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Armenian Art

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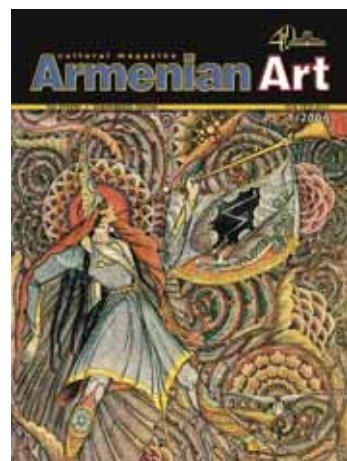
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contents



3. The Year of Armenia
4. Artsvi Bakhchinyan, The Armenian Month in Bazel
6. Aram Kalantaryan, Archeological Excavation in Armenia in 2005
8. Daniel Erazisht, When the Song is Prayer, the Prayer a Song
10. Karen Matevosyan, The Losses of Manuscripts During the Genocide of Armenians
11. Hasmik Harutiunian, Museum Discoveries
14. Martin Mikaelyan, Perpetuum Mobile
15. Grigor Gurzadyan, Paravon...
17. Hasmik Harutiunian, History of the National Gallery of Armenia
20. Hrachia Hakobyan
23. Henrik Igityan, Sargis Hamalbashian
24. Seda Ananyan, The Art of Varos Shahmuradyan
26. Armen Edoyan, Still Life and the Art of Hakob Hakobyan
28. Frina Babayan, From Dvin to Los Angeles. Edward Vardanyan
29. Varazdat Harutiunyan, Davit Kertmanjian, The Inward Artistic Life of Gagik Vardanyan, the Architect
30. G. Eghiazaryan, The Private Picture Galleries of Yerevan
32. Artur Avanesov, Eavesdropping On One's Own Roots
34. Georges Aintablian, The King of Persian Pop Songs. Varoujan Hakhsbandian
36. Varazdat Harutiunyan, Davit Kertmanjian, The Armenian Art of Silver Working
- 10, 33, 34, 37. The Cultural News



Cover Picture:
Hakob Kodjoyan,
Armenian Messenger,
1921

The year 2006 has been declared "Armenia Year" in France and in Russia, 2005 having been "Russia Year" in Armenia. To be frank, it was not different from previous years. If the giant Russia organized its year in Armenia in this way, then it is difficult to say how we are going to prepare, although the opening of the year



The Year of ARMENIA

in the Kremlin this January was very pompous.

Armenia is also exploring the French program. Time will show the way our cul-tural missions will be accomplished both in the South and in the West. Yes, the expression "Armenia Year" is just a cultural mission, since in no country now can we present ourselves with alternate achievements. Our assets is the old and the new culture. Never mind that the Armenian Republic budget shows culture as the last line.

The problem however lies deeper. We shouldn't regard culture in a narrow sense, as an industry, but in a wider context,

as a way of life. E.g., if while debating an important bill, the National assembly is attended by 6 – 7 of its members, or if from year to year our citizen becomes aware that he is actually deprived of his constitutional right to elect, then this is the proof of an absence of political culture. To say nothing of the current situation in urban construction or the preservation of nature, where wide-spread misrepresentations and abuses also result to a considerable degree from the deficiency of culture.

We, Armenians, love our Motherland. However, it does not seem to be enough for possessing a country and a state. It is necessary to change, we need strong will to conquer our egocentrism, the capacity to see, to appreciate and to love the common behind the individual, to have the elevated and the dutiful feeling of be-ing a citizen. When this deep aspiration appears accompanied by favorable conditions outside, a proper education and cultured upbringing will certainly produce good results.

It is our wish that the "Armenia Year" be successful in France, Russia, and other places, but it is our dream that for real blossoming the "Armenian Year" should come to Armenia. Come and stay.

K. M.

THE ARMENIAN MONTH IN BASEL



In a little town in Switzerland

On October 26 – 27, 2005, in the city of Basel in Switzerland a festival took place titled “Culturescapes 2005 – Armenia”. After Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) the Swiss city entertained the Armenian artists. This event had been called to life by the efforts of Yurian Koiman, manager of “Culturescapes” who visited Armenia three times in 2005, to establish this organization. To assist the festival, he also visited Great Britain and US in the hope to obtain support from Armenian entities and foundations in those countries, however, no Armenian unions showed any interest in that business, so that the Month of Armenian Culture has been conducted using the assets of Swiss and other European organizations. In different parts of Basel one could see images of Yerevan roofs and a bright picture of an Armenian boy, as well as posters advertising the films

by Parajanov. A colored German catalogue was published carrying articles by different authors on the Armenian nation, Armenian history, culture and the genocide.

In Basel and environs different events took place for about a month (concerts, encounters, discussions, motion pictures), which were widely covered by the Swiss press. About two score articles were published introducing the German-speaking Swiss to the Armenian history, genocide, art, and social life.

Discussion

The month of Armenian culture opened at the University of Basel with a report “Armenia as a Spiritual Experience” by Karen Svasian, a Swiss-based philosopher. An interesting array of cognitive-type reports were delivered: “Franz Werfel and “The 40 Days of Musa Ler” (Markus Shneider, Zurich), “The Grail in the East. Early Christian Art” (Frank Teichman, Stutgard), “Armenia: an Itinerary, 1998 – 2004” (John Hews, Yerevan), “Creation of Armenian Letters” (Vehanush Melikyan, Hamburg), “Eastern Anatolia – Armenia: the Genocide and the People” (Dominic Shaller, Basel). A round table took place under the title: “The Future Demands Explication of History. Armenia, Turkey and Europe in the Shadow of WWI” in German, French and English, featuring historians, politologists and specialists in Armenian studies from different countries: Misha Brumlik (Frankfurt), Valentina Kaltzolari Bouvier (Jeneva), Mike Joseph (Cardiff), Harutian Reimond Gevorgian (Paris), Hans-Lucas Kizer, Gevorg Kreis (Basel), Jirair Liparitian (Michigan), Hacob Taner (Zurich), Ajshe giul Altinai and Hiulia Adak (Istanbul). Also two discussions took place: “Genocide and the Nation’s Future”, moderated by Gevorg Kris (Basel), and “The Future of Armenia”, featuring Vigen Chitejan (Geneva), Mark Grigoryan (London), Eva Khachatrian (Erevan), etc.

Other undertakings included: literary soirees, encounters with two alien writers having written Armenian-related books, Andrey Bitov (Russia), author of the book “Armenia’s Lessons”, and Edgar Hilzenrat (Germany), author of the book “The Author of the Last Thought”. In the course of the event named “Wild cat, Saturday Country, a Journey towards Ararat” Ralf Diutlin from Heidelberg (Germany) read poems by Osip Mandelstam dedicated to Armenia, his prosaic pieces and letters, all in German translation, at another soiree actor Diter Endreiko (Basel) read the letters by Armin Teophil Vegner written in 1915 - 1919 on the Armenian Genocide.

Cultural Programs

Particularly rich were the musical programs. The guest of honor at the Month of Armenian Culture was Tigran Mansuryan, whose pieces were performed many times at different concert halls. In Martins Church of Basel there were two concerts, the first one featuring Armenian sharakans, also Tigran Mansurian’s

and Gilliome Masho pieces were performed. Among the speakers were Tigran Mansuryan, harpist Kim Kashkashian (Germany), and “Hiliard” chorus (London). Featured at another concert, beside Mansurian were pieces by Mozart and Shostakovich, played by Swiss and German musicians with the Munic conductor Kristof Paupen (the same concert was repeated in Bern). Basel-based musicians Christine Laxote and Mark Varshavsky performed pieces for chelo by Tigran Mansuryan and Davit Halajan. The closing concert on November 20 featured pieces by Komitas, Tigran Mansuryan, Claud Debussi, and Vache Sharafyan, pianist Michael Balyan (Yerevan – Brimen), Duduk-player Gevorg Dabaghyan (Yerevan) and violinist Kamila Shatzi (Basel). Emil Rovner, cheloist and vocalist – bass-baritone from Basel, performed pieces by Komitas.

Other Artists

The “Kairos” string quartet arriving from Berlin performed pieces by contemporary German and Armenian composers (Tomas Buchholz, Gevorg Fridrich Haas, Petros Hovsepiyan, Khachatur Kanayan), the latter being second violin at the “Kairos”. A piece by Thomas Buchholz was named “A Crane”, as inspired by the popular Armenian song. A great discovery for the listeners (including those in Armenia) was a young virtuoso pianist Shushanik Hovakimyan (Yerevan - Los Angeles), who performed two concerts (Sergey Prokoviev, Komitas, Arno Babajanyan, Tigran Mansuryan, Martun Israelyan, Ashot Zohrabyan). On different days the Basel and Zurich audiences attended performances by the Gevorg Dabalyan duduk trio (Komitas, Sayat-Nova, Medieval songs), as well as the “Sanctus” vocal quartet of Yerevan led by Radik Melikyan, performing Komitas, Mansuryan and Davit Halajan, there were also concerts in Geneva. Incidentally, Gevorg Dabaghyan delivered two concert-lectures “Armenia and Duduk” as well as a report in the Central Museum of Bern. In Basel Dabaghyan received a proposition from a Swiss movie company to record a soundtrack for a motion picture in 2007. In connection with the Armenia month the “Pre-Art Quartet” of Zurich performed pieces of young Armenian composers Seda Babayan, Aram Hovhanesyan and Arthur Akshelyan in the presence of the authors.

Specimens of the Armenian modern art and video art were displayed at an exhibition titled “Memory and Autonomy” and arranged by Eva Khachatryan, curator of the Yerevan Center for the Modern Experimental Art. The exhibition displayed pieces by artists Arman Grigoryan, Grigor Khachatrian, Vahram Aghasyan, Diana hakobyan, Karine Matsakyan et al. The exhibition’s concept was as follows: the Armenian mind associates the past with the Soviet period in the life of the nation, rather than with the genocide, while the idea of autonomy is related to personal independence, rather than

to a nation-wide idea. Throughout the month, the Basel City Movie Theater showed eight films by Sergey Parajanov on three different days. Displayed in the theater hall were posters of five films by Parajanov dispatched from the Yerevan Parajanov Museum. The films were demonstrated to capacity audiences, particularly the film “The Color of Pomegranate”. Also shown was the documentary by the Munic-based director Rom Holoway titled “Requiem” on Parajanov, as well as “Ararat” by Atom Egoyan.

Our Closest Neighbours

In Basel the second most frequently spoken language is Turkish. One of the city areas is called Little Istanbul. That environment was clearly not too welcoming for Armenian Culture. Once a Turk entered the anteroom of the Armenian art exhibition and started shouting and tearing down articles on Armenians printed by the Swiss media and pasted on the walls. He stated that that no genocide had ever occurred, and he had written a book on the subject. On another occasion at the time of an Armenia-related discussion, the Turks organized a small meeting, which lasted only fifteen minutes because of lack of serious attitude on the part of the organizers. However, the real Turkish image was shown to the Swiss in full view when following the Turkey - Switzerland football match the Turkish footballers gave a brutal beating to their contestants, one of whom was rushed to hospital for internal injuries.

Local Armenians

It is interesting to see, what were the relations, both past and present, of that city with the Armenians, the city located near the point bordering on France, Germany and Switzerland. Basel’s evangelic preachers visited the Armenian-populated areas in mid-19th century to teach Christianity to those “pagan” Armenians. There taught Abraham Amirkhanyants, a notable representative of the Armenian Evangelical movement, who had translated the Gospels into different Turkic languages. From time to time the Eastern Armenians came, to study at Basel University, medical thesi were sustained here by Minas Minasyan, 1895 and Hike Melkonyants, 1905. Even today Basel has very few Armenian residents. A few women from Yerevan, married or unmarried with the locals, nearly all go in for eurhythmics, or have established eurhythmics in the homeland. However, for the homeland Armenians it was a great joy, meeting the young designer Sona Hovsepyan, former resident of Yerevan, who tried hard in every way to help the visitors from homeland, surrounding them with warmth and care.

ARTSVI BAKHCHINYAN,
Basel - Yerevan

ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION IN ARMENIA IN 2005

ARAM KALANTARYAN,

**Director, Institute of Archeology and Ethnography,
National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Armenia**

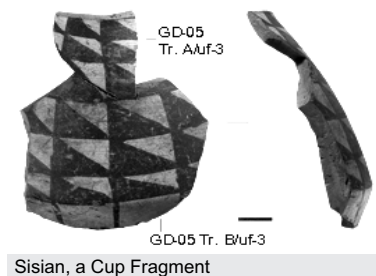
The study of the world civilization continues in a regular way, with each nation paying its tribute. We can be proud that the Armenian people also have made a tribute to the world civilization, which has been highly valued in the world of science.

For the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Science, Republic of Armenia, doing research in the spiritual and material culture of the Armenian people, the past year was rich in archeological excavations in the areas of Ararat, Armavir, Aragats, Gegharkunik, Siunik, Tavush. The excavations discovered multiple exclusive materials in Paleolite – Neolite – Bronze periods, Urartian culture, architecture, cultic structures of Hellenistic period, the art of building, Medieval culture.

A substantial part of excavations was done in cooperation with scientific centers overseas.



Gegharot, 3rd millennium



Sisian, a Cup Fragment



Sisian, a Lamp Vessel

Stateprovided assistance was used only for excavations in the former Armenian capital cities, viz.: Artashat, Armavir, Dvin, which through financial deficiency had sunk into neglect for long years. For over 15 years the capital cities have seen no excavations, monuments were absolutely falling to pieces. With the help of the country's Prime Minister this year finally the opportunity came about to restart that activity.

Joint excavations with French and British archeologists in the area of the village Hovk of Tavush marz, where the



Aratashen

study of discovered caves and the artifacts found on the surrounding areas showed traces of a stone age culture in highaltitude zones of Armenia.

