The National Gallery as Publisher of the “Armenian Art” Magazine

The National Picture Gallery of Armenia has acquired the right to be considered the Head Museum of the country with regard to its 64 years of existence, its rich collections of the Armenian and foreign art, its exhibiting, publishing and other activities. It is not only the place storing and exhibiting the artistic objects of value, but also a cultural center with wider functions. One of the basic functions of the Gallery is bringing art closer to people by means of exhibitions, publications, lectures, movies etc.

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

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

Paravon Mirzoyan, Director of the Armenian National Picture Gallery

The Forthcoming Exhibitions and Events at the Picture Gallery

April 6 - May 18 the musical festival titled “The National Picture Gallery” with the participation of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Armenia
April 22 - Exhibition on the Occasion of the 90th Anniversary of the Great Armenian Genocide
May 6 - Exhibition on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War
May 14 International Art Festival “Night/Nocturnal Lights”, within the “Illustrations ‘Night’” International Action (on May 18)
Hanibal is at the Gates

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As far back as 5th c.B.C. Plato said that the best defense of a country is music - elevated and harmonious, clear and meaningful, either than false music or chaotic. Prior to Plato, in another part of the world. Confucius said: Take care about the music being harmonious and elevating. Wasn't there a ban on the music of the rich? It makes havoc. To avoid empty speech making. According to the Chinese philosopher, wisdom, self-neglect, and courage are formed and developed by the laws of decency and music. (Confucius. Conversations. (In Armenian). Yerevan, 1991, pp. 119, 123). As to the Armenian song production, it is a plague, musical sectarianism, cancer of music rapidly expanding.

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

Society today is besieged by the synthesizer-striking crazy singer assault groups. The living corpses of songs baked by Armenians, Isid, Turkish, Ottoman, Armenian, Nagorno-Argamak, minstrelsy is a Babel of voices. And all that very often occurs within the limit of a single song.

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

A Big Artist with a Character of Igdir

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

Coriolan: a complex controversial character, a mighty personality and a propensity to put oneself at the top of everything. It is to be noted that the character portrayed by Khoren Abrahamian is indeed above his environment both in strength and might, in his mind and imagination, and even in his moral substance. The environment, the Roman people, with high art. It seems that there is a magic circle: first, the world must save beauty, so that beauty should save the world.

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

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

Yes, they are unworthy, impotent they are. What can you do, he thinks, you have to play pretend, toad-eat, because they are "the populous", "the public. And so that: that is his motherland, But even this kind of motherland is unique and above everything. To motherland you have to get com-
mited and serve her no matter what. In this land is your home and your children; it is your motherland, it has creat-
ed you, by any means it cannot be betrayed.

A very similar controversy between a personality and soci-
ety is in "Doctor Stockmann" ("Public Enemy"), a play by H. Ibsen, in its production Kh. Abramian performed the role of Stockmann.

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

Gevork (in the film "The Saroyan Brothers". That was a phe-
nomenon not only for the professional life of Kh. Abrahamian, but also for the erstwhile Armenian movie production. Phenomenon. For decades on stage, on the screen, even in the literature there has been a way of escap-
ing from an ugly tradition. Army officer Gevork was a patri-
sic officer at the time full of hazards, calamities and fighting. A strong-willed, committed soldier. His only pur-
pose was Armenia, her independent, free and secure exist-
tence, for her sake he is willing to use any means, to go to the end. If needed, to sacrifice his life. He will never go to 

exile, he will stay in his country, whatever happened. As to the country's population, or to his comrades in arms, he has 

reservations: he despises traitors and those who save their 

hide by betraying others, who talk much but do not see far 

enough. And embittered through the wretched destiny of 

our small nation, through disloyalty of friends, the nation 

tired of struggle and fighting, and mortification of the re-

sisting spirit.

It is to be noted that Gevork is also implacable towards the 

terrorists who through the Bolshevik propaganda have 

willingly or unwillingly associated themselves with the 

Turkish "revolutionary" bash-bazouks.

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

ant performance as well as his personal charm.

Master, in the film with the same name while reviewing the 

character created by Kh. Abramian, we remember that 

General Andranik used to address Oro as "Master". Indeed, 

some reference may stipulate this labeling a national hero, 

and Kh. Abramian has incorporated this character and image.

