



cultural magazine

Armenian Art

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A Cultural Diaspora

The title may sound unusual, of course, we have not yet admitted that following the massive exodus of artists from this country a new concept has come about, to be named "a cultural Diaspora". Thus, abiding in this domain are not only those who had abandoned Armenia, but those who while residing here, work overseas. To be included in this concept is also the culture of Diaspora proper, with its multiple laminations.

The cultural Diaspora is the whole bulk of the Armenian artist based outside Armenia. Today it is a rather impressive army of people.

The cultural Diaspora has two basic levels (fields of activity): purely Armenian and International. The former one is for Armenians only, for an Armenian community of any country, wherein an acting artist can successfully deal either in Armenia or in Armenian communities of alternate countries. The latter one is mostly for aliens, since the artists successfully contacting the International domains, oftentimes loosen the ties not only with compatriots, but even with the Armenian culture proper. It is natural, since those artists are called upon to satisfy the foreign users, being often engaged in multinational artistic circles, they do not choose their team, place or time of the artistic action.

The cultural Diaspora, independent of its manifestation, is a service to the Armenian art. That is our open border with the world. However, do we know the cultural Diaspora? At least to the degree whereby it is related to Armenia. E.g., if Isabel Pairagdarian should not have visited Armenia within the last two years, in the quality of an incomparable performer of the Armenian spiritual songs, it would have been unlikely for us to know her at all.

Published last year in Yerevan by Elizabeth Romhild, a person of Armenian-Danish origin, a large volume titled "Armenians in International Cinema" by Artsiv Bakhchinyan, surprised many readers by the great number of Armenians dealing in the world of cinema, the volume unfortunately not including the data on USSR and CIS countries.

It will take some effort to imagine, how many volumes it would take to publish information on the Diaspora painters, musicians, vocalists, etc.

Armenia is a cultural country, ejecting new talents from its depth, like a volcano, spreading them all over the world. It is necessary to strengthen the ties with the Armenian artists abroad, those being the envoys of our culture.

The cultural Diaspora has to be more widely known, both in Armenia and overseas. No doubt, individual efforts of some people are very useful in this regard, however it would be expedient to use a more systematic approach. It would be



Jansen, Mother With the Baby

good to create a biographic dictionary of "Armenian Artists of the World". It would be good to organize different cultural festivals. For the visual arts it would be good to implement the idea discussed in the previous issue of the "Armenian Art" magazine about establishing the "Spiurk" showroom. And finally, it would be good to start a special TV program for expatriate Armenians titled "the Cultural Diaspora" with relevant subject matter.

Our current objective being the national survival, the cultural Diaspora is an instrument especially designed for that matter.

K. M.

JULY 12 - 17, 2005



THE GOLDEN APRICOT

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL IN YEREVAN

OPENING THE FESTIVAL First Nights and Encounters

Siranuysh Galstyan

The film festival in Yerevan bearing the name of "The most Armenian" of fruits is a double festival: the Holy Day of Apricot Blessing and a six-day pageant in the cultural and public life of the Capital City. Compared to the previous year, it has to be noted that both apricot is abundant this year, and the theaters are crowded (with few exceptions). Anyway, it would have been difficult to believe a couple of years ago that we would have such a numerous audience, with the screen showing festival films, rather than American movies. Moreover, a special interest has been shown to the documentaries.

On July 12, prior to opening ceremony of the Festival in the National Opera House, the Church of St. Zoravor performed the Apricot Blessing Ceremony, which was followed by the premiere show at the Cinema Moskva of "Mariam", a film by Edgar Bagdasaryan. In all, in Festival programming there were many first-time runs ("Counselor of the State" by Nikita Mikhalkov, "The Walker in a Martian Field" by Robert Guediguian, "Sabah" by Ruba Nadda and "Stone, Time, Touch" by Gariné Torossian. "The Russian Program" with 6 films included also "Mars" by Anna Melikyan, our Russia-based compatriot, being her first full-sized film, it had been presented at the Berlin Film Festival.

The spectators attended most enthusiastically the retrospective replays of films by living movie classics visiting the Festival: Abbas Kiarostami, Jos Stelling, Krzysztof Zanussi, most of those being actually first-time shows for residents of Yerevan. Open during the

Festival was also a photo exhibition by Abbas Kiarostami. On that day no one could ever have guessed that the film director would have been so generous (confessedly, contrary to his nature), as to present his exhibits to Armenia at the closing gala night before going back to his native Iran.

Jos Stelling's 60th anniversary came round on July 16. His pictures "The Pointsman" and "The Flying Dutchman" have been placed among the all-time best films. The film director's anniversary was solemnized at the Parajanov Museum, while immediately preceding that occasion the outstanding Dutchman had met the Armenian viewers at the Cinema Nairi coming to enjoy his masterpieces. There was an exclusive moment of the "Golden Apricot" Festival, when the entire audience congratulated the great and simple man by chanting "Happy Birthday to You."

The successive meetings with a number of master movie makers, press conferences, master classes (Krzysztof Zanussi, Atom Egoyan, Peter Wintonick, Roman Balayan), should be rated among the crucial gains of the Festival, providing exclusive opportunities to the participants as well as to those who find satisfaction in the art of cinema.

Krzysztof Zanussi, Abbas Kiarostami and Nikita Mikhalkov are the ones who have gained great recognition for their merits in International Cinema. That was of course, one of the items of the agenda at the "Golden Apricot" Second Film Festival in Yerevan.

All Festivals with tight schedules have a common fault: simultaneous occurrences of important events, encounters, film demonstrations, which makes selection very difficult, however that is a specific feature of all festivals, they must be dynamic and have no gaps. Our Festival public enjoyed a compact environment of Yerevan City center, so that a smart person could attend many events of the Festival, like a press conference, a tour of the National Gallery, and watch several films at different sites within the city, and a master class in-between. Despite however all this skill one could not be everywhere at the same time.

And now about the shortcomings. Opening and closing the Festival is a result of many months of preliminary work for the Festival organizers, this type of undertaking being an extremely responsible assignment. Nevertheless, the organizers of this event seem to be of the opinion that if some of the audience are claimed to understand English, then there should be no need for translation (let us not forget that the leading language of this country is Armenian), and they think that the translation of a 3-minute welcoming speech would do the job perfectly well ("Welcome to Armenia, Ladies and Gentlemen"). In the meantime, Armenia can boast of

excellent translators (the proof of that did not take long to appear during the same Festival, at an International seminar as well as in master classes, where we saw brilliant simultaneous translators at work).

Meanwhile, the noted shortcoming was felt in the first place by the guests. Besides, we are perhaps the only nation in the world to celebrate the Festival of Translators, which has been done by our Church for many centuries.

ARMENIA

The selection of films embraced by the Festival schedule was approved by the partakers, visitors and members of the Jury, however, most were impressed by the country itself. On many occasions one could hear utterances like: "This is the most hospitable festival that I have ever seen"; "Film selection is unprecedented, but the greatest thing is that I have seen Armenia." Quite a number of visitors, the Jury in particular, were tempted into attending the Festival by the country of Armenia, rather than by money, suffice it to say that a class-A festival in Moscow would entertain one or two stars for the amount equivalent to the entire festival budget in Armenia.

Ludmila Cvikova, Manager of the International Film Festival Programming in Rotterdam, while advising on the "Golden Apricot" Festival, said in her message: "I am fully aware that wherever there is a weak economy and social unrest, the first to become vulnerable is culture. Anyway, we have seen a few festivals that have grown out of nothing, to become significant national and International events. The International Film Festival "Golden Apricot" may become one of those. The city, its wonderful people and the entire country are quite equal to the task. I am proud to have been among the honorary members of the board in its first year.

True, Armenia is an insignificant country on the world map, however, an International festival can be an exclusive opportunity for a country's promotion. Its place on the cultural world map is determined by undertakings of this order of magnitude.

THE PURPOSE OF THE FESTIVAL

"Armenia on the Crossroads of Cultures and Civilizations" was the motto of the "Golden Apricot" Second International Film Festival in Yerevan. The basic objective of the Festival was to make our Capital City a meeting place for film directors of differing ethnic, national, religious, or artistic affiliation, to show the films showing at a certain angle stories of everyday life, cares and joys, communities, faith and disillusion. This purpose may have been fulfilled this time in many ways. Anyway, the crucial first step has been taken. Armenia, as a country located on

the crossroads between East and West, Asia and Europe, historically has had many losses, however, its art and culture, which can be perceived both as



Asian and European, enable this country to aspire for a status of a regional cultural center, in the domain of cinema in particular.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR FEATURE FILMS

Atom Egoyan (Canada), film director, President of the Jury.

Engaged in a competition at the "Golden Apricot" International Festival were rather interesting, artistically viable films, including the works of well-known authors, like "A Golden Globe", "Osama" by the Afghan film director Siddiq Barmak, awarded the UNESCO prize "Federico Fellini" and other prizes, "The Sun" by Aleksandr Sokurov, "My Father is an Engineer" by Robert Guediguian, the film "Waiting for the Clouds" by Yeflim Ustaoglu, a female Turkish film director, awarded by the "Blue Angel" prize of the Berlin International Film Festival, as well as the film "Yes" by the British female director Sally Potter. There are many criteria in the world of art, but no bars as in sports, so that selection is never simple. That explains the different nominations in distributing the prizes, the special prizes and diplomas besides the Grand Prix, as well as other prizes awarded by the professional and public organizations.

A difficult choice was also to be made by the Festival Jury, although this class of nominations contained only 13 pictures.

Thus, in an International competition, the film that was declared the best and won the first prize of the "Golden Apricot" was "The Sun" by Alexander Sokurov, a Russian film director. The dramatic axis of the film is the meeting between the Japanese Emperor Hirohito and the American General Douglas McArthur in August 1945, following the cessation of hostilities ordered by the Emperor, which saved millions of lives. The winning forces insisted that he had to stand trial by a military tribunal. Dreary times, dark and dreary colors, light is almost ousted from the screen. Sun does not seem to appear at all, for a film titled in this way. No doubt, Sokurov is a real master of the screen, the structure of the close-up, the precisely resolved imagery, and his ability to recreate the atmosphere invariably attracting the spectator. The plot within the space of his filming is developed by modulating the displacements of the light in particular ways, which is characteristic to the post-modernity period. Following the films "Moloch" and "The Bull", in his picture "The Sun" concluding his historical trilogy, Sokurov shows a tsar, a sometime mighty monarch, losing his autocratic manner and becoming an ordinary man by the time he submits his resignation.

A special prize for the best feature film was awarded to two films: "The Dead", directed by Lisandro Alonso, Argentina, and "4", directed by Ilya Khrzhanovsky, Russia, while the film "Paradise Girls", directed by Fow Ping Hu, the Netherlands, was awarded special diploma. The Union of Armenian Filmmakers was awarded the prize "For Best Direction, to the film "Long Gone, directed by Jack Cahill, USA.

The Armenian Association of Film Critics awarded two prizes "The Best Film" for the film "My Father is an Engineer", dir. Robert Guediguian, France, and "Waiting for the Clouds, dir. Yeflim Ustaoglu, Turkey. Those who have seen that film made in the present-day Turkey and dedicated to the early 20th c. massacre and deportation of Turkey's Greek population can have no doubt that the award was given for artistic merit, rather than for political reasons.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION OF DOCUMENTARIES

Ruben Gevorgyants, President of the Jury (Armenia).

Besides the interesting and esthetically valuable feature films, both within and outside the competition, there were quality documentary films, so that the interest of the spectators to that program was quite easily explained.

