tasteless background music, either Armenian or foreign, at kindergartens and schools.

- Music played in the educational establishments must be primarily national, and universally accessible. Exclusively high-taste.

- At high school and colleges introduce "history of culture" within the array of subjects on the history of religions, to highlight the problems of culture and art

- At lessons of song and music, schoolchildren have to learn chair singing, Armenian folk and spiritual songs.

- It is necessary to listen to known pieces of classical music, watching films, whereby the students should receive knowledge of language and art (keeping clear of empty talk): At educational establishments and offices, to create with preferences to singing quality, to facilitate creation of spiritual unity in the society (at least a few songs should be performed on a national scale).

- To form a professional person - a citizen rather than an actor or a puppet.

- In the same way as the Language Directorate oversees the undeviating use of the Armenian language in the country, in the same way as in the past there was a Committee for Preservation of Monuments, it is necessary to create a similar type of organization, which will put an end to the attempts at perverting and destroying the National culture.

Those reforms have to be implemented expediently, while the hazard is still preventable. "Hanibal is at the gates".

"The historical treasure-house of culture is so wealthy that there is no way to worry about its future repletion. Meanwhile, culture has a practical and a moral aspect, which in everyday life is called political orientation. Its significance is enormous". Vladimir Soloviev.

One cannot demand of anyone either a supreme virtue, or big mind, talent. But it is possible to demand that everyone be delicate. "That is the minimum that can enable people to live with dignity", concluded the great philosopher. Indeed, without that minimum, without mutual respect, even the highest culture will not engraft, will not become a carrier, will not outspread like waves without a field of expansion. On the other hand, the said delicacy is acquired by communicating with the beautiful, with the elevated, with high art. It seems that there is a magic circle: First the world must save beauty, so that beauty should save the world.

My father Khachatur, the teacher, was a native of Igdir, as told by Khoren Abrahamian. My childhood passed in the flashing atmosphere of his reminiscent stories, yearnings, dreams, his offended and wounded soul, full of wrath and bitterness. In a word, before fully opening my eyes or getting the knack of the world, I had already been the Igdir man, with my blood, with my character, tastes. Naturally, that charge of Igdir had to find its exit or mode of expression.

And it did find it on the stage, in the theater, on the screen.

This word of truth by the artist is corroborated by his meaningful creation, in art, in our artistic life, in the high place and authority that he occupied by merit.

The Igdir man is honorable and respects traditions. Let us have a look at the still young Kh. Abrahamian as Rostam in the performance of "Honor". A man dedicated to his home and honor, hitting his wife only for her alleged trampling of those values.

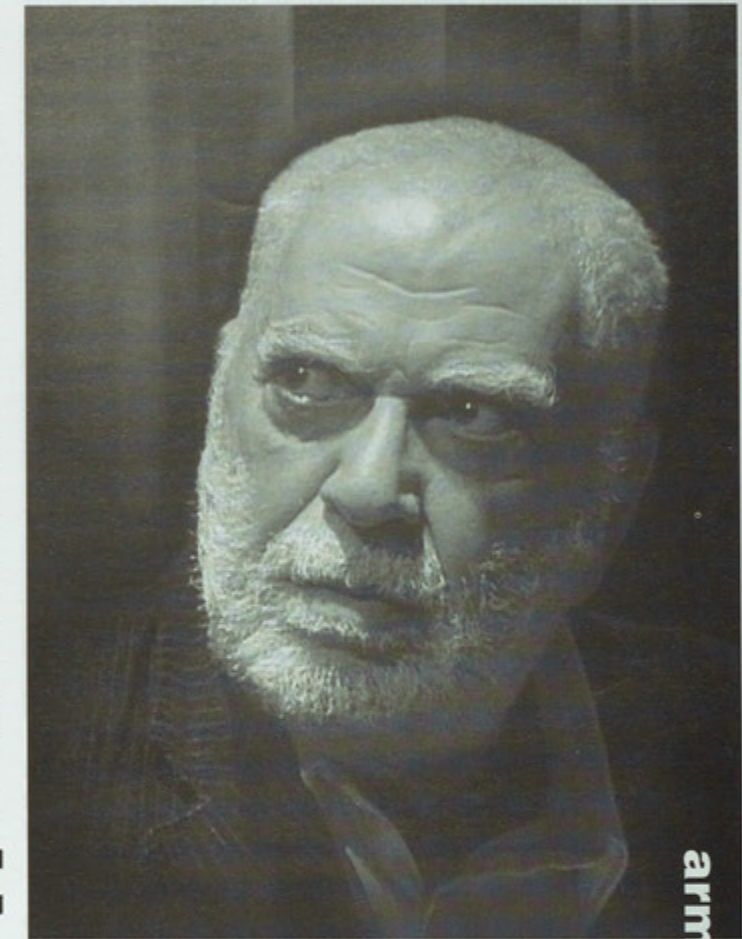
Here is Arsen (the film "First-love Song") who under the influence of juvenile inspiration and perceiving himself as one having a great talent, while feeling no need for self-control, and also stimulated by the environment, loses the sense of proportion, being overjoyed at his success, reaches the ragged edge both physically and morally. From that disproportion he is saved by the chastity which is awakened by the sobering words of his father (actor Hrachia Nersesian): An Armenian man must remain loyal to his human dignity, his home, to his good national traditions, and to his talent. That is the story about Kh. Abramian's screen character and his ordeal as well as the ultimate counsel.

A Big Artist with a Character of Igdir

Othello. The Moor by Kh. Abrahamian actually, his perfect character has punished him not because he had artlessly put an ear to the libel spoken by a mean person, but because at least for a single moment had lost faith for true and loyal love, human honesty and truthfulness. Taking his own life for that, it is as if he returns to faith, confirms the undeniable human existence in a human being.

Coriolan: a complex controversial character, a mighty personality and a propensity to put oneself at the top of everything. It is to be noted that the character portrayed by Khoren Abrahamian is indeed above his environment both in strength and might, in his mind and imagination, and even in his moral substance. The environment, the Roman patricians, consuls et al. are incomparable with that victorious warrior, strong-willed, purposeful and prominent man.

Khoren Abrahamian



However, can even a man like that have the right to place himself above his country, his home land, betray them, come out to counter them? No, he has not, he cannot, he must not have that right.

Encountering that enigma, Kh. Abrahamian's Coriolan is looking for an excuse. He is playing humility, his face showing contempt and a sarcastic smile. Shall I bow to those wretches? Shall I submit to them, crawl in their front? So that they appoint me general?

Yes, they are unworthy, impotent they are. What can you do, he thinks, you have to play, pretend, toadeat, because they are "the populus", "the public". And so that, that is his motherland. But even this kind of motherland is unique and above everything. To motherland you have to get com-



That performance by the artist (which was highly praised in Sweden, Ibsen's native country) was like an argument against Shakespeare whose sympathies were on the side of a strong Empire.

Here already we deal with the truth, which is above both the personality and the public, and even motherland. This is the counsel of the new times. Kh. Abrahamian's character is denounced by the society as public enemy, who had called out that the waterfront used by the whole city was poisoned. The honest and knowledgeable physician and scientist cannot but tell the truth, but he has no right to say it because it is against the interest of the city community. And he, a respectable citizen, an outstanding personality, how can he perform such an antisocial act and deprive his fellow citizens of prosperous life? Only a naïve, brainless idiot can do that.

Stockman by Kh. Abrahamian just so appears on stage as a strange-looking screwy man. Here he is plodding along the dirty crooked pipes drawing towards the sea. And the poisonous dirty water running in the pipes, concentration of profit and gain with an egoistic fit and the public morals that have forgotten everything. With rotten pipes perhaps just that corrupt psychology, dishonest, undifferentiated disgust is going to abuse the territory of life, morals, justice, truth.

Stockman-Abrahamian rises up against it: of course, he will be defeated. Still stalwart is the kingdom of profit. But the truth cannot be defeated or lost, and leaning on that only the human being can attain his divine mission. And finally, to fulfill his righteous duty towards the society blinded by that same interest.

Gevorg (In the film "The Saroyan Brothers". That was a phenomenon not only for the professional life of Kh. Abrahamian, but also for the erstwhile Armenian movie production. Phenomenon: For decades on stage, on the screen, even in the literature there has been a way of escaping from an ugly tradition. Army officer Gevorg was a patriotic soldier at the time full of hazards, calamities and fighting. A strong-willed, committed soldier. His only purpose was Armenia, her independent, free and secure existence, for her sake he is willing to use any means, to go to the end, if needed, to sacrifice his life. He will never go to exile, he will stay in his country, whatever happened. As to the country's population, or to his comrades in arms, he has reservations: he despises truants and those who save their hide, the busybodies who talk much but do not see far enough. And embittered through the wretched destiny of our small nation, through disloyalty of friends, the nation tired of struggle and fighting, and mortification of the resisting spirit.

It is to be noted that Gevorg is also implacable towards the errant souls who through the Bolshevik propaganda have willingly or unwillingly associated themselves with the Turkish "revolutionary" bashi-bazouks.

That was the character performed by Kh. Abrahamian in the F. Dovlatian-directed film which was a very bold step even for a relatively liberal period. That was actually our first attempt of an openly tolerable image of a Dashnak fighter. The attempt was successful largely through the actor's brilliant performance as well as his personal charm.

Master. In the film with the same name while reviewing the character created by Kh. Abrahamian, we remember that General Andranik used to address Dro as "Master". Indeed, some reference may stipulate thus labeling a national hero, and Kh. Abrahamian has incorporated this character and image.

Under the Soviets, when everything belonged to all and to no one, it happened so that a particular thing belonged to everybody (or it was pretended to be so) and so it stopped being owned by anyone, that is one did not any more consider oneself master of either the elements or even of the things of his own creation. And so, in the film directed by B. Hovhannisian by the script of Hr. Matevosian Rostom performed by K. Abrahamian countered that by his behavior and his words showing that independent of any regime or spokesman (which are transient), the Armenian man, man in general, has to be master of his own country, his land and water, he is responsible for their destiny.

It is in this way that forester Rostom understands his role and his objectives, and does not allow the men who have

in the begin

lost the master's feeling to do damage to the forest or its population making an excuse that it is owned by someone else, by the state, by the leadership. No, says the forester, the owners are all of us and each one. That mentality and feeling, alas, even today has wriggled its way into many people from different walks of life.

Avetian ("An Unfinished Monologue" by P. Zeituntsian). Between the ups and downs the strange situation emerging in the country stimulated production of a play, perhaps the best, with Kh. Abrahamian playing the title character, a large-scale manager of manufacturing industry.