Under the Soviets, when everything belonged to all and to no one, it happened so that a particular thing belonged to everybody (or it was pretended to be so) and so stopped being owned by anyone, that is one did not any more con-

sider oneself master of either the elements or even the things of his own creation. And so, in the film directed by 

F. Dovlatian by the script of H. Matevosyan Rostom per-

formed by K. Abramian countered that by his behavior 

and his words showing that independent of any regime or 

spokesman (which are transient), the Armenian man, man 

in general has to be master of his country, his land and 

water, he is responsible for their destiny.

It is in this way that forester Rostom understands his role 

and his objectives, and does not allow the men who have 

lost the master's feeling to destroy the forest to or its popu-

lation making an excuse that it is owned by someone 

else, by the state, by the leadership. No, says the forester, 

the owners are all of us and each one. That mentality and feel-

ing, alike, even spread its way into many people from 

different walks of life.

Avetian ("An Unfinished Monologue") by P. Zeituniants. 

Between the ups and downs the strange situation emerg-

ing in the country simulated production of a play perhaps 

the best, with Kh. Abramian playing the title character, a 

large-scale manager of manufacturing industry.

A strong-willed character, dignified bearing, a competent 

worker, but not greedy nor malvolent. Everyone is coming 

to heel to him, following him very closely, fulfilling immedi-

ately all his orders. (To illustrate this obedience, the witty 

film director put an orchestra on stage, with the industry 

boss conducting. It could seem that nothing could resist 

that mighty man.)

And then that man is coming across an unceasing but 

unconquerable obstacle - controlled economy; this is allowed, 

that is not, order, plan, resolution is more important than 

the company's objectives. Initiatives are rejected, enterpris-

ing is superfluous. The resolution is taken final.

Of course of order can be documented: getting the wrong 

way, addressing even immoral means: bribery, compulsion, 

sometimes even a former mistress can be used as a go-

between, or for purgery, etc. Avetian does not avoid those. But 

why should he behave like that? Doesn't he care about his 

work, his company, his industry, and finally about the inter-

ests of the country? There is no doubt, is there, that con-

structing an unplanned railway (even more so, using the 

private means), will only benefit the country.

Working, creative, business-like, inventive soul of the 

Armenian man epitomized by the reality, Avetian-Arba-

mianian is finally embarking on a sad soliloquy having 

an open end. The country and the people will have yet to 

see, to notice, to understand the incongruity of the central-

ally controlled economy.

Avetian by Kh. Abramian is the one bringing good news, 

his character the new word not only in our theater, but 

also in the way of providing the true bearing to the public 

consciousness. There have also been scores of other roles, 

each singular and original.

In September 2004 Khoren Abramian with spouse Gohar 

Galtchan, a gifted actress, returned to Mother Theater. After 

considerable effort was assured that he remained 

loyal and open to all newly arising artistic objectives and is 

ready to serve the public and society.

"Jin" game, a play by Cobarn, an American playwright, fully 

provides such an opportunity which has been implement-

ed by the actor imposing the most valued parts of his artis-
tic talent and directing experience.

The performance is started with a show of beautiful young 

semimad girls. Next comes a white-gowned medical nurse 

for a regular injection. We subsequently learn that food and 

service as well as other things are neglected in this house. 

the kind of the old people are coming and going all the time 

showing off their care and tender love.

What is then lacking in that exemplary Institution? And 

why is it so devaluating? Perhaps it is a scary recognition 

of the old age, of the unavoidable end? Was it only because 

of that this poor woman Fendri Doshi is bundled and 

shrunken up in a corner? That makes Martin Waller, having 

lost his care-free life at a game of cards, emerging in a 

nursing home like a fish drawn out of water to pace here and 

there, to toss about, to breathe, to live, to look for ways and 

means of salvation?

No, the matter is quite different. In order to kill the 

clock, Waller offers Dorsey to play "Jin". Professional dealing of 

the cards betrays a good player. It is clear he will win in 

the shake of a lamb's tail. But he deliberately loses, lets her 

be happy. While for Dorsey her victory is a great shock; it 

causes a surprise to Waller. To this game he devoted all his 

life and passion, but he had never experienced anything like 

the delight shown by that woman.

