



cultural magazine

# Armenian Art

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Cover Picture:  
Zakar Khachatryan,  
Poppies

# "The non-Armenians will see and will become aware of the high-rate Armenian art"

questroom

On October 19, the editorial office of "Armenian Art" played host to Mr. Vahe Gabrache, President of the Armenians Union of Switzerland. Karen Matevosyan, Editor-in-chief of the Magazine, and Hasmik Ginoyan, executive director, testified their gratitude to Mr. Gabrache and the Armenians Union of the Switzerland for extending his sponsorship to the English publication of "Armenian Art" magazine.

Mr. Gabrache was asked to answer a few questions:

**- When did the Armenians Union of the Swiss come about and what activities does it pursue?**

The Armenians Union of the Swiss was established about 50 years ago, when following the Genocide Armenians arrived in different countries, the Swiss, too brought some Armenian orphans taking them under their custody. Having assumed adulthood, they decided to establish the "Armenians Union of the Swiss". They built a church which later became a free and independent institution, since church is basically different from educational or cultural establishments. During that period the Swiss Armenian Alliance used to be the most important organization of locally based Armenians..

With the passage of years, more Armenians came from different countries, the colony augmented, many Armenians came from Turkey to the German-speaking and Italian-speaking communities, to start forming their own organizations. The Swiss Armenian Alliance, being a powerful entity, assisted them by advise and other means. The Swiss Armenian Alliance today is concentrated around the French-community Armenians, however in affairs of overwhelming significance they get consolidated to exercise unity and cooperation. Our most expedient operations are aimed at April 24, the anniversary of the Genocide, the Festival of Translators, the 28 of May, and September 21. On those days we display joint action, arrange various cultural events.

It has already been for two years that a new operational front has been opened to counter the Turkish propagandistic efforts at denying the occurrence of the Armenian Genocide altogether. We, along with an organization based in the German section, are doing joint work to counter those efforts. Perhaps you know that lately in the European "TIME" the Turks put a DVD with allegedly tourist purposes, but in reality it is completely anti-



Armenian propagandistic material denying the occurrence of the Genocide. We filed a suit against the "Time". And it seems, they suspended it, they wrote an apologizing letter, (as if they had ignored the contents of the DVD), however, we want them to put our DVD into their paper, describing the Genocide. It is our hope that we shall succeed.

**- What is the purpose of your visit to Armenia?**

The purpose of this visit is business. First of all, opening the specialized center "Cooking and Hotel Business" with the participation of our "Alliance" Foundation which has been scheduled for today.

Yesterday we opened an orphanage for 25 girl minors, where they can stay for two years after school. We have also the "Philipossian" Foundation donating scholarship to students.

Another one is the "Armenia" Foundation (with myself as President), building a school, a medical facility in two villages of Kharabakh, as well as other structures, I will have to visit the construction sites to evaluate the progress.

**- How did you learn about the "Armenian Art" Magazine and decided to have it translated into English?**

We were in the middle of a meeting, when for the first time we saw this publication brought in by Ms. Nevrik Azatyan. As to me, I have a small collection of pictures, so that when I saw that issue, I thought it was terrific, it had to be made known, the non-Armenians also had to see it and to get an idea of the Armenian fine art. Others, when they have a little of anything, they make the whole world know about it. It was a unanimous decision of our meeting that it should be translated into English and spread around. We are deeply satisfied that this matter has been put into operation, and that in the coming year, too, this sponsorship will continue.

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# CONFERRING THE AWARDS AT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE



On October 24 the RA Ministry of Culture convened the award distribution ceremony. Hovik Hoveian, the Minister, awarded the gold medal of the Ministry of Culture to Aghvan Hovsepyan, Honorary Chairman of the Compatriotic Union, "for significant contribution into the reinforcement of cultural life and for sponsoring activities". Meanwhile, Gagik Giurjan, Deputy Minister, delivered to Aghvan Hovsepyan a membership card of the International cultural organization ICOMOS.



In his acceptance speech Aghvan Hovsepyan indicated that the award was received as a tribute to the work done by the Nig-Aparan Compatriotic Union, mentioning the leading members of the Union name by name. He noted that the Compatriotic Union pursued non-political aims, the overall trends of the work being the cultural activities.

Subsequently the minister presented Arto Chakmakchyan, a notable sculptor, repatriated to Armenia from Egypt in 1948 and residing in Canada since 1975. The minister read a message by R. Kocharyan, RA President, awarding the artist with the "Movses Khorenatsi" medal.

Accepting the high award, Arto Chakmakchyan said: "I am deeply touched and very proud of the fact that I have

been acknowledged by Armenia. I have justified my having left Armenia. The respect that I have reaped here today is response to my work during the years that I was away. All my works are purely national, since I have been able to show the aliens that the Armenian nation can compete and exhibit the Armenian art, which was for them quite new and

unexpected. And today, when I came back to my land, I am very thankful to everyone."

To the minister's remark "Hopefully, you will leave a few sculptures in Armenia" Arto Chakmakchyan added: "That is my duty".

**K. M.**

## DONATION OF RUSSIAN PAINTINGS TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY

The Armenian National Gallery has a large collection of Russian art, however in the last two decades there have been no new additions. But now an occasion recurred, and 2005 was declared the year of Russia in Armenia, while the second week of September were the days of St. Petersburg in Yerevan.

In the interpretation of the Gallery Director Pharavon Mirsoyan (a graduate of the St. Petersburg Repin Art Academy), the Museum arranged an exhibition of modern Russian art. The success of the action was due to the competence of Ashot Khachatryan, a painter living in St. Petersburg, the National Gallery opened an exhibition of Modern Russian Art, in the presence of Valentina Matvienko, the Governor of St. Petersburg. It was a pleasant surprise that the 18 participating painters presented 22 of their exhibits to the Gallery.

Gagik Giurjan, Deputy Minister of Culture, RA, made a speech of acknowledgement to the visitors. the multiply emphasized century-old friendship between the Armenian and the Russian nations is in the context of political expressions and evaluations, this valuable donation being its good evidence.

**Zaruhi Dilanyan, Gallery Research Unit**





# ARMVENET

## TREASURES OF ST. LAZARUS IN ARMENIA

The Armenian-Italian friendship is many centuries old. Celebrations of this century-old friendship have seized our city for a month causing great joy and enthusiasm. One of the examples is the exhibition on October 5 at the Armenian National Picture Gallery organized by joint efforts of the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mekhitarian Association of Venice, the Venice Principality, the Armenian National Gallery, the Charents Literature and Art Museum of Yerevan, the Armenian National Library.

Shown for the first time in Yerevan was the 300-plus years of the Mekhitarians as seen by the eyes of the Italians in their paintings. Coordinator of the Mekhitarian Association exhibition is Father Harutiun Pstikyan.

The St. Lazarus' treasures are in Armenia for the first time. That exclusive exhibition featured all Armenian-Italian days. The opening ceremony of the exhibition started with the prayer by Catholicos Garegin II and his Patriarchal blessing. The event was attended by the Prior of the Mekhitarian Association and numerous visitors from many countries.

The three hundred years of creative history and events in the Armenian history are reflected in the works of Italian great masters of art. The display includes great Italian artists, who shared with the Mekhitarians the experience of the Armenian great return and the history of establishing self-determination, since the Christening by Grigor the Illuminator up until the remarkable Mekhitarian masks, the Armenian history according to Giuseppe Canella and Giulia-



no Giasso. It is a rich treasure having an Italian beginning and an Armenian continuation.

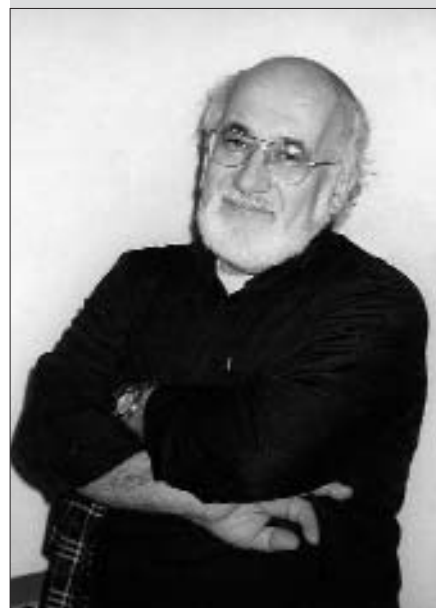
ARMVENET is exclusive not only in unique attestation of the close association of the two ancient civilizations, but also in their encyclopedic contents that has always been attributed to the scholarly and cultural activities by the Mekhitarians.

Much activity in organizing the exhibition was shown by the aforementioned museums of Armenia, which have presented the activities by St. Lazarus' and the Mekhitarians in the specimens related to the notable personalities of the Armenian culture.

**Siuzi Aghabekian,**  
*Picture gallery research unit*

Since October 5, shown at the four spacious halls of the National Picture Gallery are "The Treasures of S. Lazarus". An exclusive concept of this exhibition, the first one of its kind, was born on October of the year before, when R. Kocharyan, President of Armenia visited St. Lazarus

## FATHER HARUTIUN PSTIKIAN PRESENTS



and said in surprise: "I could never imagine that the Great Monastery of the Mekhitarians could have such a rich collection of cultural treasures". And here, just a year after that a single insignificant part of those treasures was exhibited in Yerevan.

Under the total slogan of "the days of Armenian-Italian friendship" the exhibition showed works by the Great Italian Masters (Zugno, Maggiotto, Gavagnin, Paoletti, Hayez, Canella, Zusso, etc.) belonging to the Mekhitarian Fathers, representing the most important persons in the Armenian history (Sahak, Mesrop, Grigor the Illuminator, the Vardanank, Mekhitar, et al.) as well as historical events (from Hike Nahapet to Levon, the King of Kilikia).

Also making part of the "St. Lazarus Treasure" are Armenian-language maps since 1751 made up by the Mekhitarian

Fathers, etched pictures of saints, as well as illustrations to historical books, the etched ebony wood blocks used by Hakob Meghapart for printing (1500), several old books from the historical St. Lazarus publications, historical artifacts, (a message by St. Peter with his unique seal, the hat of Aghasi, the hero of Zeitun, the belt of Daniel Manini, the last Duke of Venice, the seal of the 1918 Italy's delegation to Yerevan, and Armenian let-pass of the same year, an official order by Napoleon Bonaparte, the death mask of Komitas, personal effects of Mihitar Sebastatsi: a robe, a belt, a finger-ring, church vessels, etc., and the sword of the last King of Kilikia Levon V with golden letters: Gift to Levon I from Genoa.

Displayed in glass containers are old Mkhetharean printed books, the staffs of the National Picture Gallery and the Eghishe Charents Literary Museums showed top-level support and cooperation, while the 4 halls were reserved for the paintings and sculptures by the Mekhitharean alumni or those who had worked in Italy.



It was the first time that the cultural treasures of such value took a temporary leave of St. Lazarus, and it was the first time that Republic of Armenia should host this type of luxurious artistic collection at the National Picture Gallery.

It is nice that the cultural cooperation started with the "St. Lazarus Treasures" will develop from day to day, strengthening the spiritual links between Home Country and the Armenians abroad.

# EXHIBITIONS IN THE GALLERY

## The Days of Sharja Culture

Sharja City (United Arab Emirates) is considered one of the most conspicuous centers of Arab culture. Sharja is ruled by the Emir, it has cultural institutions and museums, including the Sharja Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Arab Art, the Islamic Museum, etc.

On September 19, the National Gallery opened an exhibition of Sharjah art. The most important attendee was Muhamad Al Kasim, Emir of Sharjah.

The exhibition was very original. It showed landscapes, still life, portraits, black-and-white art, sculptures, pieces of decorative and applied art. Particularly noticeable were the Arab national fashions, equipment for recovering pearls from the sea bottom, thimbles, percolators, grids, pliers, etc. Also exhibited were pieces of archeological evidence.

*Lilit Aghabekian*

## Reopening of the Jotto Memorial Residence

Memorial Residence of Gevorg Grigorian (Giotto) (1897 – 1976), a Tbilisi Armenian painter, established in 1980, affiliated to the Armenian National Picture Gallery. The showrooms renovated by the "Lins" Foundation, exhibit multiple pieces by the author: canvases, black-and-white art, archival and memorial materials, personal effects, as well as works by his contemporaries et al: E. Kochar, G. Fermanyan, A. Fermanyan, A. Dilbaryan, Al. Bajbeuk-Melikyan, V. Ter-Grigoryan, A. Nalbandyan, H. Hakobyan.

On September 9, the opening of the Memorial was attended by Alexandr Piradov, who brought his collection of crockery displaying it in the museum lobby with a title: "The round dish space" On the show are large and small vessels and earthenware. The painting on the ware was done by Armenian painters based in Georgia.

*Marina Eghiazaryan*

## The Pictures by Yan Artus-Bertran (October – November)

A Frenchman Yan Artus-Bertran (born 1946) established an agency "Altitude" in 1991, featuring a unique selections of photos taken from the sky, involving photographers all over the world. The book "The Earth from the Sky" was published in 24 languages. The exhibition "The Earth from the Sky" was shown in 30 countries receiving over 50m. visitors.

Yan Artus-Bertran wanted to share his photographic vision with the blind. Spectacles maker, founder of a well-known company, Armenian Alen Miklin accepting the proposal prepared a version of the photos from cellulose acetone. The images were chiseled using a state-of-the-art computer program. for the first time the visually impaired or blind people have an opportunity to perceive those miraculous photos.

