



Dear reader, Սիրելի ընթերցող,

Issue 9
2020

Welcome to our Bardez-Partez / Պարսեզ!

News and Views from the Armenian Institute

As we say hello to a new decade, I am left reflecting on the one just gone, and how better to have ended it than with recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the House of Representatives in the United States following a number of attempts to block the vote. Hopefully the historic vote will push the UK towards recognition, and maybe with a Prime Minister whose own great-grandfather acted to save Armenians at the time, attitudes may change.

Armenia itself is also blossoming into a new era, being heralded as 'the Culture hit' holiday destination for 2020 by the Evening Standard, amongst others. I took some non-Armenian friends in August and they (and I) had a truly wonderful time - drinking the wine, eating the glorious food, and discovering the heritage sites. We even managed to hike part of the Transcaucasian Trail (I have the badge to prove it), meeting people from all over Europe as we did so.

Furthermore, the Armenian Institute has firmly established itself over the past decade, and is very much looking forward to moving into our new home in 2020. AI hosted and ran over 25 events in 2019 ranging from book and film launches to workshops and lectures, as well as republishing *I Ask you, Ladies and Gentleman*, bringing the words of Leon Surmelian to a new audience. AI was also successful in its application for a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and we are excited about the works the grant will allow us to do in the coming years.

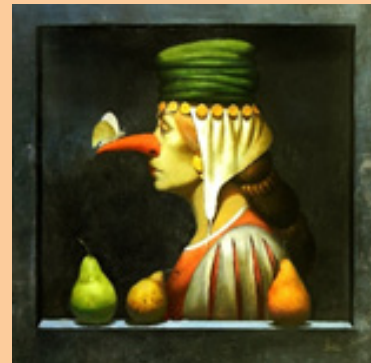
Finally, after five issues as editor of Bardez/Partez, I will be handing over the duties in the new year. I would like to thank all the contributors over this time, as well as Belinda Keheyan and Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian for all their help and guidance. Wishing our readers all the best for the twenties!

Arda Eghiayan, Editor

If you would like to contribute to the next issue please contact the Publishing Committee on info@armenianinstitute.org.uk

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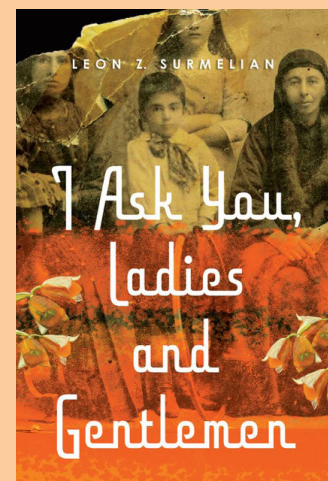
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The far reach of fake news by Owen Skirlos-Foster

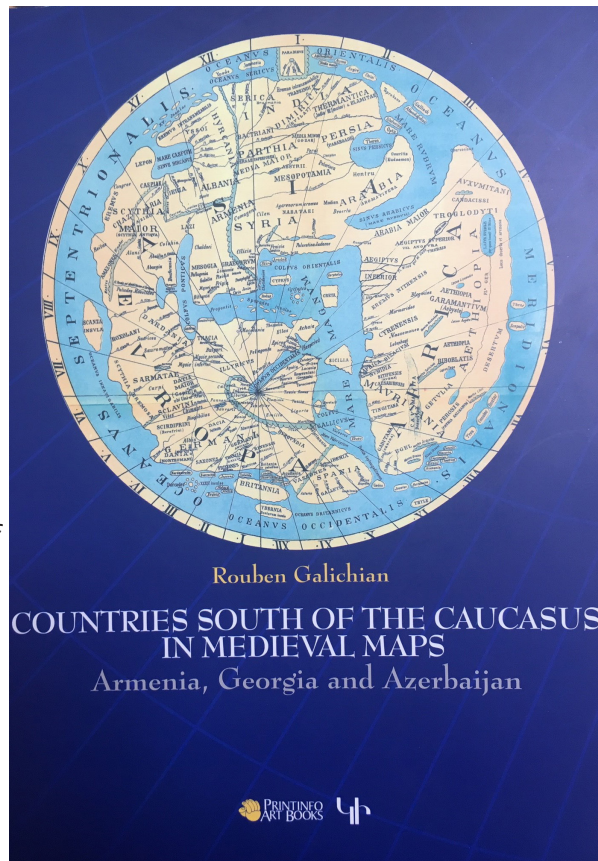
In an age of unfettered access to the internet, one of the downsides is that everybody has a soap box from which to spout their politically-motivated fake news. On Academia.edu, a site where literally anybody can post an "academic" paper, Armenian historiography has not been spared from the fake news phenomenon. An example of this kind of literature is *Albanian Church of Gandzasar in the Decrees of Azerbaijani Rulers* written by Rizvan Huseynov. The author begins on the wrong foot the moment he tries to misquote the Encyclopaedia Britannica's 11th edition, an English-language source that can be found online for free:

"Armenian Church superiors settled with the permission of Jahanshah, the ruler of the Azerbaijani state of Qara Qoyunlu, in the village of Uchkilisa - now Echmiadzin - in 1441. This information is confirmed by Encyclopaedia Britannica (1910), where the article "Armenian Church" states that Armenian Catholicoses first moved to Echmiadzin in 1441."

Huseynov is trying to use this event to prove that the Holy See of Echmiadzin only became Armenian at a late date. By doing this, he hopes to convince the unsuspecting public that Armenians are all newcomers to the Caucasus, and who appropriated the land, history, and churches of another race of people known as the Caucasian Albanians. According to this version of events, these Caucasian Albanians are in fact the forerunners to the modern inhabitants of the Republic of Azerbaijan. But does the Encyclopaedia Britannica really confirm Huseynov's claim? Instead of looking at the "Armenian Church" article, let's turn to "Armenia":

"Armenia formed part of the territories of the Turkoman dynasties of Akand Kara-Kuyunli, and under their milder rule the seat of the Catholicos, which, during the Seljuk invasion, had been moved first to Sivas, and then to Lesser Armenia, and was reestablished, 1441, at Echmiadzin."

Read that again. The Armenian church was reestablished in 1441, not first established. Huseynov



was obviously aware of the Armenia article because he cites it later on. From Huseynov: *"The article "Armenia" in the same place notes that Armenia is geographically located in Asia Minor, not in the Caucasus."*

This is an oversimplification. Firstly, Lake Sevan is listed as an Armenian lake, which is in the Caucasus. But admittedly, for centuries cartographers and writers have been inconsistent about where Armenia's boundaries are. However, this is no surprise given Armenia's lack of independence for a thousand years. If you want to see for yourself, pick up a copy of Rouben Galichian's *Historical Maps of Armenia* or his *Countries South of the*

Caucasus in Medieval Maps: Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, which are available in the Armenian Institute Library. You'll see that sometimes Armenia is labelled only as far east as Lake Sevan, other times it stretches all the way to the confluence of the Aras and Kura rivers, especially when based on ancient Greek sources such as Ptolemy.

But before anybody takes these discrepancies as a victory, they'd better take note of the following. Despite their inconsistency regarding Armenia's eastern boundaries, one thing that these map makers and the Encyclopaedia Britannica article "Azerbaijan" are all consistent on is that "Azerbaijan is separated from Russian territory on the North by the river Aras." This would by definition make it not in the Caucasus either!

To borrow a phrase from G.R.R Martin, this source is for people like Huseynov *"a sword without a hilt. There is no safe way to grasp it."*

If you would like to see for yourself, the entire 11th Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica can be found online at Studylight.org and Rouben Galichian's cartographic collections are available at the Armenian Institute Library.

Owen Skirlos-Foster is a history graduate from Coventry University, living in Shanghai and a Caucasusophile.

The United States of America recognised the Armenian Genocide

Christmas came early in 2019 for Armenians around the world when on December 12th – at the fourth time of asking – the US Senate unanimously adopted a resolution recognising the Armenian Genocide committed by Ottoman Turkey. This followed the recognition by the House of Representatives in October. While the State Department opposed the recognition – and indeed had arranged for Republican senators on three different occasions to block previous attempts – the House and Senate votes on the resolutions amount to official US Government recognition of the massacre.