In the history of motion pictures many feature films have been made in a documentary style, perhaps to increase the impression of authenticity. In the last years, some film makers deliberately blur the border line between the feature films and documentaries by shooting the documentaries using actors. Notable in this connection is the Canadian film "Dead Time" dir. Steve Sanguedolce, included in the Festival competition program, which is both fiction and feature film, being experimental at the same time. The merging of diverse genres yields an original fictional quality. Each of the real characters is telling his story, we can hear their genuine voices off-screen, while on screen we see the performers who virtualize the whole action, making it relevant to the situation whereby the characters have drugged themselves to become as good as dead. Both image and sound, the color and images are separated and autonomous, i.e., the film is black-and-white, or rather, brown-and-white, however, all colors of the palette do flash upon the black-and-white from time to time, making it a flickering medley like a disturbed sea. However, the restricted colors and images go interweaving, reversing the premeditated disengagement. In that way the characters rehabilitate their living colors after having overstepped the threshold of death. The film is based upon confessions made by four characters.

In the documentary competition at the Festival there was also a poetic film "City of Photos", dir. Nishtha Jain, India, made up of factual material. The characters, besides the photographers and those photographed, were also the photos themselves. Here are both the past and the present. The picture is assembled with delicate taste, occasionally using sequences of reverse images, India being known for its contrasts. The filmmaker succeeded through photography and through history of photo studios, to

present his home country, the multi-layered structure of its everyday life. The "Photo City" does not exist, it is virtualized within the operational environment of a movie screen, within the world recognizing no boundaries, the factory of dreams, incorporating human desires.

Other documentary items on the Festival's agenda made the work of the Jury not easy at all.

Thus, in the Festival International competition the best documentary title of "The Golden Apricot" was awarded to the film "The Three Rooms of Melancholia", director Pirjo Honkasalo, Finland, wherein the three rooms symbolize three different environments. One room shows the cadets of Kronstadt, the Russian Navy Base, the next one shows a woman who has saved children from the horrors of Chechnia, the third room shows refugee children outside the Chechen border.

The second award in the same nomination went to the film "O, Man", directed by Angela Ricci Lucchi and Yervant Gianikian, Italy, and "Moskatchka", dir. Annett Schutz, Latvia/Germany.

Perception of the Festival as cultural crossroads is largely stipulated by documentary films form the informative programs. The program titled "The Expanding Europe: "New Neighbours" lists films from East Europe, the Former Soviet Republics, and Turkey, made within the last two years. The information program "Documentary World" is very extensive and variegated. The spectators had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with films made in different places on the globe (Canada, Holland, Nicaragua, Chile, Argentina, Portugal, Malaysia, Iran, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan).

Serge Avetikian (France), Artsvi Bakhchinian (Sweden), Tamara Stepanian (Lebanon), Simon Abgarian (France), Armen Ohannesian (USA), Garnik Grigoryan (Germany)



THE NATIONAL COMPETITION "ARMENIAN PANORAMA"

Garegin Zakoyan, Film Critic, President of the Jury.

To be noted among the films of the Festival are "Planet Zorthian" (USA) by Arno Yeretian, an experimental, even cubistic, fact-recording film, consisting of four parts. The four comrades: Arno Yeretian, Sevag Vrej, Liza Tchakmakian and Harut Arakelian came forward as film directors, each one of them viewing from their own angles the world of the avant-garde painter Jirayr Zortian having narrowly escaped the holocaust, his world including the images and the original lifestyle he has created at his ranch, which looks like a huge Ark. The film starts with the blessing of the animals living there. And, gathering from different parts in the cubist style, it is becoming an original film-self-portrait. This film got a

Siranush Galstian and Atom Egoyan



special diploma within the "Armenian Panorama" competition. A special diploma was also awarded to the films "Born in Fire" dir. Suren Ter-Grigorian, Armenia, and "One Beautiful Morning" dir. Serge Avedikian, France.

In this reality, in the last 10-15 years, there came about people who were outside the margins of existence, the homeless, the outcast. They climbed onto the screen out of life. It is not surprising that the films dispatched to the Festival from different countries

Garegin Zakoyan and Svetlana Tsvikova



concentrate much of their attention on this subject. The competition program "Armenian Panorama" took on a film whose characters were homeless bums. That was the film "Under the Open Sky" by Arman Yeritzian (Armenia). The characters of this film practically disproved the Marxian principle of the predominance of body over mind. Far from their native Russia, those two people, a man and a woman, who had come together under the open sky of Armenia, two educated and God-fearing people, who loved and had been loyal to each other. Hopefully, this film will be one day watched by their kinfolds in Russia, those people who have done evil to no one, pass away peacefully. That film has been awarded the Grand Prix of the International Youth Film Festival held in Armenia for the third time, as well as the Mark-Sargis Grand Prix (Los Angeles) of the "Ani and Narot" Foundation at the Yerevan Second International Festival "Golden Apricot" as the best Armenian film.

Nora Nersisian, Susanna Harutiunian



The best film in the national competition was announced to be "Hammer and Flame" (U.K.), awarded the Grand Prix of the "Golden Apricot" Festival in its nomination. Meanwhile, the best one-reeler has never been indicated. In this nomination, a special diploma was awarded to "One Balloon" (Aram Hekinian, Aruna Naimji, USA).

The program of "Armenian Panorama" competition also included animation films. In this nomination, the Grand Prix of the "Golden Apricot" Festival was awarded to the cartoon "The Road", dir. Naira Muradyan, Armenia). This film was also awarded the Hrant Matevosyan Prize of the Hrant Mathevosian Foundation for the best script, by the "Armenian Panorama" Competition.

During the Festival, "The Armenian Panorama" also showed two information documentary programs: "Artsakh Diary" and "Armenian Genocide - 90."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This year our national cinema is marking several important anniversaries noted by the "Golden Apricot" Festival as "Homage": Henrik Malyan and

Aghasi Ayvazyan - 80; Mher Mkrtchyan and Khoren Abrahamyan - 75; Hrant Matevosyan - 70. Indeed, it was a small group of like-minded personalities who entered the motion picture industry in the 1960-s, no doubt, it was their talent and efforts that were responsible for a certain uplift in our movie production. The eight films, "Triangle", "Delivery", "We and Our Mountains", "The Autumn Sun", "A Piece of Sky", "A Burning Lantern", "The Master", "Tango or Our Youth", associated with the mentioned names, were shown at the National Picture Gallery.

"CINEMA AS AN INTER-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT"

On July 14 - 15, the Festival convened the workshop "Cinema as an Inter-cultural Environment." The project was designed by the Association of Cinema Critics and Journalists and the Festival staff from Iran, Afghanistan, Georgia, Russia, Kazakhstan, within the concept of the cinema creating a common cultural field, a domain with circulating political, ideological, religious and racial delimitations, the remote objective of the work shop being to employ the unlimited potential of the cinema, to discover its exclusive role in rehabilitating the reciprocal links between nations and consolidating their prospective cooperation. That is concordant with the motto of the Second Yerevan International Film Festival "Golden Apricot": "Armenia as the Crossroads of Cultures and Civilizations."

At first glance, each nation populating the region used to develop its national cinematography in its

Harutiun Khachatryan and Nikita Mikhalkov



original way, with certain permanent interior common elements, sometimes yielding similar results. The purpose of the workshop is to examine the similarities and differences of the processes going on within the art of those countries, showing the way their films feature the same subjects and objectives. Besides, there are linkages between cultures, in other words the culture of a given nation can develop only while communicating with other cultures. That is why the cinematic art has to take on a role of an inter-cultural mediator and a positive media of mutual understanding in the contemporary world.

Meanwhile, cultural isolation as a rule can produce an adverse effect upon the political and public life.

WHOSE IS THIS SONG?

In the film "Whose is This Song?" by the Bulgarian Adela Peeva presented at the International Competition, the same song is sung by Bulgarians, Greeks, Macedonians, Turks, and whoever you want. Everyone makes an original performance out of it, and everyone is sure that it is the music of one's ancestors. The filmmakers follow the song, the trajectory of their journey is occasionally shown on the map, it started in the Balkans and spread out... The song going on from one country to another, disregarding all boundaries, becoming a means of expressing diverse relations among people belonging to different strata - ethnic, religious, or cultural. Trying to find out the origin of the song, the film is actually putting forward an issue of a greater importance, the song that is universally known on the planet Earth, is it drawing people closer together, or is it pushing them further apart?

Talking of this film reminds a curious incident that happened last year, on the eve of closing the first "Golden Apricot." On that day the Festival staff, the Jury and the visitors set out for Noravank. After visiting and admiring the exclusive architectural monument, we pitched on a riverbank. When the tongues were loosed by drink, some native started a song. To everyone's amazement, he was joined by Gunnar Bergdal, yes, the famous Swedish film director, the man who had shot "Bergman's Voice", "Ingmar Bergman: Intermezzo", the erstwhile director of the Göteborg Film Festival. It turned out that the song was popular in his home country. A Northern country, Sweden, and far away Armenia looking as if it were close to the sun. Putting aside film production, we could at least compare the tunes. The situation was rather enigmatic. But one thing was for sure: the song made everyone feels closer to the others. And who knows, perhaps that was the moment when the Festival motto came about as "Armenia, the Crossroads of Cultures and Civilizations."

Mikhael Stamboltsian and Arsine Khanjian



Reflection of the "Armenia" series by Osip Mandelstam by the black-and-white artist Sitse Bakker

Daniel Erazhisht

It is so easy to fall in love with Armenia", as noted by Sitse Bakker, a Dutch artist, at the opening of his exhibition.

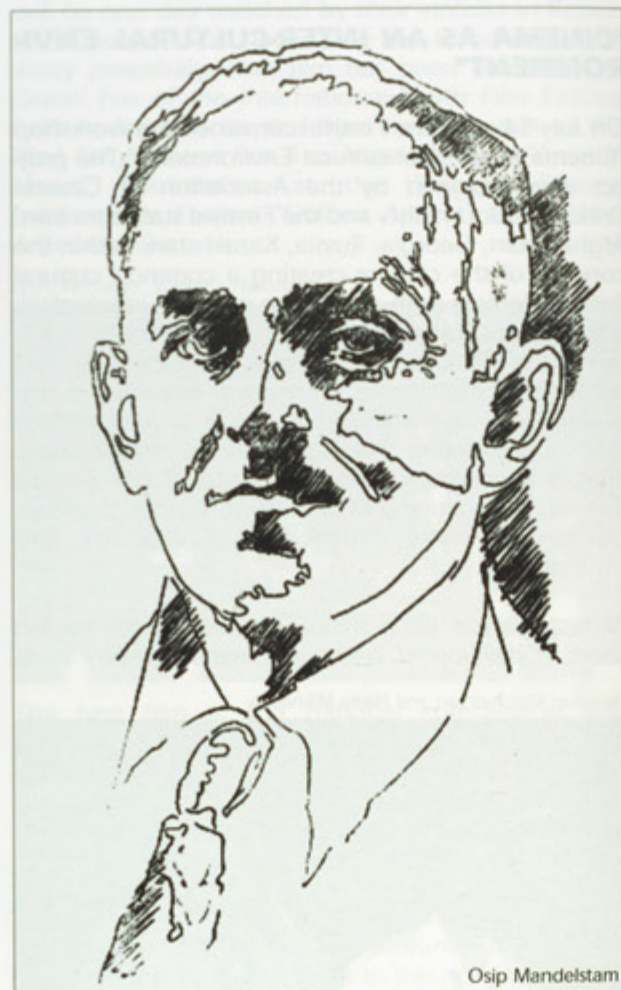
Last July the National Picture Gallery exhibited black-and-white art inspired by the "Armenia" series by Osip Mandelstam. Up until now the series has been shown only in Holland and Russia, while after the Yerevan show it was donated to the National Picture Gallery.