For Dorsey that unexpected success became an issue of 

life and death. The woman in whose life there had only been 

failure, defeat, losses and disillusion, all of a sudden had 

defeated everyone experienced so; she can also be lucky, she 

can also be a winner. She can do everything. In fact.

Being aware of that, Waller-Abramianian continues to lose.

And the way he is playing his defeat is very remarkable: he 

greens surprise, doubt, anger... Meanwhile observing, the im-

spiration, change and rejuvenation occurring to Dorsey 

at each victory, the way she regains her faith in herself, 

and the way she is becoming more and more attractive, as if 

it were quite another person.

Waller himself is inspired with his game he is getting into 

another passion. It was so easy to save a person from des-

perate solitude, to award the will and ability to live, if you 

show a little kindness, care and compassion.

And in the wake of that goes another perception: salvation 

of man and mankind is within oneself, it is being kind 

and loving thy neighbor. And that it is a much more powerful 

magic force than the fictitious miraculous abilities to play 

"Jin".

That is the meaning and sense of alas, the last creative 

and very modern work by Khoren Abramian. The great actor 

with an indomitable character of kidr stepped out well be-

fore his time, leaving behind love and good memories in 

the heart of the nation, having occupied his place on the 

golden pages of our cultural history, next the great.

Khachatur Arzruny
Emeritus of art, Republic of Armenia
90th Anniversary of Armenian Genocide
The Mystery of Multiple-Pipe Flute

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

In the remote forests of Arcadia nymphs lived. One of them, the most beautiful, was called Syrinx. Many gods and satyrs of the Greek Pantheon were in love with her. Once, the horrific god Pan, who had a goat head and hooves, started to follow her. He was not wicked, but very ugly and unhappy. Syrinx was terrified by his appearance and ran away. She reached the river side and asked her sisters - the water nymphs - to hide her. They agreed and changed her into a reed. Swung by the wind, it bent and wapt. Butterfly Pan cut a few reeds and made a multiple-pipe flute from them. He called this instrument Syrinx because its voice reminded him of his beloved creature.

To this day the multiple-pipe flute is called Syrinx. During research historians found that this word was used also by many other nations of the Ancient Orient. There may be a similar origin in the ancient Armenian word string, which also means flute.

Forgetting the legend and reflecting on the evolution of wind instruments. It is likely that the first flutes were made from reeds. Since this type of instrument could produce only one sound, it means that to create the scale, people started adding more pipes, which resolved into the creation of a multiple-pipe instrument. In past times these were stuck together with wax and arranged in an ascending row. The pipes were closed on the bottom and had no finger holes. The sound produced depended on the length of the air pipe and the range upon their number. The instrument was played in the same manner as the harmonica is played today, namely by applying the lips to each pipe separately. It is amazing that the very famous instrument, the organ, which is known for its royal sound, is the direct descendent of this primitive reed pipe.

Respected scholars Erich M. Hornbostel and Curt Sachs in their book Musical Instruments of the World concluded that the multiple-pipe flute spread into different parts of the Ancient World more than 5000 years ago. According to the Armenian ethnographer Serbhi Lstidlian, they may be even older and have originated during the times of the proto-Armenians and Hittites. Multiple illustrations prove these facts, for instance the Hittites’ stone monument from Rum Kale (11th millennium B.C.) and a terracotta statuette from Seleukia.

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

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

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

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

Two other impressive examples of stone flutes were found in modern Armenia. Felix Ter-Martirosyan, a respected Armenian archaeologist, during excavations at Gerami in 1992 found a trapezoid-shaped piece of stone. Another stone flute, found in the ancient city of Gerami, was made of stone and had finger holes. The surface of this stone flute (height: 80 x 75 mm) was covered with a geometrical relief ornamentation of a row of triangles, which are associated with ancient Urartian culture. Along the top the piece has four holes with wide slits, two on the sides damaged. The sounds produced by the middle two are a clear E and F. By calculating each step 1/15 of the length of the scale, it is easy to determine the sound of the side holes. Thus, this piece indicates the existence of a labial musical instrument with a well-formed pitch, proving that ancient Armenians were already familiar with the natural scale in the fifth century B.C.

The second example of an Armenian stone flute was found in 1796 near the village of Garni (25 km. from Yerevan). This is a two-pipe flute (60mm x 50mm) from the Hellenistic period.