The resolution brought forward by Senator Bob Menendez and co-sponsored by Ted Cruz, not only references the deaths and killings during the Genocide, but also rejects any attempts to "enlist, engage, or otherwise associate" the US government with denial of genocide and to "encourage education and public understanding" of it. Further, the preamble interestingly comments on the philanthropy of America at the time and the huge sums raised, to help the Armenians and others decimated by Ottoman Turkey.

The text of the resolution is as follows

Expressing the sense of the Senate that it is the policy of the United States to commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance.

Whereas the United States has a proud history of recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide, the killing of an estimated 1,500,000 Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, and providing relief to the survivors of the campaign of genocide against Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrians, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians;

Whereas the Honorable Henry Morgenthau, Sr., United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, organized and led protests by officials of many countries against what he described as "a campaign of race extermination," and, on July 16, 1915, was instructed by United States Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the "Department approves your procedure ... to stop Armenian persecution";

Whereas President Woodrow Wilson encouraged the formation of Near East Relief, chartered by an Act of Congress, which raised approximately \$116,000,000 (more than \$2,500,000,000 in 2019 dollars) between 1915 and 1930, and the Senate adopted resolutions condemning the massacres;



Whereas Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term "genocide" in 1944 and who was the earliest proponent of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in the 20th century;

Whereas, as displayed in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Adolf Hitler, on ordering his military commanders to attack Poland without provocation in 1939, dismissed objections by saying, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"; setting the stage for the Holocaust;

Whereas the United States has officially recognized the Armenian Genocide—

(1) through the May 28, 1951, written statement of the United States Government to the International Court of Justice regarding the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and Proclamation No. 4838 issued by President Ronald Reagan on April 22, 1981; and

(2) by House Joint Resolution 148, 94th Congress, agreed to April 8, 1975, and House Joint Resolution 247, 98th Congress, agreed to September 10, 1984; and

Whereas the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-441) establishes that the prevention of atrocities is a national interest of the United States and affirms that it is the policy of the United States to pursue a United States Government-wide strategy to identify, prevent, and respond to the risk of atrocities by "strengthening diplomatic response and the effective use of foreign assistance to support appropriate transitional justice measures, including criminal accountability, for past atrocities": Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that it is the policy of the United States—

(1) to commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance;

(2) to reject efforts to enlist, engage, or otherwise associate the United States Government with denial of the Armenian Genocide or any other genocide; and

(3) to encourage education and public understanding of the facts of the Armenian Genocide, including the role of the United States in humanitarian relief efforts, and the relevance of the Armenian Genocide to modern-day crimes against humanity.

Swallows and Armenians - re-appraising a children's classic

by Dr Karen Babayan



The Lake District National Park feels a million miles away from a world of conflict, civil wars and refugees. Yet it is more connected to the wider world than we may think. In the years since *Swallows and Amazons* was published in 1930, the ethnicity of the real children who

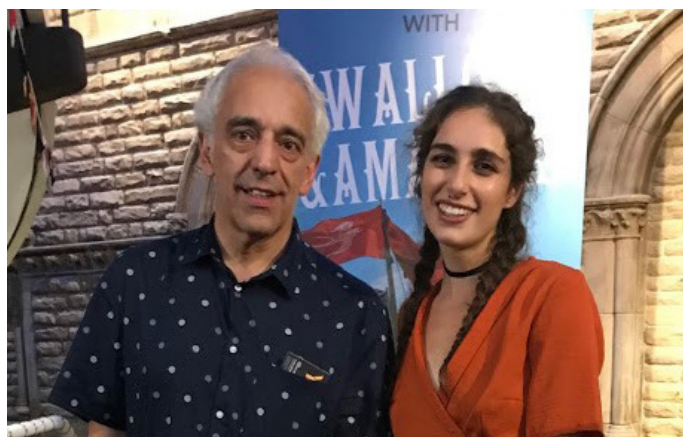
inspired the fictional 'Walker' family is still not widely known. Lake District tourism presents an English cultural menu of the Wordsworths, Beatrix Potter, John Ruskin and Arthur Ransome. The irony is that Ransome's books have come to stand for something quintessentially English when, in reality, this gaggle of upper-middle class English children having jolly japes, sailing and camping, was inspired by Anglo-Armenian children from Syria who were nicknamed 'The Three Zulus' when they eventually came to boarding school in England.

The official line set by Ransome in his autobiography is that the Altounyan children identified themselves with his characters, not vice versa. The Walker family as presented by Ransome is white-British, a reflection of the culture Ransome was most familiar, and the audience for which he was writing. So, it may seem appropriate to producers who wish to create 'authentic' film or theatrical versions of the book to continue to depict the family through a narrow prism of what was considered 'British' in 1930, even in the most recent film released in 2016. However the Altounyan family are a prime example of a culturally mixed British family. In recent theatre productions, producers/directors finally broke through this stereotype of white-British children by casting Akiya Henry a young black British actor as Titty for Bristol Old Vic touring production in 2012 and Hanna Khogali, an Anglo-Egyptian in the same role at York Theatre Royal 2019 (left: with Asadour Guzelian, son of Titty (Mavis) Guzelian).

It may be argued that Ransome could have written about any children having adventures on a lake. The fact is, he wrote *Swallows and Amazons* immediately following an intense period of sailing and camping

with this particular family in 1928 who had come to visit their maternal grandparents in Coniston. These children were homeschooled by tutors in Aleppo, used to an open curriculum with time for art, poetry and imaginative play, free-spirited and unconstrained by social norms of the time. The Altounyan children, Taqui, Susan, Mavis (Titty), Roger and Brigit, had Armenian, Northern Irish, Swiss and English heritage. The eldest two were born in London, the rest in Aleppo, Syria where their paternal grandparents Aram Assadour Altounyan and Harriet Riddall, established the first modern hospital. Their father Ernest, a brilliant doctor, helped to run it and their mother Dora was an artist from the Collingwood family of Lake District artists, writers and philosophers with links to John Ruskin. The children spoke Armenian, Turkish, English and Arabic, and the food they ate was a cultural mix. They visited their maternal grandparents every few years in Coniston, where they felt equally at home as in Aleppo.

Ransome used three of the children's names in the book – Susan, Titty and Roger – but it is Titty's name, unusual even in its day, that fixes the Altounyan family to the Walkers. Ransome dedicated the first edition of the book 'To the six for whom it was written in exchange for a pair of slippers' (the Turkish slippers were a gift given before the family returned to Syria) but gradually, he and his wife Evgenia became increasingly estranged from Ernest, the children's father and then one by one, from the adult children themselves. Sadly, in later years, paranoia overtook reason in assuming the family were unjustly promoting their connection to the book. After Arthur's death Evgenia took this to a new level following an TV programme where Titty was interviewed on the connection between the families. Evgenia writes on Sept 3 1967: "There was nothing to connect you with the Walkers and you





could have remained anonymous if you so wished – but obviously some, if not all of you preferred a bit of publicity and reflected glory.” If only she had remembered an article Arthur had written in 1931 for an American magazine, *The Horn Book* (volume 7, p.38-43) entitled *Swallows and Amazons, How It Came To Be Written* where he writes: “About once in every five years a friend of mine who has an enormous family and lives in Syria brings his family home and spends the summer with them on the shores of a lake which he and his wife and I have known ever since we were ourselves children. We have played about in boats on it ever since we can remember. Syria is mostly made, I believe, of sand. Anyhow, that is what it sounds like, and though, now, this friend of mine whom I will call Walker, has found a place where he can sail...etc.” The article continues in this vein, irrefutable evidence that Arthur connected the Altounyan family with the Walkers. In his mind, they were at that time, one and the same.

The accusatory correspondence from Evgenia to Taqui and Titty on the subject, resulted in the relationship coming to an irreparable end. The dedication to the family was removed from subsequent editions and replaced with a foreword citing Ransome’s own childhood as the inspiration. However, reason has prevailed in recent years and since 2016 the publishers Penguin Random House UK now include both the dedication to the family and the foreword about Ransome’s own childhood.

To ignore the cultural background of the children is to miss the opportunity of introducing British and international audiences and children of an ethnically diverse mix to the work of Arthur Ransome and to the rich literary heritage of the Lake District.