Naturally, perception of any work of art is thoroughgoing when the original sources are available, hence let us now scrutinize the poetry in question by Mandelstam and his relationship with Armenia. The "Armenia" series by Mandelstam was thereat translated by Gevorg Emin, Hrachia Beileryan, Shoghik Safyan.

Indeed, with no love it is hardly possible to produce an outstanding work of art. "His addictive love for Armenia is attested by a number of accomplished poems", wrote Anna Akhmatova (O.Mandelstam, Yerevan, 1989, p.6 /in Russian/): The poet loved the Armenian land, "Reddish-yellow rough ochre", "orange-colored rocks", cross-stones, lavash bread, "the righteous water", he had a dream of "the Armenian Dawn", and loved the "crooked streets of Yerevan". He regarded Armenia as "Husky mountains calling to arms", "a country of uproaring rocks". Most of all, however, Mandelstam appreciated "the bitter broken chatter on the Plane of Ararat", confessing in the essay "Sevan" that "we, aliens, are not worthy to speak that mighty tongue".

The poet was stunned by the diverse manifestations of the Armenian culture. Having heard musical pieces by Komitas, he reminisced on them in Moscow, and in his Voronezh exile. Meanwhile, the "song of the Armenian weaver" was something that he experienced with us along with the weaver by Schubert, wrote the poet's wife Nadejda.

So many unexpected parallels are drawn by Mandelstam, the Armenian folk song and the great music by Shubert. "Faust" by Goethe or a church in Ashtarak and St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. Mandelstam and his wife arrived in



Osip Mandelstam

Yerevan in May 1930 and stayed well into the fall. Nadejda Mandelstam attested: "We saw Saryan, a wonderful artist. He visited us on the first day". After having met Charents, Mandelstam described him as "a genuine poet". Perhaps "My Sweet Armenia", a poem by Charents, prodded Mandelstam to rename Anna Akhmatova to "Anoosh", or was it "Anoosh", the poem by Toumanian?

In Oriental poetry Petros Ghapantsi (18 c.) was the first to regard the rose flower as a symbol of the country. He regretted that he could not rejoice, since his rose had not opened, that is, Armenia had not become free. Meanwhile, Mkrtich Peshiktashlian said "O foreign land, you are a thorn, while homeland is a rose".

We also encounter a rose in "Sevan", an essay by Mandelstam. "I was among the people who lived by the solar clock, rather than by an outdoor clock, I have seen a sundial buried in the ruins of the temple of Zvartnots, looking like an astronomical wheel or like a rose.

Mandelstam was not only enjoying the Armenia rose, but, as the song goes, "he smelt Armenian blood", for an Armenian laurel holds more thorns than roses. However, it was as if the poet was saying after Khrimian Hairik, the Catholicos:

**My country's thorns are sweet, like rose,
And in the midst of those thorns
I will search roses.**

Mandelstam wrote: "Agreeable to me is nation that survives by work. A screaming nation nailed down to earth"



Sitse Bakker

Perhaps it was a reference to Rilke, who had written: "The light of poverty is glittering inside". "Thus, in Kharabakh, in Shushi town, I felt a taste of those instinctive fears" (a reference to the 1920 massacre and the fire of Shushi arranged by the Azeris).

The poet also remembered that formerly Armenia had suffered multiple tyrants, had seen many bloodthirsty rulers, torturers and killers.

As birds feel the approaching earthquake, the poet, too is apprehensive of Armenia's uneasy future, as well as his own impending demise. Addressing Armenia, he says:

"But you are on your deathbed now". Mandelstam was the first to openly unmask the wild man Stalin using semi-human servants: The poem "We feel no soil under our feet".

The poet also expressed his apprehensions using the following words: See you no more, lightblinded shortsighted sky of fire-Armenia. And when he by the head and ears was returned to Moscow, "the place where days are marked by sentences of death", he wrote: Prior to that, I notwithstanding saw the holy summit of splendid Ararat.

Through Mandelstam another great poet "beheld the lighted top of Ararat and came by", another poet immortalized the Biblical Armenia, immortalizing also himself in hearts and art. The best example of that is the black-and-white art series by Sitse Bakker.

Armenia World and Sitse Bakker

Mandelstam's love for Armenia was incited by the Pushkin's story "A Travel to Erzerum", by Valery Briusov's Selected Armenian Poetry, or some other origins. Meanwhile, the pilgrimage of Sitse Bakker to Armenia was stimulated by the Dutch translation of Osip Mandelstam's "Armenia" series of poetry by Peter Zeieman. Bakker, it may be said, translated it using the language of black-and-white art, adding also his personal remarks: For his 12-page series Bakker used the following tetrastich by Mandelstam as a motto:

**Like terrible oxen on wings,
The labor makes public appearance,
And bursting with blood of the veins,
The roses are freezing with brilliance.**

In the center of graphic papers the artist showed a man in an octagonal frame enclosed within the lines of a tetrastich, in Russian and in Dutch. The total image is perceived as an eye. So that not only you observe the rose, but also the painted eye is regarding you, and a silent dialog is being deployed. With regard to the Armenians, Mandelstam notes that it is extremely fruitful and instructive to be submerged into an alien community of people who you respect and with whom you take pride. (O.Mandelstam, *ibid.*, p. 35):

The poet is also accompanied by the painter who regarded Armenia as an abundant origin of antique, Medieval and contemporary cultures, the country that had suffered persecutions from neighbors, strikes of the destiny, has not become evil, but was able to retain the human values, his childish simplicity, unshaded joy. This inartificial way of mind is what is seen in Bakker's "Armenia". He came to Armenia, he saw, and he fell.



In the National gallery of Armenia

Like the Russian avantgardists, Bakker in his black-and-white art has found an alignment between the text and the image. Thus, a manuscript is also becoming a means of national expression, like the Chinese penicraft, while the images sort of explicate, translate the subtext, the supermeaning. The artist also makes a reference to the images of the past, the symbols, since he is aware that without the knowledge of history, it is impossible to recognize self, nor to comprehend the meaning of the present.

Bakker, a compatriot of Rembrandt, the Martyr of Light-and-Shade (Mandelstam), provides ample opportunity for the onlooker to discover the new facets and views.

One of Bakker's art keynotes is clouds. Those are the future horizons. Clouds show implacability of time, the periodic reemergence of disasters.

For those clouds.

In the bottom of this polyphonic book are the 12 disciples of Jesus, written on the ruins is a poetic text, while up above are three clouds. The same number of clouds are in the 4th book ("A docile man with muffled mouth, holding an octahedral honeycomb in his hands"). Shown here are a drawing of a church, three stonecrosses, a bell. Meanwhile, the clouds of



Book One are reminiscent of the map of Armenia, as well as that of lake Sevan. It is titled "Armenia".

As seen, an octal image is a keynote again, indicating the church dome, the faith of Armenians, their worldview.

**You breathe with your octal shoulders
Of stalwart bovine churches**

The 11th book has four sections.

**I will never perceive you again,
Nearsighted Armenian sky.**

This text is written as if on a piece of sheepskin, or just on the ground, its design resembling the mentioned map. That was what he called Armenia: "a limestone library", "the book of soul", which had been serving as manuals for the primitive people.

At the top of the book are red clouds, with mountain heights at the background, and above clouds are miniature paintings belonging to the four Gospel Writers. At the core of the book is a sacrificial lamb suspended from a tree.

In places, passing through the clouds are crimson layers or crosses. According to Bakker, it is featuring the conflict between the eternal and the transient. Also encountered are landscapes affected by red color. In this connection red is equivalent to blood and war. The name of the very first book is "Armenia", and it is as if written with blood. The layers of blood pierce the clouds as well, trodden by



the Good Shepherd carrying the rescued lamb. It is reminiscent of the Raphael's Sistine Madonna, also treading the clouds. Incidentally, in the middle of Book 3 outside the text there is a picture of Godmother embracing infant Jesus.

Red and white are also dominant in Book 8, displaying the victim with crossed hands and his slaughterers shooting him. Meanwhile the scimitar is an identification mark of those Turks. The same "blood" and "snow" can be seen in Book 10, on the slopes of Mount Ararat. What a coincidence. In the year 1515 Vittore Karpaccio within the Catholic tradition of "the evidence of Ararat" started painting turbaned hangmen and countless victims nailed to crosses. In Bakker's pictures all that seemed to have left only traces of blood.

Among eloquent symbols are Saint images taken from the Medieval miniatures, fragments from Last Supper in Books 2 and 12. In the latter, shaded by bunches of grapes, are the Apostles, and standing alone is Judas, with no halo. He dropped from the vine, i.e. from Jesus. Meanwhile at the top of the book the starred sky is replaced with numerous crosses. This multilayered picture is somewhat reminiscent of the "Seven", a canvas by Vasily Kandinsky, showing seven independent images. The mentioned series by Mandelstam is compared with a colored rug. Resembling a rug is also Bakker's series, particularly Book 6 ("The State of Screaming Rocks - Armenia").

With regard to color or objects, the most moderate books of the series are as follows: Both feature the subject of rose. One, as mentioned, is a label of the series, the next one is Book 5, in fact, those are the only ones with the text presented in two languages, which is particularly focusing attention at the meaning.

Holland is known for its Medieval multivocal music. Polyphonic music was a commonly applied principle. It was also manifest in Bakker's art, particularly in Book 5. E.g.: a multivocal motet by Josquin Despres "O, Mother of Savior", sounds two different melodies simultaneously, one is "O, Mother of Savior" proper, the other one is "O, Heavenly Queen", subsequently the voices multiply.

**Wrap your hand in rags and stick it in the midst of
thorns, to pick up the rose without scissors, but
beware, don't drop the leaves. This call in defense of
beauty was made in the 12th century Japan, to pick
up the rose in a way not to spill the dews, nor scare
away the nightingale, nor shake the moonbeam off.**

The rose of Mandelstam is a powerful symbol of culture. The poet demands to regard the spiritual and the beautiful with care and veneration, to avoid measuring them with a coarse yardstick. That is to say, a laurel wreath is

better suited to adorn a man's head, rather than to be cooked.

To summarize, like Joseph Brodsky, Alfred Schnittke, the art by Bakker makes comparisons between the cultural archetypes of East and West, their civilizations and the components of diverse times. However, whatever their diversity may be, the basic idea of this art is antagonism between good and evil, creation and demolition, beauty and deformity, eternity and instantaneousness.

Today, when cultural relics and churches are being abused, the crosstones painted by Bakker seem to come to life and to step out of the frames in order to occupy the places of those killed in battle.





On June 7, Ohan Duryan showed an excellent performance of his own original compositions at the Komitas Hall of Chamber Music. The musical soiree on that day was particularly significant. Maestro appeared before the public interpreting his own compositions. The first part consisted of thirteen pieces by Ohan Duryan for voice and piano: "With my soul", "A gift", "Art song", "A girl in green", "A canvas", "Summer time", "Sweet hands".

"Die Zeit ist hin" "Il pleure dans mon coeur", "Elegy", "Wenn due in Herz gefunden", "Des Menschen Leben", "Aghthamar". Each musical performance revealed the whole beauty and attraction of the great artist's emotional world. However, even more emotional and impressive was "Elegia", words by Hovhannes Shiraz in memory of Avetik Isahakyan, when Ohan Duryan was singing along with Magda Mkrtchian, soloist of the National Opera. The music-loving community marked high

An Anticipated Encounter with Ohan Duryan

Many a name dedicated to culture has been immortalized by our nation. In the swift passage of time we, the witnesses, owe a correct judgment to our living great. One of the names to be revered in this way is Maestro Ohan Duryan.