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

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

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

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

Hundreds and hundreds of years have passed. Destructive wars erased cities, wiped out palaces and their powerful governors and tore down civilizations, but the small flute made by an unknown craftsman was saved. It was impossible to destroy it - as it is impossible to destroy the soul of a nation, its music, its songs.

Naune Shamilyan
Musicologist

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

Fig. 1. Silver vessel of King Pakor III (II-th centuries A.D.)
Fig. 2. Multiple-pipe flute on terracotta statuette from Seleukia (11th millennium B.C.)
Fig. 3. Pan playing a multiple-pipe flute.
Fig. 4. Stone flute from Garni (IV-th centuries B.C.)
Fig. 5. Graphic picture of two-pipe flute from Garni (IV-th century B.C.)

6. Vartan - Ancient country in the territory of modern Armenia, established in the IX-th century B.C.
8. Ter-Martirosyan, T. Stone Pan Flute from Dilzhsararak.

Music and Instruments • (11)th - (19)th centuries A.D.

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The ART By Ashot Khachatryan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Sophisticated Portrait-Painter of Lyricism

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

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

It is to be noted that the artist is not satisfied with his style acquired long ago, but continues to look for new expressions. From imported paints he developed an original method of execution and produced a noteworthy black-and-white series. His search resulted in original manifestations of multi-dimensional painting where the surface of the canvas finds a continuation in cardboard or similar volumes. At the same time yet another, perhaps the most sophisticated aspect of the same composition, complementary and complementary to one another. Thus, e.g. the image of the cross in the wealth of its measurements and mentality is reminiscent of a series of images in the center wherein is Christ crucified, while the wings of the cross show different moments of the Son of God's life.

Villik Zakarian has also made a substantial contribution to book illustration. We are not going to enumerate his illustrations to books and Armenian folk tales, they are very numerous. Let us mention only the works with opening volumes which for their implementation beside the artistic abilities must have a very exigent approach of a lay-artist. Elaboration of small detailed details are done by the author, all work of the painter, even in minutes sketches. There is such as a strict layout on each square meter of his studio in Verevan city center, in that studio standing before the easel in deep thought from dawn to dusk, creating. His regular compositions of the mature age far behind is filling with meaning each moment of a transient life.
An interesting document dated August 14, 1921 has been preserved: a list of persons taking part in opening the Art Gallery of Armenia, listing the participants of that significant event: painters, actors, musicians, officials, workers, soldiers, schoolchildren and students.

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

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

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

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

Actually, any museum during its formation goes its own way. In the case of our Museum the factor of acquisitions was particularly remarkable, which undoubtedly has had its preliminary data concealed in history. In early 20th century the part of the Armenian people that had survived the unprecedented massacre in the Western part of Historical Armenia had to abandon the land of their ancestors so to find refuge in different countries of the Near East, Europe or America. Having adopted those countries as their second homeland the Armenians formed national communities becoming actively involved in their political, economic and social life, developing cultural activities involving all domains: spiritual life, culture, music, fine arts. However, they used to remain nostalgic about their homeland living through its cares and realizations. No wonder that the Armenian art critics and art collectors participated in the cultural life of the rejuvenation Armenia, the establishment of the fine arts museum in particular.

When in 1923 Askanaz Manvian applied to the Armenian artists of France asking to help the Museum to the best of their abilities, responding enthusiastically were V.Makokhchian, Z.Zakarian, T.Sayan, S.Khachatryan, R.Shihmanyan, et al, step by step until 1935 presenting about 40 pieces. Other donors of the first decade were Artists M. Sarian, E. Tadevosyan, F.Terlemezian, V.Galayan, Art collector V.Ahanian, T.Khan-Kelejian, V.Kanahan. The Museum also received donations from the notable Russian painters A. Benoi, A. Ostroumov-lebedeva, E. Larsen, meanwhile, Isahak Brodsky enriched the art collection with pieces by the greatest artists of the XX century: K. Kuoni, B. Grigoreli, B. Anisfeldi, I. Mallavary.