# Jean Ter-Merkeryan -70

Jean Merkeryan, violinist, winner of International contests, Professor, is 70 years old.

Some artists leave traces on the time, communicating with the classical values of the world, inspiring, shaping and integrating many generations. Jean is exactly like that. Having won the Margerit Lundi and Jacque Tibault contest in Paris, 1961, Jean



continued his triumphant performances. Every concert of his is a victory, the victory of soul against matter, good against evil, discipline against chaos.

The world today is filled with virtuosos. However, many of

them, no doubt, being worthy of respect, are mostly stunning, rather than touching the heart. Their playing draws no tears of joy from the listeners. Meanwhile, the virtuosity by Jean is pleasing, the attendance of his concerts is like pilgrimage. His art is like twittering of the soul, it is as distinct from others as a manuscript illustrated by Toros Roslin from a printed book. Jean is performing a very difficult mission: planting peace in people's souls. The words aimed at singer Cheramis by Avetik Isahakyan can today be re-addressed to the violinist: "Listening to him is life and joy, in one with no heart it will ignite a fire."

*Daniel Erazhisht*

## Karo Nshanyan's Concert in Yerevan

On October 10 "Friends of Armenian Culture", a performance by an Armenian Canadian Karo Nshanyan (bass-baritone) took place in the Arno Babajanian Concert Hall of Yerevan under the sponsorship of the Constantinople Armenians with the participation of the soloists from the A. Spendiarian National Opera Varujan Martirosyan (tenor), Magda Mkrtchyan (soprano), Lilit Hakobian (mezzo-soprano). The concert included pieces by Komitas, Tigranian, T. Chokhajan, G. Siuni, Hovannes, et al. the Yerevan audience enjoyed a beautiful evening of master-art musical performance.



### THE WORLD OF BOOKS

## ARMENIAN MINIATURE PAINTERS IN LUXURY EDITION

The Mesrop Mashtots Matenadaran continues publishing reference literature on the Armenian manuscript culture in different fields, including miniature painting. A long-time researcher of Matenadaran, Astkhik Gevorgyan, a Ph.D. in art criticism published a bibliographic list in 1998 of the Armenian miniatures: "Armenian Miniatures. A bibliography". The fundamental publication covering the 9 – 19 cc., was followed by a new hefty volume "Anonymous Armenian Miniature Painters. A Bibliography", 9 – 17th cc., Cairo, 2005-11-18 (supported by the Satenik J. Chaggr Foundation of the Armenian Benevolent Union). The previous volume covered 464 miniature painters (mentioning all their known manuscripts and paintings), while this volume makes references to 903 miniature painters of the illustrated manuscripts, whose names remained unknown. Presentation is made of around 400 miniature reproductions, most published for the first time. Placed at the end of the book are thematic pictures, portraits, inventories of geographic names and used manuscripts. This publication provides a huge mass of material to the researchers of the Armenian miniature painting.

The editorial staff of "Armenian Art" has received a very useful book "Armenian Computer Fonts" by Avetik Mkrtchian, Edik Gabuzyan, Hike Gabuzyan and a luxury edition of the catalogue by painter Boris Egiazaryan (Kiev).







September 13 was the day of unveiling  
“Commander Njdeh” at National Gallery.

“I become extremely surprised when I encounter an Armenian person of no talent”, said Garegin Njdeh (Garegin Njdeh, *Utterances*, Yerevan, 2002, p. 73, in Russian).

Times have changed. Today another popular saying, born in the West, is in fashion: “If you are clever, why are you not rich?”

If that idea were absolute, then the present-day Armenia would indeed be paradise on earth. Moreover, Armenia would by no means have lost its long-standing paradise. However, the talent and intelligence given to man originally, was expected by Njdeh to yield not the riches which could only enslave and corrupt, but rather the sublime values, like patriotism, freedom, courage, and virtue.

Those who love God will also accept responsibilities with regard to nation, homeland or state. Meanwhile, the unbelieving are evil and cannot become soldiers with breath of fire.

The Armenians are defined by Njdeh as the nation who had been the first to embrace the Christian Inspiration.

Very much like the wizards and leaders of

# He Will Illumin

the past, the Troop Commander was keenly aware of the role of art and culture as a whole for an individual or a nation in their perfection, integration and liberation. The country, land, territory, were regarded by Njdeh as the geographic armor of the homeland, while the home country itself as the soul of the cultivating nation and its culture. (R. Hambartsumian, Garegin Njdeh, Yerevan, 2002, p. 140, in Armenian):

The same idea, however, in figurative language, is supported by another utterance. “Ararat and

Mesrop are the summits of great sanctity sustaining the high level of the Armenian thought and outlook (ibid., p. 56).

Njdeh believed that the measure of the country's and nation's greatness is their mind, art, culture and their scopes of influence. Therefore, the significance of national art was seen by the Commander in a dignified dialogue with the culture of humanity.

That is, the national and the all-human must be like communicating vessels. However, the national ele-

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Վոկալ (♩ = 48-50)

Կոմպ. և ինստր. մասնագործ՝  
ՊԱՆՈՍԵՐ ԵՐԱՍԵՐՈՒՄՅԱՆ



music

G. Njdeh was most imaginative in

using the experience and ideas of his contemporaries. The philosopher Hike Asatryan draws a parallel between Njdeh and Friedrich Nietzsche. Njdeh, also within the context of "strong personality" uses the "superman" concept, however without the Nietzsche's extravagancies. As the human SELF in struggle for existence, embracing mighty supernatural forces, will not collapse, according to Njdeh, it has to lean upon the basis of the tribal SELF, the ALL-SELF. If, by reason of a weak temper, those two YES-s cannot be superposed, that calls forth a tragedy, if they merge, that will produce a hero, a superman. Some have picked up honey from

It is interesting to note that the Commander liked the gallant Spartans.

The greatest enemy of nations, according to Njdech, is a greedy leader. An ignorant leader is considered by him a curse and a punishment for his nation. A man having lost holiness will eventually become anti-human, while a clean body is a storage of infinite strength.

The Commander shows contrasting characters of barbarous troop commanders and Alexander the Great, Napoleon, etc., concluding that whatever the atrocities of war, making use of the “weapons of hell” should be ruled out.

The Commander is very concerned with generosity of freedom fighters, which is incidentally mentioned in "The Campaign of Khanasor".

"... Fear not, calm yourself, dear, revengeful Fetan will never lay a finger on the women".

Njdech exhorted to love the beautiful and the heroic, even among enemies. The same with Napoleon. In 1809, distraught by the death of his comrade-in-arms the French Marshal Jannie after being wounded near Vienna, which was coincidental with the death of Joseph Haydn, Napoleon, who being deeply distressed, equalled nonetheless the occasions by providing security to Haydn's house so as to lay to rest with dignity the brilliant son of Austria, a country hostile to his own.

Njdech expressed veneration for Richard Wagner, while another great German inspired him to write the following: "As a vessel, Bethoven is no more, he has sunk, what remains are his divine chords (Utterances, p. 64).



Indeed, divine are the starting chords of the "Heroic Symphony". Of the same quality are other chords, like "Egmont", "Leonora 3", the overture to "Koriolan" and other masterpieces, supporting the daring call by Schiller: "Against Tyrants".

Of course, Njdech was captivated not only by the ideological principles of music. E.g., Egmont was the leader of a liberation movement, while the Roman Koriolan was a general. The Commander's respect for music is particularly remarkable with regard to the fact that most troop commanders perceive music as a drum beat calling to assault. Incidentally, one of the concepts of Wagner's "Parsifal" is concordant with Njdech in that a troop commander should be honest, and that the strength belongs to a clean body. Parsifal is a noble knight, invulnerable to the arrows of evil.

The Commander, being a man of poetic soul, could not be insensitive to music. He used to say: "Suppress music and poetry, and our world will become a piggery (Utterances, p. 14). Here Njdech echoes Nietzsche who had written: "Life with no music would be a mistake".

Like Nietzsche, he is extremely sensitive to words, and is aware of the strength of word. According to him, a perfect example of the extraordinary force of word is the speech by Vardan Mimikonyan prior to the battle of Avarayr. Another note by Njdech reads: "Word is the leader himself", "In order to win, intelligence and talent is not sufficient, what is also needed is a mighty word (R. Hambartsumian, ditto, p. 58). A poem by Nietzsche reads: "...A well said word will be attended by the dead".

Today, at the time of an all-out pursuit of wealth, when word is severely depreciated both by the crowd and by the elite, we more than ever miss the elevated fiery word by Njdech. So contemporary-sounding are the words by the Commander: "At the time of great peril the inter-party clashes are tantamount to genocide (ibid. p. 131).

The intellectual class was regarded by Njdech as Architect of National Destiny. He cautions against disengaging from religion, for it is the same as severing an artery. "There can be no culture without the religious feeling. The sources of his creative zeal are all dried up, so he becomes a worshipper of goods"

(ibid., p. 39). Njdech calls to the young men to aim high, in order at the hour of danger to become the living sword of Motherland. The artists are advised to regenerate and disseminate the elevated ideas expressed in old Armenian literature, this mission being all-human, rather than national. Njdech's indications have been partially fulfilled. Today, the best manifestations of Armenian art are being spread all over the world. E.g., music by Aram Khachaturyan, the legacy of the singers of Goght.

It is a mystic coincidence that the first night of A. Khachaturyan's ballet "Spartacus" took place on December 27, 1956 in Leningrad. It was in some way a commemoration of Njdech's anniversary of death in a Vladimir City jail. Njdech regarded Spartacus as a spiritual man, comparing him to Vardan Mamikonyan. (Incidentally, A. Khachaturyan admitted that he had to overcome the resistance of Communist leadership while creating the "Spartacus" ballet:

the composer just quoted the positive opinion by Karl Marx on the Spartacus uprising). Indeed, A. Khachaturyan's Symphony #2 has also been created in the spirit of Njdech, as well as the Violin concerto, the sound of chords of those pieces were so unpleasant to the ears of the tyrants, very much like the sounds of the trumpets of Jericho.

It was one of the Commander's wishes to be rested on a slope of Khustup, until the bones of the Great Martyr will not only rest, but shine, like the torch of Grigor the Illuminator.

Could the Commander assume that the lines that he wrote in 1942 would be concerned with him directly, "The Martyr... will illuminate and warm up the road that we travel. He will consolidate our efforts. Those who go in his trail will become the nation of kings".

**Daniel Erazhisht**



### ՄԱՐԱԴԵՏ ՆՇԴԵՅ

1. Ողբարկի անդին մեր Ավարայրն է,  
Այս ասին քո սուրբ ծննդաբանն է:  
«Ասորականաց թուղ» սրբազան ու վեհ,  
Ցրաբաշխ ես դու՝ Գարեգին Լեւոն:

3. Խառնուրդի լանդին կանգնեց է վառված  
Յյուսիսի զոհն ավերասից՝ հառնած՝  
Զերսից անմահ մատուցն է լուսն՝  
Գալիլի վարդս՝ մահաբաշխ Լեւոն:

2. Երբ հուսահատված, հայերը զորված,  
Եկ Լյոն վաճառողն, ոստիկան զարկված,  
Դու՝ մոլորվեցիր՝ սղոթելով մեջ հրդեհ,  
Գեղեցիկ՝ «Ե՛հ վե՛հ», ապարդյուն Լեւոն:

4. Վերջը քո սուրբ եր, երկնացի օրհնված,  
Պատգամող լրագ հայ ազգող փրկված:  
Արյան կաթիլներ կողառնան վաղորդ,  
Ծավաթիդ պղծակ, հաղթական Լեւոն:



# From Motherland Away, Make Sounds of Motherland be Uttered by Children and Young Men Alike

diaspora



**Gayane Simonyan-Teryan** was born in Yerevan. She got her primary musical education at the Sarajan musical school graduating the 7-year course of violin playing.

**1980 – 1985:** study at the Yerevan Romanos Melikian musical school, conductor division, under Seda Stepanyan.

**1985 – 1990:** study at the Yerevan Komitas Conservatory, the class of Prof. Sergey Ghazaryan.

**1990 – 1993:** post-graduate study of conductorship at the Conservatory.

**1988 – 1991:** work at the Radio and TV with the “Arevik” children’s vocal and instrumental ensemble as conductor. The operatic choir of the Conservatory employed her as second conductor.

Since 1991 until today leading the “Mesrop Mashtots” Children’s Musical Ensemble and the Youth Choir of the Syrian Youth League.

**2000 – 2005:** founder and leader of the Kesap choirs “Kantegh” and “Kilikia”.

**2000 – 2004:** founder and leader, the Latakia “Narek” choir for children and young people.

**2004:** founder, the “Grigor Lusavorich” Church choir.

**- Ms. Gayane, how did you start your work in Aleppo?**

In November 1990 the “Arevik” children’s musical ensemble received an invitation from Aleppo. In the last days of the tour I received an invitation from the educational committee of Aleppo to accept the leadership of the “Mesrop Mashtots” youth choir established by the National Educational Board of the Beria diocese. Having come back to Armenia and obtained my parents consent, on December 21, 1991 I set out for Aleppo to accept my newly acquired job, and so for 15 years I have led the “Mesrop Mashtots” choir.

**What have you gained from Halepo as an artist that you could not find in Armenia?**

Actually, several months after graduating from the Conservatory, I came to Syria as a specialist. To be frank, I was very young, it was difficult to imagine life away from Home Country and family. Until then I worked with children born in Armenia. It must be noted that the “Arevik” group children possessed extraordinary musical knowledge and brilliant talents. Naturally, working with them was associated with a highly professional environment.