Also to be noted are results of research materials from excavations of an early agricultural compound of the Neolithic period 7 – 6 millennia B.C. in Aratashen and Aknashen villages on the Ararat plain. Analyses at different European laboratories have established the origins of stone instruments, radiocarbon dating determined the time of the lower strata of the site at early 6th c. B.C. Excavations of those monuments are well placed, for on the mentioned area of the Armenian plateau archeological research of such an early dating are being conducted for the first time. Meanwhile in Western Armenia a few score of similar monuments have been excavated with excellent results. It seemed that in the southern part of this highland the existence of this culture is due to the proximity to the Interfluve, however, the current excavations reveal that the Ararat



Agarak

plane was one of the most important origins of that developed culture.

Of the overseas excavations the most important monument is the residential area in Nerkin Godedzor,



A Temple in Artashat

Sisian, dated at 5 – 4 cc. B.C, with an unexpected discovery of the Mesopotamic-type colored crockery. In excellent condition, great masses and variety of crockery shows that 6 – 7 thousand years ago Armenia was the scene of socioeconomic upheavals and developments. The most surprising results of the last year's Sisian unique excavations are as follows:



A Temple in Artashat

monuments of extraordinary scientific interest related to 4 – 3 millennium B.C. were excavated in the areas of Aragats Marz, villages Tsagkasar and Agarak. The multi-level archeological site of Agarak, which has already been studied for a few years, used to be a mighty religious center, known for its religious sites. The 2005 operations on the monument have widened our horizon on the architecture and material culture of the early period. We deal with the same culture on the sites Tsaghkasar and Gegharot to the North of Mount Aragats. The Armenian-American excavations on the hills near the village Gegharot discovered a pagan temple within an archeological site dated at 4 – 2 millenia B.C. The discovered material shows that the temple has been in existence since 15 – 14 cc. B.C. and is of great interest with regard to the study of pagan cults in Armenia.

Exclusive materials have been yielded by the excavations of the capital Armavir. One of the most significant



A Temple in Gegharot

discoveries is the temple structure opened in the summit of the citadel.

in the capital Artashat on the shore of the Arax river basement walls of colossal monumental structures of the Hellenistic Armenia are being discovered which, according to the fragments of sculpture-ornamented capitols and pillars and a fragment of mosaic floor, may have belonged to an important cultic structures of the city.

With the assistance from individual sponsors the Institute's archeologists also worked in Artsakh, particularly in Shushi.

The rich archeological material yielded by the excavations is currently being subjected to laboratory treatment, with different analyses, the results and data to be published.

When the Song is Prayer, the Prayer a Song

DANIEL ERAJISHT

"Armenian Church, the birth place of my soul", - wrote Vahan Tekejan. The Church is also a cradle of spiritual poetry and song art: Mesrop Mashtots, Sahak Partev, sharakans by Movses Khorenatsi, Ekmalian, "Divine Service" by Ekmalyan and other sacred songs.

The origins of the West European Classical music have also been found in the Church. As far back as in the 4th century, Saint Ambrose, a bishop in Milan, founded the so-called Ambrosian Chant which so enraptured Saint Augustine and influenced the Grigorian Choral developed in Rome giving rise to multiple types of music. Established in 16th century was Lutheran choral music which later became the origin of the art by Johann Sebastian Bach: choirs, prayers, Christ-inspired passions, etc.

Originally the purpose of psalms, chorals and sharakans was "to carry word to God from the depth of heart". The basis of church singing is prayer, word, while a pleasant tune, according to the Church Fathers, must have carried saint word so that it should penetrate into the depth of soul. However, Saint Augustine cautioned not to go after beautiful tunes, lest one should turn aside from the basic objective of the words and prayer. (Музыкальная эстетика западноевропейского средневековья и Ренессанса., Москва., 1966., стр. 27).

Later the melodies of spiritual music experienced an explosive development. In the 11th century Europe polyphony started to outgrow its primitive state, and the musical component acquired independent significance and attraction. In the West European aesthetics the first ever mention of the beauty of music was made by Marketto Paduacci. Regarding music as the most beautiful of arts, and likening it to a blossoming tree, the Italian musicologist wrote: "Its branches are arranged like numerical interrelations, the blossoms are types of chords, the fruits are pleasant harmonies, brought to perfection using consonants". (Музыкальная эстетика западноевропейского средневековья и Ренессанса., Москва., 1966., стр. 59).

In the art by Bach the melodies are so chrystallized, so dissolved in divine images and concepts, that even with no words those melodies are perceived as spiritually charged prayers and

blessings. E. g., organ chorals, preludes and fugas, phantasies and other instrumental pieces. And so, the merging of various melodies pleases the listener, since harmony and beauty are manifestations of the divine. Of course, the Creator has to be addressed using proper language.

Quite naturally, Komitas was concerned about the erstwhile disconsolate situation with the church music. On May 10, 1910, he wrote to Catolicos Mathevos Izmirlian: "The Armenian church music has been on the decline within the last 19th c. and particularly in this 20th century. The hymn has lost its clear and elevated manner and childish simplicity, its innocent faithful character giving way to disorderly, improper, whining and plaintive chanting. The church songs (sharakan) of our ancestors, warm like the sun, clean like air and sweet like water, have been sidelined or displaced into the background" (Մաթեոս Մուրադյան, Երեւան, 1970թ., էջ 418): Komitas shared the same concern with the violinist Margarit Babayan in his letter dated August 7, 1913: "...the monastery music has become mean, course, yelping, roguish, ignorant". Մաթեոս Մուրադյան, «Հայկական երաժշտությունը 19-րդ դարում եւ 20-րդ դարակզբում», Երեւան, 1970թ., էջ 423):

In the same way Albert Schweitzer was concerned about Bach. "The effect of music by Bach is stipulated not through performance, but rather through the spirit of performance. Only one who has submerged into the world of Bach's feelings, who lives and thinks, who has become along with him a simple and modest person, only that one can convey to others the music by Bach". (Альберт Швейцер., И.С.Бах., Москва., 1969., стр. 648): In this connection Schweitzer noted that when Mendelssohn discovered the legacy of Bach, the Germans were like crazy in their homes singing the newly discovered cantatas, often hurriedly published or even with no binding, but they were so sincere and dedicated that they often outperformed the battered philharmonic performances. Indeed, despite their common features, there is a significant difference between the mess music performed in church and a performance in a concert-hall environment. Also their objectives and criteria are very different.

In this regard to be noted are the remarks by the pianist Alexey Liubimov on the occation of recording Bach's "St. John

Passion" made by the conductor Karl Richter. Mentioning the high professional standard, dramatic integrity and other high qualities, he also noted superfluous theatrical quality, rather than submission.

The occasion for this extensive introduction was an audio CD produced by the Mekhitarian Union of Venice (directed and published by Minas Luryan). The disc contains spiritual songs for the Lent period performed by Father Vrtanes Uluhojan and the "Akn" choir conducted by Aram Kerobyan. With regard to the abovementioned criteria, the following is to be stated.

The song by Father Vrtanes is a prayer, the prayer is a song. He has a perfect command of his God-given voice. His performing art meets the most stringent requirements, his voice is coming from the depth of heart, it is peaceful and humble.

With regard to the choir, that is a religious community, that prays rather than sings. The choir seemingly does not set high professional standards like uniform sound distribution, organic merging, etc. They sing and pray with love, sincerity and artless fervor, which is probably enough for the prayer to reach its objective, since, as Jesus said, "...where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Math. 18, 20).

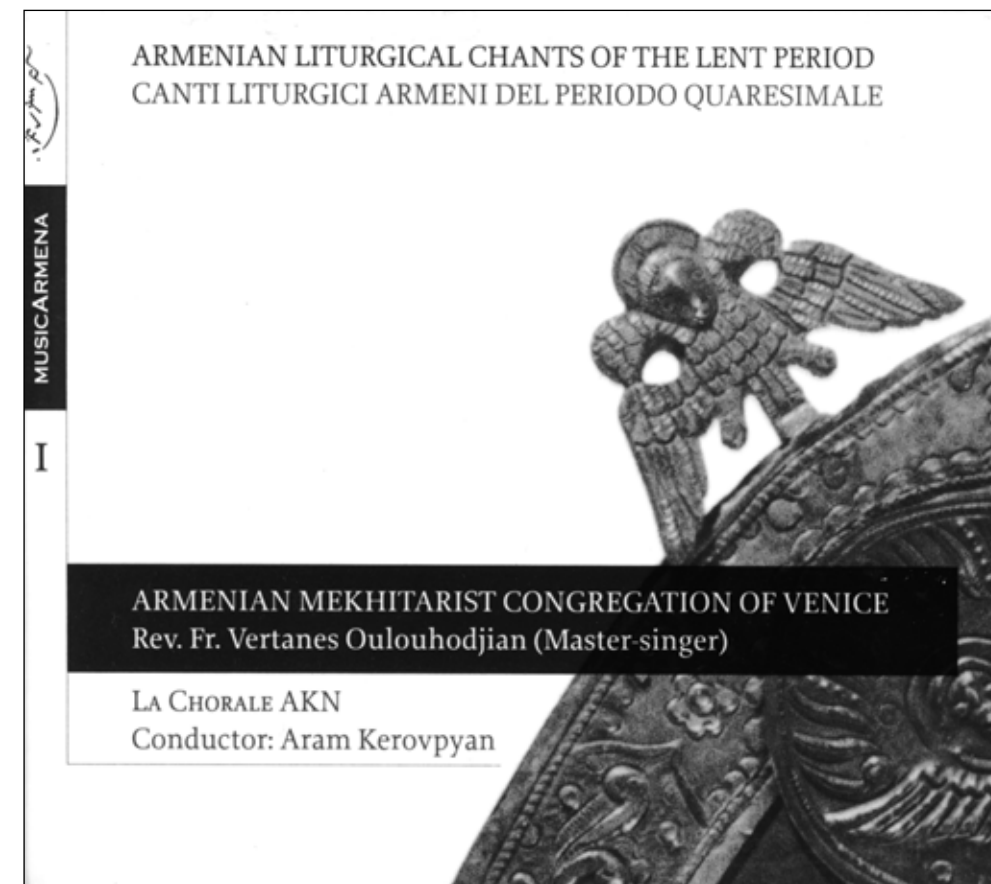
According to Richard Strauss, a brilliant melody is felt even by whistling. One could hardly remain indifferent to St. Mesrop's repentance chant with these words: "The waves of life assault me like enemies. O' Good Caption, be my suppatr!"

Or Nerses Shnorhali: "The origin of life is Mother of God coming from Paradise." which has to be sung bel canto. The choir performs it rather using in the recitative style.

The disk is summarized by Mashtots' Repentance. "Ro not abandon me, the hopeof my childhood, my God." A splendid performance of this chant is sufficient to welcome the appearance of this CD. Here are the reasons why. The song-prayer of Father Vrtanes is soaring over the nasal sounds of the chorus. The continuous sounding symbolizes eternity. It is

clearly beyond the human ability to sustain this expiring singing sound, like that produced by organ.

And the man, yearning to get absolved from guilt, as noted by Blez Pascal, this "intelligent herd", the beat of his troubled heart being imprinted upon the eternal substance, is soaring and merging with the eternal.



Unwittingly one remembers the words by the poet: In a blue country you melt, smoke dissolving far away, alone. Of whom do you remind? You remind of me. This is the way the incense-smelling song ascends to heaven.

We have been brought up in the traditions of the Apostolic Church, we are spiritually close to the Ejmiadzin singing. And if we compare the Armenian spiritual singing with the language, it can then be stated that the Ejmiadzin singing is like our classical language, while the singing of Constantinople, Jerusalem, the Mechitarians, Iranian and Indian Armenians can be likened to dialects, having their own fragrance and stress. Those branches in their variety and completeness are reflective of the ups and downs of the spiritual life of Armenian nation, its historical destiny.

Indeed, as noted by Komitas, "Music is the purest mirror of society".

THE LOSSES OF MANUSCRIPTS DURING THE GENICIDE OF ARMENIANS

In the years of WWI the Armenian nation was subjected to the first ever planned genocide which is the greatest crime against humanity. Besides the irretrievable human losses there were huge cultural losses, genocide writers often make use of the expression “cultural massacre”, since having annihilated the Armenians living in Western Armenia, the Turks in 1915 and on started to eradicate all traces of the rich Armenian civilization. The Genocide resulted in huge losses of the Armenian manuscripts.

At the start of the war the largest collection of Armenian manuscripts was held at the library of the Ejmiadzin Patriarchy. In February 1915, in view of the possible war, some precious objects retained in Ejmiadzin, along with all 4660 manuscripts were moved to Moscow, to be stored in the vaults of the Armenian Church. In the same year, when Western Armenia became the theater of military operations, the Turkish authorities, improving the opportunity, displaced and massacred the local Armenian population. Armenian Catholicos Gevorg V issued a special order to Hovhannes Vardapet Hiusyan, Superior of the Lake Van Island Monastery to save by sending to Ejmiadzin the manuscripts from Lin, Ktuts, Akhtamar, Van, et al. Hiusyan fulfilled it only in part. He and his faithful retinue succeeded in transferring about 1450 manuscripts to Ejmiadzin. However, the losses were enormous. Suffice it to note that over a thousand manuscripts had been kept at the monastery of Lin. However, Vaspurakan Region is close to Eastern Armenia and so, part of the manuscripts here were saved thanks to the front line advance, while in the deeper regions of Armenia Minor and parts of Anatolia with large Armenian population, the valuable objects and manuscripts in many cases were irretrievably lost. E.g. in Cesaria about 700 manuscripts perished.

The huge losses of manuscripts during and after WWI are described by Prof. Suren Kolanjian in “Ejmiadzin” journal (1965, քիվ Բ-Դ, Ե-Է, 1966, քիվ Ը, Թ-Ժ, 1967, քիվ Ե, Զ) (in Armenian). Without touching too much on the details, let us note that among the lost or ruined books there were some unique masterpieces, like the manuscript by the 10th c. author St. Grigor Narekatsi that was destroyed in the Aliur village church.

After a prolonged period of war and devastation, in 1922 the 4660 manuscripts were returned from Moscow to Ejmiadzin, to be merged with the 1730 pieces collected by that time. In 1920 Ejmiadzin’s library of manuscripts was nationalized by the Soviet Armenia. In 1939 it was transferred to Yerevan.

Today the number of manuscripts in the St. Mashtots Matenadaran exceeds 11 thousand. Their number could have been twice that large if not for the genocide.