A strong-willed character, dignified bearing, a competent worker, but not greedy, nor malevolent. Everyone is coming to heel to him, following him very closely, fulfilling immediately all his orders. (To illustrate this obedience, the witty film director put an orchestra on stage, with the industry boss conducting. It could seem that nothing could resist that mighty man.

And then that man is coming across an incoherent but unconquerable obstacle - controlled economy: this is allowed, that is not, order, plan, resolution is more important than the company's objectives. Initiatives are rejected, enterprising is superfluous. The resolution taken is final. Period.

Of course that order can be circumvented: going the wrong way, addressing even immoral means: bribery, cronyism, sometimes even a former mistress can be used as a go-between, or for purgery, etc. Avetian does not avoid those. But why should he behave like that? Doesn't he care about his work, his company, his industry, and finally, about the interests of the country? There is no doubt, is there, that construction of an unplanned railway (even more so, using the private means), will only benefit the country.

Working, creative, business-like, inventive soul of the Armenian man embittered by the reality, Avetian-Abrahamian is finally embarking on a sad soliloquy having an open end. The country and the people will have yet to see, to notice, to understand the incongruity of the centrally controlled economy.

Avetian by Kh. Abrahamian is the one bringing good news, his character is the new word not only in our theater, but also in the way of providing the true bearing to the public conscience. There have also been scores of other roles, each one singular and original.

In September 2004 Khoren Abrahamian with spouse Gohar Galstian, a gifted actress, returned to Mother Theater. After coming back, his first step was to assure that he remained loyal and open to all newly arising artistic objectives and is ready to serve the public and society.

"Jin" game, a play by Coburn, an American playwright, fully provides such an opportunity which has been implemented by the actor imposing the most valued parts of his artistic talent and directing experience.

The performance is started with a show of beautiful young seminude girls. Next comes a white-gowned medical nurse for a regular injection. We subsequently learn that food and service as well as other things are neglected in this nursing home. And the kinfolks of the old people are coming and going all the time showing off their care and tender love.

What is then lacking in that exemplary institution? And why is it so devaluating? Perhaps it is a scary recognition of the old age, of the unavoidable end? Was it only because of that that this poor woman Fenshi Dorsi is bundled and shrunk up in a corner? That makes Martin Waller, having lost his care-free life at a game of cards, emerging in a nursing home like a fish drawn out of water to pace here and there, to toss about, to breathe, to live, to look for ways and means of salvation?

No, the matter is quite different. In order to kill the clock, Waller offers Dorsey to play "Jin" Professional dealing of the cards betrays a good player. It is clear he will win in the shake of a lamb's tail. But he deliberately loses. Let her be happy. While for Dorsey her victory is a great shock, it causes a surprise to Waller. To this game he devoted all his life and passion, but he had never experienced anything like the delight shown by that woman.

For Dorsey that unexpected success became an issue of life and death. The woman in whose life there had only been failure, defeat, losses and disillusion, all of a sudden had defeated someone experienced: so, she can also be lucky, she can also be a winner. she can do everything, in fact.

Being aware of that, Waller-Abrahamian continues to lose. And the way he is playing his defeats is very remarkable: he feigns surprise, doubt, anger... Meanwhile observing, the inspiration, change and rejuvenation occurring to Dorsey at each victory, the way she regains her faith in herself, and the way she is becoming more and more attractive, as if it were quite another person.

Waller himself is inspired with his game he is getting into another passion, it was so easy to save a person from desperate solitude, to award the will and ability to live, if you show a little kindness, care and compassion.

And in the wake of that goes another perception: salvation of man and mankind is within oneself, it is being kind and loving thy neighbor. And that it is a much more powerful magic force than the fictitious miraculous abilities to play Jin.

That is the meaning and sense of, alas, the last creative and very modern work by Khoren Abrahamian The great actor with an indomitable character of Igdir stepped out well before his time, leaving behind love and good memories in the heart of the nation, having occupied his due place on the golden pages of our cultural history, next the great.

Khachatur Avagyan
Emeritus of art, Republic of Armenia

90th Anniversary of Armenian Genocide



In 1915 after the Turkish plunders, the archives (library) of Aghtamar Monastery

in the beginning of
20th century



Khtskonk monastery



Narekavank



Varagavank

Photos by RAA

... now

If we look back into the deep layers of ancient civilizations and think over how the wind instruments were created, we may remember a poetic legend from ancient Greek mythology¹.

In the remote forests of Arcadia nymphs lived. One of them, the most beautiful, was called Syrinx. Many gods and satyrs of the Greek Pantheon were in love with her. Once, the horrific god Pan, who had a goat beard and hoofs, started to follow her. He was not wicked, but very ugly and unhappy. Syrinx was terrified by his appearance and ran away. She reached the riverside and asked her sisters - the water nymphs - to hide her. They agreed



and changed her into a reed. Swung by the wind, it bent and wept bitterly. Pan cut a few reeds and made a multiple-pipe flute from them. He called this instrument Syrinx because its voice reminded him of his beloved creature. To this day the multiple-pipe flute is called Syrinx. During research historians found that this word was used also by many other nations of the Ancient Orient. There may be a similar origin in the ancient Armenian word sring, which also means flute.

Forgetting the legend and reflecting on the evolution of wind instruments, it is likely that the first flutes were really made from reeds. Since this type of instrument could produce only one sound, it means that to create the scale, people started adding more pipes, which resolved into the creation of a multiple-pipe instrument. In past times these were stuck together with wax and

The Mystery of Multiple-Pipe Flute

arranged in an ascending row. The pipes were closed on the bottom and had no finger holes. The sound produced depended on the length of the air pipe and the range upon their number. The instrument was played in the same manner as the harmonica is played today, namely by applying the lips to each pipe separately. It is amazing that the very famous instrument, the organ, which is known for its royal sound, is the direct descendent of this primitive reed pipe.

Respected scholars Erich M. Hornbostel and Curt Sachs in their book *Musical Instruments of the World* concluded that the multiple-pipe flute spread into different parts of the Ancient World more than 2000 years ago. According to the Armenian ethnographer Serbuhi Lisitsian², they may be even older and have originated during the times of the proto-Armenians and Hittites. Multiple illustrations prove these facts, for instance the Hittites' stone monument from Rum Kale (II millennium B.C.) and a terracotta statuette from Selevkia.

It is worth mentioning that among ancient Armenian artifacts there is a depiction of a multiple-pipe flute on a silver vessel of King Pakor III dated II-III centuries A.D.³ This vessel is a well-preserved example from the Roman era which shows theatre scenery, dancers and musical instruments. The presence of the Pan flute and tambourine surrounded by bells and rattles proves the existence of an old and mature culture of Armenian musical instruments and its common occurrence in theatre performances.

The multiple-pipe flute survived through the centuries and in some regions of Armenia you can meet it today under the name of garmó⁴. It is a narrow piece of wood with a varying number of holes. Pipes of equal length and width are inserted into these holes. The height of sound depends on the reeds inside of the pipes. It is interesting that the modern garmó looks just like the ancient flute on the silver vessel of King Pakor III (note that both of them have pipes of equal length).

It is not difficult to find illustrations of the multiple-pipe flute - they are seen in many museums of the world. However, exhibits of the actual instruments are really a rarity. Regardless of their condition, they continue to evoke excitement for researchers and are the only real source that spreads light on the history of the world music culture.

Music science knows Pan flutes made of clay, silver, bone, and rarely of stone, of which only a few exist in the world. One of them, found in Peru, is kept in Merseyside Country Museum (Liverpool, UK). The other from Bolivian archaeological digs of ancient Indian culture is preserved in the "Musée de l'Homme" of Paris. A third one is made of jade, a precious stone that in pre-Columbian times was valued higher than gold.

Two other impressive examples of stone flutes were found in modern Armenia. Felix Ter-Martirosov, a respected Armenian archaeologist, during excavations near Giumri in 1992 found a trapezoid-shaped piece of stone⁵.

The surface of this stone flute (height - 80 x 75 mm) was covered with a geometrical relief ornamentation of a row of triangles, which are associated with ancient Urartien⁶ cuneiform. Along the top the piece has four holes with the two on the sides damaged. The sounds produced by the middle two are a clear E and F. By calculating each step 1/15 of the length of the scale, it is easy to determine the sound of the side holes. Thus, this piece indicates the existence of a labial musical instrument with a well-formed pitch, proving that ancient Armenians were already familiar with the natural scale in the fifth century B.C.

The second example of an Armenian stone flute was found in 1976 near the village of Garni (25 km. from Yerevan). This is a two-piped flute (60mm x 50mm) from the Hellenistic period⁷.

The size of this flute is smaller, and its pipes are shorter, which probably means that the instrument's tone sounded much higher.

Taking into consideration the time and place where these two stone flutes were found, it may be concluded that these findings were not just a lucky happening or a casual occurrence, but these instruments were a common part of Armenian musical culture.

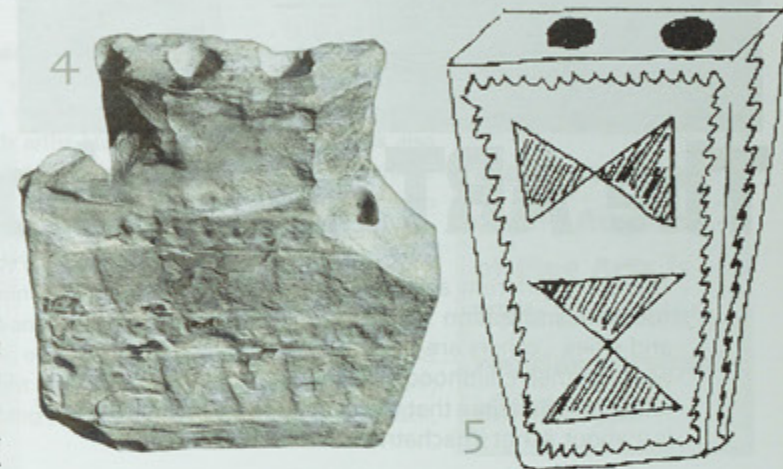
Based on the sounds that a four-pipe flute produces, probably two instruments were used for a full-octave, and four for two octaves, which constitutes a whole ensemble. The assumption made by archeologist Ter-Martirosov⁸ was that these ensembles had a well-organized assignment for parts. Due to this, the ensemble could be created not only to enrich the musical palette but also to add more notes to the scale.