The situation in Aleppo was quite different. Prior to my coming, the “Mesrop Mashtots” choir, being created in 1973, had been active for only two years. The kids who wanted to sing in the choir were too numerous, while the music reading or musical talent were extremely rare. My selection was mostly done based upon the hearing and vocal data.

However, the Aleppo children had an advantage, it was their love and thirst for the Armenian song. In the children of Aleppo I found the previously unknown

dedication, love towards the choral performance, towards the Home Country, and, not the least important, towards myself.

Living and operating in Aleppo as an artist, I felt that living away from Armenia I become more sensitive with regard to the concept of Home Country, which is a feature of every expatriate Armenian. I felt that each item of cultural news or success was to be reproduced with my choir, to quell the lasting yearning for Armenia that was ever present in my heart. No doubt, while living and working in Armenia, those feelings could not have attained this level of sensitivity. And, it has to be owned up that in contrast to my successful activities in Aleppo, I had to overcome frequent obstacles and emotional crises. Nonetheless, the range of my professional activities in Syria was very substantial.

**What have you lost living outside Armenia?**

While outside Armenia I missed all cultural news, concerts and top-level performers in particular. Trying to fill in the gaps by reading the papers and magazines, watching television, and listening to the radio is useless: one thing is to live in Armenia and to be submerged into the artistic atmosphere, another thing is to live abroad trying to import all that is Armenian into your life and pursuits.

**How do you make up the repertory of the groups performing under your guidance? Can it be that the pieces performed are all your compositions?**

In Syria the choirs performing under my leadership are quite numerous. The repertories of the “Mesrop Mashtots” and “Kantegh” children’s choirs are compiled from the Armenian composers as well as from Armenian composers living in Syria,

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moreover, I often make use of the pieces composed by our classical composers. Besides, new nice and well-sounding songs have appeared in the recent past, dedicated to Motherland, in many languages – Arabic, English, French, Italian, all of them songs for children.

The “Meghri” ensemble has a certain setting, the repertory is compiled by the music played by national and patriotic groups.

The “Saghmos” group repertory is spiritual choral pieces, Armenian sharakans, fragments from other compositions.

The “Kilikia” youth choir is only two years old, but one can see very serious choral pieces in its performance list, which at first glance seem to be unfeasible. However, the great dedication of the “Kilikians”, love and serious work yielded their positive effect.

There have also been a few performances of my own compositions, although I have never regarded myself as a composer, however, this mentality prevailed, resulting in compositions “Nakhijevan”, “Javakh”, “Tribute to Sahak Nalpanian”. Words by Avetis Gatrjean, an Aleppo Armenian, “Masis’ Plea”, words by Nelli Tashjan-Tanashian, arranged by Dr. Raffi Apejian.

It is to be noted that the song “Nakhijevan” took part in the award-winning procedure at the vocal contest “Sayat-Nova” 2000, reaching the second round and earning an encouragement from the jury.

**Music being part of the Nation’s history, at what age, how and in what way should it be taught to the Armenian children?**

Actually, musical instruction has to be started by every mother during fetal development. The musical sounds heard by the mother at this period will be stored in the memory of the Armenian child.

Subsequently, it is important to do the presentation of the singing hour in the right way, while the school music is to be taught by a certified musical instructor. Which is often not the case, unfortunately.

And finally, all parents have to be aware that the Armenian child in the Armenian family has to say and hear the Armenian



song and word, rather than the Turkish distorted and tasteless jingle or foreign films with endless musical effects.

**What is your estimation of the Aleppo Armenians’ perception of music?**

Incidentally, my concerts are always packed with the Aleppo Armenian music fans. People are fond of these musical groups, although at the initial period the



reception was more reserved because of little familiarity with new Armenian songs, however, by and by the songs brought from Armenia gained popularity amid the Aleppo Armenian audience.

In the last five years I have made studio recordings of the “Mesrop Mashtots” ensemble. I am quite sure that the Armenia-based artists and musicians will see what I mean, what a hard work it is to be accomplished in Diaspora.

I have produced three CDs, the latest one

featuring vocal pieces and instrumental accompaniment.

Actually, since Aleppo does not have the CD-producing facilities I encountered considerable difficulties CD distribution. Although this work has won the approval of many, the CDs are being sold very heavily.

This is my 15th year in Syria. I very definitely feel that God is on my side, I am hopeful that this year, too, will allow me to do good work, I will keep trying to make the young people produce the sounds of



Motherland despite being remote, I will do what I can to raise the artistic standards.

**Are you thinking of coming back home?**

It has always been my dream to return and go on with my life and work in Armenia. However, the present-day situation in Aleppo with my family does not exactly converge with dreams. Yet, last year the “Mesrop Mashtots” group got a proposal to have concerts in Armenia, so I hope to expose the “Mesrop Mashtots” in Mother Country. That is my dream in the professional line.

**What would you like to say for a round-up?**

Let me emphasize my appreciation of the editorial staff of “Armenian Art” magazine, wish them well. As for my life and activities, I will have to be forever thankful to Lord God.

*Interview taken and recorded by  
Ani Fishenkchian*



# “THE VOICE OF THE ANCESTORS” AN EXHIBITION IN ALEPPO

The Aleppo Armenian community responds very scrupulously to nation-wide activities, unanimously participating in marking important anniversaries. The Remembrance of the Great Genocide, 90th anniversary, on which occasion a group exhibition titled “Ancestors’ Call” took place in the Aram Manukyan cultural center “Levon Shant” hall on April 22 – 29, sponsored by heads of the Aleppo Armenian communities, was initiated by the executive body of the Great Genocide 90th anniversary and the organization “Friends of the Armenian Thought”, as well as artist George Amparjan. Shown at the exhibition was the best pieces by 57 artists from different Armenian communities in Syria and other countries as well as Armenia. Similar exhibitions have a double value, since on the one hand they sustain the national memory, attesting the crime perpetrated, on the other hand showing the Armenian person, an entity so creative and cheerful, that even following a blow of destiny on that



scale, is able to live and to create in any corner of the world.

# THE RIGHT OF INHERITANCE

The “Adamean” theatrical group of the Aleppo beneficial and youth organizations “The Right of Inheritance” performed by Davit Muratyan produced by Emeritus Artist of Armenia, Professor Nikolay Tsaturyan was shown in October 2005 in Aleppo by the actors of the Nazaryan Hall. It had

been planned for April 2004, but did not take place for some reason.

90 years ago the ruthless crime was perpetrated not only against the Armenians but against the entire Humanity and the call of their innocent blood was incorporated in the essence of each actor of the Adamean theatrical group hovering before the eyes and in the souls of the spectators. The native land, language, are important stimuli in the nation’s history and culture.

ship and the salvation of many Armenian girls in the days of the massacre by gentle-hearted Arabs.

On the turn of the 21st century this performance is a call to be awake, not only to the juniors, but also to the seniors, who often, consciously or unconsciously smash the thoughts and souls of their children, affecting a specific adverse phenomenon. Best wishes to the Adamean Theatrical Group.

*Authorized Representative  
in Aleppo*



Each admonition of the old man, the main character - “Look into your heart” - was awesome, because he believed that it is conscience and mind that kept a person alert and immortal, this subject was also associated with the Arab-Armenian century-old friend-





Born in 1924 in Sarnakunk village, Region of Sisyan. Father, Avag Khachatrian, fell victim to the 1937 Stalin atrocities. Although a simple worker, in spare time he used to make different objects of art from wood, stone or metals. That was the situation that set Z. Khachatryan and his junior brother, today a well-known sculptor Artashes Hovsepyan, on the way to artistic taste, love for beauty and art.

In 1941 Z. Khachatryan graduated from the Goris Pedagogical School and started working at a village school. In November that year, not yet 18, the youth volunteered to the battlefield, passed a difficult way from the Black sea to the banks of the Oder, thrice heavily wounded, surviving by miracle.

After coming back home, Z. Khachatryan in 1946 – 1950 was a student of the P. Terlemezian Fine Arts School in Yerevan, then the State Institute of Arts. Subsequently he moved to Leningrad to study at the I. Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture under the guidance of B. Iohanson and A. Gerasimovich, well-known Russian artists.

In 1956 Z. Khachatryan graduated with honors. His graduation painting "On the Pastures of Alagyaz", a compositional large-for-

# His favorite color is radiating light

**ARARAT AGHASYAN** *Director, Institute of Art,  
National Academy of Science, Republic of Armenia*

## Zakar Khachatrian is 80

On the occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the Merited Artist of Armenia Zakar Khachatryan, published in St. Petersburg was a luxurious album featuring his works done during the past ten years, including both colored pictures and graphics.

The author of introductory note and conclusive story with the artist's biography and multiple photographs is Sergei Levandovsky, member of the Artists' Union of Russia and member of the Petrosian Academy of Arts.

The book is a pleasant surprise both for amateurs and professionals of art, for all people who are not indifferent to the contemporary Russian and Armenian painting.

Zakar Khachatryan has passed the way of life and creative activity, full of difficulties and trials, but also with happy and joyful moments and artistic accomplishments.

mat multi-figure oil painting, won high appraisal by the specialists. One year later, Z. Khachatryan accepted a job at the personal workshop of Alexandr Gerasimov, the People's Artist of the USSR, wherein he created a number of thematic images, including those dedicated to the Armenian peasants and workers: "A Foundry Hand", "In the Armenian Highland" "Taming the Vorotan". At the same time he painted one of his most successful works, the "Portrait of Alexandr Gerasimov (1960).

In the 1960s Z. Khachatryan lived and worked in Armenia. In Sisyan, under the shelter of his parental house, he opened a children's school of artistic education and a showroom, teaching art to gifted children.

For a few years Z. Khachatryan led the Department of black-and-white art at the Kh. Abovian Institute in Yerevan. The painter, being in command of different genres, during all those years he gave preference to landscape, created canvases emphasizing the grandeur of the architectural monuments of old and medieval Armenia ("White Church", 1961, "The Sisavan Church in Old Sisavan", 1965, "Gushun-dash (Holy Stone)", 1967, "The Monastery of Tonahat, Sisyan", etc). His colored panels using mosaic techniques embellish the interiors of official buildings in



Yerevan, merging with the architectural environment of the capital city.

Moving to Leningrad again, Z. Khachatryan retains close ties with Motherland, his native people, national culture, permanently assimilating and further developing creative traditions with the fine arts classics E. Tadevosyan, M. Saryan, S. Arakelyan et al., maintaining close relations with his senior and junior contemporaries: H. Zardaryan, Gh. Chubaryan, H. Minasyan, N. Tatanjyan, M. Avetisyan, and others.

Still in his student years, Z. Khachatryan was particularly interested in impressionism. In Leningrad's Hermitage and in the State Gallery of Armenia he faithfully copied the French impressionists and post-impressionists: Mone, Renoir, Sisle, Bonnari, Van Gog, Matis and other pieces, imitated in this or that way in some of



Winter

his works. ("Mimosa Flowers", 1968, "Winter", 1969, "A Street in Old Yerevan", 1969, Autumn: Tsakhkadzor, 1978, "An Outskirt of Yerevan", 1980, "The Geneva Lake", 1993, "Black Stream at Night", 1998, etc.).

By focusing upon the problems of illumination and the relationships between light and color, Z. Khachatryan gradually cleanses, refreshes and brightens his palette. The painter succeeds in open air under intensive light or objects viewed against the light making them unsubstantial, to free the bodies from their dense shells, to dissolve them so that they should be dissipated into translucent space.

The impressionist method in the art by Z. Khachatryan is manifest mostly in 1980s, when the painter goes to the Crimea, to create large-scale studies of a maritime dawn ("Sunrise at the Black Sea", 1984, "The Sea and the Sun", 1984, "The Black Sea: Midday", 1986, etc.). In these very quickly made pastels and few oil canvases Z. Khachatryan succeeds in showing the freshness of air and humid breath, in the deep and vast space suspended between the sky and water, slightly touched by the light of the new-born moon, violet-colored, turquoise, golden hues radiating on the waters as if it were a veil of braided haze. Those pieces by

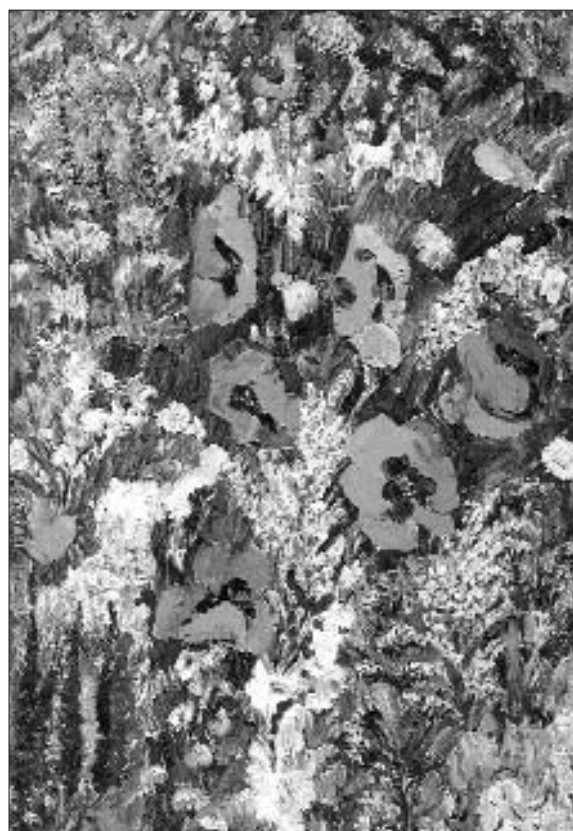
Z. Khachatryan have rightly been branded by S. Levandovsky "a new word in waterscape painting".