K. MATEVOSYAN

THE ACCUSING PHOTOS

On December 15, 2005 a letter from the Armenian Primacy of Tebriz contained several photos showing evidence of vandalism perpetrated December 10. Taken from the Iranian shore of the river Arax, the photos show Nakhijevan area with the Azerbaijani soldiers demolishing the Armenian burials of Old Jugha, transporting the tombstones and khachkars to the railroad trackside.

On the same day Armenian TV showed video images of the atrocities done by the neighboring country, the RA Foreign Ministry reported on sending complaints to UNESCO. That was followed by scores of complaints at different levels, continuing up to date. With no result.

History repeats itself. They ruin and demolish, we complain and record evidence. Then time passes and they say “nothing happened”. Meanwhile the world remains silent believing the one whose voice is louder and whose pocket is fuller.



Every artistic museum is open before a visitor with its permanent displays, presenting the artistic pieces with specially arranged data (author, title, country, school, period, year, technique). In certain cases the exhibit carries explanations with assigned data

characterized in three languages in a guide-book of 1992.

Analysis of the Credence design and style, reading of the symbols and cryptograms yielded the following data: the object was created in France, in early 16th

“Apollo and Pan” (substantiated by E. Gaifejian).

The Flemish Section of the National Gallery of Armenia displays a picture by Antonis Van Deik (1544 – 1641), that entered the Museum in 1933 from the

MUSEUM DISCOVERIES

on school, an unknown author, imitation, etc.

Usually an exhibition contains twenty percent of the total deposit. A substantial part of the pieces retained in the depositaries is also periodically presented within the format of thematic, monographic or temporary exhibitions. Both exhibitory and depository pieces are treated and studied, the research resulting in the pieces previously known to have other criteria entering the scientific circulation with newly acquired characteristics.

We shall quote one of those examples: A group of pieces received from Hermitage included a brilliant specimen of European furniture, Credence (a cabinet), its act of commission reading: “Credence, in excellent condition, from the Bazilevsky collection”, and that was it. Nothing showed the place of origin or time. How and when it was determined as a German piece of the 17th century, is unknown. For many years this piece of furniture was represented in this way at permanent exhibitions winning admiration for masterfully engraved images and ornamentation. That art object was included and properly

century, during the reign of Frances I (1515 – 1547), was ornamented mainly using the sense of beauty, and Esse Homo visions, figures of prophets, apostles and ordinary people, carried a corporate brand. As an artistic object, it is unique, since it integrates the most important attributes of French architecture, sculpture and applied arts of the transition from Gothics to Renaissance (substantiation by H. Harutiunyan),

A correct reading of literary, historic, mythological, artistic pieces, created on the basis of biblical plots and understanding of imagery enable the wrongly assigned titles to be properly updated. Thus, a canvas by the well-known Italian Venice-school artist Tintoretto (1518 – 1599), had been registered as “Apollon and Marsius” prior to 1981. According to the Antique mythology, Apollon took part in musical competitions twice: with Marsius, a Frigian faun and Pan, god of fields and forests. In this picture, the author reproduced the scene described in Ovidius’ “Transfiguration” (II, 155 – 170), struggle against Pan, as witnessed by the depicted characters. The current title of the picture is

Astrakhan Armenian Church under the title “Deposition from the Cross”. According to Christian image painting, the scene includes Christ, Godmother, Mary Magdalene, John, Nikodemus, Joseph. Our canvas shows the deceased Christ and the angels. The current title of the picture is “The Angels Taking Christ Away” (analysis by V. Badalyan).

Research yielded curious evidence with regard to the canvas “A Tribute to Amur” by Carle van Loo (1705 – 1765) exhibited in the French section of the museum. The authenticity of the piece is confirmed by its origin and the legend on making a copy of the picture on the reverse side by F. Tabuntsov in St. Petersburg in 1848. In the catalogue of the artist’s works (Paris, 1977) one of his missing pictures “Offering to Amur” was reproduced from the exact engraving in Yerevan and is accompanied by the following circumstances. In 1760 the picture belonged to a Paris resident de Juliene, whose collection went public in 1767, while the mentioned picture was bought by L. A. Golitsin for Katherine II.

The Hermitage archives of 1774 and 1859 confirm the presence

of the picture in Winter palace, while a collection of 1935 notes that in 1958 it was transferred to Ermitaj under the title "A Tribute to Amur". It was transferred to our museum under the same title. Thus, what we deal with here is the same picture.

That was the story of a picture by Carle van Loo which had once vanished from view in its homeland, had been kept in St. Petersburg for about two and a half centuries, then for 74 years its life continued in Yerevan. Moreover, the fact that the picture was retained by a well-known collector in 1760 enables us to date the canvas to those produced by the author before 1760. (analyzed by V. Mkrtchian).

Similar clarifications are quite numerous, they occur in scientific catalogues of the gallery on specific collections.

There are cases in museum operation when the origins of certain pieces are unknown. Most catalogues note those as "origin unknown".

Next story is related to origin and clarifications by the author, an enigmatic story of a double-sided picture retained in the repositories of the gallery. Origin unknown, the front side carries a legend "Jacob Shapiro 1923" (canvas, oil paint, 58 x 76cm) (in Russian), still life, slightly inclined on the plane, a thin green bottle, a large-handle coffee mug, three onions covered with enamel. On the back side of the picture upside down, a crooked figure of a man with a beard, side-whiskers,

wide-brimmed cone-shaped hat, with the right hand plunged into a thick hair of another man head. Hidden under the thick planks of the frame were other details, so that when the canvas was removed from the frame, the limits of the figure were widened, opening the eyes of the other image and the top part of the crooked nose.

Clearly, between these two pieces there is no stylistic similarity, while the back side has a theatrical nature reminding the designs by Mark Shagal (1887 – 1985) and his characters.

The dating of the picture, 1923, suggests that its entrance into the museum could have been associated with the name of Ruben Drampian, invited from Petrograd in 1924 who became the first director of the National Gallery in 1936, his activities, particularly art collection, is invaluable for the gallery formation and development, resulting in acquisition of a valuable collection of Russian Art, including "A Country House" by M. Shagal.

This issue was largely clarified due to the data on R. Drambian's pencil portrait made by Jacob

Shapiro. They were good friends, and the artist could have presented or sold the piece to the museum.

Jacob Shapiro (1897 – after 1960) was born in Latvia, studied in art schools of Kharkov (1915) and Kiev (1918). In 1920s he decorated the stage productions by K. Stanislavsky, V. Meyerhold, E. Vakhtangov in Petrograd and Moscow, participated in exhibitions. in 1922, when he was 25, as noted by P. Rostovtsev, "In his portrait of an old Jew made by charcoal there is acuteness and expression. To judge him as a full-fledged artist is too early. One can still note influences by Altman and Shagal."

In 1925 the artist settled in Paris, took part in exhibitions, arranged personal exhibitions Bonapart (1936) and Elysee (1946), at galleries and Beaux-Art magazine (1936). They wrote about him: "J. Shapiro is an artist, who acutely feels the nature, is very sensitive to objects, perceiving them as his inner life. In his art, objects and feelings are deeply interconnected. Shapiro paints what touches him, and in the first place it is the sacramental language of color. His pictures are penetrated with the inner life, and what is pictured

gives a feeling of a restrained masculine appeal.

In 1960, Shapiro published a book titled "La Ruche" (the Beehive), narrating about a communal life of artists in workshops called Beehive in 1920s, and about his encounters with Kh. Sutin, O. Tsadkin, M. Shagal, M. Kisling. In the chapter on Shagal, the author noted: "...In those years I was in close relations with many Moscow theaters, artistic and theatrical individuals." Shagal's instructions played an important role in my expressionistic formation. I remember, in one of the theatrical places there was a canvas occupying an entire wall and representing the leadership. Shagal identified there Granovsky, the head of the house, with his hands raised and holding a small individual who was Shagal himself. Those in La Ruche, did they really carry one another on their shoulders? Or in their hearts? I don't know, but that strange and idealized poet in fact supported us a great deal.

Perhaps Shapiro meant a decorative panel by Shagal from the Jewish Chamber Theater (1920, canvas, tempera, gouache, 284 x 787, the Tretyakov Gallery). At the same time, the bearded man's face on the back side of our canvas creates an impression that he is trying to uplift another man, who retained only his head on the fragment, and whose image is relevant to the following lines

by Shagal: "Perhaps, his (Shagal's) hair that has never seen a comb, his narrow face, roving, moving eyes, immersed into creative passion, with their small pupils, like grains of rice...! The 1920s photos of M. Shagal corroborate the version described here.



Jacob Shapiro, "Still Life", 1923



Jacob Shapiro, "A Fragment of a Composition", 1920-1923

Of Jacob Shapiro's works we know only two: a still life picture belonging to the gallery and a pencil portrait of R. Drampian. We have also inquired on his standing in French and Russian media. This however is not sufficient to form a complete idea and to come to a definitive conclusion with regard to assigning the backside drawing to this origin.

On the other hand, the piece is so saturated with the spirit of Shagal that a question arises, how powerful was Shagal's influence upon Shapiro, that he would paint a large canvas, only to cut it into pieces and to use one fragment for this still life. What is this, a manifestation of "Shagalism", or a previous version of Shagals theatrical composition that he had rejected?

The answer is still uncertain, although the considerations are interesting by themselves, by the simple reason that directly or indirectly are related to Shagal, as well as elucidate the functioning of the little known painter Jacob Shapiro within the context and the environment of the great Russian artists in the 1920s.

The situation with the work here described shows that the staff of the gallery have serious discussions of similar cases and take comprehensive decisions, this picture now has been subjected

to thorough rehabilitation and is going to be displayed in one of the showrooms.

In general, this story pursues an important objective: to focus the attention of the gallery visitors upon the invisible part of museum activities.

HASMIK HARUTIUNIAN,
Deputy Director
of National Gallery of Armenia



Jakobo Tintoretto, Appolo and Pan

MARTIN MIKAELYAN

Perpetuum Mobile

I saw the pictures by Grigor Gurzadian for the first time in the 70s. "Why should this gifted scientist want to have his own painted landscapes around?", I used to ask myself. This exhibition however, has proved this disorder to be quite serious.

The desire for painting had infected him decades ago, when he observed canvases by Harutiun Kalenz in the home of Artem Alikhanyan.

Now his landscapes and still life pictures remind of the Armenian painting specimens of the 1960s, which "radiated light", as was said about scores of images on different occasions.

Giurzadian seems to have created joint sketches with Levon Kojoyan, while in the company of Hovhannes Zardaryan he tried to enliven in his workshop what he had picked up in nature. No external likeness to

Kalenz, of course. "It is impossible to copy Kalenz, as noted by Giurzadian, an imitation, perhaps, could be more successful, just try to hit the keys of the piano so as to remind a great pianist.

Grigor Giurzadian depicts mountains, rocks turned-up skywards, gorges, fields, flowers wrapped in extraterrestrial mystery.

Landscape, still life, portrait, occupy a great place in the Armenian fine arts of the 1960s. At that time the Armenian painters being somewhat naive, (very few were aware how sealed was our society) were satisfied with those genres and very limited available information. There is no one who could apprehend Gurzadian or contemporary English painters with

regard to the huge amount of data available to them. But then Giurzadian, as well as the five British painters (at the "Academia" exhibition opened three years before) express their underdeveloped feelings and



ideas by painting landscapes. In the meantime, the progressive painters create images allegedly rich in thoughts, that may perhaps have a certain superficial appeal, but those canvases lack humane qualities, like those of the mentioned Englishmen or even the amateur artist Gurzadian.

Hadn't Gurzadian written his wonderful books, hadn't he authored his works in astrophysics, the fact of "Orion-2" would be enough for us to take pride in the person of this genuine scientist, with vision and poetry. "Orion-2" is the first ever orbital observatory, it is a revolution in astronomy.

- Are you Jorge Luis Borges?, - they asked the great writer who had already lost his sight.

- Yes, sometimes, answered Borhes.

Gurzadian is always himself, when writing on Democritus, Narekatsi or a cub poet, when leaving his basic work, taking up the easel.

Here is the legend he wrote on a book presented to his junior friend Vahan Kochar: "To my beloved Vahan whom I discovered on the first year of the third millennium.



G. Gurzadian and P. Mirzoyan

Text – superhuman, soul – cool, heart – all goodness, talent – abundant.

Gurzadian easily describes individuals of the old world, medieval time, as well as the modern age.

We cannot characterize him, we cannot place this type of man within an acknowledged set of ideas or within an existing model, since he knows no interruption or pause, he is constantly on the move.

I have finished two essays, one is titled "The Andromeda Paradox", the other one "The Mysteries of Saturn". Andromeda is a galaxy, while Saturn is a giant planet. Following those two, I came over to Paravon.

Within a couple of months he gave two exhibitions and produced a hefty book of pictures. I also visited his workshop, what I saw there was like a separate exhibition.

Pictures by Paravon... Three traditional domains: portrait, landscape, still life, each of

Grigor Gurzadian PARAVON...

them can become a subject of discussion. We shall leave that domain to art critics. What I want to do here is to highlight the fourth, the issue of female body.

The issue of female body, as incorporated in the Hellenistic sculpture, has a history of 25 centuries, and about 20 centuries in the frescos (Pompey, Rome).

The Armenian art has no tradition in this field, hardly about a hundred years. My personal quest is in the appeal, poetry and lyrics in the female body. Like science fiction, like a nostalgic dream. Rodin is my ideal.

But then, the advent of Paravon brought poetry into female body. In our art it is a new phenomenon, quite new, which has not been there in the past. The naked body in large brush strokes, from head to toe in large generalizations, the poetry of the body like a cosmic creation. Body in its entirety, in the same tonality, in its hypnotic simplicity. A nude body in the environment, in the nature, against the sky, now bluish, now reddish, now yellowy orange... It is all poetry, an otherworldly vision, from which you cannot take your eyes.

A nude is a nude, but in Paravon they are never alike. In posture, or in disposition, or else, in color score, they are completely different. Of all that the most difficult is a female body at rear view. This is a situation offering scarce means of expression. There is a work of genius of this type, a woman, back view, "Venus" by Velazquez, the National Gallery of London.