Karen Babayan: born in Iran to Armenian and British parents, Babayan moved to Leeds in 1978 just prior to the Islamic Revolution. Latterly she lived in Hyde Park, Leeds, a stone’s throw from the house in which Arthur Ransome was born. In 2019 her exhibition and book of short stories *Swallows and Armenians* was launched at Theatre by the Lake, Keswick. A new exhibition *Swallows and Armenians – Flying the Nest* will be touring to three venues in the north of England in the Spring of 2020.

Swallows and Armenians is published by the Wild Pansy Press, University of Leeds, and is available through the following website: www.karenbabayan.com.

Image above: “Write me something to smell the wind and rain again”, digital print on aluminium Karen Babayan 2018, from an original photograph from the Guzelian family archive.

Image below: Altounyan children from left: Susie, Taqui, Titty (seated) & Roger, Aleppo c. 1927, reproduced with kind permission of Asadour and Rahel Guzelian.



Arshile Gorky and Charles Causley, or Six Degrees of Separation by Sylvie Howse

It is a truth universally acknowledged that an Armenian in want of a connection, will eventually find one.

What links Charles Causley with Arshile Gorky? True, they were both artists, one of the poetic form, the other in the visual arts, and they would both be affected in different ways by WWI. Yet they could not be further apart. Charles Causley lived and worked most of his life in a small community in remote Cornwall. Arshile Gorky was an Armenian, born Vostanig Manoug Adoian, who fled the Ottoman Empire during the genocide of 1915, to become a painter in the United States. The folk memories that informed their creations came from different landscapes.

It was June 2010, and Launceston (the ancient capital of Cornwall, pronounced lanson), was celebrating its beloved local poet with a festival for the first time. Just as Cookham has taken Stanley Spencer to its heart, so too Launceston embraced Charles Causley and all he stood for with enthusiasm. My daughter Karen was involved in the artistic side of the festival: small pieces by different artists were placed around the town; lines of one of his famous poems were also spread out, flapping in the breeze among the leaves; chalked words picked up by the sun on rocks in the park with its ancient castle, and displayed by the church to delight and surprise.

As I was to attend, I thought I'd explore his poems a bit more. I was acquainted with his sad and amusing poems about his time at the the local school, and the poems that sprang from anything and everything. They are deceptively simple, and their accessibility masks hidden depths. I was not prepared for the wide range of his subjects, nor for the global reach they had. It was as if he was extending a hand to me and the 21st century. He



had joined the navy during WWII, travelling widely, which, no doubt, explains the scope and expanse of his ideas. Above all, it was his deep sense of humanity that shone through.

The poem I read next took my breath away. I did not expect such a superb coming together of words about one of my favourite paintings, and to feel moved by its empathy. As a Cornishman of the 1950s, how did he know, let alone understand the sufferings of the Armenians? It is only later that I learned that when he was about seven, he lost his father to lung disease as a direct consequence of the Great War. I copied the poem.

We were taken on a tour of the town by a knowledgeable lady, who had known him. She read poems connected to his various haunts. By what had been the small village primary school with its stark stone exterior, narrow windows and ancient bell, we listened to verses about his pupils. We paused by the ancient church and heard another



Charles Causley, the celebrated Cornish Poet was born in August 1917. A schoolmaster and a coder during WW2 - and close friend of Ted Hughes - Causley was renowned for his originality and his accessibility to adults and children alike. His writings covered themes of family, friendship, Cornwall and childhood, with his most noted works including *Eden Rock* and *Timothy Winters*. Causley was made a fellow of the Royal Literary Society in 1958 and awarded a CBE in 1986 amidst other prizes in his extensive career. He passed away in November 2003. The Charles Causley Trust was established to celebrate his work, including holding festivals in his hometown.

of his poems. The town and the people he had met came alive. He sketched in words. We looked down the steep, winding hill which led to his little cottage. At the end of the tour, I presented her with a copy of the poem, Arshile Gorky's the Artist and his Mother. It may have been a bit too much after a long tour.

Are you Armenian? The man standing next to me asked. (Who after all but an Armenian would pick out this particular poem?) He was Armenian too, from Paris, a big fan of Charles Causley. Like the lady, he had never set eyes on the poem.

Here it is. Not only is it full of resonances, which we can relate to, but it is also a profound description, almost tactile, of the painting itself. History is here, and in place; it is rooted in the Armenian experience:

*lives fragile
as the rose coloured light, as motes
Of winking Anatolian dust.*

Also palpable is Arshile Gorky's love for his mother. In his grief and anguish at her premature death from deprivation, he worked and re-worked the image obsessively. The colours in the poem paint the sadness of death, not only of the artist's mother, but of his people, and foreshadows his suicide:

*Locked in soft shapes of ochre, iron, peach,
Burnt gold of dandelion, their deep gaze
is unaccusing, yet accusatory.
It is as if the child already sees
His own death, self-invited, in the green
Of a new world,*

Every word causes ripples beyond itself – dandelion immediately makes me think of dead flowers, wispy seeds, dispersal, even breath....

Over the poem hover spiritual associations: *Annunciatory flowers, motes, hooded as a nun, his Miracle...*

People react to a poem according to their background and experience. They take from it what interests and concerns them. I have put the poem and the picture on Instagram. The poem has been admired mainly because it is by a Cornish poet.

I'd like it to be better known, to become familiar. Why not? In her recent wonderful exhibition at Tate, St Ives, the artist Anna Boghiguan (see page 11) has personally connected with the place, and brought to this corner of Cornwall her global vision,

ARCHILE GORKY'S The Artist and his Mother by Charles Causley

*They face us as if we were marksmen, eyes
Unblindfolded, quite without pathos, lives
Fragile as the rose-coloured light, as motes
Of winking Anatolian dust. But in the
Landscape of the mind they stand as strong
As rock or water.*

*The young boy with smudged
Annunciatory flowers tilts his head
A little sideways like a curious bird.
He wears against his history's coming cold,
A velvet coloured coat. Armenian pants,
A pair of snub-nosed slippers. He is eight
Years old. His mother, hooded as a nun.
Rests shapeless, painted hands; her pinafore
A blank white canvas falling to the floor.
Locked in soft shapes of ochre, iron, peach,
Burnt gold of dandelion, their deep gaze
is unaccusing, yet accusatory.
It is as if the child already sees
His own death, self-invited, in the green
Of a new world, the painted visions now
Irrelevant, and arguments of line
Stilled by the death of love.*

*Abandoning
His miracle, he makes the last, long choice
Of one who can no longer stay to hear
Promises of the eye, the colour's voice.*

one which embraces history, culture and society and more. She has brought a bit of Armenian presence and blended it into the local landscape.

To me, the poem represents something unique, an unexpected treasure glinting in the sand. Am I being fanciful? Maybe. As we look at poems and works of art, they become coloured by our own temperament, by our preoccupations and our personal histories. It is a two-way process, an engagement that can never be static, with each new consciousness breathing life into both poem and painting.

There may be other sightings of Arshile Gorky's The Artist and his Mother. I came across one on the cover of one edition of a book by Chaim Potok: *My Name is Asher Lev*. Are there any others, I wonder?

Sergei Parajanov - The Colour of Pomegranates

By Nouritza Matossian *Adapted from a presentation given at Close-Up on Sergei Parajanov November 2018*

"I owe Armenia a cinematographic confession. A sort of personal Bible." Sergei Parajanov

It is a delicious challenge to unravel one of the great masterpieces of our time *The Colour of Pomegranates*, equal to any epoch-defining work by Picasso, Stravinsky or Fellini. The film eulogises the life and poetry of a historic bard, Sayat Nova, enchanting and mystifying audiences in equal measure.

What do we know of the creator? An enigmatic, persecuted, quixotic genius, driven by his many talents and search for truth; impossible to pin down. Sarkis Hovsepi Parajanov was born 9 January 1924 in Tbilisi, Georgia in the Soviet Union to Armenian parents, Hovsep Parajanov and Siranush Bejanova or Bezhanian. Tbilisi in the 19th century was an Armenian cultural hub, with its commercial district of Havlabar home to many Armenians – three-quarters of its population - including composer Aram Khachaturian, playwright Gabriel Sundukian and Hollywood director Rouben Mamoulian. Here were Armenian printing presses, workshops, markets, 30-odd Armenian churches, an Armenian mayor, architects, writers and others.