In the creative life the stamp of excellence, positively verified, along the thorny path of art, exclusive seal of Self retained by the soul, in modest but assured steps in forward and uplifted movement, forever winning. The connoisseur and wizard of International and national music, enjoying his native land and water by living and creating in the midst of us.



this first-hand whole-hearted performance. Interpretations close to the author were shown by the performers: Vahagn Hovents (baritone-base), Irina Zakian (soprano), Magda Mkrtchyan (soprano), Mariam Mailyan (flute), Artsvik Demurchyan (soprano), Ruben Nurjanyan (tenor), Hasmik Baghdasaryan (soprano).

In the second part of the concert there were vocal pieces by Deoda de Selerak, Franz Liszt, Francis Poulenc, and Erik Sati. The soiree ended with another piece by Ohan Duryan, "An Armenian Female" (words by Henri Kiuni, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to Armenia).

Spectators, enriched with honest and dedicated feelings, gave a long-time standing ovation to Maestro Ohan Duryan, with an anticipation of further encounters. One more page was added to the biography of the famous conductor, while the soul of the Armenian person renewed in the melody ongoing in the music hall, having not parted from Ohan Duryan, is already starting missing him and his great art.

GOR MARKOSYAN

BELLS OF NAREK FROM WASHINGTON

In July - August a musical group of chimers made a concert tour of Armenia. The group was created in 2000 by Levon



Khajajnatian with the support by St. Mary's Armenian Cathedral of Washington (headed by Priest Vrtanes Galajan). This musical group is the only one of its kind. Before coming to Armenia, the group had made a tour of US and had performed at prestigious locations like the White House, the Library of Congress, etc.), not only for Armenian but also for International audiences. The group has issued recordings and won awards.

On August 9, the "Narek" group of chimers came out with a performance of a serious musical program in the music hall of the "Narekatsi" Association. The young and adolescent per-



formers (two Lusine-s, two Tatevik-s, Seda, Liana, Armine, Lilit, Aram, Ervand, Vahan) under the leadership of their experienced principal made an original performance of our cultural patriarchs' most significant compositions, causing very pleasing time to the audience.

A NEW GIFT FROM TIGRAN SARGSYAN

On August 30 the Tsitsernakaberd Genocide Museum displayed a new sculptural work by Tigran Sargsyan named "The Armenians lived, live and shall live". The vast sculptural composition is the second donation to Armenia, the first one was dedicated to the 1700th Anniversary of the Armenian Christian Statehood, and is on display in St. Ejmiadzin Treasury. Born in Yerevan, currently a US resident, Tigran implemented this program with the support of a number of Armenians living in Los Angeles: Movses and Vache Barsumyan, Karo Shirikchyan, Saro Giodakyan, Petros Daghljyan, et al., as well as "The Union of Iranian Armenians", and in Yerevan: Aslan Aslanyan, Grigor Bareghamyan, Hrant Avaljan, Sargis Sargsyan, and the Genocide Institute Museum.

It is to be noted that it is not only Tigran's congenital talent, but his human qualities have been very important in this matter, his ability to pursue an idea to the end, cost what it may, with no consideration for whatever difficulties may arise. That was how his previous sculptural donations to Armenia had been created, and that is the way it will be done in the future. With regard to the sculptural composition "The Armenians Lived, Live and shall Live", this piece made of rock, wood and metal, is replete with multiple symbolic components of national survival against the background of the historical map of Armenia, which makes it extremely appropriate at the exposition highlighting the 90th Anniversary of the Great Genocide.



He Painted the Game of Sunlight

An album dedicated to Vahram Gaifejan

Prize, Ruben Adalyan, in a wonderful essay dedicated to the Teacher is writing with love and appreciation: "In the new Armenian painting he was the first who was ready to draw the patches of Armenian sunlight", that is the images directly created by the living reality, the interplay of light and movement, the artistic principle practiced by the impressionistic school of art.

Some pieces of art have magic force persecuting us for years; every time they show us a new feature, filling the soul with an incomprehensible pride. The mystery of art is lasting and inscrutable.

In the pride-worthy showrooms of our excellent National Picture Gallery, for which we are mostly indebted to Ruben Drampian, the artist and the benefactor of Armenian art, pieces of this type are found in nearly every section. It is an irrefutable truth. One of these memorable pieces is "Lilac", created in 1910 and filling the eye and the soul of the onlooker; it belongs to the brush of Vahram Gayfejan, a brilliant artist and teacher, representing what is best in the new Armenian fine arts. An artist whose general creative image has not been quite known even to a restricted core of specialists, there was not a single study, as, perhaps, in many other similar cases.

Meanwhile, his followers, who later became famous painters, thanks to the great teacher (a founder and a long-time director of the Yerevan Art School), telling legends about his pedagogical activities, during the terrible totalitarian years were kept updated on the achievements of the contemporary European art under conditions of fear (violators of the Stalin regime used to be kept isolated, this way or that).

Today, having been honoured by the title of People's Artist of Armenia and the National

The whole image of creative work by Vahram Gayfejan has eventually become available to us through the painstaking work of his daughter Hellen Gayfejian published in 2002 (Yerevan, Tigran Mets Publishers), including a scholarly introduction describing the detailed research, as well as articles by N. Kotarjan, the disciple of the Master, H. Igition, Director of the Modern Art Museum, and R. Adalyan, every one of those articles original and with useful observations and reassessments with regard to contemporary criteria. By publishing this



A nude in Green Cloak

The Self-Portrait



In the Shade of a Tree

album (and other editions) our intention is to review the methodology of evaluating the Armenian art criticism of the Soviet period suffering from Socialism which had inflicted a great damage upon art and artistic knowledge separating them from the relevant developments in the rest of the world.

The value of the album by Hellen Gayfejian is also remarkable because analysis and evaluation of artistic products is done within the context of Armenian and International artistic criteria.

In the 1920s our greatest painters also under orders from above sacrificed their artistic principles submitting themselves to the whip of Social Realism (M. Saryan, H. Kojoyan, E. Kochar). The artistic world of V. Gaifejan, with its audacity, goes in parallel with most modern and progressive movements of the century. He was among the first Armenian painters who trespassed into the abstract domain, expressing their inner experiences and feelings of the modern painting, acquiring the relevant tendencies, seeing the world of humans and inanimate objects, in the integral field of light, space and movement.

In the history of modern Armenian art the pre-1910 works by V. Gaifejan titled "Decorative Motives" and Colored Compositions" despite their inconspicuous titles are extremely important, for they were among the first ever to approximate the concepts of man, nature, space, the forms of light and color with abstract presentation, so that our art is associated with the European artistic tendencies.

The night-time boulevards, fancy-dress balls, masquerades, the native Akhalkalaki, and also Yerevan cityscape, its wonderful springs and golden autumns, are in the center of the painter's artistic aspirations, with illuminated and straightforward expectations, uninterpretable movements of the soul, and zest for life.

Gaifejan is a brilliant master of compositional mask images: his masks "Auto-mask portrait" (1913), "Paintress Petrova" (1910), "Woman" ("Bertha Camus", ca. 1913) are exclusive specimen of this class in our history of art.

The book of images compiled by Hellen Gaifejian covers the whole of Vahram Gaifejan's creative work, attempting to re-evaluate our new national art in an International context, which will certainly play an important role for future artistic generations.

Poghos Haitayan

A Portrait of a Woman



Painter Paravon Mirzoyan belongs to the 1970s generation of Armenian artists. That was a controversial period of artistic life, when the conservative Soviet traditional artists and the young ones with the new outlook, new artistic language and means of expression, coexisted. Belonging to the new group is Paravon Mirzoyan, endowed with expressive thinking and leaning towards new impressionistic perception.

The early pictures by the painter are set apart in multiple layers and many varieties. This creative period may be characterized as the period of search, with a tendency to look for self-expression in all genres (still life, landscape, portrait, multi-figure compositions, images of daily life), accompanied by search for developing artistic language and individual style.

With the passage of time and creative development the painting by Paravon Mirzoyan is being perfected, acquiring an original individual style. The factor of emotional stress becomes manifest sometimes through ups and downs of the line ("A Dream", "On the Seventh Heaven", 1994), at other times by rhythmic tension on the brush strokes ("Landscape",

1992), as well as thematically. In this creative period the painter uses the emotional stress even more extensively, complemented by color, very clear, with bright tones, exempt from the realm of grey tones. In this period the artist is trying to show that matter, freed from graphite dryness becomes loaded with artistic connotations by virtue of a juicy line and pastel color.

In P. Mirzoyan's art one feature is attracting attention immediately: the synthesis of genres, which is a frequent phenomenon anyway: a domestic image and still life ("You and Me", "Cat's Paradise", 1994) portrait and still life, "Meditation", 1999) and other superpositions. In similar cases one of the genres fills in the meaning of the other one completing it with its existence and symbolization. At this period domestic scenery is gradually superceded by various lyrical works reflecting mostly states of mind, in other words, plots are being replaced by emotions ("Distaste", 1992, "A Morning Kiss", 1994). The painter's approach to portrait has undergone a significant change, whereby work on showing the inner world of a person ("The Portrait of Art Critic M. Stepanian", 2002, "The Portrait of Ingrid Herman", 2004) is

accompanied by pieces that have to produce generalized characteristics of a given human type. The objective of the painter in this case becomes not so much the exact portrait resemblance, but rather the search for features of character reflecting the generalized personal image. The principal method of showing the character of an image is the play of colors, conflicting most of the time, with juicy traces, as if supplanting the line to the position of secondary importance.

In this period, P. Mirzoyan's art more and more addresses female images which subject becomes predominant with time. Those female images are most diversified in disposition and environment, with only one common feature, femininity and sweetness. Even when presenting most varied spiritualities, there is nothing here of extreme emotional conditions, when even distress has a trace of light. Images of female body could be collected into a "vocabulary of the body language", e. g., position of legs ("Christina", 2004), the rearward position towards the onlooker ("Unnamed", 1994), the dove-like hands and other elements are indicative of certain psychological situations. Another phenomenon is something like a speculative sorrow, which is a common feature of Ph. Mirzoyan's pieces, particularly in female-related subjects. A certain incompleteness of images, insufficient clarity of topics, renders an enigmatic aspect to some pieces, enabling the viewer to speculate on virtual interactions with perceived imagery.

The subject matter of Paravon Mirzoyan's concern is lasting beauty, the one that has been sung and depicted in all times but has not exhausted nonetheless, waiting for new expressions.

Anoush HAKOBYAN, art critic

The Art of Pharaon Mirzoyan

Among the universally known names in the contemporary art is Paravon Mirzoyan, Professor of Fine Arts Academy, Director of National Picture Gallery of Armenia. On September 7 the Picture Gallery opened another personal exhibition of the artist.