The female body back view by Paravon is quite different. Instruments of expression are nearly nonexistent, a great mastery and skill is needed here. It is this mastery that I saw





Snezhina's Portrait, 2003

in the canvases by Paravon, including the feeling, rather than seeing, in the extreme uniformity of color, the tenderness and poetry of the body.

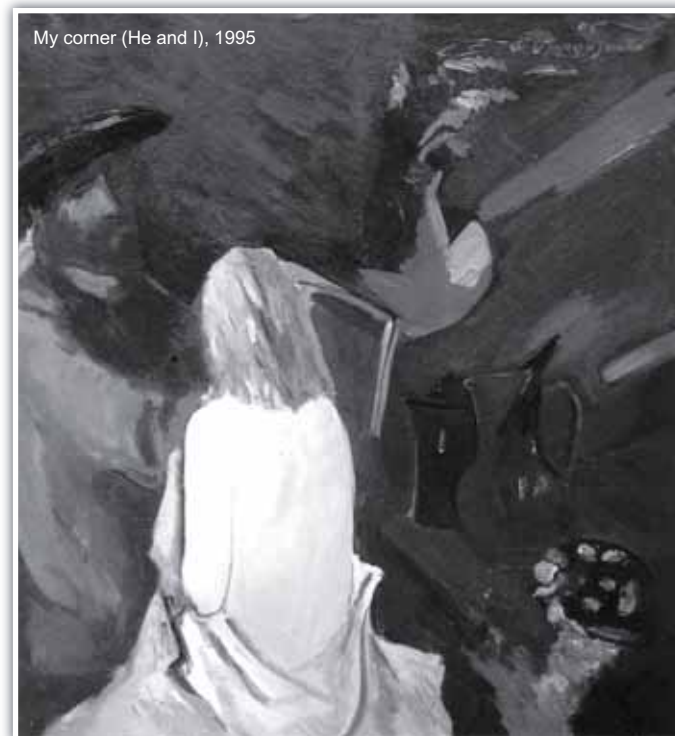
In the domain of the female body Paravon has become a phenomenon in the history of art.

Paravon continues his search, he is in full control of his resources.

I am of the same opinion. It is necessary that he should provide new surprises, the problem of female body is a phenomenon that can never be resolved... Like the Universe...

To my mind, Paravon has to keep hearing his inner voice, that can tell him the right things.

Multiplicity of devices is evident in Paravon most of the time, including when painting the nude nature. The pastel technique, e.g., has many traditions in all domains, Paravon, in fact, uses a remarkable pastel technique while painting the nude nature, in a very great variety of applications. And the pastel strokes.



My corner (He and I), 1995



The Evening, 1998

Of course, I knew what pastel was, what I ignored were the surprises that it could carry. The strokes of his brush are easily observed, there is nothing superfluous, everything is as it should be: the body, light, color, shade, and the whole intricate variety of strokes in pastel.

This pastel array by Paravon has to find its permanent place in the Museum.

In my office in Garni you can hear the sounds of symphony music everywhere, day and night. The walls are covered in pictures, while below there are rows and rows of classical books. The volume by Paravon, filled with pictures, has found its place in that range.

November 30, 2005, Garni

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ARMENIA

HASMIK HARUTIUNYAN

During the years of E. Isabekian's leadership the gallery experienced a new uplift stipulated by concepts of museum staff skill enhancement and the intention to develop the existing collections in light of modern research, to present them better, to enlarge in a targeted way, and to improve storage facilities.

Eugenia Khachatryan who had been working as fund keeper for quite a few decades, was replaced by Alis Bakrjan who had inherited her experience, dedication and the museum-type longevity. Young painters are gathered around Vardkes Bagdasaryan, head of the restoration workshop, disciple of L. Durnovo, the only restorer painter having the highest qualification in Armenia. He teaches them, transfers his complex professional secrets, they also attend enhancement courses in the museums of Leningrad and Moscow as well as at the I. Grabar Restoration Institute acquiring skills and proficiency, receiving the relevant instruction, to occupy the responsible jobs of restoring and depositing the museum objects.

It was at that time that a documentary copy was executed of the fresco at Kobair Monastery (12 – 13th cc.) This work was approved by the scientific board of the gallery and placed on permanent display. The works of the Feodosiya expedition are nearing completion on copying the central apses of the Crimean Holy Cross (1338) and the Feodosiya Saint Stepanos (15th c.) churches.

The State Hermitage Museum and the Russian Museum provide skill enhancement courses for ciceroni and heads of affiliated branches. The Hermitage in particular, annually receives staff



Kobair. The Savior

members of the Museum's European art research units who communicate with renowned Russian artists and do important work with regard to determining the schools and authorship of different pieces in their local collections.

Meanwhile, publication is accomplished of albums and catalogues "Hakob Hovnatanian and His Predecessors", "Sargis Khachatryan", "Eghishe Tadevosyan", "Vano Khachabekian", "Sedrak Rashmajian", "Sedrak Arakelian", "Edgar Shahin", et al. Donations to the museum collections are going on. This process seems to find new breath, remind-

ing the inspiration of the 1920s and 1930s with regard to our newly established relations with the Diaspora.

Entering the European Art Section is “The Portrait of Gaizago Shalamon” by the Hungarian painter Ignaz Roshkovich donated by the Armenian community of Hungary, brought to Hungary by their Armenian ancestors in 1672. (Shalano Gaiazago was a Hungarian freedom fighter of the 19th century, known as an author and a playwright). The portrait is on a permanent display.

The artist Raphael Kheranian (Paris) donated “Portrait of a Man” by the English master Markus Herardsi and “The Portrait of a Boy” ascribed to Francisco Goya. “The Anointment of David” by Antonio Molinari, late 17th – early 18th c., was donated by the new Sebastian Armenian Union of USA. A canvas with an Old Testament plot and a marble sculpture by G. Biajiotti. Sculptor Khoren Ter-Harutjun donated “A Nudie” by Ogiust Rodin”, while the French Armenian Albert Ashchian donated three pictures by Ripolesi, a contemporary Spanish painter.

By virtue of the 1970s donations the Russian collection was enriched. Thus, the archive in Zagorsk donated some well-known Russian painters of the 20th c. Le-Dantew Baxti, Rosanova, the black-and-white art pieces by Konashevich. The Union-wide Artistic Production association released 9 pieces by the well-known sculptor Sara Lebedeva, as well as V. Rojdestvensky, V. Stojarsky, A. Savitscas and other pieces of fine art.

Among the donated pieces there are many works by Armenian authors. Collectionist Aghasi Darbinyan (Paris) donated a piece by the great etcher Tigran Polad, while the painter R. Jeranian (Paris) donated 14 pieces of the latter, Jansen sent his 30 etchings and black-and-whites, Garzu – 118 lithographs, Vardush Muradian, Archil Gorky’s sister, donated “A Sitting Woman” – black-and-white art.

In 1975 the “Aurora” Publishers published “The State Gallery of Armenia” by N. Mazmanian - a large album (in English and French).

Convened in the 1980s were jubilee exhibitions and catalogue publications by Hakob Giurjan, Sedrak Rashmajian, Sedrak Arakelyan, Hakob Kojoyan, Gevorg Yakulov.

Large exhibitions were exported to many cities of the Former Soviet Union, fetching recognition to the masters of Armenian art. Exhibited in Tbilisi was Geovrg Bashinjagyan, in Kaunas Sedrak Arakelyan, in Makhachkala – Armenian painting and applied art, In Lviv – the Armenian embroidery, weaving and silver working, while the artists of Kiev had an opportunity to see the Russian painting of the 19 – 20 cc. represented in the Armenian Gallery.

In May 1986 the position of the gallery director was abandoned by Edward Isabekyan, which terminated his untiring 19-year of service in the domain of culture. Since July 1986, the post of director was occupied by Alexandr Ter-Gabrielian, who having previously worked for long years as chief of art section at the Ministry of Culture was well aware of the gallery activities.

During the Soviet years the Picture Gallery was engaged within the All-Union cultural system, securing our participation in the country-wide conferences and skill-enhancement courses for museum staff. In capital cities and big cities of different republics, like Moscow, Lviv, Alma-Ata, Vladimir, Vilnius, et al., sessions were convened with invitations extended to representatives of the museum as collective members of the Soviet Branch of the International Board of Museums. The link between museums and exhibitions continued. Hermitage presented to the Armenian public the exhibitions “The 18th-century West-European Etching” and “The West-European Broad-view Landscapes of the 19th Century”. In connection with the days of the Russian culture in Armenia there was an exhibition “The Soviet Russian Landscape” from the State Russian Museum of Leningrad. The response exhibition was convened in Moscow on the occasion of the Decade of the Armenian Culture. Exhibitions of the Gallery’s collections were organized in Sochi, Alma-Ata, and Izmail.

(To be continued)

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԼՁԱՅԻՆ ՊԵՏԱԿԱՆ ԳԱԼԵՐԵԱ TREASURES OF NATIONAL GALLERY OF ARMENIA



Կրեդենս, Ֆրանսիա
16-րդ դարի I-ին կես

Credenza, France
16th c., 1st half



Հ Ր Ա Չ Յ Ա ՀԱԿՈԲՅԱՆ H R A C H I A H A K O B I A N



Վիլենա / Vilena

Ինքնապորտրետ կնոջ հետ / Self-portrait with wife



Շնորհաշատ գեղանկարիչ ՀՐԱՉՅԱ ՀԱԿՈԲՅԱՆԻ (1935-1982) արվեստին մեր հանդեսն անդրադարձել է անցյալ տարի (թիվ 2, էջ 24-26): Ստորև ներկայացնում ենք նկարչի մի շարք աշխատանքների վերատպույթյունները եւ նրա հետմահու անհատական ցուցահանդեսների ցանկը:

- 1984թ. • Նկարիչների տուն, Երեւան
- 1984թ. • Պատկերասրահ, Օդեսա
- 1986թ. • Պատկերասրահ, Էջմիածին
- 1987թ. • Պատկերասրահ, Կիրովական
- 1988թ. • Նկարիչների տուն, Մոսկվա
- 1989թ. • Նկարիչների տուն, Լենինգրադ
- 1986թ. • Պատկերասրահ, Ռիգա
- 1991թ. • Ալեք Մանուկյանի կենտրոն, Փարիզ
- 1995թ. • Ազգային պատկերասրահ, Երեւան
- 2000թ. • Ազգային պատկերասրահ, Երեւան

Last year the current publication highlighted the art by the talented artist HRACHIA HAKOBIAN (1935 - 1982) (see #2, pp. 24 - 26). Indicated herein are several reproductions of pieces by the artist and a list of his posthumously convened personal exhibitions:

- 1984 • Painter's House, Yerevan
- 1984 • Picture Gallery, Odessa
- 1986 • Picture Gallery, Ejmiadzin
- 1987 • Picture Gallery, Kirovakan
- 1988 • Painter's House, Moscow
- 1989 • Painter's House, Leningrad
- 1986 • Picture Gallery, Riga
- 1991 • Alec Manukyan Center, Paris
- 1995 • National Picture Gallery, Yerevan
- 2000 • National Picture Gallery, Yerevan



Փոթորկածինները, 1980թ. / Born from the storm

«Հին Երեւան» շարքից / From "Old Yerevan" series



Սարգիս Համալբաշյան

Sargis Hamalbashyan



Born in 1956 in Giumri.

Graduated from P. Terlemezian Art School, 1975.

Since 1988 has taken part in many domestic and overseas expositions. Works deposited in the Armenian National Picture Gallery, Yerevan Museum of Modern Art, some museums overseas, as well as in private collections.

Personal Exhibitions

- 2006 Armenian National Picture Gallery
- 2002 "Melina Mercury Hall", (Nicosia, Cyprus)
- 2002 Viki Hovhannesian Gallery of Modern Art (Chicago, USA)
- 2001 "Bodenschatz" Gallery (Bazel, Switzerland)
- 1999 "Ayios Kassianos" 13 Gallery (Nicosia, Cyprus)
- 1997 "AUX" Gallery (Yerevan)
- 1996 "La Hune" Gallery (Paris, France)
- 1992 "New Academy" Gallery, London

Sargis Hamalbashian is a new transmitter of national painting, its trend that had been established in the 20th century by the Great Saryan and Archil Gorky, who found the worthy continuers in the persons of Kazents, Vruir, Minas, Ashot Hovhannisian, Gayane Khachatryan. Those dissimilar bright personalities were infected with what could be named as the music of fine arts, the magic of color.

Sargis was born in Giumri, in the heart of Shirak, the cradle of numerous gifted artists. ...He had long ago intended to move to Yerevan. In 1988, the terrible December earthquake only speeded up that earlier decision. Yerevan is the focus of the basic potential of our nation, determining the atmosphere and criteria of the national culture. Indeed, great distance generates nostalgic reminiscences, which is a certain stimulus for a sensitive creative temper.

Focusing upon the quiet of his workshop and severed from the world's turmoil, the capacity to aspire to unknown places, enabled Sargis to embrace the unlimited geographic latitudes and to penetrate the depths of history. Architectural monuments, medieval squares, equestrian statues, decorations of luxurious castles, are compared to the miserable huts of Giumri and courtyards with old structures. In the neighborhood of vulgar grotesque figures there are manful warriors, mailed knights and aristocrats, cows, dogs, fish, or a guardian angel that smoothly sores over the chaotic and luxurious world. East and West with their multi-colored representatives live in peace and quiet, tanks and canon threaten noone, being submitted for permanent storage in the Sargis Hambashian's museum.



Sargis manages the artistic space in an original way rarely addressing heterogeneous materials. He often makes use of stencils, which is very heavily prepared. What is usually being done with regard to the real objects – pieces of newspapers, entourage, is reduced by him to a technical device, which is completely his own operational product. The method developed after long years, stipulated the emergence of the style that exclusively belongs to him.

No one can foresee, how much time is given to him, at what time, at what age he will achieve his top point, when the potential of artistic inspiration will be depleted. Those speculations keep Sargis in permanent tension. "Each artist, like myself, has doubts. What if the pilgrimage will end halfway? One has to accomplish a lot, to say, to pronounce, to utter to the end. That is conversation with God and Universe. There is always something to say, and you always ask God: give me time to make it, to say it to the end, so long as to become empty and calm. I often think I will work until I confess and run dry. Then I become scared of that thought, since I started to imagine that the time to leave is coming. Therefore I started to wish for the contrary: not to get exhausted, to retain the permanent desire to run.