Parajanov went to a Russian school and then the Tbilisi Conservatory Vocal Department and the School of Choreography. Following the end of WWI, he went to Moscow, with his name Russified to Sergei, to join the directing programme at the VGIK, State Institute of Cinematography, with Igor Savchenko. From 1946-1951 he worked on the standard themes of the Soviet state propaganda. The USSR State Committee for Cinematography dictated every aspect of film-making from scripts to final copy, censoring and categorizing and frequently banning the result. Only a handful of films were made each year.

Parajanov was openly critical and rebellious, protesting the straitjacket of formulaic requirements.

After making eight films, documentaries and features on his required subjects, he went to the Ukraine, married and had a son. He turned his back on Socialist Realism to make his outstanding film



Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors, a mythic love story of shepherds in the Carpathian Mountains. "I was attempting to build an expressive system originating directly from folk poetry and mythology," he said. Banned by the authorities, a smuggled copy would go on to win numerous prizes in film festivals abroad. But

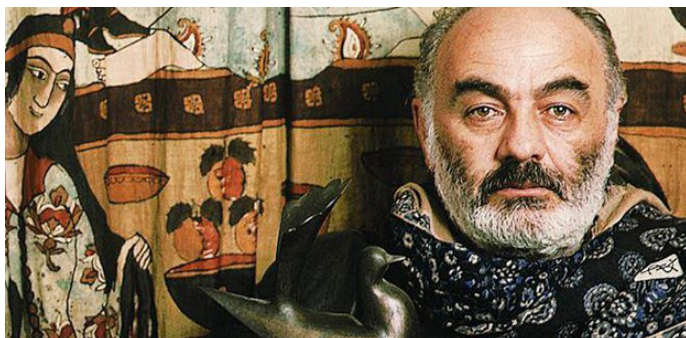
Parajanov was not permitted to travel. Ultimately it would be seen by 8.5 million viewers in the USSR and the Armenian had become a *persona non grata*, with his scripts summarily rejected.

Salvation came from Armenia in 1965. As a filmmaker of international renown, praised by Fellini, Truffaut, and others, Parajanov was invited to Armenia to make a film about the famous Ashugh Sayat Nova, revered in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Travelling through Armenia with filmmakers and artists to scout locations, Parajanov fell in love with the stark, rugged landscape and resilient dogged people. Having visited the Catholicos, Vazken I, head of the Armenian Church at Etchmiadzin who had succeeded in preserving the Church from Soviet prosecution, Parajanov was lent some of the most precious treasures, carpets, illuminated Bibles, embroideries, jewels, and even the arm encased in silver of St Gregory, founder of Christianity in Armenia in the early 4th century, for use in the film.

In *The Colour of Pomegranates*, Parajanov came up with the idea of making a film in the plan of a miniature and pantomime. Each frame is the line of a poem. Each frame is a work of art. The camera does not move. The miniatures do not speak. Eight dramatic episodes of Sayat Nova's life and poems unfold in pantomime within the frame. There is no dialogue. Instead the soundtrack is comprised of natural sounds, duduk, Georgian hymn and Armenian Church music, voiceovers, all brilliantly composed by Armenia's outstanding modern composer, Tigran Mansurian.

Parajanov drew each frame, as well as made most of the costumes and objects. He chose faces, characters, people from life, and avoided theatrical actors. The struggle between the spiritual and the worldly was Sayat Nova's theme and perhaps Parajanov's too. He wished to "show the world in which the ashugh lived, the sources that nourished his poetry . . . national architecture, folk art, nature, daily life, and music





will play a large role in the film's pictorial decisions."

A great deal of the film is shot in churches and with religious music, even the Lord's Prayer is intact.

Parajanov shows the doomed lovers twinning, mirroring one another in setting of the court. Both Sayat Nova and the Princess Anna are played by the same actress, Georgian Sofiko Chiaureli, who played an additional four roles in the film. The film authorities were scandalized. The central love affair is cast in gender-fluid imagery as the lovers reflect one another. In Persian miniatures, he noted the loving couple appear with identical features. This elegant depiction of androgyny reveals the elastic world view of Parajanov and his own bisexuality.

Not only was the film rejected, banned, abused and re-cut by another director, but the name chosen by Parajanov – Sayat Nova – was also rejected. For many years it was not seen abroad and only appeared in the early 70s in bootlegged version. When it was screened in international festivals it caused an immediate sensation in the film world.

In 1973, Parajanov was arrested on trumped-up charges and sentenced to eight years hard labour. While he continued to make art in prison, he was tormented, with the worst criminals and murderers for company, and on his release lived in Tbilisi where his scripts were again rejected. Incredibly in 1982, he was again imprisoned then released.

From 1983-88 he made the films *The Legend of Suram Fortress* and *Ashik Kerib*. Fearing for his safety he sought refuge in Yerevan. A house was built for him by the Armenian government which he filled with his art works, superb sculptures, collages, hats, costumes, designs. But his lungs had been destroyed in prison and he died on 20 July 1990 before spending even one night in his house. It is now a radiant, phenomenal, most exceptional museum of the region.

Made under the most repressive and financially straitened circumstances by a director hounded and imprisoned for his artistry *The Colour of Pomegranates* became a favourite of the greatest filmmakers of our time. A film so rich in concept and execution, in inverse proportion to the suffering and pain perpetrated on the director. And in parallel the film itself was abused, injured and imprisoned.

Who was Sayat Nova?

Sayat Nova was born Arutin Sayatyan probably around 1712. The name Sayat Nova means 'hunter of melody' in Persian, and this is brought out in Parajanov's film. The title *Ashugh* derives from the Arabic word *Ashik*, meaning lover, and as itinerant minstrels often sang about love, they were thus called. Sayat Nova was a poet and musician, who successfully combined mediaeval Armenian lyrical poetry with emerging oriental minstrelsy bringing poetry to new heights with metrical forms, language, imagery, metaphors and similes in the folk tradition. Parajanov adapted similar devices for filming.

Sayatyan's father, Karapet, was from Syria and came to Georgia by way of Jerusalem, and his mother Sara, was from Tiflis. He probably studied in the long-vaulted hall of Sanahin, the 10th century monastery famed as a centre of learning and for its school of illuminators and calligraphers. He learnt Armenian and Georgian letters and would later compose in Azeri and Persian, often mixing languages.

Apprenticed to a weaver, Sayat learned music in the guild, producing poetry, song and musical accompaniment. The boyhood scenes at the start of *The Colour of Pomegranates* evoke these surroundings.

Erekle II, Falcon King of Kakheti made Sayat a court musician, as well as taking him as a soldier and diplomat on campaign between 1751 and 59. During this time, Sayat Nova and the king's sister, Anna, fell in love. As their lives intertwined, his love poetry flowed, rich with sensual imagery. In one scene in the film, the poet, drunk with pleasure, invites his beloved to the vineyard where he sings her praises on the saz:

"You are mantled, slender cypress bough, in silks and satins." "Tun grag es, Hakazt grag." You are fire; your dress is afire."

Following his dismissal from Erekle's service, Sayat Nova joined the church as a priest, later a deacon in Haghpat Monastery. He inscribed his poetry and other copied religious texts in his energetic hand. When the Persians invaded in 1795, he fought in Tbilisi and was killed in battle at St George Church.



Three Armenian Painters

By Baykar Demir and Arda Eghiayan

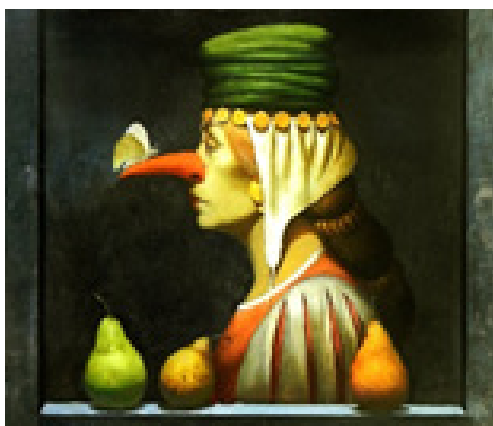


Berc Demir, Arda Eghiayan and Baykar Demir with Portrait of an Old Woman by Tigran Asatryan. Photo Jay Goldmark.

In early Autumn I was invited as a member of the Armenian Institute to visit the Goldmark Gallery in Uppingham for the opening of an exhibition of three contemporary Armenian artists: Tigran Asatryan, Artur Hovhannisyan and Ashot Yan. Established over 40 years ago, the Goldmark gallery is an art and ceramics gallery, film producer, book publisher and printmaker. They also put on a lovely spread for Saturday openings!