The Impressionistic method is successfully used by the painter both for the scenes of clean nature and to feature the urban and rural subjects. A special array is constituted by the work done with regard to sightseeing spots of St. Petersburg.

Reproducing topographic details of specific landscapes, he is putting an emphasis upon the first impression received from the nature, emphasizing the emotional part of the natural environment, capturing the irreproducible character of the moment. Following the example of the impressionists, he removed the black color from his canvases, as a symbol of bitterness and misery.

The painter shows his surprise and admiration not only for the views of nature but also in multiple still life images of flowers ("Lilies", 1956, "Poppies", 1961, "Roses", 1981, "Field Flowers", 2001, "Asters", 2003, etc.), perpetuating and developing the "Saryan Line" of the Armenian painting tradition. Several of those canvases executed with particular harmony and brightness, are dedicated to the participants of the Great Patriotic War, to those who had fallen on the battlefield and to the rest of the combatants.

Flowers



Despite advanced years and highly charged professional life, Z. Khachatryan is also engaged in public activity. He is member of the painting department of the St. Petersburg section of the Artists' Union of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the War Veteran's board, member of the Petrosian Academy of Arts and Sciences.

His works have been exhibited many times in Armenia, in Russia, in the republics of the Former Soviet Union, and abroad. Many of the works by the painter are being preserved in the showrooms of Yerevan, Moscow, Petersburg, many cities of the world, museums and private collections.

Being modest and honest, educated and well-mannered, amiable personality, Z. Khachatrian is not indifferent to the urgent public and moral problems concerned with many. In the words by the painter, "the current situation is alarming. Causing particular concern is the moral collapse, the indifferent and estranged attitude towards culture on the part of the state and the public. Man, unaware of the need for spiritual food, in the environment with purged morality, is becoming a toy for animal instincts and base passions." That was regrettably what Z. Khachatryan had to see with his own eyes. In May 2004 his house in native Sisyan was looted and abused. Valuable objects disappeared, the painter's archive, many documents and photos, scores of canvases created during decades. However, as noted by Jivan, "the days of adversity will come and go like winter". The people of Sisyan love and respect their gifted compatriot, talk of him with pride. In November 2004, the Sisyan children's school of artistic education and a showroom were named in his honor. Meanwhile, with regard to the merits of the painter in the matter of organizing the artistic life of Sisyan and the artistic education of the young generation, he was awarded the status of the Citizen Emeritus of Sisyan.

Good news has lately come from Russia. In Spring 2005, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War, by the edict of Putin, President of Russia, among other painter veterans, Z. Khachatryan was awarded the honorary title and the order of "Red Star", orders of Patriotic War, 1st and 2nd degree, "For Gallantry", "For the Capture of Berlin" and other decorations. Moreover, he has the title of merited artist not only in Armenia, but in Russia as well.

Let us now extend our cordial congratulations and wishes of new success to the distinguished artist on the occasion of his 80th Anniversary, that he remain with the same energy and youthful enthusiasm.

## NON-WRITERS, TOO, ARE INSPIRED BY LORI

The Picture Gallery of Vanadzor has become harmonious with the primeval colors of the autumnal Lori. For about a month this parade of colors has been captivating hundreds of people: started here was an unprecedented exhibition, authored by the "three brushes", a popular reference to the three painters – Hrant Tadevosyan, Khachatur Garabekyan and Nikol Agababyan.



This creative coalition has not been shaped automatically, two of the artists, Hr. Tadevosyan and N. Agababyan deliberately settled at Kh. Garabekyan's rural workshop to create and display 70 canvases to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the great writer at his birthplace, the village of Ahnidzor.

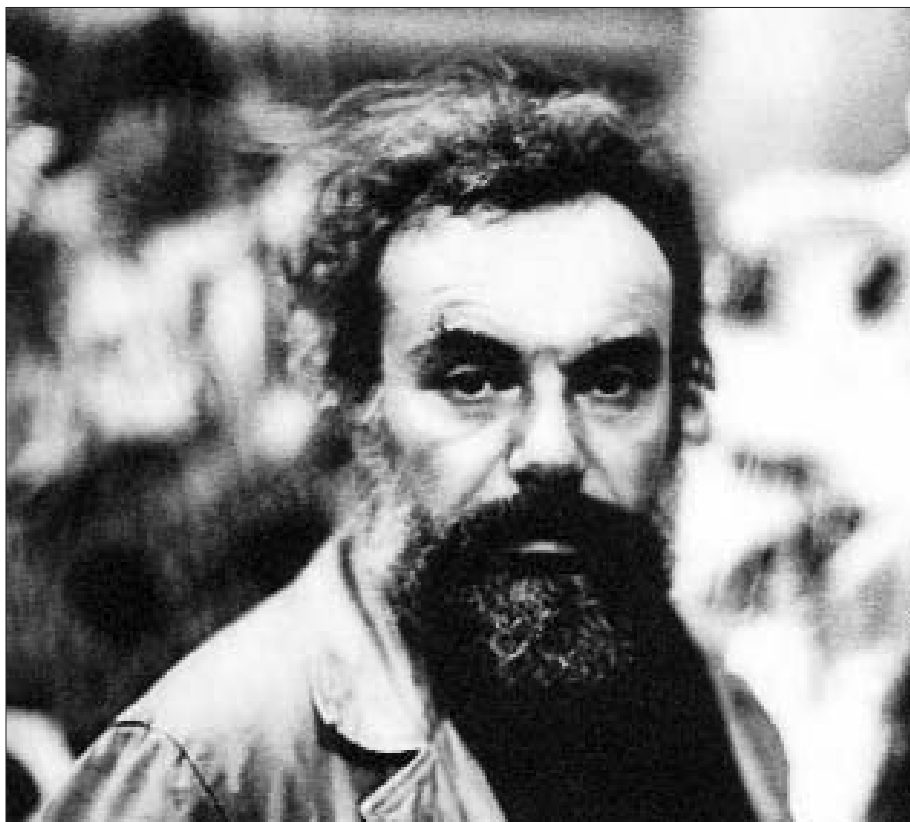
Taking part in the opening of the exhibition were members of the public from Yerevan, Ahnidzor, Noyemberyan, Giumri. That exhibition was exceptional, not only for the quality of pictures made by gifted artists, but in that the same scenery, a hill, a lawn, an autumn pear-tree or a stack of hay was depicted differently by each one, being displayed side by side.

The accord of Hrant Tadevosyan, Nikol Agababyan, and Khachatur Garabekyan showed Lori as a miraculous world. Each canvas looked like a symbol of nature, love, accord between man and nature, the flow of colors and melody, and a medley of personal feelings and generalized perceptions of the three masters.

Beside the esthetic pleasure, accompanying the visitor from the first canvas to the end, there was another growing satisfaction: an artist-citizen, thoughts of a specifically Armenian artist. The painters regarded this action as their duty, indicating the place and the role of the artist in our life.

**Samvel Khalatyan**





# Henri Elibekyan 70

**Poghos Haitayan**

Henri Elibekyan is one of the brightest stars in the Armenian constellation of the late 20th century. Henri Elibekyan, Minas Avetisyan, the Adalyans, Arto Tchakmakchian, Ara Shiraz, Ervand Gojabashyan, et al., have made a U-turn in the entire system of the Armenian artistic ideology, bringing in the new modern forms and problems, new perception of life and time. For this generation the workshops of Master Saryan and Maestro Kochar have almost become an origin, and later the presence of Kostan Zaryan makes the spiritual atmosphere of Yerevan meaningful and appealing.

The compulsory false soulless pathetic themes and forms of the totalitarian regime of socialist realism in the 60-s were countered by bold experimental search of deep and free imagery of

reality. This massive advent of the young was historically meaningful not only in the Armenian fine arts, but in the entire Armenian culture.

As far back as 1956, the 20-year-old H. Elibekyan for the first time in the Armenian reality, in complete ignorance of pop art because of the Iron Curtain, in his artistic medley embraces differing things and objects, admixing extraneous bodies to his artistic environment, enabling him to achieve an artistically and semantically new tones previously unfamiliar to the contemporary Armenian art.

This phenomenal artist was established in a very short spell of time, his very first pieces today stun by their artistic and semantic completeness, by their innovation and experimental spirit, the imaging and plastic mighty expression, emphasized national semantics.

I have been following the artist's life and creative work for two score years, from his first steps to gaining the universal recognition. The life and work of this overstrained, volcanic artist possessing demonic strength constitute a single unity, one being a natural extension of the other in his art, his physical and spiritual presence are so natural, inasmuch as he himself is a clot of living art, an artistic entity moving in space and time. Essentially daring, highly principled artist perceives man and world in permanent motion, dramatic conflicts, within the ever changing context of interpenetrating light, color, and volume. For him everything is in motion, whether it is canvas, or sculptural plastics, black-and-white graphics, a conceptual object or a brightly directed performance. His rare versatility is his remarkable personal quality.

Being a carrier of natural and subcon-

scious data on the 20-c. avant-garde art, the elements of scenic performance by Myerhold and Vakhtangov, anyway, the painter adopted the basic principles of expressionism. However, as any serious artist, he eventually remained loyal to the tradition from Velasces to Picasso as well as to the concepts associated with Marsel Duchan and Joseph Bois.

The creative, artistic and conceptual scale of H. Elebekyan is amazing: hi-tension psychological masks and compositions, new designs using diverse materials (object, assemblage, installation, flying objects, models of stage decorations), actions of theatrical performance ("Yakulov", "Nakhijevan, Artsakh, Armenia", "From Impiety to Faith", "Bachus", "Love the Man", "I Don't Give a Damn for Public Taste"), stage decorations of different years (A. Arbuzov, "Tough Games", F. Durrenmath, "Playing Strintberg", G. Sundukyan, "Khatabala", E. Charents, "Country Nairi").



H. Elebekian, having in-depth experience of the obscure political processes, the formation of moral and ethical standards of our time as well as the marginally located culture, is trying hard, as in the previous years, to remain in control of his personal environment, with elevated civil orientation, with the intention to open new horizons in art.

He was dreaming about dressing an entire street in Yerevan, performing fantastic staging, under his directorship and his script in a modern musical setting.

However, interfering with the imagination is the array of exhibitions that have not been implemented, but could have been done by the author himself, with his flying objects, with phantasmagorical coloured assemblages, created by multiple interrelations of things, large-scale panels and other scenic devices, built using different materials, sculptures and many arrays of graphic images born in the soul and imagination of the painter as an unforgettable feast of art.

That is however our tough reality, today's excentric morals, wherein we placed Henri Elibekyan, the brightest personality of the post-Saryan period who had never accepted any boundaries.

The outstanding artist on the threshold of his 70th anniversary, inspired by his art, fills every single day with warmth of soul and youthful enthusiasm.



# ՀԵՆՐԻ ԷԼԻԲԵԿՅԱՆ



Henry  
Elibekyan



1. Գիշ սարերն ռեգիստրում  
Shout in different registers
2. Տղամարդու դիմանկար  
Portrait
3. Լեռներ  
Mountains



# Lanirra Aytsh



1



2

Ծնվել է Երեւանում, հինգ տարեկանից տեղափոխվել Մոսկվա: Վերադառնալով ուսանել է Փ. Թերլեմեզյանի անվան գեղարվեստի ուսումնարանում, ապա՝ գեղարվեստա-թատերական ինստիտուտում, որն ավարտելուց հետո շուրջ 25 տարի դասավանդել է նույն տեղում: Վերջին տարիներին բնակվում է ԱՄՆ-ում (Լոս Անջելես):

Մասնակցել է բազմաթիվ խմբակային ցուցահանդեսների, այդ թվում EXPO- 67-ին (Կանադա), 1992 Art EXPO-ին (ԱՄՆ), ունեցել է անհատական ցուցահանդեսներ՝ 1993 (Բոստոն), 1996, 2000, 2002 (Լոս Անջելես), 1997, 1998, 2003 (Նյու Յորք), 1998 (Փարիզ), 1999 (Պետրոյոյ), 2001 (Սան Ֆրանցիսկո), 1989-ին Հայաստանում արժանացել է «տարվա նկարիչ» մրցանակին:

1970-ից ԽՍՀՄ նկարիչների միության, 1995-ից ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՕ-ի անդամ է:

Աշխատանքները գտնվում են Ժամանակակից արվեստի թանգարանում (Երեւան), Mission գալերիայում (ԱՄՆ, Կալիֆոռնիա), նաև բազմաթիվ մասնավոր հավաքածուներում:

(Շարունակությունը տես էջ 24)

Born in Yerevan, moved to Moscow at age five. Coming back to Yerevan, graduated from the P. Terlemezyan School of Fine Arts, then the Institute of Theater and Fine Arts, teaching there for 25 years following graduation. Residing in Los Angeles, US, for the last few years.

Took part in many group exhibitions, including EXPO - 67 (Canada), 1992 Art EXPO (USA), had several individual exhibitions: 1993 (Boston), 1996, 2000, 2002 (Los Angeles), 1997, 1998, 2003 (New York), 1998 (Paris), 1999 (Detroit), 2001 (San Francisco), 1989 won the prize "Painter of the Year" in Armenia. Memberships: 1970 - Artists' Union of the USSR, 1995 - UNESCO.