In late 1924, as advised by Al. Tamanian and M. Sarian, art critic Ruben Drambian moved to Yerevan from Leningrad, he had been
In 1925 he accepted the position of the chief of Fine Arts Department, while in 1935 the Department was enlarged to become the State Museum of Fine Arts with Ruben Drambian as director (until 1951). R. Drambian's professional intuition and collector's abilities as well as his experience had predetermined the future development of the Museum. Due to the correctly chosen policies in furnishing the Museum with exhibits the museum has become one of the best Fine Arts Museum in the Soviet Union. It was in those years that the foundation was laid of the subsequent extensive research work.

Under the leadership of L. Durnovo (1885 - 1963), a great specialist in old art invited by R. Drambian from Moscow, the museum started scholarly research and reproduction of the Medieval Armenian wall-paintings and miniatures. A group of young painters - E. Khachatryan, M. Chobanian, R. Loris-Melikov, V. Bagdasarian, G. Khandayan, H. Garagozian, et al., were trained in the difficult crafts of reproduction and rehabilitation. In expeditions dispatched to diverse regions of Armenia they discovered, researched, registered and reproduced relics of the Armenian monumental painting. Many frescos ornamenting the half-ruined churches had been open to the elements. Today they are no more. However, their copies have become full-blown substitutes for the originals. Due to L. Durnovo and her disciples, the museum today shows to its visitors the wall paintings of Lmbatavank monastery of Aruj Church of Tatev and other churches. It is to be noted that later on that collection was reinforced by new specimens, and in 1985 it became possible to exhibit them in a new specially designed show-room as well as the miniatures and copies of the high-reliefs of churches. Displaying the medieval art ensures the chronological sequence of the Armenian fine arts from early Medieval sources to the 17-18 cc. ecclesiastical painting, to the new times and the newest art.

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

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

In 1936, a notable Armenian black-and-white artist, widely known in France, Edgar Shahn, added 170 bas-reliefs to his collection in the Museum, sending them from Paris to his personal exhibition being arranged in Yerevan. A donation from France by artist Abraham Jinjan added 30 paintings and 9 drawings to the already existing collection by the world-famous marine painter Hovhannes Avazovsky. Associated with the marine painter is one of the large events in the life of the Museum. In the years of the Great Patriotic War, which had disrupted the peaceful life of the entire Soviet population, the Museum continued to work and also to retain security of its collection. The Museum accepted the priceless stocks and archives of the H. Avazovsky Museum relocated from Feodosia, the Crimea, during the war. Since November 8, 1941 that collection had been kept in the Fine Arts Museum. On May 2, 1942, on the 125th Anniversary of the painter, the management of the Museum and the Armenian Artistic Union established an exhibition in the Persian mosque where in those years the Artistic Union was based. There were 75 works by Avazovskiy and 10 pictures by West-European marine painters. Among the partakers of the opening ceremonies were A. Shahinian, Chief of Directorate on the Affairs of Art, M. Sarian, Academician H. Orbili, R. Drambian and B. Barsamian, director of the Museum and the Picture Gallery in the city of Feodosia. Within 12 days the exhibition had 45000 visitors. On November 5, 1944, the collections of Feodosia Gallery were returned to the Crimea without any losses.

To be continued...
www.armenianartist.net

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

The website authors are Zhanet Lazaryan, Manvel Adamyan, and Gevorg Sargsyan.

Designed by Arman Oshakantsi.

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

www.gallery.am

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

www.naregatsi.org

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

www.hyeart.org

"HyeArt" Armenian Cultural Center and Armenian Artists in Australia

www.24.brinkster.com/valmargallery

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

www.georgyangallery.com

A gallery, presenting modern Armenian paintings in Yerevan

www.zirani.com

"Zirani" Armenian gallery in Lebanon

"GITELIK"

University in Yeghegnadzor

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

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

www.syunikngo.am.
ART AIMED AT THE FUTURE

Poghos Haltayan

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

sects of socialist realism or false realism waiting for years for the humiliating permissions from the central committee. The multi-aspect and multi-image creation being conspicuous in contemporary complex and controversial symbolic and meaningful parallel opened before the art-loving public a unique world of the beautiful filled with the tension of the soul and mind, with exactly focused dramatic charges and concerns. Full of Universal grief, the famous "Hrazdzn", Armenian unconquerable spirit, the symbolic mythic horse "Towards Yerevand" and generally on the horse subject, many series of pictures, in the name of freedom, the firing squad, the tragic and fantastic cityscapes of the outgoing old Yerevan and other multiple works enriched the history of the new Armenian art with completely new artistic approaches and concepts of forms and color-plastic problems.