I had the opportunity to speak with Mike Goldmark, the founder of the gallery about putting on the exhibition and how it came about. One of his team - an Armenian from Istanbul, Berc Demir - has a brother, Baykar, who is an art curator and dealer, working with Armenian artists; through this connection was the seed of the show born.

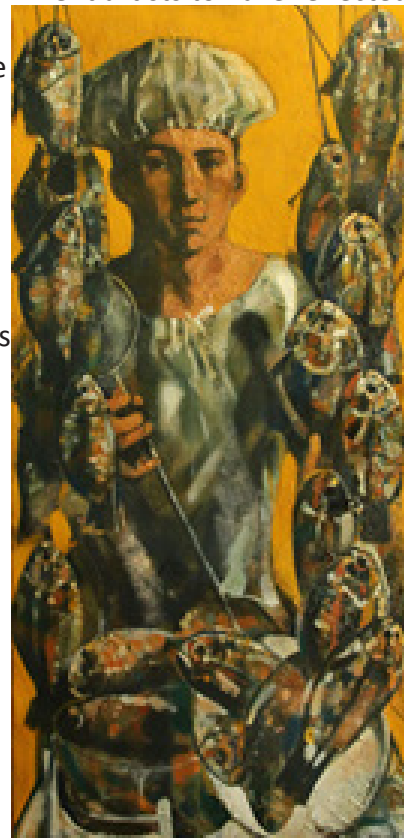
Baykar Demir has been showcasing the three artists for a number of years, including exhibitions in France, Turkey and Russia, and was excited to be bringing their work to the UK for the first time. Writing in the Goldmark magazine and catalogue, Baykar says that “dating back to the fourth century, Armenia has been productive in various artistic fields. While Armenian art has its unique cultural heritage, how it has combined with Western



tradition has brought contemporary Armenian artists to distinguished ground. This combination

can be most famously traced in the work pioneered by the most celebrated Armenian artist of the 20th century, Arshile Gorky. To Gorky – a leading name in the development of Abstract Expressionism – can be added Ivan Aivazovsky, the Russian artist of Armenian descent who reached world-wide fame for his seascapes; and two Armenian compatriots, Martiros Saryan and Minas Avetisyan, who were among the most prominent artists to have reflected

on their experience of the Soviet Regime and incorporated Western stylisation in their works. While their pictorial language was nourished by the innovative aesthetics of the West, at the core of their artistic expression lay traditional and Soviet Armenian influences. In other words, Armenian artists have been able to create links between past and present, between tradition and innovation, which have carried them



Fishmonger by Arthur Hovhannisyan

far beyond the labels of Modernism. Thanks to this enriched cultural vision, Armenian art has gained an important position in contemporary art as well. These three contemporary Armenian artists – Tigran Asatryan, Ashot Yan (left) and Arthur Hovhannisyan – present the inimitable style of Armenian art and its blend of histories ancient and current.”

I must also thank Steve Roberts for his hospitality and assistance with this piece.

Goldmark Gallery, 14 Orange Street, Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9SQ.

You can see a short film about the exhibition here https://www.goldmarkart.com/exhibitions-and-events/all/142-three-armenian-painters?utm_source=Goldmark+Newsletters&utm_campaign=9abf8d3db7-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_09_18_12_31_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1885a0962b-9abf8d3db7-94198295

Anna Boghiguan: The First UK Retrospective

By Dr. Vazken Khatchig Davidian

This was the first major UK exhibition devoted to Canadian Egyptian Armenian artist Anna Boghiguan's work. It was held at the Tate St. Ives from 8 February to 6 May 2019. Most of the works on display had travelled to St. Ives from another retrospective at the Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Turin.

The show brought together large-scale installations, including *A Tin Drum That Has Forgotten Its Own Rhythm* (2019), a major site-specific work engaging with the fishing industry in Cornwall made for Tate St. Ives, as well as notebooks, drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures. Born in 1946 in Cairo, the daughter of an Armenian clockmaker, Boghiguan studied political science and art in Cairo in the 1960s, and arts and music in Montreal, Canada, in the 1970s. Travel is an intrinsic part of her art-making and her direct experience of world cultures and history is evident in her work.

A prolific artist, Boghiguan has participated in several biennials, including in more recent years Thessaloniki (2007), Istanbul (2009), Sharjah and Sao Paulo (2014), and the group exhibition *Here and Elsewhere* at the New Museum, New York (2014). Her work however appears to have burst onto the art scene, and the notice of curators worldwide, especially since her participation at the Pavilion of the Republic of Armenia at the Biennale di Venezia in 2015. The large-scale multiple installation by eighteen Diasporan artists – *Armenity/Հայություն: Artisti Contemporanei Della Diaspora Armena*, curated by Adelina Cüberyan von Fürstenberg – won the prestigious Leone d'Oro for best National Participation. Boghiguan's installation, in which she took over a small room at the Monastery of San Lazzaro degli Armeni, dealt with her visit to the ruined medieval city of Ani on the modern Turkey/Armenia border. Engaging with the well-known *Mekhitarist* image of *Mother Armenia Upon the Ruins of her Ancient Glory* – created by the Italian artist Michele Fanoli in the 1840s – Boghiguan explained the concept behind her installation to the late art historian and curator Neery Melkonian via email with the following verse: "My Ani do not cry / Please do



not cry / But we can collect your ashes / Your past in a vase that is part of our history, there you can meet the eternal." An immersive and contemplative experience, the viewer was presented with a space covered with small-scale drawings in multiple media, installations of birds – Boghiguan is especially fond of crows – signifying the freedom of the bird's eye view over the sad, deserted city and the spectacular landscape it inhabits transcending the geopolitical lines

that are artificially carved upon it by man (above).

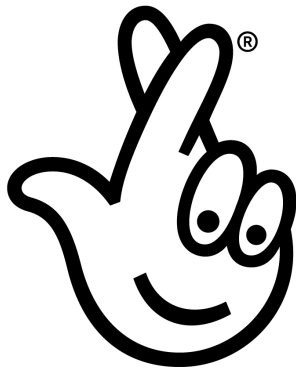
The St. Ives retrospective provided a rare opportunity to art lovers in the United Kingdom to survey this wonderful artist's work. Its remit was truly global: *The Salt Traders* (2015), made up of painted sails, collages, honeycombs, sections of a boat, red wool and salt, and inspired by the history and commerce of salt, links several world events – including the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and the recent economic crisis in Greece – across history; another, *A Play to Play* (2013), was inspired by Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore's play *The Post Office* (1912), and recreates the characters and settings from the work as performed in an orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Nazi occupation of Poland (below). One would have needed several visits to properly experience this truly awe-inspiring body of work, so well curated by the Tate St Ives. We are grateful we made the trip to Cornwall.

Dr Davidian is Calouste Gulbenkian Fellow in Armenian Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford.



Armenian Institute - National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant

By Dr. Rebecca Jinks



HERITAGE FUND

We were so pleased to get a call from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to say that the grant application we made over the summer had been successful! Our project will run for two and a half years, from 2020 to 2022. As we move into our new premises in Farringdon, the project will allow us to hire an expanded staff team, and will help fund two core elements of AI's work: the preservation and use of our valuable Library and Archives Collections, and our new Culture Hub, which will host workshops, lectures, panel discussions, film series, Open Mic nights, and more. Both projects will enable our visitors, Armenian and non-Armenian, to engage with Armenian heritage and its contemporary relevance.

Preserving and accessing AI's Library and Archives Collections

Our Library and Archives collections are at the heart of AI. The 8,000-volume Library collection includes works in English, Armenian, and other languages, with some rare items dating from the 17th and 19th centuries. The holdings include information about historical, modern and contemporary events and a wealth of literature and poetry, folklore and art-related works. They are a valuable resource for the community and for researchers, and give us a wonderfully rich understanding of Armenian heritage and shared histories. There are eight archival collections:

1. *Papers of Professor Charles Dowsett*: research notes, draft articles, newspaper cuttings, and correspondence. Particularly significant are his materials relating to Armenian folklore and poetry.
2. *Papers of George Kurkjian*: correspondence, papers, photographs dated c.1950-2000. Particularly significant are the photographs of cultural and ecclesiastic life in Soviet Armenia.
3. *Papers of David Miller, British Ambassador to Armenia (1995-1997)*: correspondence and research papers. Particularly significant are papers relating to the Armenian genocide, including correspondence with Jack Straw and Geoffrey Robinson QC.