Angels Kissing

ծնվել է 1949թ. դեկտեմբերի 1-ին, Սյունիքի մարզի Սալվարո գյուղում:

1975 թվականին ավարտել է Սանկտ Պետերբուրգի Գեղարվեստի ակադեմիան:

1972 թվականից մասնակցում է հանրապետական, համամիութենական և միջազգային ցուցահանդեսների:

1975 թվականից դասավանդում է Երևանի Գեղարվեստի ակադեմիայում, պրոֆեսոր:

1976 թվականից ՍՍՀՄ Նկարիչների միության անդամ է:

1989-2002 թվականներին Գեղարվեստի ակադեմիայում ղեկավարել է գեղանկարի և կոմպոզիցիայի ամբիոնը:

Ստեղծագործությունները գտնվում են Հայաստանի, Ռուսաստանի, Ուկրաինայի թանգարաններում և մասնավոր հավաքածուներում (Գերմանիա, Ֆրանսիա, Հարավսլավիա, Իտալիա, ԱՄՆ, Կանադա, Ճապոնիա):

2002 թվականից Հայաստանի ազգային պատկերասրահի տնօրենն է:

Անհատական ցուցահանդեսներ

1989թ. - Մոսկվա

1995թ. - Երևան

2000թ. - Երևան, Հայաստանի ազգային պատկերասրահ

2005թ. - Սիսիան

2005թ. - Երևան, Հայաստանի ազգային պատկերասրահ



The Art of Pharaon Mirzoyan

Born in december 1, 1949
in Salvard village, Syunik region.

In 1975 he graduated from the St.
Petersburg Academy of Arts.

Since 1976 he has been a member of the
Artists Union of the USSR.

Since 1972 he has been participating in
republican, all-union and international
exhibitions.

Since 1975 he has been a professor of the
Yerevan State Academy of Arts.

Since 1976 he has been a member of Artst's
Union of the USSR.

In 1989-2002 he was the head of the Chair
of Painting and Composition.

His works are in the museums of Armenia,
Russia, Ukraine and in private collections
(Germany, France, Holland, Yugoslavia,
Italy, USA, Canada, Japan).

Since 2002 Pharaon Mirzoyan has been the
director of the National Gallery of Armenia.

Personal exhibitions

1989 - Moscow

1995 - Yerevan

2000 - Yerevan, National Gallery of Arts

2005 - Sisian, Syunik region, Armenia

2000 - Yerevan, National Gallery of Arts

Նատյուրմորտ, 2005 / Still-life





Հայացք, 2003թ. / The view



Գառնիի ձորում, 2003թ. / In Garni gorge



Ինգրիդ Հերմանի դիմանկարը, 2004թ. / Portrait of Ingrid Herman



Դաշտային ծաղիկներ, 2004թ. / The field flowers

Փ ա ր ա վ ո ն Մ ի ր զ ո յ ա ն Pharaon Mirzoyan

Երեկ, 1998թ. / The evening



Սալվարո գյուղը, 2005թ. / The Salvard village



Φ

Վենետիկ / Venice



Լոնդոն / The beach



The Big Bang In Art

fine arts

In the pieces by Soghomonian there are visions, dreams and images are merging, sometimes overgrowing the colorful spaces of the Universe, wherein they irradiate their deep and lighted force having lush and fiery hues. In the picture titled "Meditation" the glimmering yellow and red lights outline part of a female body, the shrill-voiced towers of the Milan Cathedral are shining in the light, the "Kazanov" canvas is an orange spotlight against the bright blue of background.

In the case of Van Soghomonian we look at the best example of abstraction. He is abstracting, squeezing, reproducing the entity of only the things that he has gone through and imagined. At the same time, he is not eventually severing the ties of visual and emotional perception. Reality is being transformed in its imagery, without opening completely, it will always retain a closed mystery, and it is those features that deliver high quality to Van Soghomonian's painting.

The artist uses various capabilities in a very original way. Extremely notable is his technique of handling the working materials, which yield qualitative results. Jets of color that thickly flush down the picture surface, the sticky strata and structure of painting materials with the paint still wet, provide a counterpoint layout with a vividly charged surface.

The subject matter of the pieces is multilayered and differentiated in the same way as painting approaches the esthetic quality of the material. Here, beside the nudes, natural landscapes and still life, one can see plots borrowed from Saint Image Painting, both mythological and Christian. However, pieces like "Last Supper" or "Crucifixion" are not expressions of religious consciousness, but rather are generated due to the historical traditions of art with regards to current situations. Thus, "Last Supper", instead of Christ with disciples presents a few young women who gathered for a musical soiree, while in another case the Crucifixion of Christ is used to picture

the suffering of an individual within contemporary society.

Other pieces, like "Vision", "Mirage", "An Angel Abandoning the City", or "A Dream in the Moonlight" pull the onlooker towards the world of fantastic, supernatural images, visions and dreams, scenes of heavenly creatures, hovering in immaterial weightlessness, dissolving in their imaginary world, beyond the limits of reality. Other pieces show buildings or cityscape, constructed in a cubist style with all rules of color and form, however transgressing into transubstantiated compositions.

Meanwhile, Van Soghomonian never presents his subject matter to the viewer as a bamboozle, but rather as a reflection of a subject in reality, as an artistic event. This is a painting that makes recognize, that it is constituted by colors, surfaces, brush strokes or other technical devices. Indeed, is it a real cliff, what we see, or it is just an immaterial crystalline form, but here, this is truly an image, or those are all some colored spots, resulting from slight brush strokes and seeming to be moving.

One thing is clear: painting by Van Soghomonian is permanently slipping beyond the margins.

In its unmistakable artistic individuality, the art by Van Soghomonian in its entirety shows that the process of its development is based upon both Armenian and European artistic traditions. Thematic variety, painting style, abundant stylistic interpenetration, and visual tingeing of colors are integrated into an artistic phenomenon singled out by supreme fascination.

DORIS HANSMANN
Doctor of Art, Germany

armenian art • 3(13)/2005



I want to assure you
that there are
extremely happy
people on this planet.

I love my one and
only God and life,
Mother and Father,
myself and my
friends, the sun and
the mountains, ani-
mals and plants, the
sea and the clouds,
peace and books, art
and creation.

And all that in each
of my sculptures

Arsen Avetisyan

The masks concealing plots and guile, the lofty bursts of soul, and an entire unexpected world of crafty strikes from the ambush. Masks by Arsen is an entire world of poetry and multilayered feelings and a discovery of its creation, a bitter story of ruined dreams, shattered ideas about good and evil. What is most attractive is the restricted, terse forms of expression, enabling the observer to fill in the gaps for the artist's ideas to be further developed by alternately using the incomplete and decorative resolutions. The language of his art is moving freely, with innumerable undertones.

The works by a talented adherent of the notable artists - sculptor A. Avetisyan and paintress J. Simonian - attracted attention by an original philosophy of perceiving life, by the soaring feelings,

thoughts and imagination. His art is based upon beauty and harmony, upon eternal duet generated by their divine permutation.

His first steps in art started at home: Arsen painted upon domestic housewares. He was in command of the languages: Armenian, Russian, English. Developing within the artistic atmosphere, he has always been tending to independence, both in art and in world view. In his art the sculptor acculturated universal ideas, going outside everyday life.

The main subject of the artist is the discovery of the human SELF (the series "Masks", "Carnival", "Libido", "Venus", et al. Original miniatures, seen with subtle humor, discovering differentiated modulations of the human entity.

It is essential in art to leave a trace



A Little Sun in Cool Water



The Inaccessible Love



The Smoke Break

Exclusive character of Arsen's works is stipulated by the basic structural elements: a specific sensitivity of the internal logic of matter and plasticity of the displayed composition, of the internal dynamics of postures, with psychological depth and philosophical generalization in the presentation of images.

Art by Arsen Avetisyan has found recognition in Russia, Europe and US. He is honored by the membership of artist's unions of Armenia, Russia, and UNESCO. His works have been exhibited in the most prestigious showrooms of Moscow, New York, Paris, London, Antwerp. 200 of his 350 works are placed in private collections in Europe and US, some are decorating the squares and fountains of St. Petersburg.

Arsen's art can be regarded as a gamble, with the author masterfully using differing styles, in gothic forms merging with one another in oriental ornamentation, with a subtle admixture of modernity, which was the way the sculptor was characterized in the Russian media.

The decade of self-assertion and maturity in Arsen Avetisyan's creative life, since 1994 was associated with St. Petersburg, where he moved after graduating from the Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts and Theater. During this period he succeeded only in implementing a small part of his vast designs. In the year 2001, on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the city, Arsen donated a masterfully colored bronze statue of a bull titled "Arrival of the Circus" which was placed in the square in front of the first Russian circus. It was followed by the statue "Speculations about Little Prince" placed standing in the fountain in front of the Philological Faculty of the State University, "On the Way to the Carnival" in Zelenogorsk, and "Bread", a memorial to the soldiers who fell in the Russian-Finnish war, inspiring thoughts on goodness and eternity, giving the city a new spirit with original plastic images.

I met Arsen the man only once. Alas, that encounter was the last one. My admiration for his art was enriched by the perfection of his human image radiating the light of his soul. In all his entity, Arsen was love, and the whole of God-given love went over to kinfolks, relatives and to the world. That love illuminated and filled the world with color and infinite warmth. He perceived the world in its entirety, penetrating into the invisible realm of nature. He transferred it all to the world of art, giving it all away to humankind, from his soul, drop by drop.

SHUSHAN RSHTUNI

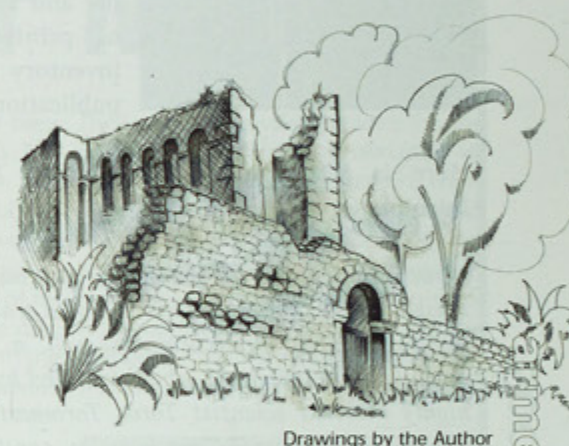
The Story Told by the Ruins of Shushi

Today, when you walk the Shushi streets, it is difficult to imagine that exactly one century ago that it was one of the highly developed cities of the Caucasus. Compared with other cities of Armenia, Giumri, Yerevan, as well as with Tiflis, Baku, Gandzak, Nukhi, Shamakhi, Akhaltskha, Kutaisi, Shushi formed at a later time, however, near the turn of the 20th century (1880s) that city was already noted for being among the largest cities, ceding only to Tbilisi and Baku.

While in the 18th century at the time of the rule of Khans, the Shushi fortress city was more like a village, with its fenced orchards and pastures, starting from the year 1828 of the Russian rule it gained a signifi-

remain. The lower part of the Armenian quarter burned after the bloody massacres of 1905-06 (below the Ghazanchetsots Church and Topkhana, which part of the city has not been rebuilt) was joined in 1920 by a completely devastated Armenian part of the city. The only evidence of the city is left in the form of poorly printed photographs. The city with its original style and character created in centuries and had concentrated both Christian and Muslim cultures, now stood half-dead in ruins.

The liberation wars of the late 20th c. mercilessly damaged the almost 300-year-old structures: residential, public, commercial and religious.



Drawings by the Author

cant position. It developed crafts and trade very rapidly. According to Leo, in 1826, prior to the Russo-Persian war, Shushi had already gained the fame of a trading center. The city populated with predominantly wealthy traders' families in their mansions and villas, was growing at a tremendous pace.

In 1865 V. Vereschagin, a great Russian painter, visited Shushi, making a note on it later, comparing its architecture with other cities: "This city is quite contrary to Yerevan, Nakhijevan, Elizavetpol or other Oriental cities with small houses and low ceilings, mostly built of earth or bricks, with few windows. In contrast, the houses of Shushi are regular, beautiful, tall, lighted, with many windows. The city had a wall around it made of local stone, streets were paved, and roofs were made to European standards.

In place of the once solid and flowering city only ruins

In summer 2004 some geodesic work was performed on public and residential buildings, giving rise to renewed attempts at reviewing the city's recent past and its deplorable present.