God willing, Sargis Hamalbashian will stay long, long, since he needs an integral world, like all those people who believe in life, nature, Infinity of Universe and the almighty power.

HENRIK IGITYAN,
Director of Armenia's Museum of Modern Art

fine arts

armenian art • 1(15)/2006 23



"Self-portrait", 1962

Petrosian, Seiran Khatlamajian) he was aware of his advantages, but humble as a man, tough and consistent as an artist. The results of his incessant work, inquiring mind, artistic taste and expressive methods are shown in his canvases: "Automasks" (1962), "An Encounter" (1963), "A Landscape" (1965)

Since the initial years of his creative life Shahmuradian merged with the domestic roaring and turbulent whirlpool. He was an enthusiastic partaker in the domestic and overseas exhibitions (Yerevan, Moscow, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Argentina, France, USA, et al.). In that period (1967 – 75) he also taught painting at Yerevan specialized Institutes, continuing his research with Armenian miniature painting and the early 20th c. French art, Matis and Picasso having become his idols.

Since the mid-1960s the brush touches of the painter became bold and sure, his line skillful and discrete, the color set subordinated to the interior balance of the

The Art of Varos Shahmuradian

The painter Varos Shahnazaryan (1940 – 1977) lived only 37 years. He was destined to be one of the exclusive personalities who by the unwritten laws of nature are obliged to create the lasting artistic treasures within the limited fragments of time allotted to them.

He was born in Leninakan, in a well-to-do intellectual family. He was the elder son, since early years noted for sensitive soul and artistic temper. Educated in Yerevan, where his family had been established by that time, in 1967 graduated from the Industrial Artistic Higher School in Moscow.

Having himself experienced the search and discoveries characteristic of the young artists of the 60s and 70s (Brothers Elibekyan, Varujan Vardanyan, Martin

composition. "Ancient Blessing" (1965) is in line with the Medieval Armenian miniature painting, whereas "My Predecessors" (1969), "Midday", "Family" (1970) are modern extensions of the the 19th-c. Armenian portrait painting in classical noble manner.

Gradually enriching his palette, decorative expression and motivation, the painter achieves the extreme spiritual tension, steadily increasing and becoming almost alarming. The images of everyday things and articles acquire symbolic meaning within a composition, becoming the tools for presenting the inner world of the painter.

Windows looking at an alarming blue light against the darkened background of the canvas, the wrinkled silk

of curtains, details of the interior design, which were excellent means to resolve plastics within a space: "Nocturnal Vision" (1970), "A Window" (1970), "Still Life in Blue" (1971), "Room #13 (1972), "A Workshop Window" (1974). This array of widows with diverse perspectives makes the onlooker become a partaker to the tumultuous infinity outside. This symbolic, ambiguous and offensive atmosphere is immediately creating the mood of poetic anticipation, a strife for uneasy uncertainty.

Poeticism as formation of artistic mentality is characteristic to the art by Varos, poetry being a rich source of inspiration. Naturally, at this period he creates a graphic album of illustrations to Baudelaire which he intended to publish with the Armenian translation.

In early 1970s Shakhmuradian created an entire array of lyrical heroines with emphasized individualities: "A Nude", "In the Mirror", "Expectation", "An Actress", "A Portrait of Veronica". Large compositions by Shahmuradian, stipulated by artistic and philosophical generalizations: "Zangezur", "In the Workshop of an Artist", "A Sonata, Spring-Autumn" are impressive for their treatment of details, and for their bold color (turquoise-blue, scarlet-red, orange-gold, silver-brown) selection, often creating transitory conditions between light and shade, and changing the relations of colors thus underscoring the inner topical meaning.

The choicest taste and harmonic proportions are characteristic not only to Shahmuradian as an artist but also as a personality. His personality and art were also merged: a restrained, dignified person, good-hearted and respectable, an attentive listener, soft-spoken, a near-perfect personality.

Particularly fruitful was the artist's life of the latter period, when he never let go his palette. In 1976 he created "A Butterfly", a large-scale festive canvas, where a colored butterfly was in vain striving to freedom. Harmonically combined with it was a noble image, moving forward to encounter the light and beauty. Then follows "Crucifixion", and again "Albatros", this time very expressive, in restrained colors.

Wasn't it a feeling of impending tragedy that he touched upon in those images? They say that gifted individuals can be apprehensive of their approaching decease. So



"A Dream", 1971

that if Baudelaire had compared a poet to a heaven-bound bird, then Varos did so with his tragic demise. Incidentally, this poem has been translated by Henrik Bakhjinian, an outstanding connoisseur of French literature.

*Thus the poet, you sore under tempest and blizzard
Irresponsive to arrows, defiant to fate,
But for walking the ground in railing and whistle
The span of your wings is exceedingly great.*

The picture's background is pale blue showing a large beautiful wounded bird drenched in blood and doomed to destruction by repetitive falls. This expressive work painted in large bold touches produces a smashing impression, symbolizing the painter's heartfelt cry.

Varos Shahmuradian would have been 65 today, and regrettably, he will not be around to celebrate his anniversary, however, his legacy will atone for his unlive years.

In 1962, when Hacob Hakobyan repatriated to Armenia from Egypt, the Armenian art acquired another artist with his original world. In Armenia Hakobyan's art received its natural development, while original artistic vision secured him the place at the side of the greatest Armenian artists. And the fact that Hakobyan's art reflected the phenomena of the 20th century, like "dehumanization", indicate an artist that is perpetually

Still Life and the Art of HAKOB HAKOBYAN

Armen EDOYAN

in motion, proceeding in parallel with his time.

The still lives by Hakobyan related to the late 60s and early 70s differ fundamentally from those of the early period. The difference first and foremost is a new method of interpreting the objects by Hakobyan, which is reflected in the new vision by the artist. In the painting plane we see no more photographic effect, which was evident in the early period. In earlier works one can see occasional instantaneous "stolen freeze frames".

That resulted from the program of the earlier period, when it was expedient to present poverty and human isolation. By that reason the object used to be merged with the environment: interior, etc.

We can classify the early period as "photographic", whereby Hakobyan was featuring as an operator, trying to find a convenient vantage point, to show an already prepared still life, however in the later period he became a director, constructing the composition, with regard to his own system of signs. The table, an almost inseparable part of Hakobyan's still life pictures, has become a theatre of operations, wherein his dramatic exercises take place. The objects interest the artist no more as such, and, retaining their external model, they lose their functionality to human properties. By this reason the Armenian still lives are constructed upon an internal semantic system, dictating the artistic resolutions. Environment becomes neutral, retaining a decorative background.

As noted by the painter, in his early period he tried to create a void around the object, and, proceeding from the partial to the general, he obtained an entire structure, which, like a sculpture in the interior, was placed in the center of the canvas. Hakobyan's idea was to depict the situation. In his still lives of the Soviet period Hakobyan is

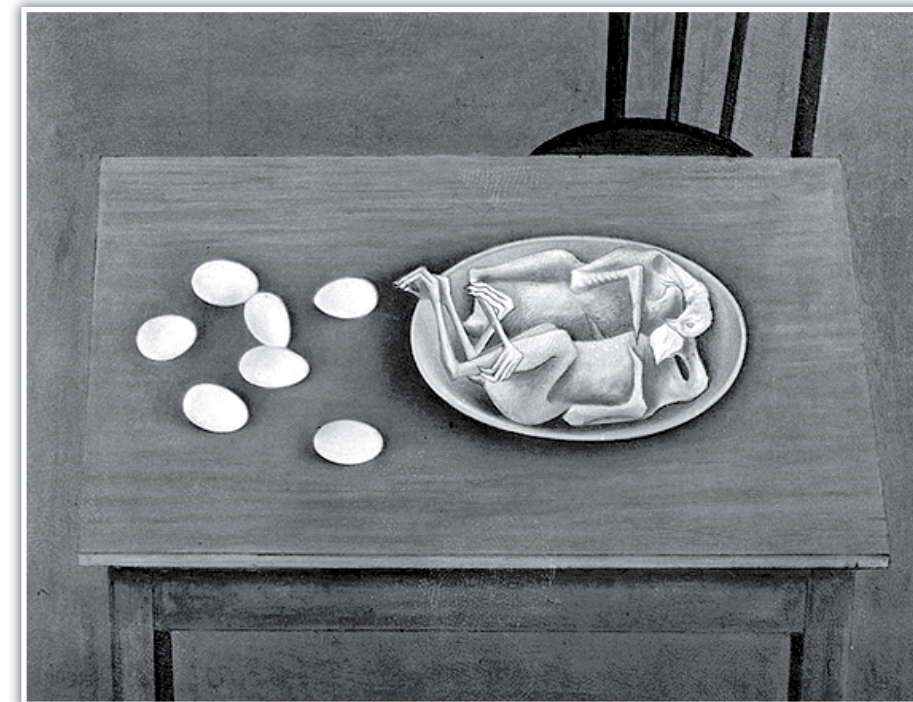
egg expresses the future. Life and death, the etherial and the mineral, this counterdistinction is a feature of Hakobyan's painting. The egg symbolizes the beginning. Indeed, surrounded by mineral or dead nature, it remains capable of reproduction, carrying life in itself.

inherent to the 20th century. It is mainly expressed in that in nearly all directions the classical human perception is being changed. In the 20th century art, man loses his classical face. Man is being reformed and converted into schematic arrangements. Hakobyan, too, is sort of putting a tabu upon man, featuring him by using instruments.

The "humanized" instruments emerged in the 70-s. Hakobyan himself explained the removal of man from his art by that in Armenia he found man no more in his models which had been devised abroad. However, man does not disappear from Hakobyan's pictures, but rather he changes his face. In other words, man disappears as an exterior model. That change resulted from the change in Hakobyan's ideas. As noted by Gutin, each new idea is like a new organ that we acquire. Our ideas are like observation points wherefrom we scan the whole world. We perceive objects using the ideas that we have about them, however in the natural process of thinking we are not aware of that, like the eye that does not see itself in the process of vision. It can be assumed that Hakobyan just did not see, did not perceive his previous models, because his ideas about man had changed.

Hakobyan's new man is hidden behind the instrumental model and is merged with it. "Creative Instruments" (1976), "Instruments" (1977), "Instruments and Eggs. Aggression" (1980), "Scared Instruments. Still Life" (1979), "Instruments on the Table" (1980). Those works comprise an integral illustration. We see aggressive and scared instruments involved into fighting, game and conversation.

Those mise en scenes by Hakobyan can be regarded as still life with some difficulty. Paradoxically, his dead nature lives. However, it is this

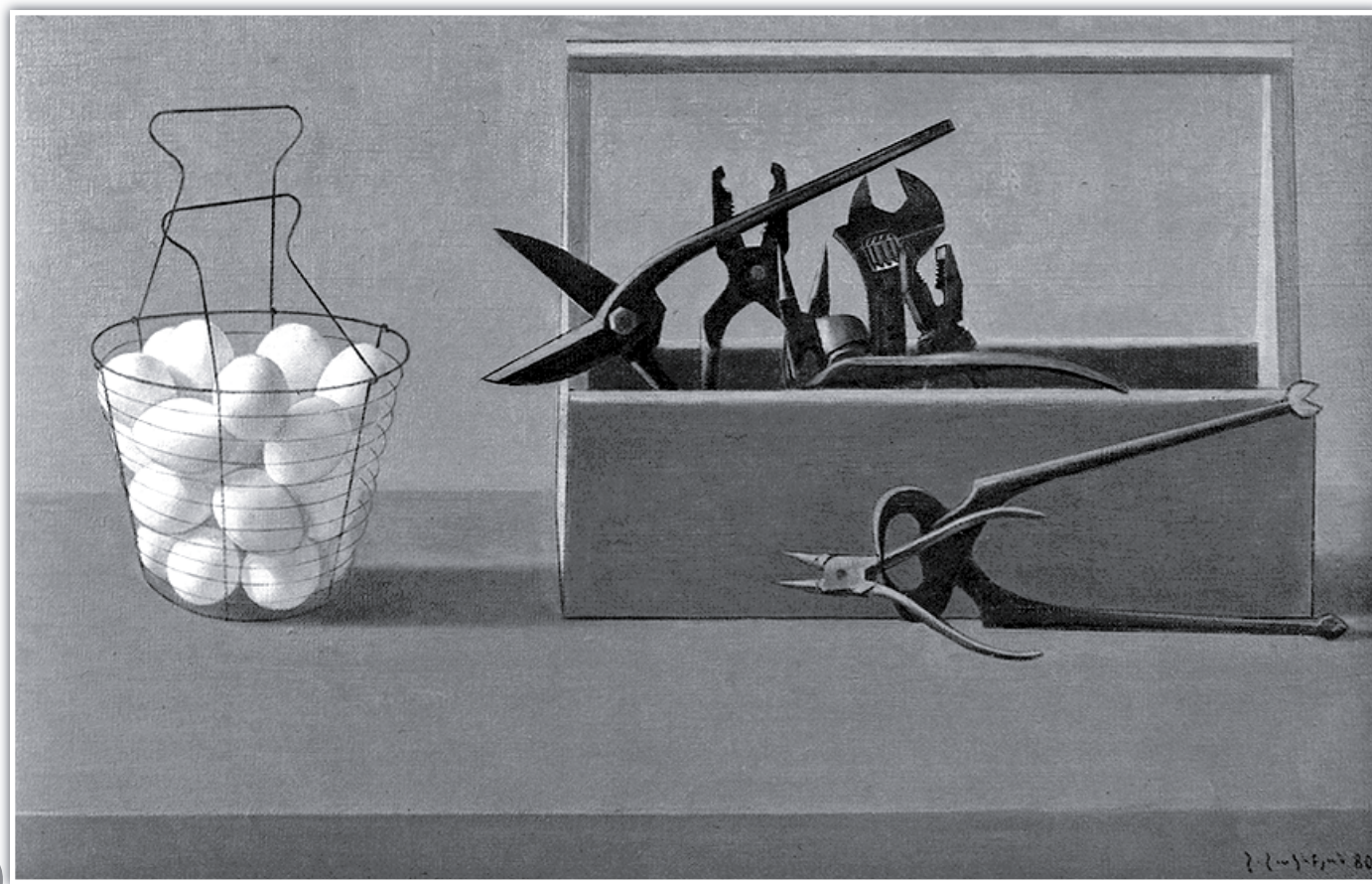


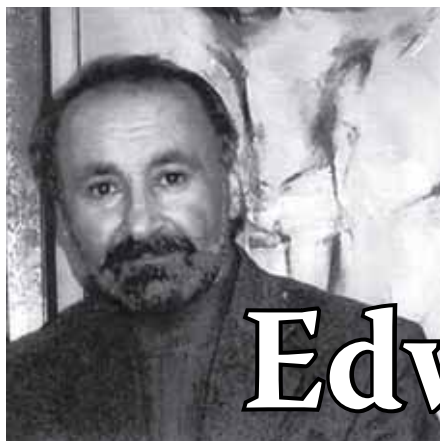
trying to depict motion. The painter is attracted by ordinary objects, however, in this case they become metaphoric. In the later period, only everyday objects remain from the old times, however everyday life as such, or the descriptions of everyday life, do not attract the painter any more.