The pictures are retained in the Modern Art Museum, Yerevan, Mission Gallery, California, USA, as well as in multiple private collections.

(See page 24)



# ապան

1. Երեք մուսա  
Three muses
2. Կյանք  
Life
3. Ծովի տիրուհի  
Mistress of the Sea
4. Ակվարիում  
Aquarium
5. Տրիումֆ  
Triumph

3



4



5



Laura Avetisyan



# ՕՆԻԿ ՄԱԽԱԿՅԱՆ

## Onik Sahakyan



1. Տիրամայրը մանկան հետ  
Madonna and Child
2. Երագողը  
Dreamer
3. Ադամ և Եվա (Կերպարանափոխություն)  
Adam and Eve Metamorphoses



# An Exhibition of the Dali-Est of Men

fine arts

*Momik Vardanyan*

Ohik Sahakyan having been close friend of Salvador Dali, and, according to Dali, "the dali-est nuts", has had over 50 exhibitions in multiple prestigious showrooms and museums of the world (International Culture Museum of Gothenburg, Grand Palace in Paris, Museum of Modern Art in Moscow, etc.).

The artist is based in Lisbon and New York.

"I am a mystic surrealist, which is the reason for the onlookers to always look for new ideas in my pictures", says Onik Sahakian.

In contrast to Salvador Dali, Onik's compositions are more positive. The author's reasoning is that the world is so full of negative happenings that scare people, while his objective is not to have people scared one more time with his pictures.

"His surrealistic pieces made with outstanding authormanship, display no distortions or internal conflicts. On a peaceful and clean space nature and people send a message to the onlooker showing a classically luxurious beauty, like a fairy apparition", says Shahen Khachatryan, art critic.

The painter has produced outstanding pieces on the subject of Godmother ("Godmother with the Infant", "Madonna Gala with Dali", "The Language of Birds"). In the first case the artist pictures Godmother in full glory en face with infant Christ standing with no luxurious ornamentation, however he could show Godmother's complete greatness. In the second picture he showed Godmother with her gaze directed at infant Jesus in her lap. In the second picture he showed Godmother's garments, seemingly using the Armenian or Persian miniature painting techniques. It is to be noted that in both cases the painter does not show the face. "I ignore what the face of Godmother is, he says".

Onik Sahakian has also done some applied art, like jewellery, sculpture, scene painting, and costumery. He made an exquisite necklace for President Nickson's wife.

Onik Shakian was born in Tehran in 1936, he became active in art at age seven. 1952 he moved to Paris. 1956 he moved to US. His teachers were the well-known Russian dancers O. Preobrajenskaya and T. Maximova. Having studied classical ballet, Onik Sahakian goes deeper into Indian and Persian dancing. In 1964 – 1973 Onik had over 100 performances on stage.

Having lived in the Armenian environment since his early days, with Persian and Russian associations (his parents had emigrated to Persia from Russia), Onik Sahakian abundantly adorned his pictures

Lately in the "Gevorkian Showroom" the art-loving public of Armenia could see for the first time the latest 16 pieces by Onik Sahakyan, an Armenian friend of Salvador Dali. Onik Sahakyan's personal exhibition opened on September 23 continuing into the early October.



with precious stones, assuming that those stones would permanently supply positive energy to the onlooker. (According to the painter, the same role in his painting also belongs to his prevailing blue color).

Why then did the top surrealist once said that Onik was the craziest and the Dali-est person that he had ever known? In 1958, in New York, Onik asked his compatriot who was Salvador Dali's hairdresser, to create an occasion whereby he could personally meet the famous surrealist. The hairdresser agreed. Onik entered the hairdresser's at the moment when the hairdresser was blacking Dali's moustaches. Onik made a very exceptional pirouette and all of a sudden knelt before Dali. Dali was perplexed, however without stirring an eyelid he took up his walking cane and started consecrating Onik with great solemnity. Those crazy expostulations by the Spanish and Armenian artists triggered a friendship that continued for about twenty years.

Some pieces by the painter have for a long time been exhibited in the "Gevorgian Showroom".

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# The "Tigran Mets" Publishers have printed an Album of Paintings by Laura Avetisyan Yerevan, 2005

**L**aura Avetissian is an artist, who works in the different genres of painting. Her original symbolic images are realized in a bold but mild technique of painting. With her mastery the paintress enriches and ennobles the human soul.

Laura's original art is profound and expressive. She loves Nature, loves people with their spiritual world. The dramatic images of her fantastic theater are performed in brilliant artistic methods and in restrained colors of the palette.

How vital and joyful her canvases are!

**Suren Nazarian**  
*People Artist of Armenia,  
Sculptur, professor*



Any form of art, be it music, painting, literature, is often a reflection of a person's soul. Each creator expresses this reflection in a unique fashion.

**I**t is not easy for an artist, even with the professional education, to create his own microcosm. Some studios resemble shops of the accidental things. It seems that they represent works of different artists, having no connection with each other. In this sham creative diversity the individuality of such authors is absolutely lost.

In an exhibition one can easily recognize Laura's canvases among hundreds of others. Being part of her emotional experience, Laura's art has caught the fancy of many collectors and found haven in many countries.

Laura's world consists of individual novels, integrated into a single subject. It is like a fancy theater showing Laura's favorite characters with every rise of the curtain. It is enjoyable to see the enhancement of her vision from one canvas to another.

Laura's generous soul is always on the alert to grasp the beauty of life, music, art, being expressed in love for her Home Country Armenia.

Laura Avetissian has established a Foundation under the National Center of Aesthetics, bearing the name of Souren Nazarian, her husband, a master sculptor. The Center awards annual prizes to young artists encouraging their new efforts in artistic creation.

**H. Igitian,**  
*art critic,  
Founder and Director of Children's Art Gallery and  
Modern Art Museum,  
General Director of the National Center of Aesthetics*

In my creation, using paints and brushes, I try to manifest the inner beauty of the human soul. The main theme in my works is theater and music, art within art, reflection within reflection. I try to convey the permanent movement present in these art forms and their monumental significance in the interpretation of the world. The combined use of bright colors and dark hues shows the fortes and the pianos of this intertwined art world.

The aesthetics of music, literature, theater, and fine arts coexists with the beauty, present within each of us, input my Mother Nature, is present in all my genres of painting. I express this beauty through female figures and the playing harlequins in their bright outfits and costumes, gracefully interacting and playing out scenes from my imagination.

I infuse my soul and energy into each piece and try to create a magic atmosphere, which will transfuse only positive emotions to my viewers.

*Laura Avetissian*



# ARMMONO INTERNATIONAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRICAL FESTIVAL

On September 12 – 17 Yerevan hosted the 3rd Armmono International Theatrical Festival, which only one year before was declared Shakespearian at the time of its closing procedure. This one, too, like the previous ones, was sufficiently representative. The partakers included actors from Great Britain, France, Russia, Poland, US, Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia, who had performed Shakespearian roles or the ones who had not missed the occasion of taking part in soliloquy performances on different stages.

One has to do justice to Hacob Ghazanjan, Festival Manager, who steadily continues to practice the performances in the soliloquy genre, making it a component of the modern Armenian theatrical art. Incidentally, as noted by the manager, Armmono will henceforth be named Shakespearian, which is a serious step in the succession of our theatrical art and its historical development.

For 6 days in a row, both the theatrical staff and theatre goers watched 14 performances, very differing not only in the new type of staging, but also in the standards of performance, in the way of modernizing the familiar tragic actions and characters, at times, alas, for crowd pulling effects only.

The general conclusion is that Armmono has taken place. Meanwhile, it is not on the margins or in the postscript that one has to continue: it has taken place, with most events however at a low level, with certain organizational and problematic approaches showing too many unwarranted innovations.

But first about the accomplishments: The overseas artists who showed high art were: Anna Melen ("King Lear", Turkmenistan), Garret Armstrong (Shellock, G. B.) Christoff Gordon ("Shexshow, Poland), Constantine Jeldin ("Hamlet of Moscow", Russia).

Among the Armenians starring at the Festival were Gooj Manoukyan ("Starting the End", Timon), Mekhitar Melkonyan ("Prisoner of World"), in the role of the assumed Shakespeare), Arthur Karapetyan ("Treatise on the Handkerchief", Yago).

The Armenian Juliets were limited success: Anush Panosyan with her pantomimic, and Mariam Ghazanjan ("Treatise on the Handkerchief"). Limited, because the former showed her deb status being more like Anoush than Juliet in her distress, while the latter, having successfully

overstepped producer's demands, remained in their grip, not without a feeling that the young actress had a considerable performing potential:

Both at this and the previous festivals, producer Hakob Ghazanjan and playwright Karine Khodikyan did everything to become holier than the Pope, bringing to the soliloquy festival a piece with three dramatis personae (the "Treatise on the Handkerchief" performance) under the pretext that it was a rehearsal, that the personae would never meet on

stage, and that they would be rotated both in action and in the roles. It is however, to be noted that solo theater, as such, is performance of one actor, character imaging, as a problem and superproblem. The concept of solo theater is so perfect and specific, that this innovation becomes purpose in itself. It is quite another matter, when an Armenian producer and a playwright in a joint creative effort establish a new trend in performance, or a new genre or new form, wherein the development of plot, the conflict and resolution, as well as other problems are conquered and presented on stage in images which do not meet, but jointly deliver the basic purpose of creation.

As to the performance proper of the "Treatise on the Handkerchief", painful though it might be, Hovhannes Babakhanyan's (Othello) fans left the theatre in discontent. In the previous festival H. Babakhanyan showed a brilliant solo performance ("Double-bass"), which had been seen and highly appraised overseas, and which has rightly become one of the most significant accomplishments of the artist. In this case however, H. Babakhanyan failed to take control of his character being represented.

An improperly devised drama or inadequate directorship may be the reason why Karen Janibekyan did not succeed presenting King Lear in the mono-drama "King Lear's Recollections".

The Festival also revealed two unacceptable phenomena, which are by slow degrees creeping into the Armenian theatrical world.

Firstly, it has become common practice that some actors are striving to produce plays, while some directors are trying to replace the dramatists. Very few succeed in achieving skills in a second profession overstepping those of their original vocation, however, in all cases both the drama and the dramatist are on the loosing side.



On some theaters' posters the names of the dramatists as of today are written in small print, often following the title of the play, while on the invitation cards and in oral announcements on the TV the dramatists are often not mentioned at all. Let us however return to the Festival, where in all booklets and posters no mention was made of the names of the two dramatists – Karine Khodikyan ("Treatise on the Handkerchief") and Samvel Khalatyan ("Starting the End").



Gouzh Monoukian



Anoush Panosyan

Surprising as it may seem, both at the Festival and at its multiple associated events the authors remained offside. Was it the situation that the pieces were written especially for the occasion of the Festival, and actually causing the Festival to occur, and the fact that the low standard of the other stage productions presented mostly resulted from the non-professional dramas, was it that this situation extinguished the feeling of obligation towards the two well-known authors in the minds of Festival hosts? Moreover, it became clear that some of the art critics and most theatre goers (if not all) knew nothing of "Timon of Athens", the play by William Shakespeare. Samvel Khalatyan wrote the "Starting the End" monodrama after this tragedy, but he

wrote it using another plot, action and resolutions, he gave a new birth to the image of Timon, having a present-day sounding, presenting avarice as evil. Being written in classical tradition, filled with many aphoristic thoughts, with internal tension, acute conflicts and unexpected solutions, the play, to author's credit and to his regret, was perceived in its monodramatic version as a piece by William Shakespeare.

Another shadowy trick was absence of the jury. "Each festival has to be a cultural fireworks rather than sports", - this novelty was attested by the manager H. Ghazanchian. That mentality is unacceptable. Oscar is not given at sport competitions, is it? According to H. Ghazanchian, "The Shakespearean festival has taken place, and with what participants! Winners of multiple prizes from International festivals." The names were indeed outstanding. It is clear that the partakers of our Festival got their prizes not for wrestling or boxing. Another matter is to assume that the Armenian festival is making its first steps, with meager support, the name "International" being derived from the geography of the partakers. Meanwhile, granting certificates of participation to everyone does not look like cultural fireworks at all.

Anyway, we can state, we can even rejoice or take pride in that the Festival has taken place, we most sincerely congratulate the hosts, the sponsors, the partakers and the theatre-goers.

**Vahram Mirakyan**

## An Event Dealing With The 1600th Anniversary Of The Invention Of Armenian Letters Organized By The "MESROP MASHTOTS" CENTER OF BELLES-LETTERS

On October 17, in the Al. Spendiarian Opera Theater Nadya Antonyan, head of the "Mesrop Mashtots" Center of Belles-Letters, organized a demonstration of the literary and musical theatrical composition "The Life of St. Mashtots" (director: R. Grigoryan), using the Armenian literary and musical resources, with the authentic voices of literary elders like Hovhannes Shiraz, P. Sevak, H. Sahian, S. Kaputikian.

Literary pieces by the great Armenian authors were recited during the soiree, causing the souls of countless listeners to be enveloped in specific veneration and delightful ecstasy.

This unusual termination of performance indeed magnetized all those present. Head of the Center Nadya Antonyan performed "Triple Voice Mess" by P. Sevak, the fragment "Hail to the living... Get United" was abruptly followed by the legacy of S. Kaputikian. The end was red-hot with passion, when the commandment by the poetess was joined by the playing group, the whole house rose to their feet.