In November 2004 the new exhibition opened in the Artistic Union dedicated to the 75th Anniversary of the diverse degrees of human tension, the invisible strata of the conscious and the unconscious, releasing the artistic problems of the current moment, the processes of situational transformations.

Incredible by today's artistic criteria are the high-quality features of his self-portraits, the length and breadth of his inner world, done during the years of study, however, there is one completely exempt from subordinate (or illustrative) status to acquire the attributes of self-sufficient art. Examples are many. The Self-Portrait of 1935 which is exclusive in the self-portraits, is dedicated to poet Edgar Poe. It could seem that that manner of painting could belong to a wizard bent by years who had attained great mastery with the classical clarity and high professionalism cutting the new and unfamiliar way for the artists. In this row, the mentioned portrait is not alone, and an attentive observer will see that quite easily. However, the phenomenon of Adalian is that Artist (which is striking in the whole panorama of fine arts) has never been content with what he had achieved but is looking forward to seek for new ways and forms in order to walk in step with the contemporary times. This process is going on up to now, as shown by the splendid array of the portraits created in 2004, brilliant design solutions, with great inclusion of time and space, with new artistic inventions to discover the divine image of man.

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

An Armenian Artist to Open an Exhibition in the EC Building

My conversation with Armen Daneghyan occurred during his work hours.

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

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

Your next exhibition is to be arranged at the European Council building, isn't it? Yes, I am glad that I have received an invitation to open my exhibition in the building of the European Council in April this year. It is my hope that the Europeans will like my works. The exhibits are going to be very different, including works in both Armenian and International subjects. I wonder if there is an Armenian community in Strasbourg. As far as I know, the community is small, consisting of intellectuals. I have heard that Khachik Mouradian, born in Armenia, is doing a lot of work to congregate the local Armenians, being a gentleman of virtue. We wish you success at the Strasbourg exhibition. Thank you. It is indeed an important assignment. I have taken part in quite a lot of exhibitions both in Armenia and overseas, this one however seems to be of top priority.
The "MEK" experimental cultural center was established in Giumri in 2003. It is targeted towards the new development of modern art with regard to an extensive range: fine arts, music theater, video art, haute couture, while accepting new forms of art. The founders are convinced that the Center has an analytical bias in education and specialization.

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

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

Many values are suppressed today, black and white are often times confused. Very often through false values we arrive at nonsense while disregarding the obvious truths forged for our use long ago, fully forgetting that all things and matters are under God's vision, and our visions and pathways remain unquestioned. We become surprised why our desperate screams loose their echoes without considering that our glances are directed towards the abyss.

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

Gayane Eghbalyan, Research Worker, National Gallery of Armenia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vache Petrosian
The "MESROP MASHTOTS" language arts center

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

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

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

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

The Center has organized a benevolent cultural pilgrimage to Artsakh: Shushi, Stepanakert, Lachin (Kashatagh) with the purpose of validating and paying patriotic tribute to the Armenians-Artsakh moral and psychological channels of communication.

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

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

To be noted is another important development of our Center. In the governmental Jubilee concert programs celebrated in Armenia, the "MESROP MASHTOTS" has become a mandatory and desirable partner. It is especially prestigious that the participation of the Center is suggested by the beneficiaries themselves, the giants of our culture: Silva Kaputkian, Hovhannes Chekijan.

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

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

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

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

With blessings,
GAREGIN II,
THE CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS

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

SILVA KAPUTKIAN

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

HOVANNES CHEKIJAN

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

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

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

Today, using the joint efforts of all Armenians we must strengthen the house of our ancestors, the century-old vision of a free and independent Armenia. Let us join forces to make our home country strong. We invite you for cooperation:
9, Tigran Mets, Yerevan, Armenia
Tel: 52-56-62, 28-30-74, 56-34-55
PIETA

The Painting Named “Seven Wounds of Godmother” IN THE ARMENIAN ART

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

Later, that sacral ordeal of spiritual cleansing became widely used, particularly by the Catholics, so much so that in the Middle Ages there came about many saints pictures on that subject. Adopted as their historiographic basics was the scene of “Removal from the Cross”, particularly the situation when Godmother holds the dead Son in her embrace mourning about Him. In the preliminary presentation it was a multifigure composition involving also some disciples of Jesus. However on saint pictures of a later period the partakers of the “Removal from the Cross” scene yielded their places to the images here are the artistic methods forming and fixing the line of composition, which is simple but imaginative: Monik has solved the problem. The small miniature expressed and explicated the big and deep Pieta.