"Chickens and eggs. Still life" (1969), "Fish in the Basket" (1976), "Apron and Eggs" (1972), "Fish and gloves" (1973), "Still Life with Fish" (1982). Those pictures show objects which are esthetically neutral. We can say that the primary objective of the painter is not esthetical. In the piece "Chickens and Eggs. Still Life", we start to see the metaphoric interpretation of reality, that reaches its pinnacle in still life using it as a creative instrument. A bird on a dish, dead, is becoming a symbolic expression of the past, the

Objects are perceived by man with regard to their importance. In this hierarchical ladder one object is more significant than another, still another one has no significance at all. In his initial period Hakobyan depicted simple inconspicuous objects. In a later period his attention remained concentrated upon the simplest objects, however he no more tries to concentrate upon them as such. Hakobyan just makes a U-turn, reversing this hierarchical ladder. He feels no need to distort the natural forms, he is satisfied with their interior functional distortion. The tendency to cover one by another shows Hakobyan as escaping from reality. This metaphoric reproduction of reality can be perceived in his so-called "instrumental" still life pictures, that took place in the 70-s.

This type of escape from reality is





From Dvin to Los Angeles Edward Vardanyan

This story is not about Dvin, however, before coming to the essence of the matter, I want to make a short reference to history, to the 30s of the 4th century, when in the heart of the Ararat Valley in the shadow of Minor and Greater Ararat foundation was laid of Dvin, the capital city of Armenia. This large medieval city has completely vanished from the face of the earth. However, for long years, the citadel of the city has been archeologically excavated showing the ruins of the Catolicos' residence, areas of the royal palace and other structures. The resulting large mass of archeological material was covered in publications filling in large gaps in our knowledge. Archeological research attracted not only specialists and tourists, but also the current population of the historical city of Dvin. A great number of them have taken part in those operations, with love and affection, removing crockery from the ruins, as well as other artefacts, admiring and taking pride in their high-art legacy. Many of the residents were children, teens, students, who approached the archeologists, asked

questions and often asked for permission to take pictures the discovered objects. Years ago a certain young man was identified in this group. He was a student of Panos Terlemezian art school. He often visited us. He used to talk on motherland and on heavenly concepts of art, attended the excavation sites, took images of discovered clay jugs, pitchers and sculpture-ornamented stone fragments.



unimportant, whether they sell or not (my impression was that he is not quite willing to cede a picture to any money-giver). Cut off from everyday noise, the painter focused his mind on a dream world of his own creation.

What is the dream world of the artist? Village. He thinks in colors. The structure and composition of his pictures receive images and expressions due to the use of colors.

Years went by, our peaceful life changed. We heard that Edgar was in Karabakh. The painter's brush was substituted by a weapon. He was defending his country. He won, he made it free, and he was wounded. In 1992 we heard of him no more. And suddenly of late I ran across him in Los Angeles. He grew older, but his eyes were worried. Missing his birthplace Artashat, his kinfolds, comrades, Dvin, the soil and water, the tree and flower of Motherland. Living away from native land however, he can dispel his homesickness in his own way. He paints. There is no free space on the walls of his small workshop. It is



The thematic orientation of the artist is a woman and a flower. He thus celebrates life, beauty, motherhood and goodness.

"Astkhik", this is the title of the picture, representing a beauty matching her name. But is she indeed just the Goddess of love, water and fertility, or simply a real, full-blooded, ideal beauty, a woman, a charmingly attractive and enticing female?

In the words by St. Narek: Your eyes will spread like morning sea, and filled with laughter is the mouth of two petals dripping the juice of roses.

The artist well familiar with the eclectic art using his original

thinking was able to subdue many criteria adhering to human thought and modeled formulas. That opened the potential for him to fashion new approaches to the existing values, viz.: sensuality, diverse formations of physical contact. That means mundane freethinking, that since the renaissance and even earlier had entered all branches of art. That is the subject of the primacy of love, emphasized by erotic and sensual variations.

The same idea is shown in "Expectation", a woman on the canvas, seeming to be a visual illustration to the words by Kuchak:

Your breast is white. It is a shining temple, your tits are like a dazzling fire, I will go out to cry and chime, and come again to be flooded by this light.

And another picture, as a continuation of the theme "In Paradise. Lilit". In Paradise, indeed. The matter is that the "expectation" of the previous image was materialized in an encounter and physical engagement. That is not a scene reflecting the mythic story of a frustrated love between Adam and Lilit, but rather a real, material love that has taken place, amongst the dreams and feelings, and expectations of fertility.

Edward the painter is also concerned with other subjects. "December Devastation". A scene of grief with no characters, demanding no words. The sadness of humanity demands no comment.



Another canvas "Where to?" With faces showing grief and desolation, women driving a donkey proceed along the road of exile. The painter's art is optimistic, nonetheless. As shown by his pictures, exuding warmth, flooding with light and color, beaming with professional aptitude and power.

FRINA BABAYAN, Archeologist

Gagik Vardanyan is an architect born by the Shirak traditions, that traditionally has artistically characterized style, a situation, that is relevant to the Giumri artists generally. Among the attending circumstances of Armenian art of the last decades is a new manifestation of nostalgia, which is characteristic of the contemporary diaspora. Actually, the Diaspora, created through expatriation caused by the Great Genocide had another expansion including specialists and artists expatriated from contemporary Armenia. Stimulated by the living conditions, alienated from the native land, the intellectuals born and professionally developed in Armenia, generated a completely new orientation in all branches of art, particularly distinctive are the artists of Giumri, including the architects, who have created serious works in fine arts. Indeed, art is a song glinting at the brush strokes of those artists, they are the sounding patriotic particles in the foreign environment. They also spread out vigorously on Gagik Vardanyan's canvases, which

THE INWARD ARTISTIC LIFE OF GAGIK VARDANYAN



THE ARCHITECT

basically are exploratory intellectual landscapes, contemporary urban scenes, suburbs and grasslands on the horizon, and from time to time dreamy images of Armenian monuments with unending return to Motherland symbolized by churches. The art by Gagik Vardanyan is a gamut of colors, its natural environment is bright, while the residents are transient and painted in cool colors.

Canvases by Gagik Vardanyan are filled with life and melody as well as with a variety of forms. The current and old natural or urban environments are free and dynamic in their outlines, they possess convulsion, rather than curved-line serenity, a moment is always active, relevant to surfaces with deep dynamic perspective, the joy of light and shade, and particularly with the variety of brush strokes, which, in combination with colors, sound in unison with texture.

Art by Gagik Vardanyan is tender poetry written in color. Those nostalgic letters have a melodic undertone, whereby formal expression and a hot and cold contrastive color shriek displays dramatism, like that of "Mona Lisa". Seen here is a novella dualism emphasizing the concept of "AS IS" at a given moment.

VARAZDAT HARUTIUNYAN, DAVIT KERTMANJIAN

Private picture galleries is a new phenomenon in Armenia, born by independence. All over the world in the art business promotion of this type of institutions goes slow in Armenia, since there is also an open-air market, the so-called Vernisaj, which is competitive through low prices. However, experience of other countries show that the future of art business belongs to private art galleries and artistic salons. "Armenian Art" Magazine will periodically present to its readers the private picture galleries of Armenia.

GAYANE YEGIAZARYAN

Operating in Yerevan today are around a dozen private picture galleries, each one differing from others by its adopted principles. Perhaps a general concern is the problem of shaping a common taste.

According to Armen Mkrtchyan, director of "Mkrtchyan Picture Gallery", the art business requires a serious approach, since it deals with spiritual values, whereby the human factor is appreciated. "People have to be educated since early age. Taste has to be developed". To that effect Armen Mkrtchyan and his wife Alla Aghavelyan often hold meetings with schoolchildren and students, as well as with the visitors of the museum. Meanwhile, Aram Sargsyan, director of "Arame" picture gallery, welcomes all galleries, adding that founding of each gallery is an event of great significance. Distancing himself from the idea that new galleries cause competition, Aram Sargsyan thinks that "each one has to have a special orientation, to represent a definitive direction, to be recognized by the

THE PRIVATE PICTURE GALLERIES OF YEREVAN



A Dedication Ceremony at the "Mkrtchyan" Picture Gallery

public as a generator of artistic taste, since the purpose of a private gallery is not only to sell objects of art, but first and foremost, to disseminate culture".

This year "Mkrtchyan Picture Gallery" is becoming 15 years old. In these tense and difficult years it could not only survive and get consolidated, but also remained in the leading position. Established in 1991 as a cultural salon "Krun", it was renamed "Mkrtchyan Picture Gallery" in 1994 (44, Isahakyan St., 44, Yerevan). In the course of its fruitful existence the gallery has convened about four score exhibitions both in Armenia and abroad. In the cold and dark years of 1991 – 92, when the Armenian people had a problem of bread and survival, the Mkrtchyans spared no effort to uphold the interest of the population to art. The first, unprecedented private showroom, with a multigenre

collection, presenting not only the fine arts, but also about 500 exhibits of decorative or applied art, rugs, and even folk musical instruments. This collection in 1992 was in five cities of the State of California drawing full-scale attention and media coverage.

Later the "Mkrtchyan Gallery" was on display in US, France, Belgium, Cyprus, Moscow, etc. In 1994 – 1996 it cooperated with the showroom of the Lebanon's "International Art Center", and with "Studio 22" in Antwerp in 1997. In 2002 the "Mkrtchyan Gallery" was honored by "International Quality Crown Awards" by the London XIV International Convention. Since 1993 the gallery has prioritized the classical fine arts, and this preference remains to date.

The Mkrtchyan showroom official seat has convened multiple exhibitions: thematic, personal, Armenian

primitivists, symbolist-abstractonists, Russian, European art, portraits, the traditional April 24, as well as displays by Vahram Gaifajian, Hovhannes Ter-Tadevosyan, Mkrtich Kamalyan, KhachaturEsayan, GayaneKhachatryan, Ashot Hovannisyan, et al. There were many charitable ac-tions to help children. Each exhibition is presented to the public following long months of careful work, in an academically correct and tasteful display.

Like other gallery directors, Armen Mkrtchyan thinks that the more galleries, the better for developing art, adding: "Serious painting can be only at a gallery, you cannot sell a serious thing in the street". In his opinion, art business would profit a lot by grouping the galleries. "I suggest to create the Directors' Council, as practiced in developed countries. If we go in for serious business, we have to establish a so-called syndicate. That will enable us to get empowered, to create a net, both inside and outside. The Council will have its foundation, that would be helpful to the artists with whom it is currently engaged. The operational field will stabilize, there will be no drops in prices, on the contrary, by careful cooperation we shall become represented worldwide by

merit, enter the art market, hire the salesmen to sell Armenian art. Art is priceless, but if it enters the market, it has to be appraised.

"Arame" picture gallery was founded in 2003 (Yerevan, Abovyan 13). The founder director is Aram Sargsyan, Ph.D., candidate of philological science. Since its inception the gallery operates following distinctly formulated principles. It presents mainly different trends of realistic art based upon figurative thinking. According to the Director, in the last three years the gallery has consolidated a number of gifted artists like Ruben Abovyan, Emil Gazaz, Taron Muradyan, Sargis Hamalbashyan, Armen Gevorgyan, Kaits Vanikyan, Gevorg Egiazaryan, et al. With three of the mentioned painters: Ruben Abovyan, Emil Gazaz, Gevorg Egiazaryan, "Arame" is working with exclusive rights.

The purpose of the gallery is not only to display, but also to promote some authors, it has deployed the publishing activity. It has printed catalogues of several artists and monthly inventories of the new collection, sending them to different countries. "Arame" has established cooperation with different galleries

in America and Europe. A number of exhibitions have been convened in Holland, Sweden, next on the list is Denmark.

For the last two years, 2003 – 2004, "Arame" took part in the world art expo in New York. It should be gladly noted that "Arame" is presented in every catalogue on five pages. "That is an outstanding phenomenon", says Aram Sargsyan, "with our principles in mind we promote the art that we consider the most expedient, that does not mean we exclude other trends of art, we positively welcome all trends, however, we think that each gallery may have its face, its style, and it is good that Yerevan today is the scene of this process, the profiling of the galleries, when each one is trying to create its team, concentrate around the artists who adhere to a certain tendency and promote the art that seems most indigenous.

As of today, the galleries are very few. A European city of the size of Yerevan would have hundreds. It is by virtue of these galleries that the art market is formed accompanied by an ever increasing public interest.

In the West, every intellectual, self-respecting businessman must have an art collection. In this country that culture has yet to come about.

Nonetheless, there are galleries in Yerevan, that are second to none in Europe, and even excel many.

They have discovered the correct operational mechanism.

The difficulties of this stage, to my mind, will be overcome, the time of the private exhibitions will have yet to come.

Do we agree with Aram Sargsyan?