So, two stone flutes. Most important is that these are not depictions or copies, but actual physical examples of musical instruments coming from the very beginning of civilization. They are mute evidence of how anxious love for music inspired soul into a piece of reed or stone, thus immortalizing it.

Hundreds and hundreds of years have passed. Destructive wars erased cities, wiped out palaces and their

powerful governors and tore down civilizations, but the small flute made by an unknown master still lives. It was impossible to destroy it - as it is impossible to destroy the soul of a nation, its music, its songs.

Noune Shamakhyan
Musicologist



This article is based on the work and research of famous Armenian musician and scholar Anahit Tsitsikian, who studied the history of ancient instruments for many years and was the founder of Musical Archaeology in Armenia.

¹ *The Myths of the World*, published by Soviet Encyclopedia, Moscow, 1982, volume II.

² Lisitsian, S. *Ancient Dances and Theatre Performances of the Armenian People*, published by the Armenian Academy of Science, Yerevan, 1958.

³ Goyan, G. *2000 Years of Armenian Theatre*, published by "Iskustvo", Moscow, 1952, p.377.

⁴ Lisitsian, S. *Ancient Dances and Theatre Performances of the Armenian People*, published by the Armenian Academy of Science, Yerevan, 1858, p.147.

⁵ Ter-Martirosov, F. *Monuments of Classical Armenian Antiquity*, Bulletin of the Yerevan State University, 1993, N3, p.59-72.

⁶ *Urartu - Ancient country in the territory of modern Armenia*; established in the IX century B.C.

⁷ Khachatryan, J. *Garni I, Antique Necropolis*, Yerevan, 1976.

⁸ Ter-Martirosov, F. *Stone Pan Flute from Draskhanakert*.

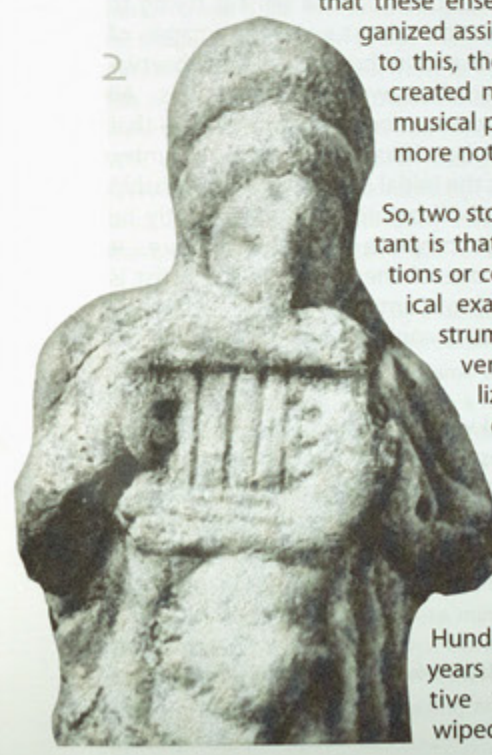
Fig. 1. Silver vessel of King Pakor III (II-III centuries A.D.)

Fig. 2. Multiple-pipe flute on terracotta statuette from Selevkia (IV-II centuries B.C.)

Fig. 3. Pan playing a multiple-pipe flute.

Fig. 4. Stone flute from Giumri. (V-IV centuries B.C.)

Fig. 5. Graphic picture of two-piped flute from Garni (II-I century B.C.)





The ART By Ashot Khachatryan

There are different artists: some seek new impressions, use their inspiration to create images of new countries and cities, others are dedicated to one subject, viz.: the world of their childhood and youth, the world where they felt for the first time that their vocation was painting. That is it about Ashot Khachatryan.

In St. Petersburg where his whole creative life has passed, he remains essentially an Armenian artist, with a specific profoundly national world outlook and style.

Ashot Khachatryan was born in 1954 in Hoctemberian (now Armavir) city. He grew up in Sardarapat, in a big patriarchal-style family where both domestic utensils and colorful rugs have from infancy formed the future artist's taste and preferences. From his childhood he recognized the traditional Armenian folk culture, its value and significance. It was the same culture that subsequently fed his art with its sustainable though not always open-minded precedents.

In 1971 Ashot joined the Yerevan decorative and applied art school, the department of glass. The fine arts course was led by Hacob Ananikyan, an extremely original and interesting artist. Communication with this person has perhaps given more to Ashot than the professional knowledge gained at the school. Acquaintance with the meaningful and active cultural life is of primary importance for an artist. Martiros Sarian's authority was unshrinking, Minas Avetisyan was in his prime, original work was being done by repatriated artists, Hacob Hacobian in particular. In the whirlpool of the artistic impressions Ashot, perhaps subconsciously, selected his artistic bearings - the art by Sarian and Minas.

In 1977, as advised by sculptor Gh. Chubarian, Ashot goes to Leningrad (St. Petersburg) to continue his study at the Artistic Academy. For four years he attends the Academy as an extern. Having become acquainted with Hermitage and the Russian Museum, the artist enriched himself with new impressions. He was struck by the canvases by Gogin, Van Gogh, Serov and Vrubel. By making the exhibitions of the old and new art more accessible, sometimes the unattainable values expand the artist's mental vision, without compromising the national origins of his art.

Ashot's genre preferences are portrait, still life, and of course, landscape. His characteristic is open and loud color with its original purely national perception. Color is the artist's most significant means of expression. Even when his colorific pressure is released, the colorful intensity retains the meaningful significance of the structural image. The colorific sensibility often becomes symbolic of the artist's creative imagination, both on canvases based upon the interplay of the tints of a single color, and on canvases where the color is exempt from the need to subordinate itself to the form.

In portraits, particularly, in self-portraits, Ashot seeks to establish certain colorful dominants which could reveal the imagery development. Another manifestly successful work of the artist is the portrait of Levon Lazarev (1995) with its decorative solution integrally parallel to the pure image worth of the portrait.

However, the basic subject of the artist is Armenia as incorporated in mountain, home, tree, man and nature, and in their harmonious interaction. The artist is trying to avoid a blunt reproduction of nature. His images of Armenia full of real life and its bright feelings, observations and affections produce two collective images. All landscapes are built upon memory, which retains all that the artist considers to be characteristic to his country. Ashot mostly sketches the initial design and relationship of colors on undersized oil paintings. Subsequently he goes on to create a large complete generalized picture. It is not accidental that one of the works by the artist is named "From the Depth of Centuries" (1994). Like many other canvases by Ashot, it could be called an original architectural fantasy.

The imaginary and real world of Ashot's canvases is inspired with human presence. Shown in the works by the artist are people, patriarchal-style homes and century-old mountains in some imaginary space beyond the boundaries of time. That is the vision by Ashot Khachatryan, the old and the new, the vision and poetic glorification of Armenia.

V. Razdolskaya, Professor (St. Petersburg)

A Sophisticated Portrait-Painter of Lyricism



Anyone who followed closely the new developments of the Armenian fine arts, must be sure to know Vilik Zakarian. Whatever could have been the changes in the set of colors by the artist, going over from brown or auburn to silvery, nonetheless, the mighty seal of the author's personality is perceived on every one of them.

So, what is the determinant of Vilik Zakarian's art? First of all a special lyricism. We deal with a thinking and sophisticated artist who originally interprets the phenomena of this world, seeks and finds new and interesting means of presenting his interpretations. Most notable among the latter has been and is the line, strict and determined. The line in his images has a prevailing value which is generalized and meaningful. Meanwhile, what was impressive was both the line and the total culture of performance. Also to be noted is the inner serenity that is present in nearly all creation by Vilik. Whatever he is depicting, nature, or a scene from everyday life, he is looking for harmony everywhere, even in situation with seemingly prevailing chaos. That is because that harmony is being carried inside his soul.

Looking at a canvas painted by Vilik, one can only think, that he is a great master of composition. One is attracted by the rhythm of volumes, the game of light, an artistic color of ordinary paint results from a magic process. His creation is multi-subject and multi-genre. The painter is interested in subject from myths and rituals to the present-day events. The latter are presented not in a traditional way, but rather in constructive and conventional solutions, with a multiplicity of symbolic presentations. Everywhere is Vilik Zakarian and his thoughtful eye of an artist following today's events and life, in these, mildly speaking, non-artistic times. It is interesting that disrupted proportions do not produce disharmony, but rather become coherent creating a comfortable and pleasing environment, an artistically saturated space.

Certainly, very often it becomes difficult to determine the affiliation of some of the Vilik's works, whether it is abstract art or some other artistic trend. His works of art are distinguished by their synthetic qualities and by the multiplicity of approaches. Thus, in some picture seeming to be abstract at first glance, a careful examination may unexpectedly reveal elements of a female body, or other images. In that way the artist perhaps deliberately is confusing the boundaries of different "isms", in order to establish the principle of good painting. In the works by the painter there is also a mutual penetration of the black-and-white art and color painting, imparting additional attraction to objects of art.

The generalized outline and forms of human body, their somewhat extended presentation are in some way reminiscent of the early-last-century French artist Modigliani. Like the latter, Vilik also mostly depicts feminine figures, striving to achieve not so much physical resemblance, but rather to create a relevant mood. His females are not simply beauty of nature or expression of perfection. They are primarily living beings, having external brilliance and admirable lyricism. The affection characteristic of his works of art is always a mixture of thought and ideal, e.g.: "An Armenian Woman", "Morning", "Noon", "Evening", "Eves", "A Model", etc.

It is to be noted that the artist is not satisfied with his style acquired long ago, but continues to look for new expressions. From imported paints he developed an original method of execution and produced a noteworthy black-and-white series. His search resulted in original manifestations of multi-dimensional painting when the surface of the canvas finds a continuation in cardboard or similar volumes. At the same time yet another, perhaps this time the experienced artist is suggesting a hitherto unencountered composition, presenting whole pictures constituted by a few non-uniform canvases which are neither diptych nor triptych. Their constituents are organic parts of the same composition, complementary and stipulatory to one another. Thus, e.g., the image of a cross in the wealth of its measures and mentality is reminiscent of a series of images in the center whereof is Christ crucified, while the wings of the cross show different moments of the Son of God's life.

Vilik Zakarian has also made a substantial contribution to book illustration. We are not going to enumerate his illustrations to books and Armenian folk tales, they are very numerous. Let us mention only the works with opening volumes which for their implementation beside the artistic abilities must have a very exigent approach of a lay-out artist. Elaboration of small detail takes place in all work of the painter, even in minute sketches. There is such a strict layout on each square meter of his studio in Yerevan city center. In that studio standing before the easel in deep thought from dawn to dusk, creating his regular compositions, the artist having left his mature age far behind is filling with meaning each moment of a transient life.