4. *Papers of the British historian Christopher J. Walker*: correspondence, research notes, articles, newspaper cuttings and his own publications. Particularly significant was his work on the Minority Rights Group report on Armenia (1975).

5. *Papers of translator Mischa Kudian*: many works of Armenian poetry, correspondence, drafts, and proofs.

6. *Papers of British-Armenian historian Joan George*: newspaper cuttings, correspondence, drafts, and offprints of her research on the Armenian communities of London and Manchester.

7. *The London Armenian Community collection*: pamphlets, notes of cultural events, and other ephemera relating to the cultural activities of the London Armenian community (c.1970-present).

8. *Archives of the Armenian Institute itself*: organisational reports, records of meetings, correspondence, records of events, and copies of publications.

Together, these archives speak to Armenian history and experience in the UK and across the globe; the diversity of materials (photographs, cuttings, pamphlets, poetry) make them an exceptionally rich resource.

Our forthcoming move to Farringdon enables us to bring these precious collections out of storage, and to house them in our new space. A grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has enabled us to purchase rolling bookshelves, for efficient storage and access, and archive-quality preservation materials for our archive collections and rare books. Under the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, these collections will be opened up to the community and researchers, via a cataloguing project, a Community Archiving Project, and our new 'Highlights from the Collection' series aimed at sharing gems and stories from our collections, across podcasts, social media sites, and in the Library.

Community Archiving Project

A cornerstone of the NLHF grant will be our Community Archiving Project. In order to make our eight archive collections fully accessible to the community and

researchers, they all need to be sorted, preserved in special archive boxes and folders, and catalogued. We will be inviting volunteers to help with this project – anyone interested can come for as much or as little time as they can spare, to look through the fascinating collections, help re-order them and preserve them, and help develop finding aids (which list what materials are in which folders, and help researchers work out what is in a collection and what its significance might be). Training will be provided by an external archival consultant, and the project will be supervised by our Librarian, Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian. We are really excited to have volunteers at the heart of this Community Archiving Project – it means that the archives really are part of the community, and that people with their own knowledge and expertise about certain subjects can help the community and future researchers interpret these materials, by adding their own knowledge to the finding aids and catalogues.

As part of this project, two experts in Armenian library and archival collections will be brought over to AI, with funding generously provided by the Saint Sarkis Charity Trust and the Benlian Trust. Dr. Levon Avdoyan, newly retired librarian of the US Library of Congress, and Dr. Levon Abrahamian, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Matenadaran, Yerevan, will both advise us on shaping the focus of the collection to make it stand out amongst other important libraries, such as the Nubarian (Paris) or NAASR (Boston), to suggest needed acquisitions, and guide us in making the collection more accessible. Dr. Abrahamian and Dr. Avdoyan will attend a small workshop for other librarians from UK-based collections to come together, meet and discuss shared issues and ideas, and each give a public talk.

The Community Archiving Project will mean that more people can more easily access our valuable collections, and find out more about Armenian history and culture. As well as getting their hands dirty (or, rather, clean!), volunteers will have the chance to learn new skills and meet new people. Watch this space for more information!

Culture Hub

One of AI's other core activities are our regular events – lectures, workshops, book launches, and film showings. These will be taken under the umbrella of our Culture Hub in our new space. The National Lottery Heritage Fund will support a programme of Culture Hub events and activities over two and a half years which fall into four themes key to AI's work. The themes are reflected in our Library and Archives collections, and all are core to the lived experiences of Armenians and Armenian culture, and speak to contemporary social issues. They are:

Literary Heritage: Inspired by the richness of our Library and Archive collections, we want to explore how Armenian literature, language, and writing cultures continue to influence Armenian identity and heritage today. Activities such as Book Clubs, Open Mic Poetry Nights, podcasts, and workshops on Artists' Books and

Armenian puppet theatre, will help us record and share these experiences.

Migration, Displacement, and Refugees: Through activities such as panel discussions, film showings, and a Refugee Stories graphic nonfiction workshop, we want to explore Armenians' historic experiences of migration, displacement, and refugees. In particular we want to focus on the varying experiences of Armenians of different backgrounds (for example, those who arrived in the UK from Cyprus, Lebanon, Iran, Soviet Armenia, or Syria), and to connect these experiences with those of other groups.

Exploring Gender: Through panel discussions on Armenian feminism and LGBT+ identities, and film showings, we will explore the shifting gender histories, identities, and heritage in Armenian culture over time. In so doing we want to open a space for subjects that are often overlooked in Armenian and other minority heritages.

Neighbours, Historic and Present: One of our key goals is to explore the connections Armenians have had with their 'historic and present neighbours', whether Kurds, Turks, Jews, Greeks, Russians, and indeed British culture here in the UK. Thus, we want to build our Culture Hub as an inclusive space where we can explore shared histories, difference, diversity, and interconnections, through workshops, panel discussions, film showings, and our annual commemoration of Hrant Dink.

AI has a long history of organising events around each of these themes, as part of our commitment to exploring the diversity and richness of Armenian culture. Through discussion, exchange, and workshops in our Culture Hub, we seek to increase engagement with this heritage, especially of those groups who have been underrepresented in the past, including Armenians of all backgrounds and our neighbouring communities. In this way, our understanding of Armenian heritage will be broadened and deepened. We believe that discussion, debate, and engaging with the complexity of heritage – including subjects that are normally overlooked – are the best ways to share the cultural meanings and value of our heritage, include those who might normally feel excluded, and keep this rich cultural heritage and identity alive.

Transformations

This project will help us transform AI as we move into our new space. Our Library and Archives will be safeguarded for the future, and our Culture Hub programmes will allow us to showcase an exciting range of activities which we hope everyone will find interesting. We are exceptionally grateful to the National Lottery Heritage Fund – alongside the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Saint Sarkis Charity Trust, the Benlian Trust, and all of our many donors – for making this possible.

Poems of Armenian War and Peace by Liana Hayrapetyan and Peter Sutton. Interview by Arda Eghiayan

Last summer I was kindly invited to the launch of a new book of Armenian poetry by the poets Liana Hayrapetyan and Peter Sutton entitled, *Poems of Armenian War and Peace*. The poems are mostly in English, with a number written by Liana in Armenian. While the themes in the collection cover war and peace they also extend to food, culture and landscape. The book was the only poetry book selected by the Chipping Campden Literature Festival and has been showcased in Armenia and even New Zealand!

A few months later, I was able to catch up with Liana to discuss how the work came about and its reception so far...

Arda Eghiayan: So how did you and Peter meet and decide to work together?

Liana Harapetyan: As both of us were writing poetry, we were introduced by Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian from the Armenian Institute, who knew us well at the time. Peter and I started to meet more regularly, reading and enjoying each other's works. We quickly realised that our work would have more impact – and be more interesting - published together than if we published separately. Obviously, we also got on well as a team, which made the project much more enjoyable.

AE: How did you decide what poems to put in the collection?

LH: I hadn't intended my first published poems to be about Armenia, but it was a topic that interested both Peter and me - and seemed a natural collaboration. Peter already had many poems about Armenia and Armenian culture – unfortunately we weren't able to publish all of them – and with my pieces we were able to construct a narrative to the book. It can be read – as some have preferred to do – from the beginning straight to the end, or you can choose to dip in and out. During the time we were working, the Velvet Revolution was happening, so I had to write a piece about that. It took around a

Liana Hayrapetyan and Peter Sutton



poems of **Armenian** war and peace

year to complete the project.

AE: There are a number of beautiful illustrations in the published book, how did those come about?

LH: We hadn't originally planned to have any illustrations, but Peter thought it would add to the work. While my background is in art, I didn't have to time to work on the illustrations as well, so I connected with Martha Moderitz – who I had met at a poetry reading event at Jacobs restaurant in Kensington – to see if she could help; when I saw her work, I immediately knew that she would be the right person for the book.

Although, unfortunately – or

fortunately – Martha was unable to create more pieces within our deadline, so I took over and produced the remaining illustrations under my artistic name, Patricia Arbelina.

AE: What is your favourite poem in the collection? Which one speaks to you the most?