(To be continued)

The "Arame" Gallery



Eavesdropping On One's Own Roots

Following the late medieval ages, the Armenian musical art experienced a downfall, with a further uplift only in the late 19th century. We have had no Baroque period with its tender miniatures and developed polyphony, we remained untouched with the determinism of classical style, we have not enjoyed the appearance of a contemporary composer like Shubert, who reduced his entire composition to the folk vocalism, while from the whole inventory of romanticism we regrettably assimilated only what is related to parlor and demonstration.

The creative work by Komitas seems to fill in all those gaps. Indeed, his music in many cases has common margins with all the mentioned schools and styles. Moreover, his art opens such horizons that until today have not fully opened in the European music: the impressionism of Debussi, the folklorism of Bartok, the extreme semantics in each sound of Webern's pieces. It should be said that given the unlimited musical talent, Komitas deliberately sacrificed his own compositional language in favor of the language of country song, thus becoming its preacher and its symbol. It is impossible to say about Komitas: "He is feeding on the musical origins of the Nation". He himself is that origin, he is not feeding, he is the feeder.

The purpose of a performer of music by Komitas is to discover the cultural symbolics and codes accumulated therein, to be very sensitive so as not to violate the intonation of the song, and to finally merge its sound with the sound of the entire Armenian nation singing through Komitas. The pianist Lusine Grigoryan who produced a musical CD of piano pieces by Komitas in 2004, under the sponsorship of the "Narekatsi" Art Union, resolved this triple task in a bright manner. The word "bright" does not stand anywhere near the extraordinary quality of the said music.

In L. Grigoryan's performance instrumental virtuosity is completely absent, being fundamentally alien to the music by Komitas. Like the medieval Japanese poets, Komitas is a master of miniature. he does not need to be eternalized. While listening to the CD carrying nearly the entire piano legacy of Komitas, one can do comparison: if the whole Armenian music is a tree, Komitas is the seed of this tree. As long as the seed stays, this type of tree will not cease to be.



Music by Komitas is the DNA of Armenian music, its genetic code. And how sensitive must have been Komitas's inner hearing, so as to detect that moment, when life is awakening within the seed, when the little heart starts beating.

Hearing L. Grigoryan play it seems that the pianist puts her ear to the ground, not playing, but rather waiting for the first buds to appear, to cherish them with care. Her playing is touching, like a sweet motherly caress, so close to Komitas' poetry. When however it is needed to play with force, the pianist does it as if reluctantly, without hitting.

It is often stated that Komitas cleansed the Armenian village music from foreign impurities. It would perhaps be right to say that Komitas cleansed, idealized the entire Armenian nation, and isolated from the elixir of his music is what is the most advanced, the most essential. Particularly valuable in L. Grigoryan's performance is that with a miraculous perception she can pick up that Komitasian artery presenting it in an original and sensitive way. She deeply feels the demand and measure of the performing freedom, and does not prevent music from staying as it is: as if she sends it back to its original state, the song. On the other hand, his perfect command of the instrument enables her to play discretely and to simultaneously reconcile different musical articulations, seemingly with no effort.

ARTUR AVANESOV,
Composer, pianist, Ph.D. in art.

ARMENIAN MOMENTS IN THE MUSICAL PEZARO

In the center of Italy Pezaro, sprawling upon the fabulous Adriatic coast, is known as a city of great musicians. Born here were Gioacchino Rossini, the trailblazers of operatic art Mario Del Monaco and Renata Tebaldi. The narrow streets of the ancient city, houses and structures that have become evidence of old times mentally take you to distant past, where everything is saturated with the smartness of a Figaro and witticisms, the subtle girlish artfulness or genteel Rossini-type flirtation.

The city's central square is the starting point of Rossini Street, and the location of two musical schools, one – the Renata Tebaldi, Mario Del Monaco International Vocal Academy, and the other one – the G. Rossini Conservatory. Taking part in the vocal art enhancement courses at the Academy since November 2005 were the young Armenian vocalists Hovhannes Gevorgyan (bass), Veronika Padaryan (soprano), and Gor Markosyan (baritone). Parallel to the study, within the context of monthly concert programs they have the occasion to perform professionally.

On February 3, the students of the Academy (Armenians, Serbs, Koreans, Georgians, Japanese) performed their native vocal compositions. Our compatriots featured both classical and contemporary Armenian composers. Accompaniment was provided by the professional Dutch concertmaster Villem Perik. In the concert section Hovhannes Gevorgyan performed the aria of David Bek from the opera of the same name by Armen Tigranyan, and the art song "A Willow Bowed over a Brook" by Daniel Ghazaryan. Veronika Padaryan presented pieces by Arno Babajanyan. Gor Markosyan performed Arshak II's arioso from the opera of the same name by Tigran Chukhajian and Mosi's aria from "Anush" by Armen Tigranian, continuing the Anush-Mosi duets accompanied by Veronika Padaryan.



The audience welcomed the Armenian performers with applause. Eventually, the veteran Maestro Melani highly appreciated the execution by the Armenian performers, underscoring at the same time their originality and appeal.

GOR MARKOSYAN

New CDs

The Mesrop Mashtots Center of Rhetoric and Oratory has launched a subscription campaign for a double CD: "KNOW YOUR LEGACY" and "YOUR LEGACY IS WITH YOU" representing 36 pieces of exclusive Armenian literary and musical compositions.

CDs with original design include: live vocal performances by THE GREAT ARMENIAN MASTERS: PARUIR SEVAK, HAMO SAHIAN, VAHAGN DAVTIAN, HOVANNES SHIRAZ, SILVA KAPUTIKIAN, SOS SARGSIAN, HOVANNES CHEKIJAN on the subjects of love of country and language.

This collection has been established by the RA Ministry of Science and Education as an audio tutorial for schools and Institutes of higher education.

To subscribe, visit the Mesrop Mashtots Center of Rhetoric and Oratory, Yerevan, Tigran Metsi 9, t. 1 seniak (next to Firdusi Fair), every day, 11.00 – 19.00

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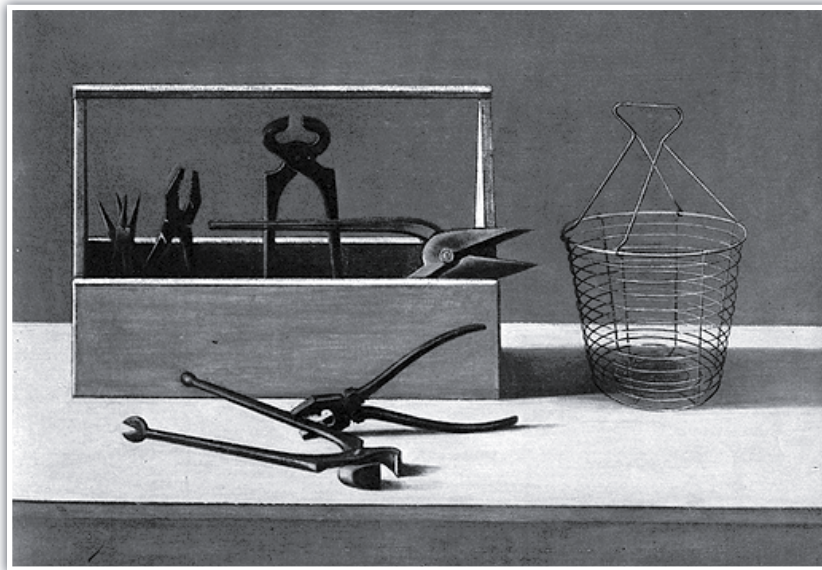
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confrontation that is the chief advantage of those pieces. This type of a living still life can be seen in Salvador Dali, and it is named so, "Moving Still Life" (1956). The movement by Dali has a physical character. An impression of unreality is achieved by rejecting the laws of physics. Hakobyan's objects never make any unreal movement: pliers hold tight, nippers cut, etc. The movement is done in the inside. Being merged with man, the instruments never look to us unreal in their imovement, however, man's existence remains visible and real.

Hakobyan remains faithful even now to this system of world view established in the 70-s.



AT THE "NAREKATSI" ART ASSOCIATION February, 2006

- 13** The "Haifesti" Youth Association and the "Ifeps" studio presented the "Hope, Faith, Love" show program. Their purpose was to introduce the visitors to the symbols of the Church holidays Candlemas and St. Valentine's. The soiree was closed with the Candlemas fire, with the young people leaping over it.
- 16** There was a display of the Armenian American sculptor Grigor Manukyan's monumental works. The opening was accompanied by string and piano music, while the actress Hasmik Ter-Karapetian read poetry by the sculptor.
- 16** There was a concert of the "Rabble Rouse" vocal and instrumental ensemble. The ensemble members performed their compositions (artistic director Robert Khudaverdian).
- 21** A personal exhibition was opened by Arevik Mkrtchian titled "From my Window".
- 23** By the initiative of Mariam and Armen Kanayans an event took place dedicated to the holiday of Vardanants. It started with a prayer by the priest of St. Trinity Church of Yerevan, the latter noted that this holiday was for the people whose names were not matched by the names of Saints. Khoren Palian and the partakers read fragments of the book by Eghishe "On the Vardanants and the Armenian Wars", and sang church songs.
- 26** There was a soiree of chamber music, sounding pieces by F. Mendelssohn. Participants included Ashot Avanesov, piano, Vilen Gabrielyan, violin, Hike Babayan, chelo.
- 27** The meeting of intellectuals was dedicated to the composer Alan Hovhannes, and the problem of correctly representing his legacy in Armenia. Other details of the "Narekatsi" Association activities can be found in www.narekatsi.org

**RUZANNA MOVSIYAN, Student of the Yerevan State University,
Dept. of Journalism**

THE KING OF PERSIAN POP SONGS

GEORGES AINTABLIAN, Los Angeles

My interest in Varoujan started six months ago with one song: Shabzadé (Nightstruck), performed by the legendary Persian singer Ebi. I kept listening to this particular song again and again for more than twenty times at a time to enjoy the harmony of its arrangement which is lacking these days in many Persian and Armenian songs. I also was very curious about the lyrics of this song which is written by Zoya Zakarian. Ebi, whose real name is Ebrahim Hamidi, was born in 1949 in Tehran. During his career and vast repertoire of 200 songs, he had the chance to perform only three songs composed and arranged by Varoujan and one song only arranged by him. The other two songs composed by Varoujan have both lyrics by the poet Iraj Jannati Atayi and are the very popular Pooste shir (Lion Skin) and Kandoo (Beehive), which is taken from the homonymous film directed by Fereydoon Galé in 1975. Asal (Honey) has very rich arrangement by Varoujan although the melody is composed by Farid Zoland, another legendary composer in Persian song, and the lyrics come from his longtime collaborator Ardalan Sarfaraz. Ebi later on performed seven Varoujan compositions in his Tajé tarané (The Crown of the Song) album that were originally composed for Googoosh.

Time passed, and I attended Iran's utmost legendary singer Googoosh's concert in Inglewood, California. Before going to the concert I discovered how Varoujan had shaped the career of this Persian nightingale by composing and arranging no less than thirty of the most beautiful songs of not only her career but in the entire history of Persian pop songs as proudly recognized by all Persians around the world. Some name him the king of Persian pop songs of the golden age and some lament his loss and irreplaceability in Persian pop songs because things were very different after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Varoujan was no longer there and Googoosh was banned for twenty years from singing.

During the concert I was devastated by the name "Varoujan" in Farsi projected on the background of the stage each and every time Googoosh

Varoujan Hakhbandian

performed one of his songs. I wondered why Armenians never acknowledge one of their sons that have this immense effect on their neighboring country and its people around the world although more than half of the 16,000 attendants of that concert were Armenians that night. We also have similar master composers whose works sit on Yerevan's radio station shelves to accumulate more dust as years pass and technology remasters all kind of possible vintage recordings around the world except ours. I wonder how many of Amirkhanian's compositions can one find today fully remastered from their original 70's recordings which were perfectly arranged and orchestrated as compared to nowadays less than average songs.

Varoujan's collaboration with Googoosh started in the early seventies and continued on until his premature death in 1979. Googoosh, whose real name is Fayeghé Atashin, was born in Tehran in 1951. Varoujan composed twelve songs for her and arranged more than twenty others that now are undoubtedly an inseparable part of every Persian in the world. Those songs evoke both nostalgia and remembrance of a past era in the history of Iran. The twelve Varoujan compositions are as follows: Bavar kon (Believe!, lyrics by Iraj Jannati Atayi), Khabam ya bidaram (Sleeping or Awake, lyrics by Iraj Jannati Atayi), Harf (Letter, lyrics by Shahyar Ghanbari), Mah pishooni (Moonlit Forehead, lyrics by Iraj Jannati Atayi), Pol (Bridge, lyrics by Iraj Jannati Atayi), Faslé tazé (New Season, lyrics by Zoya Zakarian), Hamsafar (Fellow Traveller, lyrics by Iraj Jannati Atayi), Gahvaré (Cradle, lyrics by Zoya Zakarian), Vaghteshé (It's Time, lyrics by Iraj Jannati Atayi), Asheghané (Amorously, lyrics by Shahyar Ghanbari), Daryayi (Of the Sea, Dzovayin, lyrics by Iraj Jannati Atayi), Shabé shisheyi (Glass Night, lyrics by Iraj Jannati Atayi). On the other hand, Varoujan's arrangements for Googoosh recall masters of film music to mind like Lalo Schiffrin and Ennio Morricone,

especially in these three particular songs composed by Hasan Shamayizadé and based on lyrics by Ardalan Sarfaraz: Mano To (Me and You), Karibé Ashena (Familiar Stranger) and Oon manam (That's Me).

A third Iranian pop music idol is Dariush who performed four of Varoujan's compositions in his repertoire of 200 songs. His real name is Dariush Eghbali and was born in 1951. The most popular and very much loved Booye khoobe gandom (The Good Smell of My Wheat) is based on a poem by Shahyar Ghanbari. The other two songs have lyrics by Iraj Jannati Atayi: Baradar jan (Dear Brother) and Eshgheman ashegham bash (Be My Lover O My Love). The fourth song is a crowd cheerer and a personal favorite of mine called Ejazé (Permisson) with lyrics by Reza Atayi. Audiences all over the world are always thrilled by this song whenever Dariush sings it at his concerts. Varoujan also arranged seven other songs for Dariush based on melodies by other composers.