Open February 25 to March 7 in the Showroom of the Academy of Fine Arts is Vilik Zakarian's regular personal exhibition.



From the History of the National Gallery of Armenia

Hasmik Harutiunyan,
Deputy Director,
National Gallery of Armenia

The Armenian National Picture Gallery was started in 1921, by the ruling of the Government of Soviet Armenia, as Department of Arts, one of the five departments. At that time the Director of the Museum was appointed Martiros Sarian, while the Fine Arts Department Chief was painter Vrtanes Akhonian. The State Museum was located on Astafian (Abovian) street in a two-floor tuff building designed as a boys' high school (Architect V. O. Simonyan).

Operating in the Museum building were the public library and a concert hall. Also sheltered here were orphaned children repatriated from Western Armenia, that was the reason why in the first four years the Museum had no exhibition room. It was not accidental that Lunacharsky, having visited Armenia in 1924, disliked the Museum saying that it was like a multicolored storage room.

An interesting document dated August 14, 1921 has been preserved: a list of persons taking part in opening the Art Gallery of Armenia, listing the participants of that significant event: painters, actors, musicians, officials, workers, soldiers, schoolchildren and students.

Among the visitors were notable art critics Karo Halabian, Sargis Khachatryan, Taragros, Romanos Melikian, et al. Attending the opening ceremony, according to list, were 130 persons which, beside the statistics, shows the enthusiastic attitude of the Yerevan population to the establishment of the cultural origin.

The initial log of exhibits for the fine arts department of the Museum, a few dozen pieces, were bought by the government in July 1921 at the 5th Exhibition of the "Armenian Artistic Union" open at the Stepan Shahumian Central Workers' Club. Those had been authored by outstanding painters E. Tadevosyan, S. Arakelyan, Hm. Hakobian, V. Akhikian, G. Sharbabjian, black-and-white artist E. Shahian, et al.

In September of the same year in Moscow by the decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee the former Lazarev Institute was renamed The House of Culture of Soviet Armenia, with all its material and cultural assets being transferred to Armenia's control. That ruling had a crucial significance, since the presence of the Russian and European art in that collection transferred to the Armenian museum prompted the Armenia's art collecting policies: to establish an International rather than national collection of applied and decorative art.

In 1925 "Concise Inventory" of the fine arts department of the State Museum, published in Yerevan, had already endorsed 400 pieces of Russian and European authors, exhibited in six showrooms. In actual fact, that brochure, the first brief guide book, prioritized beside its data the importance of disclosing the names of the donors, including Hakob Ekizler (Ekizian), an architectural engineer based in Moscow. The donations received included H. Aivazovsky, V. Sureniants, S. Schedrin, I. Shishkin, V. Polenov, V. Makovsky and canvasses by other authors. Those are classified among the masterpieces of the gallery.

Actually, any museum during its formation goes its own way. In the case of our Museum the factor of acquisitions was particularly remarkable, which undoubtedly has had its preliminary data concealed in history. In early 20th century the part of the Armenian people that had survived the unprecedented massacre in the Western part of Historical Armenia had to abandon the land of their ancestors so as to find refuge in different countries of the Near East, Europe or America. Having adopted those countries as their second homeland, the Armenians formed national communities becoming actively involved in their political, economic and social life, de-



The Showrooms in the 1920s.

A group of painters, art critics and visitors, 1949.
Left to right: Hovhannes Zardaryan, Babken Kolozyan, Khachatur Yasayan, Tzolak Azizyan, Ruben Drambian, Vahan Harutiunyan, a visitor, Shant Hertevtsian.
Seated: Hakob Kojoyan, Martiros Saryan, Aleksander Gerasimov, Gabriel Giurjyan.

ployed cultural activities involving all domains of spiritual life, literature, music, fine arts. However, they used to remain nostalgic about their home country living through its cares and realizations. No wonder that the Armenian art critics and art collectors participated in the cultural life of the rejuvenating Armenia, the establishment of the fine arts museum in particular.

When in 1923 Askanaz Mravian applied to the Armenian artists of France asking to help the Museum to the best of their abilities, responding enthusiastically were V. Makhokhian, Z. Zakharian, T. Esayan, S. Khachatryan, R. Shishmanyan, et al., step by step until 1935 presenting about 40 pieces. Other donors of the first decade were Artists M. Sarian, E. Tadevosian, F. Terlemejian, V. Galfejan, Art collector V. Vahanian, T. Khan-Kelekian, V. Kananian. The Museum also received donations from the notable Russian painters A. Benoi, A. Ostroumo-



va-Lebedeva, E. Lansere, meanwhile, Isahak Brodsky enriched the art collection with pieces by the greatest artists of the XX century: K. Juoni, B. Grigorelli, B. Anisfeldi, I. Maliavin.

In late 1924, as advised by Al. Tamanian and M. Sarian, art critic Ruben Drambian moved to Yerevan from Leningrad, he had been

working in the State Russian Museum. In 1925 he accepted the position of the chief of Fine Arts Department, while in 1935 the Department was enlarged to become the State Museum of Fine Arts with Ruben Drambian as director (until 1951). R. Drambian's professional intuition and collector's abilities as well as his experience had predetermined the future development of the Museum. Due to the correctly chosen policies in furnishing the Museum with exhibits the museum has become one of the best Fine Arts Museum in the Soviet Union. It was in those years that the foundation was laid of the subsequent extensive research work.



R. Drambian. Painted by Hovhannes Zardarian.

Under the leadership of L. Durnovo (1885 - 1963), a great specialist in old art invited by R. Drambian from Moscow, the museum started scholarly research and reproduction of the Medieval Armenian wall paintings and miniatures. A group of young painters - E. Khachatryan, M. Chobanian, R. Loris-Melikov, V. Bagdasarian, G. Khanagian, H. Gharagiozian, et al. were trained in the difficult crafts of reproduction and rehabilitation. In expeditions dispatched to diverse regions of Armenia they discovered, researched, registered and reproduced relics of the Armenian monumental painting. Many frescos ornamenting the half-ruined churches had been open to the elements. Today they are no more, However, their copies have become full-blown substitutes for the originals. Due to L. Durnovo and her disciples, the museum today shows to its visitors the wall paintings of Lmbatavank monastery of Aruj, Church of Tatev and other churches. It is to be noted that later on that collection was reinforced by new specimen, and in 1985 it became possible to exhibit them in a new specially designed showroom as well as the miniatures and copies of the high reliefs of churches. Displaying the medieval art ensures the chronological sequence of the

Armenian fine arts from early Medieval sources to the 17 - 18 cc. ecclesiastical painting, to the new times and the newest art.

In 1930 - 1950 the Museum continues to be resupplied, opening temporary exhibitions accompanied by brief catalogues and booklets, an Armenian-Russian-West-European triple-department permanent exhibition is on. All those functions are supported by the relevant research units.

In those decades the Museum accepted three donations of large collectors: T. Russo, Dias de la Penja, A. Montichelli, E. Buden, A. Benari and other very valuable canvases from G. Chambakhchian, a Rumanian Armenian art collector. Those masters added new quality to the French art collection. Another large collection donated by one more Rumanian contributor, Vahan Barakian, consisted of pieces by well-known Russian painters and black-and-white artists, European bas-reliefs, as well as articles of decorative and applied art, 150 pieces (Europe, Russia, the East).

In 1936, a notable Armenian black-and-white artist, widely known in France, Edgar Shahin, added 170 bas-reliefs to his collection in the Museum, sending them from Paris to his personal exhibition being arranged in Yerevan. A donation from France by artist Abraham Jinjian added 30 paintings and 9 drawings to the already existing collection by the world-famous marine painter Hovhannes Aivazovsky. Associated with the marine painter is one of the large events in the life of the Museum. In the years of the Great Patriotic War, which had disrupted the peaceful life of the entire Soviet population, the Museum continued to work and also to retain security of its collection. The Museum accepted the priceless stocks and archives of the H. Aivazovsky Museum relocated from Feodosia, the Crimea, during the war. Since November 8, 1941 that collection had been kept in the Fine Arts Museum. On May 2, 1942, on the 125th Anniversary of the painter, the management of the Museum and the Armenian Artistic Union established an exhibition in the Persian mosque where in those years the Artistic Union was based. There were 57 works by Aivazovsky and 10 pictures by West-European marine painters. Among the partakers of the opening ceremonies were A. Shahinian, Chief of Directorate on the Affairs of Art, M. Sarian, Academician H. Orbeli, R. Drambian and N. Barsamov, directors of the Museum and the Picture Gallery in the city of Feodosia. Within 12 days the exhibition had 45000 visitors. On November 5, 1944, the collections of Feodosia Gallery were returned to the Crimea without any losses.

To be continued

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Հովհաննես Այվազովսկի, 1817-1900
Ձկնորսները ծովափին, 1852
կտավ, յուղաներկ, 93,5x143 սմ

Hovhannes Ayvazovsky, 1817-1900
Fisherman on the beach, 1852
oil on canvas, 93,5x143 cm



ԱՇՈՏ ԽԱՇԱՏՐՅԱՆ

Ashot Khachatryan



Բանաններով հացդրոմ
Still-life with bananas

Կապույտ
Lilac



Ձմեռ
Winter



ՎԻԼԻԿ ԶԱԲԱՐՅԱՆ

Vilik Zakaryan



Մոդերն ցուցահանդեսի բացում
Opening of modern exhibition



Օտար և եվրոպացի
Zeus and Europa

Եվա
Eva



Աննուն, 120x100, 1999p.
The Annunciation



Ես ուզում եմ ասել, 100x80, 2000p.
I want to say



Հավատ, 100x80, 2004p.
Faith



Տիրուհի, 185x145, 2000p.
Madonna

Բնանկար, 60x50, 2004p.
Autoportret



Born 1962 in Tbilisi.
Since 1983 took part in Exhibitions.
In 1988 exhibited in the Yerevan Museum of Modern Art.
In 1992 received the Ajemian Prize.
1993: personal exhibitions in Tbilisi and Yerevan.
Moved to Yerevan with family in 1996.
Member of the Artistic Union of Armenia since 2000.
2003 - Member of UNESCO, personal exhibition in Moscow.
2005 - personal exhibition at the "Naregatsi Art Institute" art showroom (Yerevan).

M. Mkhitarian's works have been used in the film "The Symphony of Silence" by V. Chaldanian.

Has produced a number of theatrical stagings.