There are many stories hidden among the silent ruins, it is an entire historical period, with developed construction, culture and traditions. It was the uniformity of the houses that helped to rehabilitate the information on the multifaceted and animated life of the city. The seemingly similar construction elements included the wide and tall window vaults and sculptured wooden balconies.

The complex terrain of the city, irregular streets, had shaped the original image of the residential buildings. If it was a one-story or two-story structure facing the street, then there would be one or two more basement floors at the side of the courtyard, with vaulted

windows. Similar structures can be encountered among the Giumri residences, but unlike those, Shushi being deficient in natural rocks, made use of small and middle-sized rocks and rubble. The same conditions determined the outward appearance of the Shushi houses. The lime masonry of the walls with the plaster peeled off, has become a new esthetic standard for this type of structures. Only stones of windows, doors, and corner stones were cut to regular shapes.

No project has been retained for residential structures, wherefrom we can assume that there have never been any projects at all. Anyway, the basic similarity of structures, their structural uniformity and architecture speak in favor of their structural identity. Houses built by craftsmen arriving from cities Meghri, Agulis and Jugha of Zangezur area have retained the original traditions and principles of those craftsmen. This fact is irrefutable, if we compare the similarities of not only residential but also Armenian churches with their entrances, windows, corners of structures, roofs, etc.

well lighted, too. The first floor was allotted for lounges and bedrooms. They were also lighted with large windows. From the structural viewpoint, a very attractive feature of the house was its wooden balconies decorated with sculptures. Unfortunately, most of them were burnt or destroyed, very few specimens remained.

It is painful to bear witness to a recently living city full of life and activity that suddenly would come to a complete standstill. From year to year this city with half-ruined but still solid structures is becoming more and more deserted and neglected. With no roofing or cover, with no conservation or at least temporary preservation arrangements, we are rapidly losing a unique and original city, that could have obtained a status of a cultural conservation area, subject to rehabilitation and development.

The ruins of Shushi are awaiting caring and concerned attention, an expedient urban rehabilitation. The "Shushi" foundation has developed programs in

The ruins of Shushi also show that its builders intended to widen the narrow streets of the city, even to make them fit for public transportation. With this purpose the ground floors of the houses were truncated, while the first floors had all the protruding and decorative elements. Similar solutions were applied in a number of Siunik towns (Goris, Meghri, Kapan), also having narrow and very inclined streets. The orientation of paved streets used to be chosen so that the surplus of water through frequent rains should be easily spilled and drained through escape ditches.

The internal structure of the Shushi house was arranged in much the same way. The ground floor was occupied with a large hall, probably a drawing-room, used for gatherings of the whole family. This room was copiously lighted with wide and numerous windows. The adherent kitchen was spacious and

this domain. That is however, only one part of the matter, while the fundamental initiative is to proceed from the architectural community.

To make possible future construction work, it is necessary to consider the rehabilitation and preservation of historical and cultural environment, including the rehabilitation and preservation of artistic and historical environments. Otherwise, here we can obtain a contemporary city with no valuable historical component.

It is a pity, if Shushi, a city with rich cultural and building tradition, should remain abandoned and destroyed, while the Armenian architecture should be presented internationally with only Medieval monuments, disregarding the excellent and original legacy in urban construction from the 19 - 20th centuries.

Natalia TADEVOSYAN, architect

Congratulations

A highly merited scholar, Doctor of Architecture, Head of Architectural Department, Institute of Art, National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Armenia, Member of Editorial Board, "Armenian Art" Magazine, **Murad Hasratian** is 70 years old. On this occasion the Institute has published his



"Biographic Bibliography" (compiled by Anush Ter-Minasyan), with the introductory article written by Academician Varazdat Harutiunian.

The booklet includes basic chronology of M. Hasratian's life and activity, list of printed works, inventory of edited publications.

Here is a characteristic fragment from the Introduction.

"Proceeding along the fruit-bearing road, Murad Hasratian has presented himself as a trailblazer of our national architectural research, a dedicated disciple of the excellent school founded by our most highly merited scientist Toros Toromanian. That means that his works are born by careful professional analysis of every cultural monument, rather than by "creating books from books" as it is done by some contemporary writers. In this way Murad Hasratian has found a worthy place among the professionals of architectural research, like Nikolai Tokarski, Anatoly Jacobson, Hovhannes Khalpakhchian, Constantine Hovhannisian, Alexandr Sahinian, the author of these lines, et al."

Varazdat Harutiunian

The "Hi Art" editorial office offer Murad Hasratian their cordial congratulations, wishing him new success, we also express appreciation of Murad Hasratian's role and contribution in the establishment and operation of the magazine.

Excavations in Vayots Dzor. New data on the tribe of Momik, a notable medieval architect, sculptor, scribe and miniature painter.*

Aram Kalantaryan
Gagik Sargsyan
Husik Melkonyan

Momik is a significant person in the Medieval Armenian culture, an artist whose natural talents and fundamental education in the Gladzor University were manifested equally both in miniature painting and manuscript writing as well as in sculpturing and architecture. All areas of his activities for years have been in the center of professional attention. Data on Momik were retained in several manuscript repositories and epigraphic writings, attesting that the great artist lived and created in Vayots Dzor.

The earliest mention of Momik is dated 1283. According to a manuscript from the depository in the Aghberts Monastery copied by scribe Mathevos, the vestries were orna-

THE NEWLY FOUND MEMORIES OF MOMIK

mented by Momik, who wrote: **Painter Momik ornamented this vestry, please remember.**

Ten years later, in 1292, in a gospel copied at Noravank, Momik presents himself as scribe and miniature painter. Momik mentioned his title as a deacon.

The Gospel copied by scribe Hovhannes and ornamented by Momik by the order of Stepanos Orbelian in 1302 is an artistic masterpiece.

In a note made by Momik in 1331, it is mentioned that he had lost his sight, which was later rehabilitated: **"I, scribe Momik, suffering from disease of the eyes, unfortunately could not complete work, however, thanks to Jesus and the remaining hope, my vision returned, and I wrote this memorial"**. Another important domain in Momik's pursuits was sculpturing. In 13 – 14 cc. three cross stones carved by Momik were in Noravank, the largest religious center of the Royal House of Orbelian, the Seat of the Archbishops of Siunik. One cross stone was standing in the Monastery entrance hall, carved in 1304 by the order of Archbishop Hovhannes Orbel, for the salvation of soul of his predecessor and spiritual father Stepanos Orbelian. The legend on the cross stone is terminated in the words **"MASTER MOMIK"** (The word Master here means "Architect").

Another cross stone by Momik, a perfect masterpiece of stellar monuments, established in 1308 by the order of Princess Tamta, wife of Prince Elikum, for the salvation of soul of her

father-in-law Tarsajj and for the blessedness of her sons Burteli and Bughtayee. That memorial legend is closed with the formula **"REMEMBER MASTER MOMIK"**. The cross stones are now being preserved in the Museum at the Residence of Catolicos in Echmiadzin.

The third cross stone was placed at the entrance to the Smbat Orbelian vault in Noravank, it is presently kept in the Museum of Eghegnadzor. The customer was again Tamtan, the cross stone was commissioned somewhere between 1300 and 3012.

Momik was the architect of the St. Godmother Church built in Areni in 1321 by Archbishop Hovhannes-Orbel. He is also credited with the sculptures of Godmother on the temple lintel and the four Evangelists' symbolic statues.

The architectural historian S. Mnatsakanian also credited Momik with the churches Tatevi S. Grigor and Eghegisi Zorats.

The last known work by Momik the Architect was the Burtelashen Church of Noravank, it was commissioned in the year of the great master's death. A cross stone has been discovered which had been put up in his memory carrying the following legend: «ՅԻՇԵՆ ԶՍ (Զրիստոս) ԱԾ (Աստուած) ԶՍՈՄԿԱ ՅՈՂԻՆ ԵՒ



The Ascension, by Momik, 1302

ՈՂՈՐԻՄԵԱ:ԹՎ ԶԶԲ: (1333)» (God bless the soul of Momik). The year 1333. This dating enabled a number of researchers to ascribe the construction and completion of cathedral as well as sculptures to Momik's disciples. However S. Barkhudarian in one of his previous works rightly moved the date to 1339, which is coincidental with the 1339 date indicated in large ornamented letters on the ground floor entrance.

Beside research into the work done by Momik, of great interest are the data on his biography and origin. In this connection interesting evidence is contained in the legend with Momik's name on the cross stone found in 1955

on church ruins at Ulgiur location near Rind village. The legend is nearly obliterated and read with difficulty. It is engraved at the sides of the stone monument, with the top part in alternative writing.

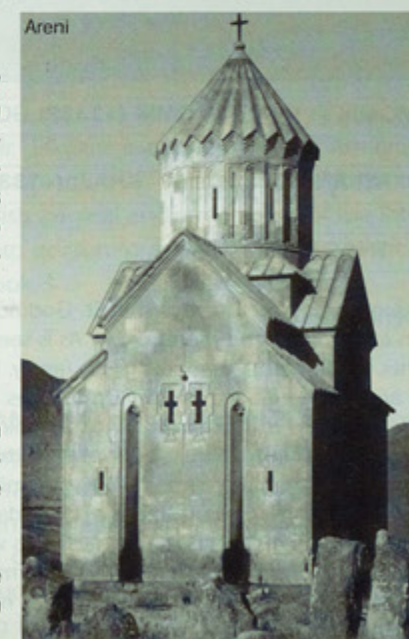
"MYSELF, ASKANDAR, SON OF MOMIK"

S. Barkhudarian, with regard to this situation, that Momik's son made a donation of part of his ancestral land, ("incised a legend as sort of testament"), righteously concludes that the placement of this village is Momik's birthplace and his native village.

Of great interest are the newly discovered legends at the Ulgiur village place the Eastern part of the mentioned location, conveniently matching other data on Momik's origin.



The Lower Ulgiur village place is located 5 km North-West from Aghavnavdzor village of the Vayots Dzor Region. Naturally, the remnants of structures that had still remained in 19th century were completely ruined in the past years by reclamation works. Remaining in place is a small church made of basalt stones named St. Godmother, according to the legends preserved on its walls. Standing



to the South of the structure are two monster stones converted into cross stones, dated 1009 and 1199, which are well known from professional literature.

Samvel Sargsyan, governor of Vayots Dzor Region and his brother Murad started a benevolent action in 2004 of rehabilitating the St. Godmother church and its courtyard, that is how the data on Momik and his work became known to us. The church courtyard clearing operations opened a few score of tombstones. The tombstones to the West of the church carry no legends but have remarkable ornamentation. The tombs must have belonged to people above the ordinary level, since the discovered objects attested not only to great skills but also to great care and efforts.

One of the double tombstones carries a two-line legend:

TO FATHER AND MOTHER OF MOMIK, A MEMORIAL, 1298

It is seen that the legend mentions the parents of the great master: **Grigor and Avtha, who died in 1298.**

The next tombstone carries a two-line legend: **GOHARTASH, MOMIK'S BROTHER AND HIS DAUGHTER KHLAT, YR. 1333**

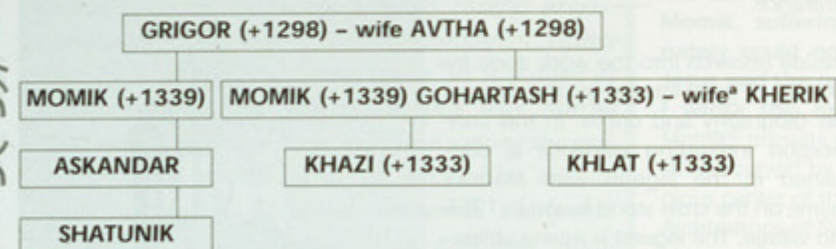
Mentioned here are Momik's brother Gohartash and his daughter Khlata who died in 1333.