Varoujan composed only one song for the lyrical and beloved Persian singer Farhad called Hafteyé khakestari (Grey Week). He also composed one song for Satar called Shabé akhar (The Last Supper). Leila Frouhar sang only one of his compositions called Yek nafas atre to bas (One Breath is Enough to Feel Your Smell). Those three compositions were all written by the acclaimed poet Shahyar Ghanbari.

Varoujan Hakhbandian was born in 1940 in Kazvin, Iran. The same year he lost his father. His mother died in 1942 and he was sent to live with his grandparents. When his grandmother died in 1947 he was sent to the Italian boarding school in Tehran. He graduated from the Tehran Conservatory of Music where he learned to play the piano. His teachers were Ruben Grigorian and Ludwig Basil. After that he went to the United States to specialize in music arrangement for four years. After he returned to Iran, Varoujan taught music in

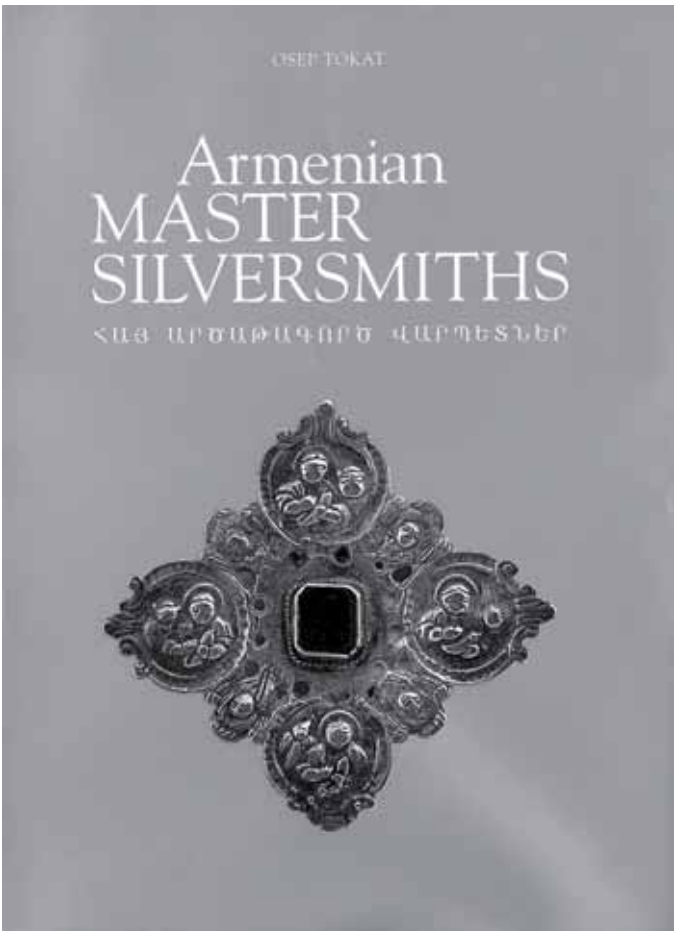


Armenian schools for two years in Ahvaz. When he moved to Tehran, he was hired by Parviz Atabki as orchestrator for his Tanin studio. Then he started composing songs for the Zangooleha television show where new voices were discovered. There he met the poet Shahyar Ghanbari and Googoosh. His song Harf (Letter) based on Ghanbari's poem was chosen as Best Song of the year in 1975. The same year he won the SEPAS Award for Best Film Music at the 5th Iranian National Film Festival for the movie Kandoo. One of Varoujan's other compositions based on Ghanbari's work called Dehkadeye koochake man (My Small Village) is lost forever and no copy of it exists anywhere. This song was performed by Zia Atabay in the Athens Music Festival in Greece and won the Golden Medal for best song. In 1979, when he was arranging the soundtrack for the film Bar feraz asemanha (On Top of the Skies), Varoujan had a heart attack and was taken to the hospital. After being confined to bed for ten days he passed away on 26 Shahrivar (September 17). The next day he was buried by friends in the Eastern Armenian cemetery in Tehran.

From 1970 to his tragic death in 1979, Varoujan composed twenty seven film soundtracks and was highly ranked among the best film music composers along with Babak Bayat and Esfandiyar Monfaredzadé in the history of film music in Iran.

Babak Bayat said about him: "All that we have in a song is from Varoujan. All the arrangements and the musical themes have their origin and are influenced by the works of Varoujan."

THE ARMENIAN ART OF



We are looking at the much anticipated edition by the “Van” publishers of Los Angeles and the “Tigran Mets” publishers of Yerevan of “The Silversmiths of Armenia” by Hovsep Takat. The author is a distinguished collector of silver articles based in Los Angeles, whose long years of research and collected items and data are put into service to the Armenian studies of the relevant periods. Actually, the multiple specimens of silver art exhibited in different museums of the world until now have not merited the appropriate attention. This gap is filled by Hovsep Tokat with his professional approach. The purpose of the book is to submit to the readers and specialists data on certain periods of the Armenian history which, beside Constantinople, Caesaria, Smyrna, Trabzon, Carin and other places, mostly include Van-Vasputakan, as well as places of Armenian exile of the post-genocide period. This situation has been masterfully interpreted by the specialists supplying the book: Harry Vorberian and Ishkhan Jinbashian. The work is printed in Armenian and English, with interesting selection of illustrations, putting into circulation extensive evidence, including ancient coins, sheaths of swords, book bindings, containers for everyday use, ornaments, things, et al.

The starting and ending pages carry images of “Paradise on Earth”, a view of Van City with its cliff fortress, city center and orchards formerly bustling with Armenians. Here one could see the small but very efficient Armenian community of jewelers. In actual fact, from this and other shops the Western Armenian modernism had to exit that because of the Great Genocide remained an unopened flower, imprinted into this little article of Armenian silver craft. It is not surprising that the author dedicated the book to his genocide-surviving parents.

As noted in the preface, “In reality both art and craftsmanship belong not to one nation or one individual, but rather to the entire humanity, equally, their protection and support has to be effected by the whole of humanity. But when I saw the destruction of our monuments, and even small and subtle manually produced and unique articles by the Armenian hands lumping the blame onto aliens, in the face of those bitter happenings I could not remain indifferent”. The first part of the book is a review of the history of the

SILVER

Armenian nation, wherein of a particular interest is the subsection “The Cultural Life of Armenians under the Ottoman Rule”, with all the most important intellectuals and artists. Presented in the second section is the chronicle of Van City, with a special emphasis on the most significant specimens of the Van’s jewelers’ art. The second, fourth and fifth sections of the book are of a particular interest, bearing the names: “Armenian Ornamental Art in silver and gold work”, “Armenian Gold and Silver Working in Van”, To be noted here is an original definition of ornamental art



Master Malchas. A Silver Book Binding



A Silver dishes for honey and butter. Master Tigran, Van

by the author: “Ornamental art shows the real life of the people. That art, from the beginning of human history to this time has



A Silver Bag for Keeping Rings, Van

host box, different crosses, silver wine cups from Van, a chrism cup, cigarette boses, tumblers, inkpots, pens and different ornaments, rings, handbags, incense cups, handles, etc. In this part of the book an important contribution is the professional explanation of the silversmiths’ technical innovations, thermal treatment and other techniques, gilding. An important undertaking was the compilation of lists of renowned jewelers, their personal details and trademarks.

WORKING



A Silver Gilded Cross. 18th c., Kilikia

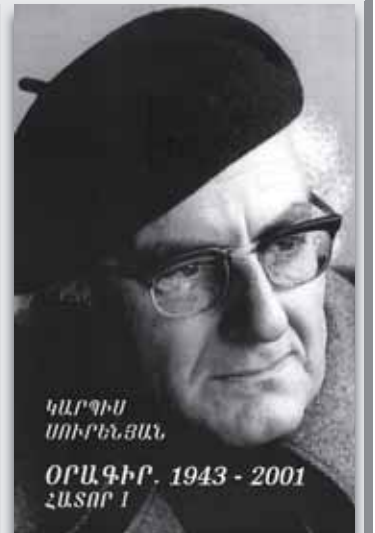
embellished the human body, clothes, dwellings, furniture and utensils, instruments, books and manuscripts, places of worship and temples, even tombstones”. Among the exhibits there are some specimens belonging to the author, like a silver gold-coated

“The Silversmiths of Armenia” by Hovsep Tokat is a talented work, not only because of artifacts and innovations, but rather by the method of presentation. This is an comprehensive merging of the contemporary and the historical, the professional and the commonly accessible, the Armenian and the International. The history of this book includes a wide-range cooperation between the domestic and overseas specialists. Indeed, while writing the book, the author contacted about fifty foreign and domestic specialists.

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New Books

Karbis Surenian, Diary, 1943-2001, Vol. 1. Yerevan, “Sargis Khachents” Publisher.



A. Hakobian, A Study of Color and Imagination. Yerevan, “Zangak-97” Publisher, 2006.



Liza Manvelian, String of Love. Aleppo, Syria, “Arevik” Publisher, 2005.



L. Lajikyan, Iaudation to Mother Tongue. Yerevan, 2005.



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Editor's Briefcase



"PANORAMA" Magazine, #32, 2005, Los Angeles, containing Sarian-related materials.

"SHAVIGH" Magazine, #5, 2005, Aleppo.

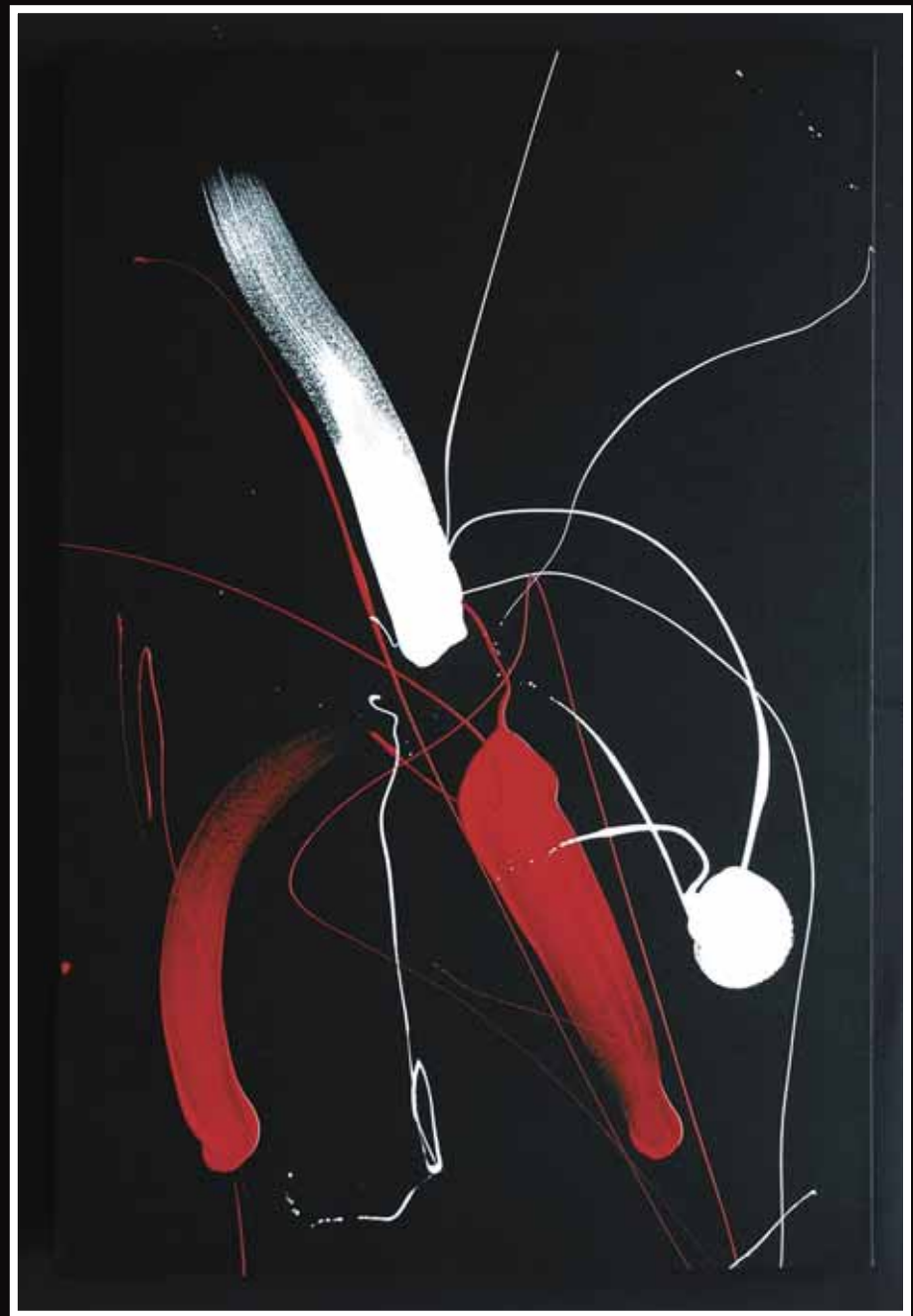
"KAMAR" Magazine, a Beirut based newly opened literary and artistic periodical, the first number (2005):

All mentioned publications are culturally oriented, and loaded with essential information.

CONDOLENCE

The Editorial staff of "Armenian Art" offers condolence to Norayr Vardanyan, executive secretary of the journal, on the occasion of death of his beloved mother, SEDA MKHITARYAN, which occurred on December 9th, 2005, at 82 years of age.

The Editorial staff of "Armenian Art" offers condolence to Hasmik Ginoyan, Executive Director of the Journal, on the occasion of death of her beloved mother, SONA GINOYAN which occurred on January 16, 2006, at 68 years of age.



Milanda de Mont

(Australia).

A Personal Exhibition,

the National Picture Gallery,

June 7.

Milanda de Mont, A Dance



**The Editorial Office of “Armenian Art” Magazine is advocating
a compilation of an illustrated manual
“The Armenian Painters and Sculptors of the Early 21st Century”,
to include the expatriate Armenian professional artists.**

**Please find the relevant forms to be filled in and submitted at our web site
www.armenianart.am**