Works by the painter have been displayed at different exhibitions in Germany, Italy, France, Canada, US, Iran.

Works by Mais Mkhitarian can be seen at www.mmais.narod.ru

Evaluation

I consider myself lucky to have come across the material on your art and to have acquired the Internet page. It is magnificent. I think your canvases are wonderful. Your painting indeed has touched me. It is the truth, rather than rhetoric. Your pictures are compatible with the beauty of soul, incessant work of mysticism, and great talent. I am assured that you will see great success.

With my best wishes,
Art critic Molly O'Tool.

The New Website of The Armenian Artists

www.armenianartist.net

There is a new website on the Internet devoted to the Armenian artists. It is open to all professional artists from Armenia and Diaspora, where they can provide any information about themselves and their works.

The website authors are Zhanet Lazaryan, Manvel Adamyan, and Beatris Savadyan.

Designed by Artour Oshakantsi.

We welcome our readers to get acquainted with the Armenian culture and art, and with private galleries on the following websites.

www.gallery.am

The National Gallery of Armenia - the largest collection of Armenian paintings; a rich collection of Russian, West-European and Oriental artworks.

www.naregatsi.org

The "Naregatsi Art Institute" has different cultural activities in Diaspora, Armenia and now in Artsakh too.

www.hyeart.org

"Hye Art" Armenian Cultural Center and Armenian Artists in Australia

www.24.brinkster.com/valmargallery

About the artist Valmar and his gallery opened in Yerevan in 2004

www.gevorgyangallery.com

A gallery, presenting modern Armenian paintings in Yerevan

www.zirani.com

"Tsirani" Armenian gallery in Libanon

"GITELIK" University in Yeghegnadzor

"Gitelik" University Fund, based in Yeghegnadzor (Armenia) in 2004 will operate in full power starting this September. There are 150 current students and hundreds to join them. The University has 12 departments. "The University will provide undergraduate and graduate courses corresponding to European standards" said the founder of "Gitelik" University.

You can find information about the multifaceted work of "Gitelik" University and its founder "Syunik" NGO on the web page



www.syunikngo.am

ART AIMED AT THE FUTURE

Poghos Haitayan

Still fresh in our memory are the large-scale exhibitions by Ruben Adalian opened in 1997 and 2000 in the National Gallery and in the Artistic Union reviewing the half-century record of the People's Artist of Armenia (later on also a prize winner) which was created under the hurdles of the totalitarian ideological system keeping clear of the reefs of the loyal sub-

name of freedom, "the firing squad", the tragic and fantastic cityscapes of the outgoing old Yerevan and other multiple works enriched the history of the new Armenian art with completely new artistic approaches and concepts of forms and color-plastic problems:

In November 2004 the new exhibition opened in the Artistic Union dedicated to the 75th Anniversary of the

diverse degrees of human tension, the invisible strata of the conscious and the unconscious, releasing the artistic problems of the current moment, the processes of situational transformations.

Incredible by today's artistic criteria are the high-quality features of his self-portraits, the length and breadth of his inner world, done during the years of study, however, there is one



artist with its originality and unexpected approaches again baffled the hard-boiled beneficiary (even the professional colleagues):

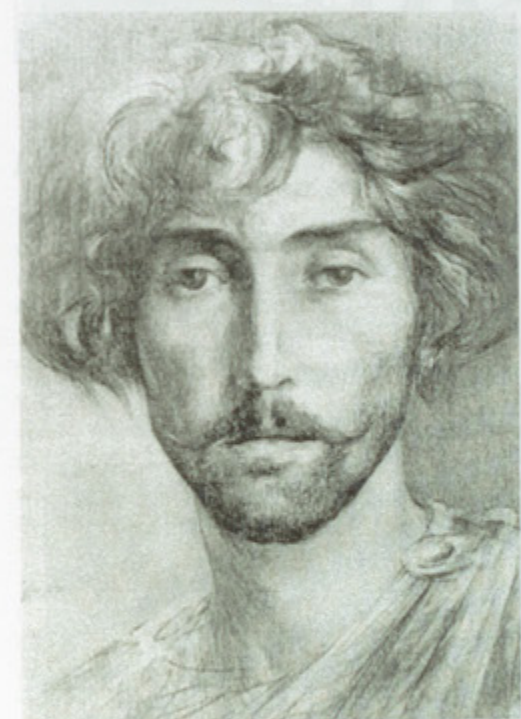


feature which accompanies the artist everywhere: that is his romantic inspiration and the active dynamic characteristic that in different years acquires philosophical speculations and unexplainable questions and answers of magic attraction:

From his young days to our time the self-portraits distinctly trace the entire array of the artist's creation, his search and his discoveries.

Showing unique Intellectual capacities are his deep "readings" of national and international literature whose visual images or simply echoes get

completely exempt from subordinate (or illustrative) status, to acquire the attributes of self-sufficient art. Examples are many. The Self-Portrait of 1955 which is exclusive in the self-portraits, is dedicated to poet Edgar Poe. It could seem that that manner of painting could belong to a wizard bent by years who had attained great mastery with the classical clarity and high professionalism cutting the new and unfamiliar way for the artists. In this row, the mentioned portrait is not alone, and an attentive observer will see that quite easily. However, the phenomenon of Adalian is that Artist (which is striking in the whole panorama of fine arts) has never been content with what he had achieved but is looking forward to seek for new ways and forms in order to



walk in step with the contemporary times. This process is going on up to now, as shown by the splendid array of the portraits created in 2004, brilliant design solutions, with great inclusions of time and space, with new artistic inventions to discover the divine image of man.

It has already been noted that Ruben Adalian in his young years used to paint in rhyme with a merited wizard, however, in advanced years to be so contemporaneous, dynamic and mighty is a real gift to our nation and their art which is targeted at the 21-nd century being a guiding star to the succeeding generations.

An Armenian Artist to Open an Exhibition in the EC Building

My conversation with **Armen Daneghyan** occurred during his work hours.

You will have to excuse me. I work under natural light only, so in winter every moment of sunlight is a treasure. I started doing this picture 15 days before, in a few days it is going to be finished. This is Aram Khachaturyan.



Actually, my art throws back to our Medieval miniature painting. It is in fact, contemporary miniature painting. Formerly I was mostly interested in biblical plots, later I painted some series of pictures dedicated to the history of the Armenian Nation and the Church, like "The Voice of the Great", "Armenian Rugs", etc. Now I have new interesting topics which generated "Shakespeare", "Nicolo Paganini", Marco Polo", "Chess", "Dance under the Triumphal Arch" and other works.

Your next exhibition is to be arranged at the European Council building, isn't it? Yes, I am glad that I have received an invitation to open my exhibition in the building of the European Council in April this year. It is my hope that the Europeans will like my works. The exhibits are going to be very different, including works in both Armenian and International subjects. I wonder if there is an Armenian community in Strasbourg. As far as I know, the community is small, consisting of intellectuals. I have heard that Khachik Mouradian, born in Armenia, is doing a lot of work to congregate the local Armenians, being a gentleman of virtue. We wish you success at the Strasbourg exhibition. Thank you. It is indeed an important assignment. I have taken part in quite a lot of exhibitions both in Armenia and overseas, this one however, seems to be of top priority.



ARMENIA,

GIUMRI

"MEK"

The "MEK" experimental cultural center was established in Giumri in 2003. It is targeted towards the new development of modern art with regard to an extensive range: fine arts, music theater, video art, haute couture, while accepting new forms of art. The Founders are convinced that the Center has an analytical bias in education and specialization.

"MEK" has taken part in several programs. It has implemented conspicuous advocacies, particularly, in September 2003, the advocacy "We tread upon our grandfathers". To some this legend may seem profane, however, the meaning is that we walk in the country populated and constructed by our grandfathers, and their immortal existence is for us a bridge to the future.

In August 2004 the Center came forward with the Giumri days, while in November there was another advocacy named "God's Vision". The exhibition is deployed in the basement of St. Hackob Mtsbnetsi Church. The primary objective was to arrange the spiritual environment or exhibition space congruent with the circular architectural structure, since the concept of the highlighted exhibits has to be coincidental with the subject under scrutiny. The choice of topics has been far from accidental: "Adam and Eve", "The Last Supper", "The Roads", "The Questions" "The Screams".

Many values are suppressed today, black and white are oftentimes confused. Very often through false values we arrive at nonsense while disregarding the obvious truths forged for our use long ago, fully forgetting that all things and matters are under God's vision, and our visions and pathways remain unquestioned. We become surprised why

our desperate screams lose their echoes without considering that our glances are directed towards the abyss.

The Exhibition was presented in the traditional fine arts form as well as by means of installation. Participating in the advocacy was the painter Arman Tadevosyan, black-and-white artist Levon Flijan Arthur Gevorgyan, instructor of the Giumri Branch of the Yerevan Academy of Fine Arts, President of "Mek". The Exhibition was made possible through the sponsorship by Bishop Michael Ajapahian, Primate of the diocese of Shirak.

Gayane Eghizaryan,
Research Worker, National Gallery of Armenia

A group of artists and supporters of the "Kerpar" Association



The KERPAR Artistic Association

The past is presence of our consciousness in the future. However, the present carries a certain tendency to reject the public moral and spiritual values of the past systems. What we see here is not a rejection of the national idea, but rather the imperative of the time to get integrated into the international culture.

In light of those approaches there came about the "Kerpar" Artistic Association. It was established in the wake of the last convention of the Artistic Union of Armenia. The link between the state and creative guild having been severed, the Artistic Union, given the financial difficulties of its multiple members, understandably lost the flexibility of its operations. Started under those circumstances was "mobil", a corporation that could meet the requirements of the International cultural market. Following the establishment of "The Kerpar", the men of virtue did not take long to appear.

On October 28 - 29, 2004, in one of the art centers of Salle de Drouot in Paris the expedient work with the French party by Hovhannes Harutiunyan, President of the Association, Member of the Artistic Union of Armenia enabled the opening of the fair "Armenian Painting 2004" featuring 25 associated and 30 independent artists (all members of the Armenian Artistic Union), with around 350 works of art.

The objective of the fair was to present the creative products of diverse age groups of the Armenian artists to the International community and to the market of artistic objects.

One of the founders of the Fair, Roget Arias, artistic consultant in a 21-million copy auction-center periodical "La gazette de Drouot" wrote: "My desire is to present to both France and Europe the gifted and talented from the land afflicted by earthquake and war". This short sentence, to my mind, is very characteristic in the sense that it is not the artist who hunts the market but rather the market goes after him doing the presentation.