The Armenian alphabet, "the Mesrop Mashtots" Center and the integrated ambition of hundreds of spectators, the solemn recital joining by the will of the destiny the component branches of our triple tree of life Armenia – Artsakh – Diaspora and flying the holy tricolor flag at the Al. Spendiarian's opera theater have grown and become all-Armenian collective soul and testament.

**N. A.**



# With Elvira Uzunyan



When I knew that Elvira Uzunyan was to be honored in Boston for her anniversary, I could not stay indifferent and sent her this letter:

"Oberge de pyramide" is a popular hall in Cairo, where by the invitation of the late Telman Mekhitarian, First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, we enjoyed the fiery dancing of Zizi Mustafa.

This lady, isn't she the one who sings "Habibi"? Could you please, tell her of my gratitude and admiration", those were the words spoken by a young Arab man coming up to our table and translated by Mekhitarian.

Yes, this is she, the wonderful singer Elvira Uzunyan, who had captured the hearts of the passengers of the Abhazia, the tourist ship en route from Odessa to Egypt, she also won the hearts of Alexandria, Cairo and Luxor.

"Habibi" was not the song that is being performed by other singers today, that was a Russian song in classical style (my beloved), which caught the fancy of the Arab audience in her presentation.

Rewinding the tape of the time, I remember some close-ups with no visible advantage to anyone, since wherever Elvira comes to be, she is dear, welcome, lovable and dedicated. Why dedicated? because, despite her exclusive femininity, appeal, softness and intellectualism, she understands the dedication. Fact: her art, fact: her multiple friends and fans.

Dear friend, no matter how far you are, you are remembered, loved and expected, I remember all the time your unparalleled voice: I will never come, Never, I will never.

I have no news except the family, who else has read it? or not at all, it would of course be good, that someone should have done so, not as a fact or opinion regarding herself (she has an abundance of those facts),

but only in order just to know, that I am also among Elvira's remote friends. Perhaps by the same reason, the echo to the artist's birthday was from the City of Giumri.

Thus, the continuation of the joke was the letter of invitation.

"Without Giumri there will be nothing.

That was what we said when it became known that Elvira's birthday was celebrated in Boston, Tbilisi, Moscow.

So that one should know, what will happen, you are invited to Giumri theater, October 4, at 7 p.m."

The house was full, the stage was brightly lit, and, despite the presence of one person, everything was beautiful. Beautiful with its willow branches, the music from "Anush", the insatiable thirst of the actress to re-ascend the stage.

The unexpected everywhere, however, Giumri, Giumri, it gave me again the joy of stage lights, the smell of stage, the warmth projected from the audience.

The theater of 1989 in Leninakan, frost-bound, with mourning candles, and Armen Budaghian making a speech. But here and now is 2005, same house, dignified and joyful.

This awful amplitude can be resisted by human creatures only, the actress uttered, happy and astir.

Words, and fulfillments, and suspense, for which occasions were abundant.

New Orleans remains remote and under water, but Giumri has also witnessed terrible misfortunes and cannot stay unmoved.

"Dear Elvira Uzunyan, one of the :Bird's House: trustees was in Los Angeles on the day of the Giumri earthquake, so he was approached by an American boy who handed him \$10 saying he was donating all money from his moneybox to the children suffering from the earthquake.

We have not seen those days, however we are well aware of what a disaster is, therefore we ask on the part of the "Birds House" using the childrens' organization that you lead to carry to US their hand-made rugs as gifts, as signs of friendship, to the children suffering from the disaster.

In these rugs is the strength of our hands, the colors of our motherland, our love and warmth, which are transferred with love to our brothers and sisters in US.

The alumni presented the rugs to Elvira, while the audience became extremely excited and emotional.

Closing the evening, when the hall was filled with the recorded voice of Elmira singing the immortal "Tsitsernak", the crowd was not dispersing but gathering around Elvira, familiar and non-familiar fans, there were embraces, flowers, autographs, the joy was shared by Ms. Hasmik, the organizer of the soiree.

Dear Elvira, we are quite sure, that you are quite busy in Boston, and would have been so in every corner of the world, however, please know that today as ever the place of Elvira Uzunyan remains vacant in her Mother Country.

Romen Kozmoyan

# Symbolic Structure and Decoration

**ASHOT GRIGORYAN,**  
*Director, National Museum Institution*

The Monastery of St. Stephen, the Original Witness (Darashamb, Iran) is distinguished within the Armenian medieval monasterial compounds by its structural and decorative features. The largest structure of the Monastery is St. Stephen Church, founded in 1643. The interior triple-vestry, enclosed within an exterior rectangular structure (like the Cathedral in Talin or St. Grigor Church in Dvin): The Eastern vestry is deeper, consisting of seven Facets, right and left are double-decker vestries. The cupola is resting upon four huge wall pylons. The drum has 16 seats, the hood is folded, which makes triangular stones on the upper part of each seat, columns at two corners of each seat of the drum (which, except two, terminate with double-headed monster capitols) merge in arrow-like arcs (the drum of the Mother Church of Echmiadzin has a similar solution):

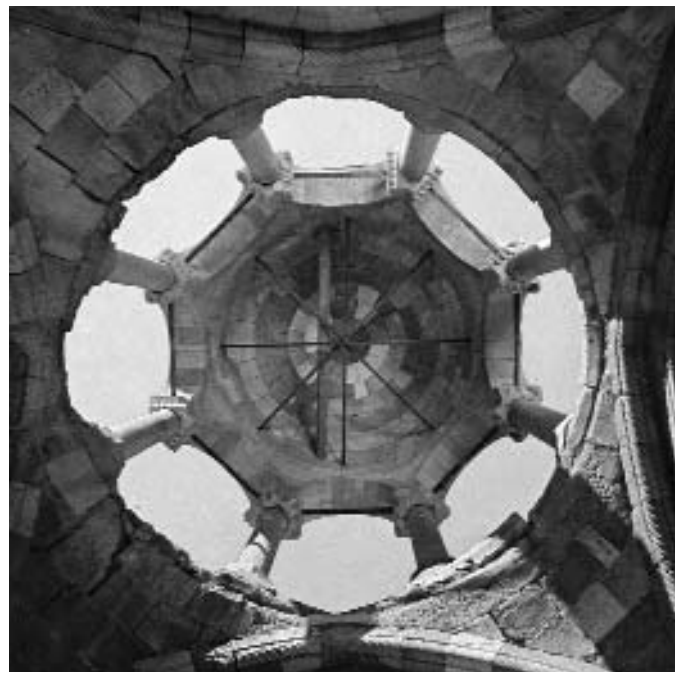
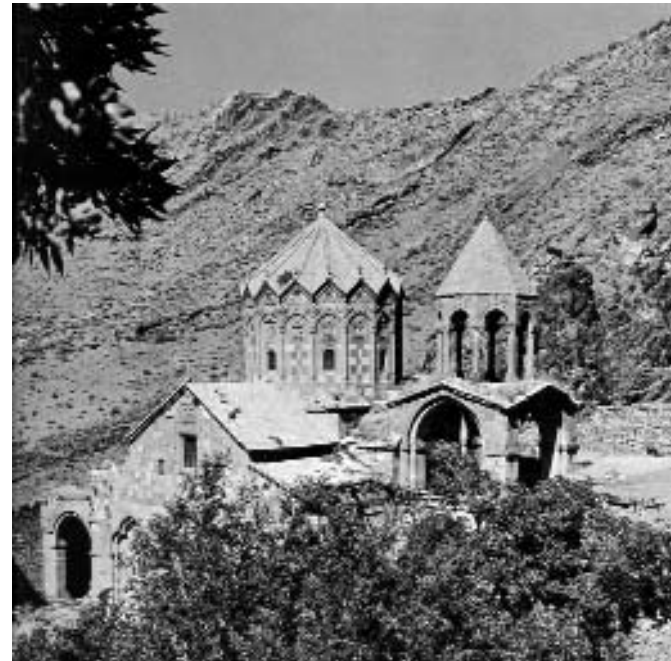
Above the vaults in the center of triangular stones, are images of encircled crosses, carrying low reliefs of doves on the top parts while right and left of the circle are single little roses. Below the vaults in the axial center there are larger roses, one per each seat.

Above the monster capitol facets joints in the corners are shown relieves of angels, on the base of the drum there are eight windows, below 16 encircled bas-relieves of Apostles and Saints. "Between the umbrella-like cupola and the window-carrying drum there is a thick frame with images of heads of people and animals. Other four animals are placed onto the square abacus of the cupola, on each corner: On top there were ornamented cross stones at the time, which are not there any more, while still staying at the Southern facade and on the cupola cover. Perceived on the front panel had been now worn-out two stone images, in a kneeling posture, serving as the corner top animals (acroterion)".

The Drum and hood structure of St. Stephen Church in its multiple features does not reiterate any of the medieval structures, despite having many similarities with similar structures (Akhtamar, Harij, Gandzasar). The structure in its entirety is a saturated system of symbols, describing the biblical and pre-Christian mysteries.

noticeable in the rectangular floor-plan structure of the church are system of four-sided perception of the Earth as westward directed, the concept of the Holy Trinity in the triple-vestry interior space, the female origin of the Earth, the symbolic image of Godmother, associated with the tree of life and the cross, the horizontal – with the structure of the earth: Around its center on the four pylons (four points, four elements, four rivers, four apostles, etc.), the cupola is soaring above.

Notable in the spatial formation of the church is the result of earth-heaven-man triunity, a three-layered system of perception, whereof within the earthly limit the walls of House of God utter diverse symbolic versions. Thus, the western front is decorated, at the top of the triangle of the gable roof is spread eagle, with a lamb in his claws, the symbol of rising and falling sun, with two encircled crosses to its right and left (planets). Below, also to the right and left of the vertical axis of the structure, are



the symbolic roses of eternity, flanking a realistic image of the stoning of St. Stephen in an anaglyphic square in the middle.

St. Stephen is the original witness, who spilled his blood witnessing Jesus Christ being the Son of God. He was murdered by stoning in a Jerusalem suburb, when he exclaimed: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God". (Acts 7, 56). Below that image, again in a rectangular frame is the cross of the tree of life - a cross-window which is at the same time the only opening



# of the Church of St. Stephen, the Original Witness

architecture

transmitting light on the Eastern wall. Also placed within the structural area of the cross-window are fishes, a snake, a lion, a bird and other images.

Another solution is the plane of the Southern wall adjoining the structure of the belfry. Seen here is another frame with the sculptured Mary Godmother with Infant Jesus. Higher in the same vertical axis a rectangular frame on the Southern rest of the drum displays the image of Catholicos Jughaietsi.

On the Eastern side is an image of the crucifixion of Jesus (a similar sculpture is on the Western wall of the Gandzasar compound). And on the Western rest of the drum, again in a frame, there is the image of God the Creator.

Original in its kind are the cross on top of the triangle on the North of the structure and on right and left angles of the triangle the sculptures of kneeling worshippers, symbolizing the arrival of heavenly justice and a scene of worship, in the realm of the tree of life.

The drum-and-top structure is exclusively covered with symbolic images. To be noted here is 16 – the numerical symbol

of the Sun, 8 windows – the cardinal points of the earth, in the transitory part of the drum and the top there are 16 triangles – the symbol of heavenly truths spreading upon earth, the winged crosses – the symbol of the tree of life, the wavy hood – the symbol of heavenly element of water, as well as symbols like man, lion, musk ox, bird and other symbols with vegetable and animal associations.

Anyway, the whole monument with all its decorations is an entire book with symbolic images, symbol-carrying structures, are deducing and presenting Church as the earthly abode of God, Paradise, the tree of life, the Temple of Divine Truth, the establishment of the Holy Trinity, Godmother, the Creator, Apostles and Evangelists, the Saints and Angels, Cross-Sun and the Truth, in the name of the crucifixion of the Son and many other Christian events, which in their turn openly or covertly retain and represent also many pre-Christian manifestations of the world outlook, the four cardinal points, the four seasons, the earth-to-heaven link, the four rivers taking off from hell, heavenly bodies, animal-like symbol carriers, etc.

The late-period dating of the monastery (1643 – 1665) in turn, is the basic reason why the founders embellished the structure with specific symbol-carrying compositions, bringing up the forgotten symbol-carrying images in order to refresh and reinforce the Christian ideology.

The vision of Jesus Christ standing at right-hand side of God, seems to be the key speaking about the step-by-step process of transition from the pagan temple to the Christian Church. Since the initial Christian structures still retain the idea of being oriented towards the sunrise within the four-cardinal-points system, hence the Southern wall of the structure remains almost intact, with no decorations, later however this approach will have changed. Formerly the origin of the four cardinal points was man, while now the priest, as the earthly spokesman of God is standing in the main vestry, facing the worshippers, his right-hand side being regarded as the right side of the church, also comprising the stoup for christening, which, according to the old faith, was placed on the left, in the Northern wall, indicating the defense against the evil powers. That means gradual transition from the pre-Christian natural-philosophical mystical tradition to the developed period of Christian ideology, its precisely known regularities being seen in the entire structure of the Church of St. Stephen, the Original Witness, and particularly in the structure of its drum and hood.



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The “Mughni” publishers have issued a collection of articles “Contemplations with Time” by Andranik Daghljan (in Armenian), (Yerevan, 2004).