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

“Seven Wounds of Godmother” is an imitation. Since the Western Pietas were either painting, fresco or sculpture, (of which the widest known is the masterpiece by Michelangelo), the Armenian artist most probably reverted not to imitating one of those, but perhaps to some bas-relief version. Besides being a perfect example of classical Pieta, part of the general composition of this picture is comprised of the seven swords piercing the heart of Godmother, the relevant seven circles which enclose seven small images of plots and the tools that tortured Jesus. The inner layer related to each miniature image has been decayed and obliterated.

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

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

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

Those are the seven wounds of Godmother.

a. When at the time of Jesus’ circumcision she saw the blood of her Son.

b. When fleeing to Egypt for fear of Herod, when blood of many infants was spilt.

c. When the twelve-year-old Jesus remained in Jerusalem temple and His Mother was looking for him.

d. When it became known that Jesus was going to be crucified.

e. Road to Calvary.

f. The crucifixion.

g. Jesus’ death and burial.

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

Avet Avetianyan
Scientist Employed by Matenadaran
Who Hosts the Monument?

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

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

Let us hope that this publication will
find a repercussion and Aruj com-
 pound's host or hosts will show their
experience. This is however, a sin-
gle case, exemplifying hundreds of
similar situations.

K. M.

Saltboxes in Armenia

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

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

Among the five different types of artistic style the common prin-

ciple is the female image; with linear, dotted, bas-relief and high-

relief ornamentation as well as different symbols. The clay salt-
boxes besides external female appearance had also other prop-
erties, symbols of gender, fashions, ornaments expressing multi-
ple meanings.

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

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

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

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

Getting out of the ap-
plicated usage, the male-
image pots in many
rural homes have re-
maind as memories and
survivals of the past.
As an original sec-
tion of national culture
the saltboxes not only
have lost their sig-
nificance, but they are
revived these days
due to the folk crafts-
men themselves taking the traditional as a basis, create the
new, each one using his own style and interpretation. Thus, the
Armenian female-figure saltboxes continue to survive, present-
ing the legacy of former culture to the generations.

Lilit Aghababyan
Senior scientist, National Gallery
About Lidia Durnovo

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

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

The office where they made copies was on the second floor of the Gallery in a small room with a single window. Working here were Vardik Baghakian, Garegin Khanaghian (Giga), Louis, a repa-
trant from France, Durnovo spoke French with her, Haikaz Khachatryan, and Hera Karapogian.

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

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

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

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

Later there was an exhibition of our copies which was a great success. Academicians Hovsep Orbeli,
and Akhtam Maronian were very impressed with our work. In our working room, he was sur-
pised and saddened saying, why did they remove

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

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

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

Durnovo was very alert to her students’ needs seeing to it that their abilities be applied in the best possible way. Anastasia Vermishian, a highly qualified fruit expert, was ar-
rested in 1937, after spending many years in Siberia she un-
dertook a new project in the Armenian National Museum. She advised Durnovo, she advised to commit the task to me. Fortunately, I did not fail her trust, and I was very happy when the album was published with an acknowledgement by the Author.

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

Lidia Alexandrovna Durnovo was an extraordinarily modest
and noble person dedicated to her work, she attracted peo-
ples with her professional knowledge, but also by her wonderful human qualities. She was one of the best friends of our nation, she largely promoted the Armenian miniature painting and its international recognition.

Proper Evaluation of the Past is a Pledge to Form the Future

On March 31, the press conference conducted at Matenada-

ran, was dedicated to the ongoing and subsequent programs, particularly the diverse activities of the "Benevolent friends of Matenadaran" of which the prominent place is occupied by the events dedicated to the 1600th Anniversary of the Inven-
tion of Armenian letters, in the course of the year benevolent cultural actions are to be held exhibition publications.