At the side of that tombstone there is another, to the son of Momik's brother, two lines: **KHAZI, GOHARTASH'S SON, SAME DAY AND YEAR.**

The two tombstones being side by side and inscribed "**SAME DAY AND YEAR**", we conclude that the person named Khazi died at the same time with his father and sister.

It is clear from the legends that Momik's kinsmen were involved in accidents. First his father and mother died in the same year, 1298, then his brother with his two children in 1333. It may be assumed that there must have been natural disasters in those years, perhaps a plague or some other calamity.

Comparing the data obtained at the Ulgiur archaeological site with earlier publications, we can build up the genealogical tree of the Momik's tribe:



Discovered in the graveyard of St. Godmother church were other legends made on tombstones and monuments. As is seen, buried here are master Momik's parents, brother and members of his family. Meanwhile, members of Momik's family are not mentioned on the tombstones. As to Momik himself, he is in all probability buried in Noravank. Since Momik was unclerical, had sons and grandsons, of whom two are mentioned on the cross stone legend in Verin Ulgiur. It can be assumed that members of his family may have been buried at the church of St. Stepanos, in the same locality, today it is standing in ruins, partly buried. In the Ulgiuri residential area graveyards we find tombstones everywhere, many with legends. The excavations of this memorial will bring to light new lithographic materials, and may help clarify many unknown data on master Momik and his social environment.



During my visit to the United States in May 2004, I had the opportunity to lecture on Armenian history at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum in Mission Hills, California. This opportunity was provided to me by my friend, Mrs. Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin, Vice Chairman and Administrator of the Museum. On May 21, 2004, Mrs. Goschin introduced me to the Museum Founder, Mr. Luther Eskijian, a 91 year old gentleman who lives in a

Luther Eskijian and His Unique Collection

ARMENIAN MUSEUM IN CALIFORNIA

large home of unusual design in Altadena, California, with his wife Anne.

Luther Eskijian was born on November 1, 1913, in the Syrian mountain village of Ekiz-Oluk, in the Province of Kessab, Syria, to Reverend Hovhannes (John) and Gulenia Eskijian, where Rev. Eskijian was called to his first church.

Mr. Eskijian relates: In that small village, my father started building a church out of hand hewn rock from the hills surrounding the village, called the Emmanuel Church of Ekiz Oluk. During the First World War the family moved to Aleppo, Syria, where my father was called to minister to the large Armenian Evangelical Church there. They assisted many Armenian refugees, as well as hosted Armenian intellectuals, who were exiled to Aleppo. Later in the United States, Mr. Eskijian met numerous orphans, who survived the Genocide because of Reverend Eskijian.

However, when the family left Ekiz-Oluk in 1915, the church was unfinished-until some 40 years later at which time I was called upon to provide the funds to complete the church. When my wife and I visited the village in 1978, we saw the finished church. We actually met some of the men who had cut and carried the stones to build the walls of the church. While we were there I also met an elderly lady, the midwife, who had delivered me in 1913. It was the experience of a lifetime.

Luther Eskijian is a typical "self-made-man." He arrived at Ellis Island in New York Harbor in October 1920, without

a penny. He later became an architect and general contractor, specializing in commercial and institutional buildings. He designed several churches for the Armenian, American and African-American communities. He was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Evangelical College of America, as well as served several Armenian colleges and Christian day schools. He has worked on civic committees including the Rotary Club of Altadena, California where he has had perfect attendance for some 54 years. He also served as President of his club. During his tenure the club won the Best Club Award out of 50 in his district.



I interviewed Mr. Eskijian especially for the Armenian press. Several parts of that interview are presented below. The English original audio recording of the interview was put into written form by my friend, American writer Crystal Cook.

Artsvi Bakhchinyan

BY MR. ESKIJIAN: - My name, "Martin Luther," shows you that my father was spiritually inclined. His father was beheaded in Urfa, Turkey, during the 1895 massacres and he was taken to an American missionary in Urfa. She taught him the grounds of the Christian faith. Father became well educated in the scriptures at the missionary school, deciding to become a minister. He married my

mother, beginning his first pastoral position in Ekiz-Oloukh, a village of the district of Kessab, Syria, starting a church there.

My father was a compassionate and loving person. In 1915 he was called to a church in Aleppo, Syria. In Aleppo he helped save thousands of refugee Armenians. He would go to the transit camps and pick up children, as well as take all available opportunities to rescue Armenians. He helped start an orphanage with the view to protecting future generations. He knew that if you do not protect the children, there would never be a nation again. Additionally he obtained information from the interior of Turkey from the incoming refugees about the



Genocide and conditions they endured. This information was reported by my father to the American Attaché Jackson in Aleppo, who sent the reports to Ambassador Henry Morgenthau in Constantinople. He worked among the people in the camps where there were the dead and dying. As a result he got typhus and died in 1916. The Turks had found out about my father's underground activities and came to hang him. But he died of typhus, which he contracted by helping the refugees, the day before he was to be executed by the Turkish authorities.

My mother took my brother and I and returned to our ancestral home in Aintab, Turkey. The Turkish and German troops in that area were shooting at any Armenians they saw on the streets. Our stairway to the second floor in the family home was outside on a kind of balcony. They could see us from a half a mile away and shoot at us. They were very well-trained, their guns were supplied by the Germans, but our guns were registered before the massacres. Then right before the massacres

the Turks came and took all of our guns, so we had nothing with which to defend ourselves. When people talk about gun control in the United States, being a military man I can see the potential for abuse. Guns are for self-protection. You never know what can happen. Anyway, that gives you an idea.

At the age of six and a half I took food to the Armenians soldiers who were fighting the Turks in Aintab, receiving a commendation by the Aintab Patriotic Union. Therefore, I was in World War I and World War II. I consider my military service as a privilege to help save this country and my people.

Later, moving to the United States, my mother earned a living by repairing oriental rugs. I started to work for the wealthy people in Pasadena. I could see how these people lived. They would buy houses in the poor sections of town for their maids, cooks and chauffeurs. I saw their life style. I had a liking for fine works of art, but when I saw then who had them and why they were there, what their expectations were, and what their values were, I learned a lot.

At an early age I worked for a couple in Pasadena who were nice to me. They paid me 15 to 25 cents an hour during the Depression, I was able to acquire two or three items of art from them. That was the start of the Museum. In my early teens, I was already starting to collect art and artifacts, because I had the background. I could appreciate what was good. I studied architecture, combining classical architecture with fine handwork of the artists and sculptures of the past. See, that's the only way you can do it; you can combine it all together. Anyway, I collected a good portion of art, and I was fortunate to have friends that were from Armenia or from Lebanon who had coin and stamp collections. I bought many stamp collections from American dealers because they had no special buyers for them. I bought many Armenian coins, as many as I could get, Roman and Greek mostly, and just put them away.

When I went to World War II I started out as a buck private, a sergeant, warrant officer, with the Air Force. After that I went into the Intelligence Corps and from there to the Army Engineer Corps. In the engineer corps, I went to Europe with my one little outfit of about 35 men. We worked around the clock. I was not happy a war was going on. Our captain was a drunkard and a womanizer. One day the military inspector came and asked me what right did I have to be in bed during the day? So I told him that I had worked around the clock 7 days a week. Afterward I wrote my own pass to go to Paris.

There, I went to the Office of the Chief Engineer, and he showed me a drawing and asked, "How long would it take you to do that?" I said, "A couple of hours." He said it was impossible. I said, "No." I was a good draftsman, and I had already studied architecture and was doing buildings before the war. So, he said, "Okay, I'll have you transferred immediately." They needed me with the Office of the Chief Engineer, European Theatre of Operation. I followed Patton's Army all the way to Berlin. When we captured a city, usually there would be a large building they wanted to convert to a hospital. They had to have a drawing of that building immediately. So, I would measure the building and draw it up. I had my own assistant driver and I had the freedom to lodge with any military group along the way. The engineers would follow with technical drawings where the operating room was, where the morgue was, where all the facilities should be from my drawings, because they couldn't make a building drawing if they tried. I was able to do these drawings in a couple of days and give it to them. From there, we'd go to the next city. In between, however, I would always stop at an antique store or bookstore or junk shop, I would collect wonderful items, which I sent home. One big box of the finest crystal you ever saw in your life was lost in transit, but nevertheless I got a lot of nice things and brought them home.

I continued adding to my Armenian collection. In time, I realized this is too important for me to keep to myself. It must be shared with the Armenian people. So, I started thinking about starting an Armenian museum. In the meanwhile, three or four others and I, started the Armenian Numismatic Society. We have had a wonderful society now in existence over thirty years. That gave me a location to start expanding my thoughts. In my mind we had to have a museum.

During that time, I started helping the Ararat Home of Los Angeles, at their old location. I realized there was a possible connection for my vision with them. They started talking about new buildings, so I made sketches for them, including a museum and a church. We didn't have the property, but began to raise money with a colored rendition of what we'd like to have. They knew I wanted a museum. When the Ararat Home purchased the new property in Mission Hills, California, I drove Bob Shamlian to the location. The church would have to go here, the museum would have to go there. From that we made a drawing. We had a banquet, raised money, and that was fine. The Ararat Home tried two or three different architectural forms for the master plan layout. I was not impressed by any of them. Finally a firm in Beverly Hills came up with a rendition of our plan that was excellent.

We worked at it for a year. I went to their Beverly Hills office every Saturday morning, working and improving it and making suggestions. Incidentally, although they are not Armenians, they are the only firm of architects among Armenians. When they visited my Museum and the Church they wrote me an excellent letter of recommendation. Outstanding.

The Ararat Home told me that if I could raise the money for the church and the museum they would let me have my way. A friend of mine, Mr. John Sheen*, lived down the street from my home. His real name was John Geuvkaladjian. I had been helping him for about 25 years with his correspondence, estate work. He was a



wealthy man. So he told me to make a drawing of my proposed church and museum. I made a drawing of the church, and a balsawood model. He loved it. He said, "I'll do it!" He arranged to pay for the church, but I had to raise the money for the Museum in the level under the church. I raised the money for Museum and he paid for the upper part - the church. I think the church is an excellent example of Armenian church architecture, and the Museum is very well-located under the sanctuary.

I designed the Church of Armenian architecture and

* An American Armenian tradesman, John Sheen-Geuvkalajian was of the Holocaust orphans, who had been saved by Hedvig Biul, an Estonian female missionary. In US his business was manufacturing the church furniture. In the year of his death (he lived 97 years) Shin gave up half a million dollars to build an Armenian church on condition that it become a gathering place for all Armenians: the Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelist. The Geuvkalajian Chapel has been erected in his name near the "Ararat" nursing home.

Museum building. I did all the engineering, detail of the building, and I made a balsawood model of the structure, because some of it was very complex and the engineers couldn't even figure out. With the model, they were able to complete the structural and earthquake engineering. The Museum is doing well. I had some volunteers. My dear Maggie and her family have been a great help.