Let us return to the book “Contemplations with Time”, not for literary criticism, but rather to present the book structure and contents. Contents are high-capacity, 384 pages, with successive presentation of his articles published in different years, itinary notes, interviews, “portraits”. The Preface was written by Jirair Nairi, Editor of the “Nairi” paper published in Beirut.

The very first acquaintance with the mentioned chapters causes surprise, as to the extension of the author’s interests, scope and knowledge, used to span a golden bridge between the Arab country of his residence and his home country. Evidently, the author is a person who has seen the world (India, Thailand, Cypress, Russia, US, etc.), the theory and practice of his specialty and its history.

Lastly, with regard to the benevolent action by Andranik

# Contemplations of the Patriotic Son of the Armenian Nation

About the Author:

Speciality: Architect, Educated in Homeland. Had come from Beirut to Armenia to study. Graduating in 1965, married and returned to Beirut. However, because of the long-time war in Lebanon, he moved to the United Arab Emirates in 1971, where he practiced his profession for over 3 decades. While residing in Abu-Dhabi, he authored many buildings and structures. (On his creative work see Varazdat Harutiunyan, My Comrades in Arts”, in Armenian, Yerevan, 2001, pp. 462 – 463). The patriotic son of Armenia has always combined his professional work with public activities: charity and benevolent activity in favor of the small Armenian community of the UAE. The gifted disciple of the Armenian architectural school is a typical intellectual architect. Living outside Armenia, he had always retained love and concern with regard to Motherland, often visiting it, well informed on its current accomplishments, and of course, on many of its existing problems.

Andranik Daghljan has a powerful pen. For several decades, he wrote articles for the Armenian media in Beirut and London. The subjects discussed were Armenia, the Kharabakh problem and of course past and present of the Armenian architecture.

Andranik Daghljan is a dedicated activist and organizer in the small Armenian community of UAE. Using the local cultural company, he is instrumental in bringing up the young Armenians in the Armenian spirit. To this effect personalities of literature, art, and science are invited from Armenia, to take part in meetings, exhibitions, lectures, dancing performances, etc. In 1989 yours truly also benefited from a similar event. Spending there a week, I delivered some lectures in Abu-Dhabi, Sharja, I surveyed this original country.



Daghljan for rehabilitation of an architectural monument in Armenia, the purpose being to eternize the memory of his parents Mkrtich and Mariam as well as his late wife Liudmila.

with the financial support by Andranik and with his personal involvement the four-apsed church built in the 7th c. by prince Nerseh Kamsarakan was rehabilitated from a dilapidated condition to its former gorgeous appearance and decent-looking surroundings. The recovery work was completed in 1998, in the presence of Andranik Daghljan.

Varazdat Harutiunian, Member of RA Academy of Sciences, Chairman of the Armenian Society for Preservation of Historical Monuments

The editorial office of the “Armenian Art” magazine congratulates the Honorable Andranik Daghljan on publishing the Collection and emphasize their appreciation for the grant to our magazine, as an authorized representative in UAE.



# "NAREKATSI" ART UNION

## Exhibition by Florist Nadejda Oganeseva



On September 8, the Narekatsi Art Union arranged a personal exhibition by Nadejda Oganeseva, a florist with a University degree in biology. The opening was attended by Karen Aghamyan, the RA Artists' Union President, Saro Harutiunyan (US), brother of the "Narekatsi" Art Union Chairman, and many artists and art critics.

The exhibition displayed 31 pieces of art. Nadejda has been active in floristry for 8 years, however until now her pieces have been shown only in a UN office and were limited in number.

Nadejda Oganeseva differs from other florists in that she takes popular painters' pieces and reproduces them using petals of flowers. Among her works are Leonardo da Vinci, Renoire, Matisse, M. Saryan, K. Agamyan, and other painters. She started her work with the pictures by Saryan, while her first professional piece was "The Birth of Venus" by Botichelli.

In her work Oganeseva uses multi-colored petals of roses, lilies, poppies, et al. "I could have never imagined that it should be possible to reproduce a face using flower petals, but when I laid out Venus' lips ("The Birth of Venus"), I understood that everything was possible, said Nadejda.

"They say, beauty will save the world, but it is not so, the world can be saved by goodness, it is my wish therefore, that everyone should be not only beautiful but good", that was the way the florist concluded our interview.

## OTHER EVENTS

### In Giumri

06.10.2005. Exhibition was opened for the 28 students of the Giumri art school, some of the authors presenting more than one pieces. Showed at the exhibition were not only paintings, but also sculptures from glass, wood, stones and metals, figurines and souvenirs.

Having seen the exhibition, Arto Tchakmakchian, a well-known painter and sculptor, said that despite the participants being not too old, some had good works. To become established artists, however, one had to work not only on the artistry but on one's inner world. Only those will have their due place in life who show intellectual development.

## ARMENIA AS VIEWED



## BY HRAIR BAZE



## The Armenian Art Song Returns

14.10.2005. Opera singer Hasmik Zakaryan made an appearance with a program "Armenian Art Songs" accompanied by the pianist Armine Harutiunyan. The singer featured the composers R. Melikyan, Al. Hekimyan, Al. Ajemyan, N. Galanteryan, et al.

Anna Mailyan, who is Asmik's teacher, noted after the concert that she was never content no matter how well her students looked to the audience, for no artist should be pleased with his performance. She wished her student big stages.

## Never Forget The Past

14.10.2005. Paintress Taguhi Dashtoyan opened her first personal exhibition. The show included 23 paintings depicting old Armenian cities, mostly old Yerevan.

In her speech the artist said: "I want to use my pictures to make people stop murdering the old relics and nature, so as to protect our city Yerevan."

"NAREKATSI ART UNION" has also held a number of other proceedings: September 13: an action dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the genocide. Demonstration was made of the documentary "The Spring of Armenians" by Wilfried Kaute, followed by traditional musical improvisation performed by trombonist Hinz-Erich Geodike and vocalist Anna Mailyan.

On October 4 there was a presentation of the book "Watch the Woman" by Lilit Danielyan on October 20 – demonstration of the film "Mesrop Mashtots, 5th century. Songs of repentance, a concert of the vocal quartet "Garni", October 31 – demonstration of the screen version of performance "Jesus, Love and Peace".

THE "NAREKATSI ART UNION" HAS ALSO IMPLEMENTED A NUMBER OF NOTABLE PUBLICATIONS (presented herewith are book and booklet covers).

The UNION's current and forthcoming events are indicated on the following site:

[www.naregatsi.org](http://www.naregatsi.org)

**Rusanna MOVSISYAN,**  
student of Yerevan State University,  
Dept. of Journalism

Publisher:  
**NAREKATSI**  
**ART UNION**



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# The Unknown Compatriot



**Artsvi BAKHCHINYAN**

**An exclusive interview**

**with American-Armenian dancer SHAMIRA**

**Meet Shamira** – dancer, teacher, drummer, and RCA recording artist, who has been performing since childhood. She began with ballet and concert piano at the age of four and was the soloist and assistant dance instructor for an Armenian folk dance company by age 16. She has lived a career dancing, playing keyboard, singing and drumming with various bands and has appeared in numerous clubs as well as concert halls such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and Radio City. Her first role model and biggest influence was cousin Katherine, a wonderful professional belly-dancer who would also dance at all the family parties. Being from an Armenian family (their grandparents immigrated to the USA from Turkey), family gatherings were always centered on music and dance. Shamira gives all the credit for her amazing skills on finger cymbals to her years of Middle Eastern drumming. Shamira began her teaching career by establishing dance and drum classes at the New York Open Center. Her dance classes expanded to New Jersey and out-of-town workshops. In 2000 Christina Aguilera hired Shamira to choreograph and dance in an "Arabian Nights" opening for her MTV Music Video Awards performance, seen by millions all over the world. After that, bellydance exploded onto the MTV culture with Britney Spears and Shamira featuring it

too. In the summer of 2003, Shamira was commissioned by Lincoln Center to create and direct a show using New York City's top middle-eastern dancers and musicians. The show was called "The Divine Divas of Oriental Bellydance" (the title was given by Lincoln Center). On August 14, to a sold-out crowd, during the sound check, the great Blackout of 2003 occurred! This meant no electricity, which meant...no sound. The troupe decided to "go on with the show" anyway. The band played acoustically and all five dancers—Shamira, Rayhana, Samara, Ayshe, and Elena—did shortened versions of their numbers. The enthusiastic crowd fully appreciated the non-cancellation with wild applause. Although it was chaos trying to get home after the show, Shamira made the best of it by picking up stranded, walking hitchhikers (one of them a pregnant woman!) and drove them home. The following year, Lincoln Center invited them back. There was no blackout, and the troupe enjoyed success to a standing-room-only crowd.

(From <http://www.shamiradance.com>)



# Shamira. I Dance From the Past, Present and Future

*—What is the concept of being belly dance? Is it very different from the other dancers?*

—Belly dancing is a unique art form. This is a dance by, about, and for women. It celebrates the feminine form and female mystery, wisdom, and beauty. Belly dancing is not only hot and passionate, it is soft, sensuous, feminine, rhythmic and deep. Hypnotic undulations and mesmerizing isolations characterize this ancient dance, but there are deeper things going on. Belly dancing is a bridge that connects a woman's profound mystery to a modern-day world, bringing her back to the sensuous, passionate female she is, no matter what age, body type, or background. It's beyond "who" you are -- it links you to "what" you are - All Woman.

*—Some specialists say that actually the belly dance is not an erotic dance, it generated to prepare the women for the delivery experiences.*

—That is only one small facet of information. I understand

that yes, in some cultures, belly dancing was used as a way to prepare for childbirth. But the bigger picture is that belly dancing is beyond culture. It is universal - an expression of the goddess within every woman.

*—You said that the bellydance is a dance of women. But now there are not so few male bellydancers. What is your opinion on it?*

—Bellydancing is originally a dance of, by and for women. But men are welcome to do it! After all, aren't women now doing things that were originally only for men? Now we have female police, firefighters, politicians, etc. Share and share alike!

*—Do belly dancers follow certain diet for keeping their figure in good shape?*

—I would have to say no. One of the beautiful things about bellydancing is that it embraces women of all different shapes



and ethnicities - big, small, round, thin, young, old, black, white. We are not limited to be a certain body type or age. We are allowed to just dance and express, without being worried that someday we will be discarded because we no longer fit the mold. That said, I can also add that for myself, I prefer to be fit and healthy in my diet and exercise. I dance every day and watch what I eat so that I can stay in the most pleasing shape for myself. But that is my own personal preference.

*–Can you tell us a little about you personal life?*

–What exactly would you like to know about my personal life? I get up every day and ... dance! I have a small dance studio in my home and spend time choreographing for classes or videos or shows. Then I spend time on my business of making and mail-ordering my line of instructional DVDs. Sometimes I play the piano. I prefer simplicity in my life - simple food, austere surroundings (the less material things I own, the better), nature (I am an avid hiker), family get-togethers, quality time with my boyfriend. In the summer, I swim every day. I spend so much time dressing up in my costumes and dancing at other peoples' parties that when I am alone, I prefer peace and quiet, comfortable clothes, and no makeup! Well, maybe a little lipstick....

*–Why this exotic name – Shamira? Does it have any connection to legendary Assyrian queen, Shamiram (Semiramis)?*

–Yes! In a Greek club that I used to dance in, there were many Armenian customers. They all called me Shamiram. My first role model and biggest influence was cousin Katherine, a wonderful professional belly dancer who would also dance at all the family parties. Being from an Armenian family (our grandparents immigrated to the USA from Turkey), family gatherings were always centered on music and dance.

*–It will be also interesting to know how your family reacted for the dance style you chosen. For instance, I received a message from another American belly dancer of Armenian extraction, who wrote me that she is conflicted with her passion for belly dance and she does not wish her name publicized as belly dancer...*

–I have no such negative feelings. I embrace the art of dance no matter what it is called. I have no problem calling it belly dance. I dance at all my family big parties over the years, such as weddings, anniversaries, etc. My family all love my dancing.

*–Please tell us about your ties with Armenian culture.*

–I am Armenian 100%. People always ask me about my origins. My father's parents came from Van. My mother's parents came from Marash and Aintab. I am second generation Armenian. My father started the first Armenian Dance group in this country, the Sevan Dance Company. I was born in New York City. I have been dancing since 5 years old, starting with ballet. I studied Armenian folk dance from 14 years old. This taught me grace, fluid arm movement, how to dance with wonderful posture, pride, softness, strength and class. I speak a little Armenian. Actually, my parents raised me to speak fluent Armenian, but as soon as I started school, I started speaking English. I can understand about 30 percent of a conversation now. My Armenian identity runs deep. Because I was fortunate to grow up surrounded by my grandparents, I was naturally ingrained with the culture. My grandparents Vagharshak and Shooshanig are buried at Sardarabat. My grandfather, a very young man back in the "old days," was a guerilla leader and war hero, fighting alongside Antranig. All of our family get-togethers were filled with music and dance, food and Ararat cognac. Being born and growing up in America, but with close roots to all things Armenian, has given me a broad and wonderful perspective on life. I am a modern-day woman with ancient origins. This has given me both a sturdy foundation and feelings of I-don't-quite-belong-in-this-century. I don't know how else to describe it. But it all comes out in my dance - I dance from the past, present and future, all aiming toward a single expression of art and beauty.

*–Have you been in Armenia?*

–I HAVE been to Armenia! I was only 14 years old, but I remember how awesome it was. The people - incredible hospitality and warmth, the food - delicious, the drinking water - fantastic, the country - gorgeous! The language sounded odd to me, because I grew up hearing "western" Armenian, not the eastern dialect spoken in Armenia.