As noted by Arshak Banushan, executive
director of the Friends of Matenadaran Benevolent Founda-
tion, the Foundation established in 2001 provides Matenadaran with funding actually a wide variety of pro-
grams have been implemented to the amount of ca. 520,000.
In the future, the activities of the Foundation will have to be expanded by virtue of the assistance to Matenadaran by old and new friends and new programs. With regard to the 1600th Anniversary of the invention of the Armenian letters, he noted that it is the 1600th Anniversary that has been established by
Mashtots and it has to be commemorated properly.

Last year, Gregor N. Gatsalts of all Armenians, who is
Om Pirmeti of the Foundation, gave a blessing and a prayer in favour of the 'Friends of Matenadaran Foundation'. The Armenian Patriarch suggests that a proper evaluation should be given to our outgrown legacy, which is also a pledge to forming our honourable future. Let us respond to this em-
phatic call, one and all.

"Armenian Art"

Address and Data of the Friends of Matenadaran Benevolent Foundation:
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Tel: (374 1) 520-420, Fax: (374 1) 562-769,
e-mail: friends@matenadaran.org

For donations:
Hainarart Bank "Friends of Matenadaran" transaction account 1570000000010100 (WOM) transaction account 157000028700010101 (USD)
From the History of Satirical Painting
Caricature or Satire?

Vrej Kasuni

We talk, argue and suggest, ask questions, what is finally, satirical drawing or caricature. This branch of fine arts while disparaged in the past, is today impeccable and incomparable for many strata of the population. Anyways, satirical drawing or caricature?

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

Satire and satirical picture have been in existence for millennia, in different civilizations. In Ancient Egypt those were in the form of wall paintings and on papyrus. In Old Egyptian art we encounter pictures on jars, satirical presentations, in one or series of pictures. Developing along with us were humor and satire, the forms and writing or pictures. The misunderstanding occurs because later on the present-day satirical drawing started to make use of the arts' simplicity. However, the objective of the mentioned genre was quite different. The satire painting was elevated from the subconscious level to the level of consciousness during the Renaiss ance era, due to Leonardo, Titian, Rembrandt, El Greco, Bosch, Bruegel, and even Rubens and their drawings, their satirical and grotesque imagery. However, drawing the images is only one percent of the business. A great role here belongs to the subject and its dramatic development. An important role belonged to Carracci (1557-1609). Carracci's interpretation of caricatural painting: "Both of them reveal the outward appearance concealing the abiding truth. Both of them attempt to help the nature in executing its program. One is striving to depict personal images, thus revealing the new and concealed entity of a personality. That parallel existed between the classical painting and the satirical painting. Classical, wherein the balance was not a big problem, relocating whatever balance from its fulcrum being considered a very innovative step. The balance is needed even in case of creating a picture having an unbalanced composition. Therefore the same criterion exists in the satirical picture as well; moreover, when the painter is in violation of the boundaries of freedom and the measure of morality, the satirical picture at this very moment will become coarse and unacceptable, even hazardous, like a seemingly innocent and secure doll in the hands of a child may become toxic and deadly. However, a correct usage will convert it into an operational weapon against all negative sides of human nature. That is what was done by the French artists at the time of the Revolution. Europe has assimilated and expanded that art, producing great names: U. Haggard (UK), Charles Philippe, Demmais (France), Goya (Spain), etc. As to the Armenians, what was their level in this art and their place in history? In Europe since the Renaissance the Ottoman Empire, in 1952 for the first time in Istanbul (A Verbous Man). The publisher, editor and artist was Hovsep Vardanian Pasha, Hovsep Pasha was followed by other names: Nihan Perpeian, Simon Enchghian, Harutjun Hekimian, Delmak Eskerchian, et al. Thus, Istanbul was to become the cradle of the Armenian satirical painting, with some following.

In Egypt the Patriarch of Armenian satirical painting Al. Saruian, In Lebanon: Tirian Ajemian, In France: Edmond Giez, In Rumania: Jik Da madian, In Italy: Grigor Lakia In Tilfis.

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

To be continued
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1. Gohar Chemenyan. Shahin, the familiar one and the unfamiliar. Yerevan, 2004