Now, let's get into the Museum. I have a lot of beautiful Armenian maps and a good selection of Armenian stamps. I have good collection of numismatic items, coins going back to ancient times, most of which are Cilician coins of the 10th or 11th century. Most are not very valuable, but some are good and worth thousands of dollars. I have a Constantine II: That is the only one known to be in existence in the world. It is worth perhaps \$5000. Then I have a gold Lucius Varius with an Armenian king kneeling before him, worth about \$25,000, 2nd or 3rd century. I have a collection of photographs covering the progress of World War II from the German perspective which I obtained from Hitler's own office when I was in Berlin drawing a U.S. Army hospital during the war. I have a Biblical collection with most of the Biblical coins, including all the emperors that are mentioned in the Bible. I have an unusual item in the Biblical collection which is the calcified head of a person pulled out of the Dead Sea. That is the location where Sodom and Gomorrah once existed – going back to their destruction described in the Bible. I don't have very many printed items, but I do have a wonderful collection of Napoleonic tapestries better than the Napoleon museum in France. They have one like it, but only half of it. I have one much better than what is in Paris. Then there is the antiquity collection. There are also dinosaur bones, tapestries, and my sketches. I donated 151 books from my collection, and since then I have probably given 25 more. The Museum came into prominence when Maggie started to serve and expand its cultural activities. My goal for the Museum is to make it available for all the Armenians and the community at large, because you'll never have these items again in one place. In the military cabinet there is a handmade gun by the Armenians. While the Turks had modern German guns with sights on them so they could kill anything from far off, our guns would do practically nothing. There is a cabinet of Armenian historical items and fine jewelry. It should be preserved for the Armenian people and not owned by one person.

God bless the Armenian people.

Symbolic images and symbols are important expressions of Christian art, helping to understand the truths of spiritual world. In this aspect the Medieval Armenian Miniature is not an exception. Let us adduce an example.

In the year 1600, priest Zacharia Avantsi living in Avants village in the area of Van, illustrated another Gospel (Matenadaran, man. #2804). One of the features of the miniature artist was that in the books that he decorated prior to the Evangelic array of images, he inserted the series of images illustrating the "Genesis" book of the Old Testament: 6 days of Creation and the making of Adam, day 7 – the rest by God Father, the creation of Eve from Adam's rib and the Original Sin. And in a legend to each miniature Zacharia left a note explaining the meaning of the image. Those notes enable clarifications to be made of the details of the miniature images.

Incidentally, the legend relating to the miniature showing Day 5 of Creation contains a note about Leviathan the fish and Fenix the bird.

THE MYTHOLOGICAL MEDIEVAL IMAGES OF

The miniature by Zacharia Avantsi is interesting for its composition and iconographic solutions. The composition is forming a vestry, which though divided into three parts at the outside appearance, represents one integral unity. The center is the domain of divinity. The Creator appears as Jesus Emmanuel. He is kneeling in a styled vestry, giving a blessing with his right hand in a royal gesture. The vault of the central vestry is ornamented with heads and arms of the angels. That is a kind of a laurel wreath of divinity, and the top of the work of art. The image shows nine heads, intended by the author to represent the same number of heavenly angels. And finally, the lower third part is a purely creative domain, divided with a belt-type ornament from the part representing Jesus Emmanuel. That is the situation that the artist pictured under the fifth day of creation.

That field of images was divided by Zakharia Avantsi into three sections. The first one showed a big fish, the second one showed a bird with spread wings, as if screening the strange birds depicted in the third section. And if not for the commentary under the picture, giving the names both the to fish and to the bird, it could be suggested that the artist showed the fifth day of creation described in the "Genesis" book of the Old testament (Genesis, 1, 20 – 22). However, in the rele-

vant text of the Old Testament there is not a word about Leviathan the fish or Phoenix the bird. According to the Old Testament, on the fifth day of creation God creates all sea animals including big whales and birds.

What is the origin of Leviathan and Phoenix on the miniatures of Avantsi?

Leviathan in Old Hebrew designates a ring-shaped wriggling animal, a serpent, a dragon. The Bible mentions the Leviathan-dragon in the Book of Job (20), in the Psalms of David (14, 27), et al. The original Hebrew Bible instead of what in Grabar is "Big Whale" named those creatures "Giants of the Sea, the Dragons" The Jewish "Tannin" means "giant of the sea", "sea dragon", as well as "snake". Thus, Leviathan resembles Tannin, and in the Hebrew religious tradition carries three interconnected meanings: It is an entity opposing God, on the Doomsday, after the coming of the Savior Messiah he will become food for the righteous, and finally, it symbolizes the unspeakable character of God's creation. It is to be noted that this perception of the Leviathan image is coincidental with the Christian tradition. It has been noted that Leviathan is an entity opposing

God. Christianity recognizes only Satan as the figure opposing God, in this case this figure being incorporated by Leviathan. That is how that strange creature has been interpreted in the Medieval commentaries on the Book of Job and on the Psalms of David. Leviathan is the dragon, Satan, who is disempowered by God. "You have broken the head of the dragon and fed it to the Indian troops" (Psalms 73, 14): According to the Church Patriarchs, that prophesy is to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ, the Messiah Savior coming to the world, baptized in the river Jordan, and fulfilling all actions aimed at salvation. According to a Medieval commentary, sea and water is a symbol of Leviathan-dragon or Satan, while the Indian troops are Satan's escorts, the demons.

Thus, it becomes clear that Zacharia Avantsi in the miniature on the fifth day of creation showed more than could be seen at first glance. Therefore, the Phoenix bird has not been chosen without a meaning.

What is Arnav? It is the Grabar name of Phoenix, the bird that had been burned and risen from its ashes. The Phoenix image has been known in art since pagan times. In very old times that mythic bird symbolized eter-

nity and was pictured like an eagle. It used to be colored with golden and purplish colors. And since Phoenix was in some way related to the idea of resurrection, the early Christianity made it into a symbol of immortality, while later it became loaded with the meaning of Jesus Christ and the Resurrection.

Hence we can say that Zacharia Avantsi, while relating of the fifth day of creation reported not only about the divine creation but supplied the miniature with a hidden theological meaning, which is disclosed in the images of Leviathan the fish and Phoenix the bird. The former symbolizes Satan, the latter - Son of God, The Savior. In actual fact, the artist used the images of the Old Testament and symbols to channel our mind towards the New Testament, towards the array of Patriarchal Images that he had painted in the Gospel. Thus Zacharia Avantsi using only two symbols created an internal link between the first (creation of the world) and the second (salvation of the world) acts of creation. Foenix the Savior counters Leviathan the Satan and with His death and resurrection performs the salvation of the Creation of God.

Avet Avetisyan, Matenadaran Science Staff

LEVIATHAN THE FISH AND PHOENIX THE BIRD



The famous grocer of laughter and smiles



Sarukhan today is neither 50, nor 100, nor 120 years old, however, to honor and glorify the great, no anniversaries are needed, our intention is to have a look at Sarukhan's art in terms of another approach.

Alexandr Sarukhan the cartoonist could create a great matter out of nothing, e.g., in 1953 in Egypt, browsing on a daily paper, he came across an article to the effect that the govern-

ment was debating a new law that will enable women to be recruited to the army. Thus, the flight of the governmental thought incited Sarukhan to create scores of cartoons.



ment was debating a new law that will enable women to be recruited to the army. Thus, the flight of the governmental thought incited Sarukhan to create scores of cartoons.

Sarukhan had also great skills in converting insignificant political happenings and petty events into stories and images having general humanitarian values like the image of Omda Efendi

that was converted into a fictional image of Village Manager Efendi. One of the most interesting and successful images by Al. Sarukhan is this village manager who has played a large role in the life of the Egyptians. That image does not differ too much from Masri Efendi, Egypt Efendi, he is the same grinning, optimistic and witty man, and however, he is not politically minded and certainly not intellectual. He is only a kind-hearted villager, who has been elected to represent his village



folk, their concerns and aspirations. Using this image, Sarukhan succeeded in correctly analyzing the problems of the villagers. E. g., the way the villages are deprived of the cultural, political and whatever elementary conditions, like electricity, modern transportation, etc. To show the contradictions in the city and village life, the village manager had to visit the city, and seeing some inaccessible novelties, he returns to his vil-



lage to try and introduce it there. And then taking place here is the unavoidable conflict in the habits and living condition of village and city. At the same time Sarukhan using the image of the village manager can deliver his ideas to the statesmen. The village manager image at first glance looks like a miserable and infantile person, however, at the end of Sarukhan's series of pictures we see a character that puts a message across to us, that we have to preserve the pure spirit of nature and to protect love. This character is Omda Efendi himself, and the same one, village manager Efendi.

Sarukhan's most important advantages are his brilliant and healthy mind, his wittiness, high intellect and his powerful line. This line can be called "Merry Line" or "the line of loud laughter". Sarukhan's lines are not lines drawn acci-



dentally, those line resolve the problems of volume, depth, light and shade. His lines are extraordinary. They move, they aim at unlimited freedom. When looking at his pictures, it becomes clear that his desire must be to make an animation film.

In today's Egypt, in Arab countries and in the world history of satirical drawing there is a



from the history of

school and a style named Sarukhanism. Honored by IZMs are extraordinary philosophical ideas, political actions or figures, people who create styles or schools of art. And one of those is the master cartoonist Alexandr Saruchan.



"Sarukhan's face has always shown sadness and bitterness, but he used to conceal it with his usual smile".

"Oftentimes he made the whole city laugh, while shedding tears in his heart".

Mustafa Amin, media writer

"Sarukhan's style reigned for a long time affecting the Egyptian cartoon style before WWII. For this reason that period can be named the Sarukhan Period. Almost all cartoonists have been influenced and have tried to imitate his style".

Munnem Rakha, Egyptian cartoonist

"Sarukhan is the most famous grocer, he always has in stock lots of laughter and smiles".

Kemal Shnnaui, Egyptian journalist

Vrej V. Kasuni

Alexandr Sarukhan

Born 1898, Oct. 1, in Village Artanush, Historical Armenia.

1922-24: study at Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna.

1927: first exhibition.

1937 - 1968: exhibitions in Cairo, Beirut, Aleppo, Yerevan, USA.

1973, Monreal: winning the title of "Master Cartoonist".

1977, Jan.1: demise in Cairo.



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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.

New Books



THE ST. SARGIS MONASTERY IN USHI

The Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the Republic of Armenia's National Academy of Sciences has published the book "The St. Sargis Monastery of Shushi" by Frina Babayan in Armenian, Russian and English (Yerevan, 2005). It features a brief history of the remarkable monastery of Sushi, as well as data on the findings and newly discovered materials during the 1999 - 2001 excavations carried out with the support of Archbishop Shahe Ajemian of blessed memory.



THE REVEREND KOMITAS. ARTICLES AND RESEARCH

The initiatory book of "Musical Bibliography" by the "Sargis Khachents" publishers includes research works and articles by the Great Komitas (Ազիւր, աշխատասիրութեամբ Գ.Գաւաթյանի եւ Ա.Սուշեղյանի, Երեւան, 2005), many unpublished or partially published materials. Next to be published is Book Բ (Book 2). This extremely important publication for Armenian culture has been made possible through support provided by the Galust Gulbenkian Institution.

R e p o r t

In July - August the "Armenian Art" editorial office was visited by the Magazine's authorized representatives in the Diaspora:

Albert Kocharian (Tehran),
Andranik Chilinkirian and Sonia Gogorian (Toronto),
Marina Sargisian (Copenhagen),
Arthur Oshakantsi (London),
Sargis Darchinian (Tbilisi),
Nevrik Azatian (Geneva),
Tigran Sargsian (Los Angeles).

The editorial office is deeply appreciative of all authorized representatives for their dedicated service to the cause of Armenian culture and our magazine. At the same time we urge our authorized representatives to do their best to support the "Spiurk" Showroom initiative ("Armenian Art" 2005, #2, p. 28), that can become a certain manifestation of the idea to create a center of communication between Armenia and the Diaspora.