*–What do you wish to our readers in Hayastan?*

–I would like the readers in Hayastan to know that although I am a modern American woman, I am also an old-fashioned Armenian girl at heart. Even though I was born in New York City, my roots are deep enough to travel across the globe and connect me to my "people." I would also like them to know that I drink only Armenian cognac! There is no better cognac in the world. LONG LIVE ARMENIA!!! Cheers!!!

## An Australian Armenian Origin Born in Persia



Those are the starting words of the biography of Milanda de Mont, our compatriot and one of the topmost painters in Australia, see web page [www.milandademont.com](http://www.milandademont.com)

The paintress visited Armenia in May, 2004 (see "Armenian Art", 2004, #2, p. 22 – 23). In the autumn of the same year she opened an exhibition for the canvases she painted on the Armenian impressions, producing great repercussions. Milanda de Mont is a renowned abstract painter in the Western world.

She intends to bring her exhibition to Armenia next year.

## Exhibition by Artour Oshakantsi



*A. Oshakantsi and one of his paintings, Office of the Queen of England, London.*

On August 26 – September 3, the house of Cultural Associations with Foreign Countries in Yerevan showed the early works and several of the new ones by London-based Artour Oshakantsi. The works by the artist found their place in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, it is now being exposed at the official premises of the Queen of England. Foreign art critics regard Arthur Oshakantsi as the founder of the trend of Abstract Naturalism. The artist desires to present his art before his native people. He intends to show a more massive exhibition next year.

Information on the art by Arthur Oshakantsi can be obtained at the following web sites:

[www.oshakantsi.com](http://www.oshakantsi.com)  
[www.artlondon.com](http://www.artlondon.com)  
[www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

## Elizabeth Romhild's Exhibition in Singapore



On October 20, The International section of the "Opera Gallery" (London - Paris - New York) held an exhibition by Elizabeth

Romhild (for data on the artist see "Armenian Art", 2002, #1, p. 11, 2003, #2, p. 12, [www.elizabethromhild.com](http://www.elizabethromhild.com)). The artist is notable for her original style, resulting from both her Armenian-Danish origin, and her adolescent years spent in Iran, as well as adult years in Bangkok (Thailand). The main character of her art is the female, with her bodily beauty, her inner strength, and her controversial entity.

## In publication: a manual: "ARMENIAN ARTISTS OF THE WORLD" (expatriate Armenian painters and sculptors of the early 21st century)

Armenian expatriate professional painters and sculptors are requested to fill in the query given below. The manual will grant each of them an individual page. Text: English and Armenian.

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Second name, first name, birth day, month, year, place.
2. Specialized education.
3. Biographic data (countries of previous residence, date of moving to current residence). Professional employment history (art).
4. The first exhibition.
5. Taking part in prestigious group exhibition.
6. Personal exhibitions (if over 5, indicate the major ones). Where (country, city, show-room).
7. Museums used as depositories by the author.
8. Memberships of cultural organizations.
9. Awards.
10. Address, telephone, e-mail, web page.

Appended to questionnaire:

A colored photo of the author. Colored copies of two pieces (CD is acceptable).

Illustrated manual is being published by the "Armenian Art" Magazine

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

In September-October the Editor's office was attended by authorized representatives of the Journal:

Ashot Khachatryan (St. Petersburg),  
Rachel Koshkaryan (Chicago),  
Maro Manavyan (Montreal),  
Ani Babayan (Esfahan),  
Nevrik Azadian (Geneva).

In October, new authorized representatives of "Armenian Art" were established: Gor Markosyan (Pesaro, Italy), Rita Nazarbekyan (Tabriz, Iran).

The editorial office was visited by artist Setrak Nazaryan (Iran), sculptor Varujan Martirjan (Lebanon), artist Onik Sahakyan (Portugal), artist Laura Avetisyan, animation artist Trdat Aghamalyan (USA), many Armenia-based artists and art critics.

The editorial office was also attended by Vahe Gabrache, Chairman of the Swiss Armenian Union, Father Harutiun Pstikyan, The Leader of the Atrpatakan diocese Rev. Nshan Ts. Topuzyan (Iran), businessman Armen Melkonyan (USA) et al.

The editorial staff is very appreciative of Narek Harutiunian, Chairman of the "Narekatsi" Art Union for the donated computer and for the Union's publications.

On October 24, Karen Matevosyan, editor of "Armenian Art" and Director Hasmik Ginoyan attended the RA Ministry of Culture on the occasion of RA Minister of Culture Hovik Hoveyan personally awarding the "Movses Khorenatsi" medal to the renowned Canadian Armenian sculptor Arto Tchakmakchian.



Hasmik Ginoyan, Arto Tchakmakchian, Hovik Hoveyan, Karen Matevosyan

**The forthcoming 2006 is the 5th year of "Armenian Art" publication.** The magazine is being published in Armenian and in English, while one of the issues which is going to be dedicated to the Year of Armenia in France, will also have a French translation.

By the initiative of "Armenian Art" a publication is being prepared of "Armenian Artists of the World" (painters and sculptors of foreign countries of the early 21st century) in the form of an illustrated manual (see the appended sheet for details). While collecting information, we welcome assistance from the authorized representatives and all informed persons. This action stipulating the cooperation and mutual acknowledgement between Armenia and the Diaspora in the cultural domain, would also require sponsorship.

# Armenian Art

## representatives

**For subscription in Armenia and in Artsakh apply to "Armpress" (Haymamul) agency or to the Editorial Office, in Diaspora - to the REPRESENTATIVES of the Magazine**

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**REPRESENTATIVES of the "Armenian Art" magazine are full members of the editorial staff. They receive and send articles to the Editorial Office, organize subscriptions. The representatives have a legal authority to allow advertisements and realize collaborative agreements.**

# The Exhibition of Armenian Letters

## by Karolyn Puzovio

Although I have worked in education for many years my background was as a graphic designer. I always found my major interests lay in the use of type-face or of hand-drawn lettering, so logotype design was my favourite commission. I also explored calligraphy in my spare time and although I felt my left-handedness was an obstacle to achievement in this field, I learned much about the structure and origins of letterforms for the Latin alphabet and became interested in printing history and the development of typefaces.

It was when seeking a new challenge during my MA studies in the late 1990s that my attention was drawn to other phonetic alphabets, in particular to the Armenian which I had never encountered before and which is rarely seen in Britain. In researching its history I developed a fascination for these unusually shaped characters and my Mesrob and Jacob display types, produced digitally, resulted from these studies which included much hand drawing and analysis of the characteristics of the forms.

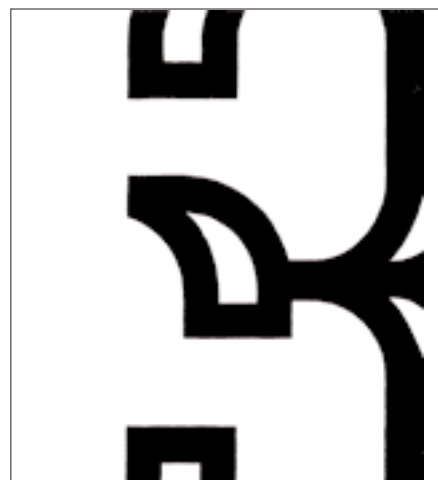
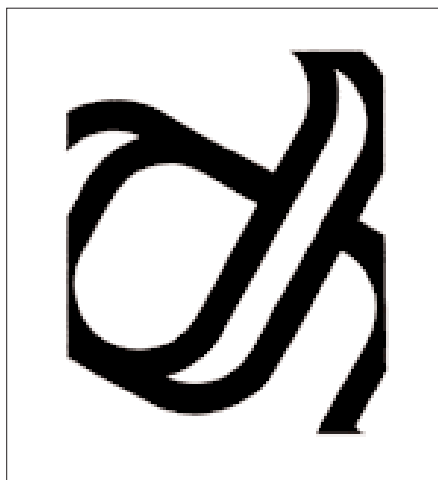
I am intrigued by the way that the Armenian alphabet is integral to the culture and religion of Armenian people spread across the world.

In the summer of 2002, I visited San Sebastian in the Basque country of Northern Spain and discovered the work of the Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida (1924–2002) shortly before he died. His large sculptures in steel, granite and alabaster were vaguely reminiscent of the shapes found in letterform but are in fact based on architectural forms and explore the spaces between.

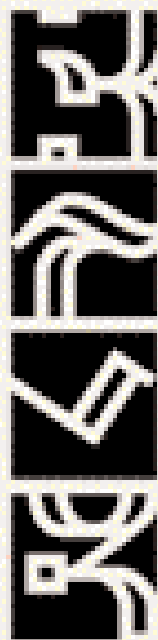
However, it is Chillida's works on paper that have been an inspiration to me – although my work does not look like his, one could draw parallels to the way his architectural training emerges in his work to the way letterforms are the starting point for mine.

I now find it satisfying to forget the demands of a client and work to my own agenda and return to the use of wet media and the tactile qualities of various paper substrates, which used to be essential skills for designers prior to the digital age. Presently, I find the purity of working without colour part of the appeal of the finished work – preferring the simplicity of form, counterform and texture, the features of Chillida's work I so admire.

The work can be described as experimental at this stage but is beginning to become more resolved as I refine the ideas and lose my initial reticence. By endeavouring to forget about the graphic designer's ingrained need for total accuracy, the work becomes more fluid, which for me, enhances its appeal.







Experiment 1

# Կարոլին Պուզովիո Carolyn Puzovio



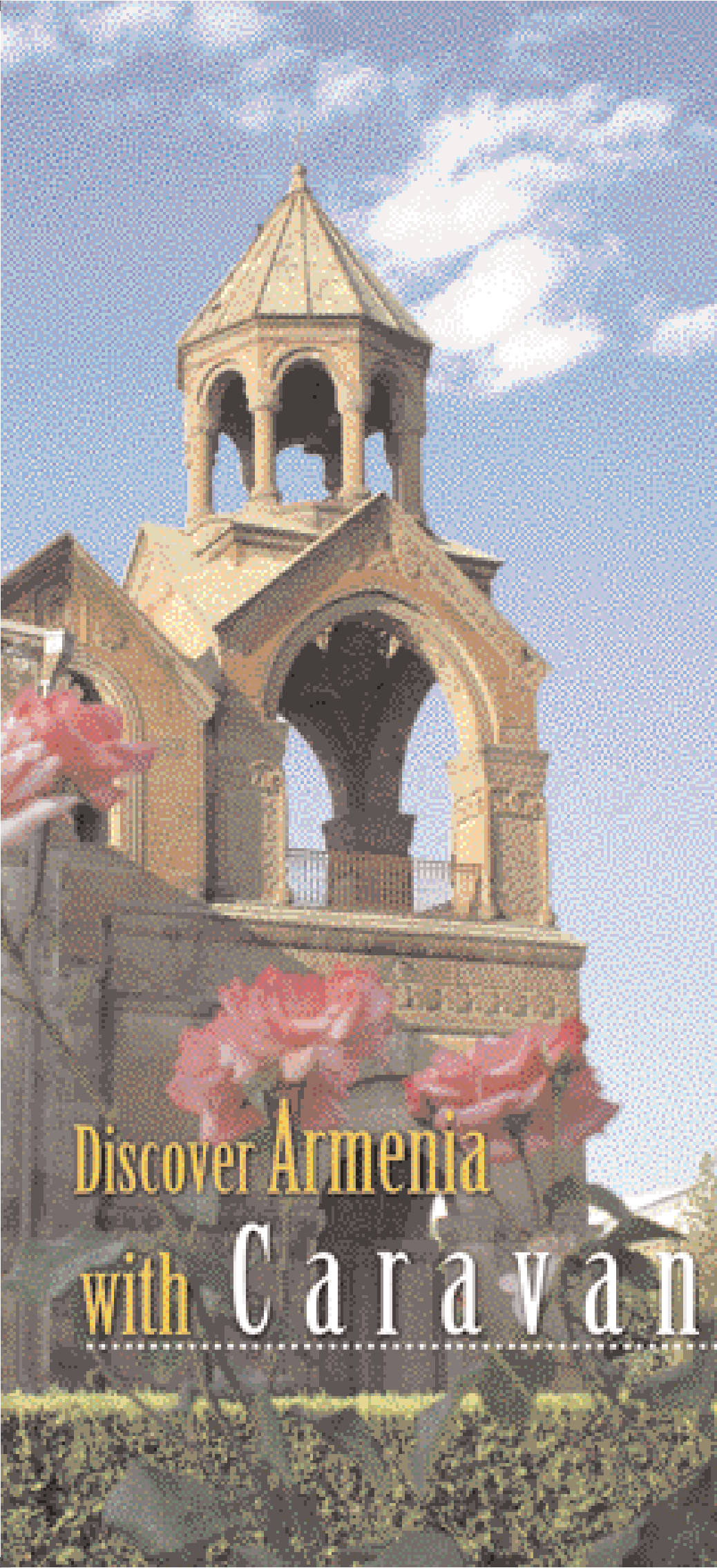
Experiment 2



Experiment 3

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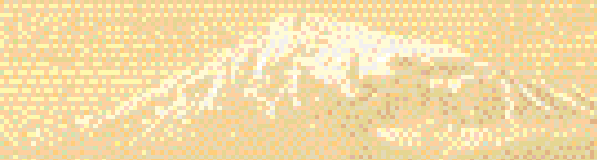


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