LH: It is difficult to single out one poem and it is equally difficult to speak about my work. I have my favourites among Peter's poems. I really love the food poems as they are not simply about food, but they tell the story of Armenian people. I also very much like his *Song for Komitas*. Peter uses writing techniques to make a song out of the words and then he silences the song when Komitas can no longer create new music due to tragic events that he witnessed, which I find very powerful.

From my own work, I find *Do they Remember* as an important, well-received, piece – discussing the current environmental destruction occurring in Armenia as a metaphor for the Genocide; a part of our history from over a century ago. And of course, *Make it Velvet*, about the recent Armenian revolution, is a favourite, which I wrote half-way through finalising the whole book.

AE: How has the collection been received by your differing audiences?

LH: The book has been really well-received across the board. At the Chipping Campden Festival and at

Հայրենիքից հեռու by Liana Hayrapetyan

Ասում ես՝ սիրո՞վ է հոգիդ լի...
 Իսկ ինչպիսի՞ն է քո սերը, գիտե՞ս:
 Արդյոք նվիրված է համայնքին այս փոքրիկ,
 Տանու մ է դեպի Եդեմական պարտեզ,
 Թե՞ ուղղված է մի գաղափարի կամ անձի:
 Ուզու՞մ ես ընկղմվել կյանքի խորության մեջ,
 Թափանցել հեռուներն անթափանցելի,
 Հաղորդել իմաստություն՞ն, արթնացնել եռա՞նդ:
 Երջանի կ ես մի բացառիկ ծայրահեղությամբ,
 Թե՞ պատկանում ես բոլորին ես ոչ մեկին:
 Արդյոք մենա՞կ ես քո այդ դերի մեջ,
 Ընտրություն՞ն է քո, թե՞ բաժին է ու վիճակ,
 Որ հասել է քեզ ի պահպանումս ավանդույթի:
 Արդյոք խա՞չ է, թե՞ պատիվ,
 Ցա՞վ է, թե՞ հոգնած հաճույք:
 Արդյոք հասնելով աշխարհիս ծայրը՝
 Հասն էլ ես վերջապես տուն
 Ու այունդ հիմնել օտար հողի մեջ՝
 Կերտելով այնտեղ տաճարը հոգուդ:
 Արդյոք խաղա՞ղ է քո կյանքը,
 Թե՞ պայքար է անանդորր, անվերջ...

Ինչպիսի՞ն է քո սերը, գիտե՞ս:

the University of West London – English audiences with limited or no knowledge about Armenia, Armenian language or culture - it was more about the discovery of a people with a unique language and tragic history. We also had the opportunity to speak about more recent history, including Soviet times and Armenian independence which I experienced first-hand. One of the students I met at the University of West London, said that the poem, *I am immortal* - which has no reference to the Armenian history or culture - resonated with her greatly. She was not an Armenian but came from a minority background.

In Armenia, the audience enjoyed the five poems written in Armenian more. Interestingly though, the reading of the English poems in Armenia was received very well as the audience could detect the musicality in the language. In academic circles, for example Yerevan State University, the work was analysed by linguists for its use of language and cultural references.

AE: What are your future plans?

LH: Possibly paintings or my collection of love poems. But I am not in any rush. I would really like to work on the topics that occupy me lately. I am worried about the environmental destruction. I am

Basturma by Peter Sutton

Basturma is made from salted beef that is washed and dried and squeezed so tight that no blood is left and the flesh is dry.

The fibrous grainy muscle of the meat is then spread with a spicy, stinging paste and put to mature in the open air.

It will keep till it needs to be sliced and shared on a journey, maybe, in the heat of the chase, when the riders are pressing and the danger is real that the quarry will be caught and hanged from a tree.

Illustration below by Liana. The image is symbolic of the Velvet revolution as women were at the forefront of the revolution, and everyone was dancing and waving the flag.



interested in the societal changes, failed politics and emerging new economic relationships. Also, I think about the future of the education. When I look at these issues I always do so through a global prism and then I check the image I capture in my mind from the point of view of a small nation that Armenians are. So, my Armenian roots help me understand how to be all-inclusive during a big wave of change that forth industrial revolution brings.

Poems of Armenian War and Peace is available to buy online at <https://armenianwarandpeace.com/shop/index.html>.

Armenians in Kenya, 1936-1980

By Donald Hindoyan

I grew up in Kenya, a former British Crown Colony, in the 60s and 70s. At a young age, I began enquiring about the origin of our language, customs and history and came to learn about our personal story that was one of survival and love.

My paternal grandparents, Yesayi Hindoian and Marie Sevadjian (aka Meroum), had met each other on their escape from Aintab, Turkey. They arrived in Ethiopia and in July 1915, were married at the Swedish Evangelical Mission. In 1928 my father was born; he was one of eight children.

In 1936, following the Italian Occupation of Ethiopia, my grand-parents along with their brood and two other Armenian families moved to Kenya. Together, they formed the nucleus of a new Armenian community.

The Hindoians were adaptable and hard-working; they had been involved with various businesses mostly in the restaurant, hotel and retail trade. After having completed his studies in South Africa, My father Moses joined forces with the firm established by my grand-parents, his older sister, Ovsana and her husband. He became Managing Director of The Nairobi Steam Laundry & Drycleaners Ltd., which comprised two plants consisting of 150 employees, catering not only to top households but also to industrial clients such as major hotels and hospitals in Kenya.

My mother, Madeleine Tekerian, had been an accomplished teacher and was Personnel Officer



at Shell in Khartoum. Both she and her parents had got to know the Hindoian family by the early 50s, as her brother, Dertad had already met and married my paternal aunt Virginia. My maternal grand-father, Hovsep Tekerian and his wife, Vartouhi Yaghjian (aka Gulla), also had escaped from Smyrna, Turkey in 1921. Their origins were Western Anatolian; Hovsep was from Constantinople and Gulla from Smyrna. They got to Egypt and Sudan via Greece where Madeleine was born in 1928.

Hovsep had taught at various schools and notably the Kalousdian Armenian School in Cairo; he was a consummate journalist and linguist. He had been correspondent with the *Arève*, *Nor Or*, *Soorp Pergich* and *Armenian Mirror Spectator*. Gifted in speaking and writing many languages, his vocation in both world wars was one of linguist and interpreter in the British Army. He continued his journalistic correspondence from Nairobi and tutored in French and Arabic too. He taught and told anecdotes on our national history to me, my siblings and cousins. Our grandmothers narrated stories and kept us happy at events in providing wonderful fares of Armenian delicacies too.

My parents, Madeleine and Moses (*above, at the Mt. Kenya Safari Club in 1975*), came to be known as the unofficial Armenian ambassadors in Nairobi. Whoever travelled to Kenya, he or she enjoyed their charming hospitality and were made to feel welcome at their home. In 1975, when the World Council of Churches Fifth Assembly met in Nairobi, my parents memorably hosted archbishops, bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries from both the *Etchmiadzin* and *Antilias* factions. We were a small and happy Armenian community who held onto its cultural identity and heritage with pride.

Left, Donald Hindoyan, Tsavo National Park in 1976



Armenians in Uzbekistan

By L. P.

I usually introduce myself as Armenian from Uzbekistan and most of the time receive a surprised response “You are the



first one I meet. Are there many?” It sounds amusing to me, as normally in Uzbekistan – a country in Central Asia with the population of +30m – most of the people know who Armenians are and what their cultural background is, even though community of ethnic Armenians is relatively small, around 50,000.



Early Armenian settlements in Uzbekistan go back to the 14th century, when the powerful Uzbek ruler Tamerlane conquered parts of the Caucasus and brought back

seized Armenians to build his new capital Samarkand. Armenians are also mentioned in different sources as active traders along the major Silk Road routes going through Central Asia. However, the largest migration of Armenians to the region and Uzbekistan specifically, started in the middle of 19th century when Central Asian regions became part of the Russian Empire. These vast new territories were united under the administration of Russian general-governors and received a new name – Turkestan.

Labour migration at that period was mainly focused on manufacturing, trade and construction. The family of my maternal grandmother, including her six uncles and their households, moved to Uzbekistan (Andijan) from Armenia (Goris) with a plan to start small manufacturing business. However, bigger changes were coming with the rise of the new Soviet rule, as their properties and assets were confiscated, making them equal with other newly born Soviet citizens.