Painting is politics, like many other things, an aspect of displaying the highest taste, an Institute of human communication and spiritual relations. It does need presentation, and, most definitely, evaluation.

I think it is time that the domestic authorities render assistance to implementing the cultural policies, help provide the quality showrooms with the ruling principle of time, the beauty concordant with truth, independent of the form of the art object. The Salle-Drouot Fair has somewhat enabled to move closer to reviewing the current situation.

Another fair took place in November, at the Teckian Cultural Center, the "Kerpar" Association representing their members with one-piece exhibition under the motto "No to Terrorism"



Hasmik Harutiunyan, Fly, 1994

The Association plans a remarkable action this spring dedicated to Sayat-Nova trying to recreate his original portrait, an event and an exhibition is envisaged in Iran. Going on in Paris is work on building an exhibition hall for virtual display named "Armenian Painting". The painters will be exhibited, two pictures each, with a concise biographic reference.

That is a panoramic view of actions taken and to be taken by the "Kerpar" Artistic Association within a span of several months.

Vache Petrosian

**Presents the
founding President of the Center**

**Nadya Antonyan,
Ph.D, leading specialist of the
Higher-Education Department,
Ministry of Science and Education**

First on the apprehensions that have given rise to the objectives and purposes of the Center. Today in Armenia there are causes for concern about the Armenian language, of our spiritual sources in general, about the status of national values, although the state is making some steps in this direction.

The "MESROP MASHTOTS" language arts center

Of great concern is the national situation and national awareness of the youth in general at the society level. There is a drop in patriotism in the youth, which will compromise our spiritual and physical security in the worldwide peaceful wars of our days. In his day, G. Njdeh gave a warning: "In the youth one has to retain the noble virtue, otherwise a non-patriotic nation will become stateless one day". Particularly worrying is the gene pool of the nation: The problem is how to stop emigration, to keep the talented youth in the home country.

That is the origin of our Center's objectives, which are: to preserve the Armenian language intact, to interpret and to disseminate the National Values, to develop patriotism in the younger generation, to shape a national psychology, to discover and support the gifted and talented young people as assets of the national genetic pool, to establish the Intellectual strata of the Armenian population, to help manage a gradual merging of the Eastern and Western

Armenian languages, To achieve a formation of the Pan-Armenian national mentality and psychology.

The Center by means of the literary and musical productions will give interpretations to the Armenian literature and the value of its historical associations at the Diocese of the Ararat Patriarchy and on other venues.

We do not present ordinary belles-lettres but rather in the form of artistic performance by the young people we demonstrate the Armenian treasury: poetry, prose, philosophy, singing, history, dance, symbols, its magic substance.

The Center has organized a benevolent cultural pilgrimage to Artsakh: Shushi, Stepanakert, Lajin (Kashatagh) with the purpose of validating and paying patriotic tribute to



the Armenia-Artsakh moral and psychological channels of communication.

We have come forward with a similar benevolent concert tour both on the big stages of Yerevan, and in recreational facilities, resting places, in the regions of Tavush, Lori and Siunik: We have our dream and our pre-meditated objective, in case of assistance or sponsorship to organize shows of this type in border-line areas or in the Diaspora.

The Center for the Armenian youth with no age limitations offers free instruction courses in the Armenian language, Armenian history, theatrical recitation, "rhetoric," art of self-expression, study of cultures.

To be noted is another important development of our Center. In the governmental Jubilee concert programs celebrated in Armenia, the "MESROP MASHTOTS" has become a mandatory and desirable partaker. It is especially presti-

gious that the participation of the Center is suggested by the beneficiaries themselves, the giants of our culture: Silva Kaputikian, Hovhannes Chekijian.

The Center's priorities include creative promotion of the Western Armenian culture in the Eastern Armenian society. Therefore the Center's operations included also participation of the Western Armenian poets in the Jubilee government-sponsored shows like "Siamanto," "Vahan Tekelian," etc.

There was a notable participation of our Center in 2004 in the Armenian-wide festival "One Nation - One Culture" with the literary show "The Call of Nation" which has been staged with great success by the "Mher Mkrtchian" theater: This original literary-musical performance gained a rapturous welcome both domestically and abroad. We even received an invitation for a visiting tour from Iran and from Moscow, however, having no sponsor, it was impossible to attend.

It is to be noted that a center existing in obscurity, with the sublime objectives to retain and strengthen the national culture, having no funding or sponsorship, being non-partisan, has managed not only to sustain its existence but to implement the given objectives using specific steps and dedication and make great strides ahead for the Armenian youth to become a Mesrop-inspired spiritual and cultural oasis against the background of domestic and alien invasion of anti-national low-taste events. In Armenia there are hundreds of centers, but standing behind the Armenian Word for multiple centuries is the only center "Mesrop Mashtots": That is why the best part of the Armenian nation has gathered around the center to become the bulwark of morals and culture in the fields of culture and intellect.

To quote a few excerpts from the opinions expressed about the center.

The emergence of the "Mesrop MASHTOTS" center has a modern sounding. We bless the origin of the Center bearing the name of St. Mesrop Mashtots. We welcome Nadya Antonyan, the founder of the Center, for initiating such a nation-loving center and for deploying the patriotic activity..."

**With blessings,
GAREGIN II,**

THE CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS



"Having heard the speeches of the Mesrop Mashtots Center's glorious alumni, seeing their dedication as well as the one by Nadya Antonyan, their leader, I am being filled with confidence in our Spiritual Motherland for our youth and the future of the country. Good run to you, "MESROP MASHTOTS", since with your dedication you have indefatigably striven to save our national treasure from the all-consuming chasm of time..."

SILVA KAPUTIKYAN



The "Mesrop Mashtots" is the only literary center in the Republic of Armenia with the activities absolutely nation-loving, high-taste and patriotic. That is the reason why I agreed to be included among the trustees of the Center and to support it in all possible ways. I hold in high respect the mission of Miss N. Antonyan and the Center's staff. Each patriotic Armenian has to join this Mashtots team to develop the Armenian Temple of Spirit.

HOVANNES CHEKIYAN

We have a program dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the genocide. Based upon the performing potential of the surviving legends of the Armenian culture and the efforts of the gifted members of the Center, we have produced an audio CD. We present the Eastern Armenian and Western Armenian written culture, poetry, our epic history in the form of original literary-musical radio theater performances. This powerful product is targeted to emphasize the Armenian national interests to assist the empowerment of the national spirit and character. This is a millennia-long highly resistant ongoing nation-preserving program which, I am convinced, will be actualized through joint Armenian efforts.

Gathering around the Center are the leaders of our cultural elite Silva Kaputikyan, Hovhannes Chekijian, Sos Sargsian, Zori Balayan, Levon Ananyan, Ara Gevorgian, et al. It is my desire to pronounce the words of gratitude to A. Margarian, the RA Prime Minister, to the Ministry of Culture and the Affairs of the Youth, whose facilitation has enabled the Center to make steps towards achieving its goals.

Njdeh advised: "THE NATIONAL ESSENTIALITY HAS NO SOCIAL STRATA. IT IS CONSTITUTED BY A MAGIC FORCE HAVING TO DO WITH BOTH RICH AND POOR ARMENIANS".

Today, using the joint efforts of all Armenians we must strengthen the house of our ancestors, the century-old vision of a free and independent Armenia. Let us join forces to make our home country strong. We invite you for cooperation:

**9, Tigran Mets, Yerevan, Armenia
Tels.: 52-56-62, 28-30-74, 56-34-55**



emotional impression, with an emphatically dramatic presentation. In these images, Godmother is confronting her grief alone. Thus, Christian art adopted and developed the style of Pietà - Orphan.

Pietà in its original setting was not alien to Armenian art, the miniature in particular. Its best example is the work by Momik, a notable Medieval artist. An array of images "The Gospel of War" (Matenadaran, Manu. 6792) Illustrated in 1302 contains a miniature on the subject of Pietà - Orphan. With this small image and modest means of expression, the Armenian master showed full suffering and pain of Godmother's heart. In the lower part of the miniature we see an open grave dug in stone. In the center is Godmother with the dead Son on her knees. Holding Jesus' legs are two kneeling disciples, taking the last farewell of the beloved teacher. Also present were two women in mourning who had attended Jesus' funeral. In the top part of the composition are the forboding symbolic figures of two winged angels. Momik, with a talent of a master made up the composition of the miniature in such a way that the eyes focus at Jesus and Godmother. The dynamics of secondary images - positioning of disciples, the bowed heads of women, the sliding curves of Angels' wings,

"PIETA"

The Painting Named "Seven Wounds of Godmother" IN THE ARMENIAN ART

It is told that Pimen, one of the great hermits at the moment of prayer was spiritually transported to Calvary, to be honored with a striking vision: he saw Jesus crucified, with Mother of God standing near the cross in mourning. Shaken to the depth of his soul, Pimen says to his disciples: "I covet to always live with this thought": The ascetic hermit talks about compassion and suffering, a road of spiritual ordeal whose follower becomes a voluntary sympathizer of the tortures of Jesus with compassion to the soul of Godmother, bringing his own soul closer to salvation to live the real life.

Later that sacral ordeal of spiritual cleansing became widely used, particularly by the Catholics, so much that in the Middle Ages there came about many saint pictures on that subject. Adopted as their historiographic basics was the scene of "Removal from the Cross", particularly the situation when Godmother holds the dead Son in her embrace mourning about Him. In the preliminary presentation it was a multigure composition involving also some disciples of Jesus. However on saint pictures of a later period the partakers of the "Removal from the Cross" scene yielded their places to the images of

here are the artistic methods forming and fixing the line of composition, which is simple but imaginative: Momik has solved the problem. The small miniature expressed and explicated the big and deep Pietà.

In a subsequent period, 17th - 18th cc., when the Armenian table painting was rapidly developing, many new Pietas appeared. Those saint images were mostly influenced by Godmother-related concepts formed in the West-Catholic and Greek-Catholic cultural environment and often regenerating the prototypes of the same environment with regard to the composition and drawing patterns of the saint images, however, stylistically and typologically they retained the characteristics of Armenian art. One of those saint images is "Seven Wounds of Godmother" which was created approximately in late 17th - early 18th century. Unfortunately the author's name has not been preserved. It is known only that the image of Godmother was a gift to St. Echmiadzin from Priest Hovsep Astapatsi.

"Seven Wounds of Godmother" is an imitation. Since the Western Pietas were either painting, fresco or sculpture, (of which the widest known is the masterpiece by Michelangelo), the Armenian artist most probably reverted not to imitating one of those, but perhaps to some bas-relief version. Besides being a perfect example of classical Pietà, part of the general composi-

tion of this picture is comprised of the seven swords piercing the heart of Godmother, the relevant seven circles which enclose seven small images of plots and the tools that tortured Jesus. The inner layer related to each miniature image has been decayed and obliterated.

The presence of those seven swords has not only given the name to the picture, it has also provided the key to a complete understanding of Pietà. They neither report a new message or modify the old one, but are rather complementary and explanatory.

To understand the meaning of the swords, let us address the Gospel and its interpretations. Luke the Evangelist tells us the story of the forty-day-old Jesus being brought to the Jerusalem temple, mentioned the old man Simeon. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And when he took the Lord's Christ in his arms, he prophesied about His mission. One of the prophecies was directed at Godmother: "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed," he says. Those words have naturally been interpreted many times by the fathers of the church. Many viewpoints have been spoken. However, only one is consonant to our objective: The sword striking Godmother is her suffering at seeing the martyrdom of her Son.

But the saint image carries seven swords, does it not. It does. However, let us remember the test of sympathy to Godmother's pain. That will assume and establish the process of step-by-step elevation through prayer or a similar condition of the soul, the highest point being Pietà. The soul and the mind of the believer takes him to Pietà stepwise. To make that problem easier, the Western religious teachers created a series of prayers in keeping with the seven days of the week. Thus, one wound (one sword) was multiplied by seven, since each prayer is concerned with one of the wounds incurred by the soul of Godmother.

Those are the seven wounds of Godmother.

- When at the time of Jesus' circumcision she saw the blood of her Son.
- When fleeing to Egypt for fear of Herod, when blood of many infants was spilt.
- When the twelve-year old Jesus remained in Jerusalem temple and His Mother was looking for him.
- When it became known that Jesus was going to be crucified
- Road to Calvary

f. The crucifixion

g. Jesus' death and burial

The cited examples with saint pictures show that the Armenian religious culture has harbored two types of Pietà imagery, one depicting the preliminary variant of the subject, and the other classical. Both of them show that the presence of Pietas in Armenian Church does not mean that the Armenian believer or Armenian priest brought foreign elements or his personal innovations into the compositions created on the native soil. That is simply a confirmation of the open-minded character of the Armenian Church, and unlimited love of the Armenian people for Godmother. To be compassionate with her pain, to be elevated through that suffering, to conquer death in that love and to become immortal.

Avet Avetisyan,
Scientist Employed by Matenadaran



Who Hosts the MONUMENT?



monuments has grown, but has there also been a growth of care about them?

Given below are two photos showing one of the pillars of the 5th-c. Aruj compound basilica, and a 7th-c. princely palace (Nov. 2004 photos by Eduard Sepetjan). The roof had probably collapsed by itself, the stones revolved, a repair would be easy, but it has to be done professionally. And the palace has become overgrown with forest. It is to be added that on the magnificent roof of the 7th-c. church a 10-year-old apricot tree is growing. The great cultural and historical value of the Aruj monumental compound is undeniable. Moreover, in December 2004 Areg Hasratian sustained a post-graduate thesis titled "The Aruj Early-Medieval Architectural Compound" emphasizing the unique character of the Compound. In fact, we have an ancient monument of unprecedented value and importance which has been deserted to its fate.

Let us hope that this publication will find a repercussion and Aruj compound's host or hosts will show their expedience. This is however, a single case, exemplifying hundreds of similar situations.

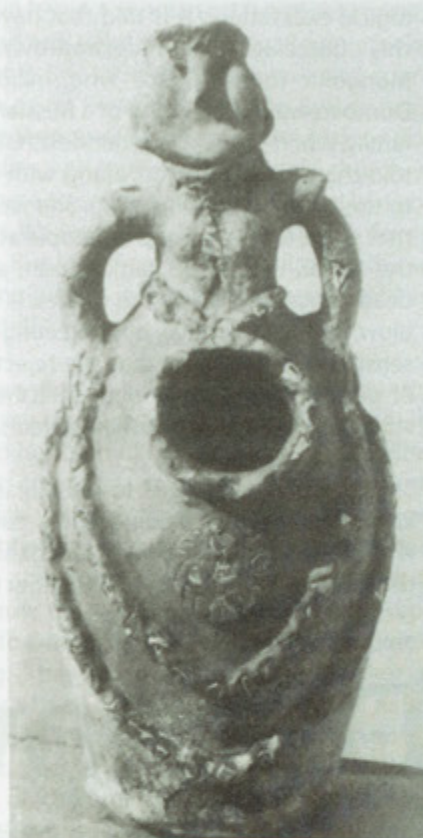
K. M.



In the USSR there was Chief Directorate for the preservation of monuments of culture and history under the Council of Ministers. It was a large state-controlled structure having the rights and competencies of a ministry, and it was responsible for care and superintendence of the historical monuments on the territory of Armenia.

With Independence, the capabilities and competencies of the structure have gradually gone down, and finally it was dissolved. Several parts of it were singled out, while the core, with a status of an agency was integrated into the RA Ministry of Culture. Last year it was accredited with \$100 000, this year it was \$1 000 000 (about 30 times less than in the Soviet times). Let us note that compared to the Soviet period, now a great number of monasteries and churches have been handed over to the Armenian Apostolic Church. There appeared a concept of a monument's host, in many cases that role belongs to the local community. Of course, the number of

in Armenia Saltboxes



Salt also had ritual functions. Even today in Armenia an animal is given salt before being offered for sacrifice. Bread and salt as blessing is a symbol of bounty. Armenians, like many other people of the world have a habit of meeting visitors by serving them bread and salt as a sign of friendship.

Salt and specially designed saltboxes have a feedback: human and cattle-shaped saltboxes show dedication to Anahit, goddess of fertility. In Christian times, when goddess Anahit is worshiped no more, by virtue of a religious reform, it remains as a survival.

Among the five different types of artistic style the common principle is the female image, with linear, dotted, bas-relief and high-relief ornamentation as well as different symbols. The clay saltboxes besides external female appearance had also other properties, symbols of gender, fashions, ornaments expressing multiple meanings.

Fictile art in Armenia originated in very old times and is surviving to date. Clayware had a very wide application both with the urban and rural population. Clay was the original material for many types of utensils: articles; saltboxes; spindle heads; giant pitchers. Known in Armenia from old times are light-colored high-quality clay and red clay. Specific clays have been used for different purposes. The potters worked taking into account the color and purity of the material, analyzing it on the basis of a millennia-long experience during the firing.

A stock of ground salt for several years or months, designed for human or animal consumption, used to be kept in saltboxes. The importance ascribed to salt among the Armenians may have assumed a level of worship. Salt as a sanctity was kept in sacred pots, water bags, sacks, jugs, fancy crockery.

A similar role of salt was primarily stipulated by its significance for food. With no salt food was tasteless. It had no taste at all. In old times salt was often exchanged for gold.

It was also used in folk medicine. The body and teeth of a newly born baby was treated with salt to improve health.



Getting out of the applied usage, the female-image pots in many rural homes have remained as memories and survivals of the past. As an original section of national culture the saltboxes not only have not lost their significance, but they are revived these days due to the folk craftsmen. While big saltboxes left over from the old time are preserved in museums, and in the flea market their miniature copies are sold as souvenirs: the folk craftsmen themselves taking the traditional as a basis, create the new, each one using his own style and interpretation. Thus, the Armenian female-figure saltboxes continue to survive, presenting the legacy of former culture to the generations.

Lilit Aghabekyan
Senior scientist, National Gallery

applied art

armenian art • 1(11)/2005



day she sealed the cabinet using a flower-shaped ornament on her bracelet. That bracelet was a gift that she had received in Mongolia. The sender was her fiancé who was there taking part in archeological excavations. It is told that having received this bracelet, Lidia Alexandrovna went to Mongolia, to her fiancé who, incidentally, like Durnovo, was an offspring of a Russian aristocratic family. When she reached her destination, she was told that the young man, along with others went to the forest for wolf-hunting. She went hastily to that place, to see a group of people at the edge of the forest. When she came closer, she saw her dead fiancé torn up by the wolves. It was a heavy blow to Lidia Durnovo, a fine-feeling and deeply sensitive woman. After that she rejected the idea of getting married and dedicated herself to the study and rehabilitation of art objects.

She loved animals, birds in particular. Everybody knew that Lidia Alexandrovna took care of wounded birds, treated them and handed them to the Zoo. It was not accidental that her relatives depicted a bird on her tombstone.

About Lidia Durnovo

I was 18 when I met Lidia Alexandrovna Durnovo for the first time. It was in autumn, 1945. At that time I was a first-year student of the Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts, Department of painting. Those were hard times for my family, following the advise of Mrs. Nektar Hairapetovna, mother of my friend Lavinia Bajbeuk-Melikian, and with a note of recommendation, I went to the Yerevan Gallery, to see Lidia Durnovo and some young artists making copies of miniatures. Mrs. Nektar was a very agreeable, clever and educated personality, an architect by speciality. She was on very friendly terms with Durnovo and was sure she would offer me a job.

Lidia Durnovo impressed me greatly. Her knowledge and reading were enormous. She heard me very carefully, with a benevolent smile. She was wearing a long white robe, with a tight collar and a large pearl brooch, and with a silver bracelet on her arm. Her headdress with a large braid was supported with five little combs. This hairstyle seemed to be very old, from the previous century. She agreed to give me a job without any interview, just on the strength of Mrs. Nektar's recommendation.

The office where they made copies was on the second floor of the Gallery in a small room with a single window. Working here were Vardkes Bagdasarian, Gevorg Khanaghian (Giga), Lusvard, a repatriant from France, Durnovo spoke French with her, Haikaz Khachatryan, and Hera Karagiozian.

In the office there was a cabinet storing the manuscripts brought for copying and Durnovo's collection of Chinese Porcelain. Every

Lidia Alexandrovna taught me the difficult subject of copying the miniatures. Now it is done by high-quality photography. At that time matters like this were done manually. That was a very complex procedure, it had its rules, and could be done only by following them very strictly. She had done multiple copies from miniatures, and published them in her works, but later all that work was recommissioned to her disciples.

She was very exigent, examined the copies with a magnifying glass, and rejected the work if detecting a fault. She demanded that our copies should not deviate from the original by a single hair-breath. We had to draw the miniature on tissue paper then transfer it to a quality heavy paper, which was given the appearance of parchment. She taught us the technique of gold backing. At that time some stores in Yerevan carried thin sheets of paper with spray gold coating, perhaps it was a pre-Soviet product. To paste gold, we used garlic and brown dough. The colors were prepared in advance on a test paper. The copying started only after she has given approval of the colors.

Later there was an exhibition of our copies which was a great success. Academician Hovsep Orbeli saw those works in our working room, he was surprised and saddened saying, why did they remove

the miniatures from the manuscripts. The copying was done so precisely that he took them for the originals.

Lidia Durnovo loved Armenian art fanatically, particularly the miniature and wall painting. She played a great role in the life of her students. She taught them to love and appreciate the beautiful, to never bow to difficulties. By her own example she gave the lessons of kindness to the surrounding people. Very soon after her copying the Akhtala church wall paintings I was there to see the scaffolding used by Durnovo and her students. We learned that she had fallen down and broken her ribs. But in a short time she climbed the scaffolding again to complete the job ignoring the pain, cold and a thousand other difficulties.

She was a very direct and sensitive person. After the untimely death of my mother she showed me great kindness and love. I visited her on multiple occasions. I remember a day in spring when there was rain which later grew into a flood causing much damage to Yerevan city. Lidia Alexandrovna made me stay at the museum, settling me in her personal suite. When she pored buckwheat meal in the dishes, the wounded crow that lived in her room, leaped on the table coming up to Durnovo's dish, rather than to mine, and started pecking. That made my favorite teacher extremely pleased. Once I saw her in the street arguing with a woman who carried chicken hanging by their feet. Another time, in Tsakhkadzor city she wouldn't eat barbeque. Later it became known that on the previous night the slain sheep had been bleating in the museum backyard.

Durnovo was very alert to her students' needs seeing to it that their abilities be applied in the best possible way. Anastasia Vermishian, a highly qualified fruit expert, was arrested in 1937, after spending many years in Siberia she undertook publication of a triple-volume album on the Armenian fruits. When she addressed Durnovo, she advised to commit the task to me. Fortunately, I did not fail her trust, and I was very happy when the album was published with an acknowledgement by the Author.

All along my artistic life I have always felt the beneficial influence of Durnovo. When the Museum of Armenian History engaged me to take part in creating an album on the Armenian National Costume, I have been doing it for about forty years of my life, never forgetting my teacher's advise and her exigence. This exigence is what I owe to Lidia Durnovo, and this is the feeling of all her students.

Lidia Alexandrovna Durnovo was an extraordinarily modest and noble person dedicated to her work, she attracted people not only by her formidable professional knowledge, but by her wonderful human qualities. She was one of the best friends of our nation, she largely promoted the Armenian miniature painting and its International recognition.

Flora Grigoryan,
Member of the
Armenian Artistic Union

PROPER EVALUATION OF THE PAST IS A PLEDGE TO FORM THE FUTURE

On March 31, the press conference conducted at Matenadaran, was dedicated to the ongoing and subsequent programs, particularly the diverse advocacies of the "benevolent friends of Matenadaran" of which the prominent place is occupied by the events dedicated to the 1600th Anniversary of the invention of Armenian letters. In the course of the year benevolent cultural actions are to be held: exhibition, publications.

Sen Arevshatian, Director of Matenadaran, Academician, told the Journalists of the research work being carried out at Matenadaran, also touching upon the current financial situation (compared to the Soviet years this unique Institute-Museum receives four times less money from the State).



As noted by Arshak Banushian, executive director of the Friends of Matenadaran Benevolent Foundation, The Foundation established in 2001 provides Matenadaran with funding (actually a wide variety of programs have been implemented to the amount of ca. \$120 000). In the future, the activities of the foundation will have to expand, by virtue of the assistance to Matenadaran by old and new friends and new programs. With regard to the 1600th Anniversary of the invention of the Armenian letters, he noted that it is the 1600th Anniversary that has been established by Mashtots and it has to be commemorated properly.

Last year, Garegin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, who is President Emeritus of the Foundation, gave a blessing and a prayer in favour of the "Friends of Matenadaran Foundation". The Armenian Patriarch suggests that a proper evaluation should be given to our treasured legacy, which is also a pledge to forming our honourable future. Let us respond to this emphatic call, one and all.

"Armenian Art"

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From the History of Satirical Painting

Caricature or Satire?

Vrej Kasuni

We talk, argue and suggest, ask questions, what is finally, satiric drawing or caricature. This branch of fine arts while enjoying great popularity as of today is imperceptible and incomprehensible for many strata of the population. Anyway, satirical drawing or caricature?

Linguists in Armenia are inclined towards "Satire", while the artists, both in Armenia and abroad prefer "cartoons". To be noted here is the psychological stimulus of the word: when one hears, e.g., the word satire, one feels tense, as if drawing back. It is clear that no one wants to be target of satire. Another thing is when you talk about humor. Then you see a smile it is becoming warmer. Satire assumes only wisdom and wit, it will even accept some sarcasm, part of it. And so, satire, satiricism, and consequently, satirical drawing. But up until now we have not heard humoristics, however the one producing humor does the same thing as the satire man or the satire painter. One has to accept and to admit that in satire there are elements of spiritual values, the spiritual here is the basic factor. Why? Because satire contains irony, repentance, witicism, and humor (condescending irony), and all that is done to raise the good mood.

Satire and satirical picture have been in existence for millennia, in different civilizations. In Ancient Egypt those were in the form of wall paintings and on papyrus. In Old Egyptian art we encounter pictures on jars, satirical presentations, in one or series of pictures. Developing along with us were humor and satire, the forms and



Old Egyptian papyrus

means of their expression, as well as their perception. The human concerns remain the same, what has changed is the times and the fashions. And it is natural, because for our parents the laughter-causing humor does not have the same effect upon us, how then can we understand the humor that has been there for millennia? There is no adequate interpretation or perception of the cave art, African masks, miniature painting or grotesque, they are falsely taken for satirical



Japanese talisman

writing or pictures. The misunderstanding occurs because later on the present-day satirical drawing started to make use of the arts' simplicity. However, the objective of the mentioned genres was quite different. The

satirical painting was elevated from the subconscious level to the level of consciousness during the Renaissance era, due to Leonardo, Titian, Bernini, El Greco, Bosch, Bruegel, and even Rubens and their drawings, their satirical and grotesque images. However, drawing the images is only one percent of the business. A great role here belongs to the subject and its dramatic development. An important role belonged to Carracci (1560 - 1609) Carracci's interpretation of cari-



Cardinal Scipio Borghese, by G. L. Bernini



The Pope in Hell. Woodcut by H. Cranach, 1521

cature was quite serious. He talked about classical painting and the satiri-



Grotesque heads, by Leonardo da Vinci



Rubens

cal painting: "Both of them reveal the outward appearance concealing the abiding truth. Both of them attempt to help the nature in executing its program. One is striving to depict per-



Italian Singer with his Wife. Drawing ascribed to Annibale Carracci

fect forms and volumes, the other one is looking for modifications of forms

and images, thus revealing the new and concealed entity of a personality". That parallel existed between the classical painting and the satirical painting. Classical, wherein the balance was not a big problem, relocating whatever balance from its fulcrum being considered a very innovative step. The balance is needed even in case of creating a picture having an unbalanced composition. Therefore, the same criterion exists in the satirical picture as well, moreover, when the painter is in violation of the boundaries of freedom and the measure of morality, the satirical picture at this very moment will become coarse and unacceptable, even hazardous, like a seemingly innocent and secure doll in the hands of a child may become toxic and deadly. However, a correct usage will convert it into an operational weapon against all negative sides of human nature. That was what was done by the French artists at the time of the Revolution.

Europe has assimilated and expanded that art, producing great names: U. Haggard (UK), Charles Philipppo, Domrais (France), Goya (Spain), et al. As to the Armenians, what was their level in this art and their place in history? In Europe since the Renaissance



"After you, please". (Disarmament negotiations, 1868) by H. Daumier

sance up until the French Revolution the satirical painting finally was formed and called caricature. The Armenian satire made its first steps within

the Ottoman Empire, in 1952 for the first time in Istanbul (A Verbose Man). The publisher, editor and artist was Hovsep Vardanian Pasha. Hovsep Pasha was followed by other names: Nshan Perperian, Simon Eagchian, Harutiun Hekimian, Delmak Ekserchian, et al. Thus, Istanbul was to become the cradle of the Armenian satirical painting, with some following.

In Egypt the Patriarch of Armenian satirical painting Al. Sarukhan, In Lebanon Tiran Ajemian, In France Edmond Giraz, In Rumania Jik Damadian, In Italy Grigor Lakka In Tiflis



Goya

Vano Khachabekian, Oskar Shmerlink, G. Bashinjaghian (here publication is made of a satirical paper "Khatabala"), in Yerevan Sergey and Michael Arutchians, Gench Vardan Ajemian and around ten more names. And parallel to these names there were numerous painters and sculptors who made significant contributions in the matter of the Armenian satirical development and updating, whose works very often were more spread around and influential than the ones by the satirical painters themselves. On the historical landscape of the Armenian satire there may be some work for the future researchers who will do justice to the bright pages that have stayed in the shade for quite some time.

To be continued

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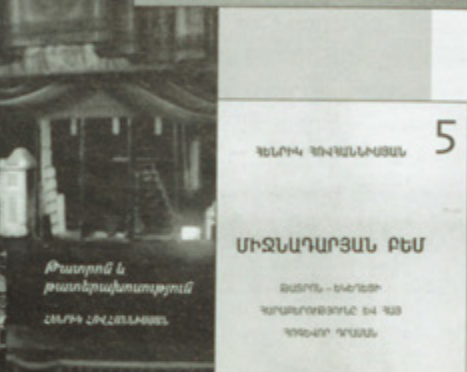
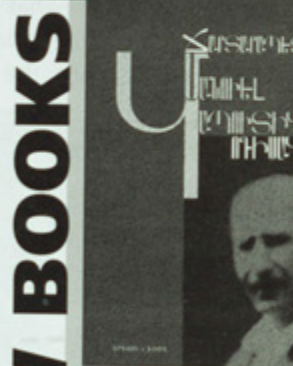
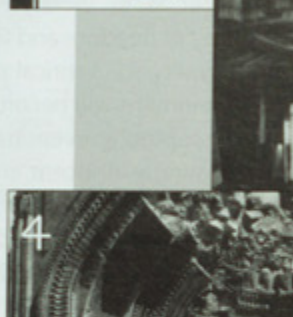
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