Nevertheless, despite all the turbulence and changes, Uzbekistan was still an attractive region to migrate to, and more Armenians moved in the early 1930s. This was the case for the family of my maternal grandfather, as his mother, escaping pogroms in Shamakhi and Baku, moved first to Russia (Pyatigorsk) and then to Uzbekistan (Kattakurgan) after marriage. Her future

husband was a shoe maker from Armenia (Yerevan), who moved to Russia (Pyatigorsk) with a hope to settle. But then, unfortunately, things did not go so well, and stories about a prosperous land called Uzbekistan were easily bought into.

Soviet Uzbekistan was a rather welcoming place for Armenians, as many of them had access to higher education, careers and an overall successful position in the society. My paternal grandparents moved in the early 1960s from Armenia (Goris/Stepanakert) to Uzbekistan (Samarkand) and easily found themselves surrounded by fellow Armenians. Armenians were recognised as one of many ethnic minorities and had their communities in major cities of Uzbekistan (Tashkent, Samarkand, Andijan, Bukhara, etc). However, as the Soviet set-up assumed co-existence of all nationalities without strong emphasis on identity, language, and culture - everyone was united under the Soviet citizen umbrella - this led to an absence of Armenian schools and cultural centres, not to mention churches, as religion was not openly practised across all of the Soviet Union. (Although now there is an Armenian Apostolic Church in Samarkand - left, above).

Family was the main reference point, as language, culture, and religion were passed from generation to generation, developing another unique Armenian identity, where you normally spoke Russian, but considered yourself Armenian, danced Armenian dances, but had Uzbek, Tajik, Tatar, Korean friends. My childhood was in independent Uzbekistan, multicultural and diverse, but still I learned what it was to be Armenian through stories of my grandparents, occasional Armenian lessons, and inspirational Sunday services and chants. Today, for many young Armenians in Uzbekistan this is still relevant, as ties with Armenia and larger diaspora are not very strong, even disconnected. However, communities become more focused in their activities and put more efforts to help Armenians to keep their identity.

Today, as always, I not only present myself as Armenian from Uzbekistan, but I do identify myself as such.



***I Ask You, Ladies and Gentlemen* by Leon Z. Surmelian**

By Richard Mourad Anooshian

The handwritten note "A most interesting & almost certainly true story of an Armenian boy from Trebizond who, after losing both his parents in the 1915 deportations/massacres, eventually ended up in the U.S.A." was what initially drew my attention when handed a first UK edition of Leon Surmelian's classic *I Ask You, Ladies and Gentlemen*. These words were inscribed on the flyleaf of the book by its previous owner, Sir Denis Arthur Wright, the former British Ambassador to Iran, who happened to have served as vice-consul in Trebizond in the 1940s. The second thing that crossed my mind was the question: why had I never heard of it?

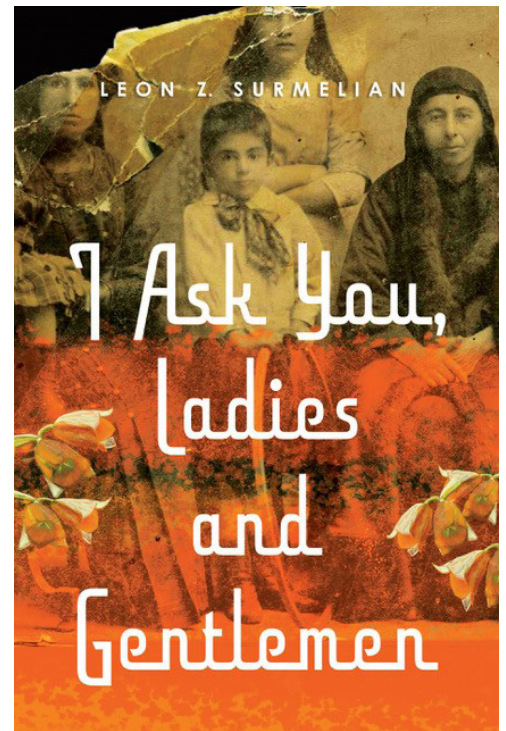
I was soon drawn into the personal journey of a nine-year-old boy; a heart-warming autobiographical account presented in a novelistic manner. I learned that the out-of-print book, first published in 1945, and a bestseller in its time, was internationally acclaimed and translated into many languages.

In working with the Armenian Institute, we decided to bring back into publication this long forgotten masterpiece for the benefit of new generations. A small team was assembled and the strategy was twofold: to remain utterly faithful to the author's original text while at the same time to provide the all-important historical context including relevant images, maps and a glossary of terms. We also periodically engaged with senior members of the family who graciously provided their support and additional information.

What strikes the reader is the eloquent and profoundly sincere account of tragic and transformational events from the vantage point of a young boy. This is a beautiful book written with a great sense of humour and humanity. Furthermore, the dozen or so photographs reproduced at the end of this edition provide a visual record of the characters and places that populate its pages.

One hundred years after the events it recounts so vividly, this timeless book continues to be extremely relevant today. It delves into the themes of forcible displacement, loss, trauma, memory, survival and ultimately, rebuilding. *I Ask You, Ladies and Gentlemen* is a gem in modern Armenian and American literatures. A must-read for everyone, it awaits re-discovery among new generations of readers.

I Ask You, Ladies and Gentleman is available from the Armenian Institute for £12.99.



Putting Women into the Picture by Belinda Keheyian and Susan Pattie

Women are underrepresented in all walks of public life the world over. This is particularly true of women and young girls growing up in Armenia and its diaspora who have few role models beyond Kim Kardashian to look to – a rather sad state of affairs if you aspire to being something more than a social media celebrity. So, a project called *Daring Armenian Women* is particularly timely. It is the desire to put women (back) into our story/history that propelled a group of international academics to present a tightly curated collection of profiles that focus on Armenian women who lived and shone but were not widely known nor celebrated. One of the project curators, Susan Pattie, elaborates:

"The *Daring Armenian Women Project* was launched in London by AI in November 2019 following its premiere in Yerevan. Produced in cooperation with the Yerevan-based Bars Media Studio, the video collage *Do You Know My Name? Daring Armenian Women* is a tribute to Armenian women in recent history. Portraits and short bios of 27 women follow an image of Mayr Hayastan, herself an example of the symbolic importance of women but also their continuing anonymity and the absence of specific women in our national narrative."

The women featured in this first collage have made an impact in societies around the world. Their contributions are in fields as diverse as sacred music and astronomy, boxing and poetry, medicine and political activism. The choices were based on months of research and discussion, curated by the project



Rita Ovanessoff Ceramics Exhibition

By Hasmig Topalian

Rita Ovanessoff, a patron of the Armenian Institute, was one of two hundred artists participating in the Borough of Ealing Art Trail (BEAT) in September 2019. The artists displayed their works in over 80 venues across the borough, and welcomed visitors to their studios, homes, local cafes and community centres.

Rita has been creating work for many years, working in both stoneware and earthenware clays. Her work is mainly hand-built by slabbing or coiling the clay and using slips, oxides and coloured glazes. She uses the versatility of clay in the expression of her work which is mainly inspired by metal, wood and organic shapes. In addition to the BEAT exhibition, Ovanessoff kindly hosted a viewing of her exquisite and inspiring work in the gallery-like surroundings of her home and garden for the AI and its guests, with pieces also available for sale.



team Melissa Bilal, Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, Audrey Kalajian (creator/initiator), Susan Pattie and Judith Saryan.

The London launch, moderated by Dr. Becky Jinks, began with an introduction by team member Susan Pattie and a showing of the collage. Three short presentations followed, beginning with Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian who added more details about his mother, Heros Marie Tchilingirian (right), included in this first collage. Nairi Stepan-Sarkissian then spoke about her great-grandmother, Nazloo Ohanjanian, a political activist who led revolutionary marches on behalf of the communist party in Tabriz, Iran. Tatevik Ayvazyan, who is coordinating the London-based human rights project *Arousyag*, talked about how they are supporting women's rights in Armenia, especially the organisations focusing on domestic abuse and sexual violence. A lively discussion followed.



The *Daring Armenian Women* project continues and welcomes ideas and input from everyone. Please see the links below to learn more about the project and the individual women, view the collage, or contact the team.

To watch the film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdhZpg7irll&feature=youtu.be>. And for additional information about the women featured in the montage, visit or follow Daring Armenian Women on Facebook, Instagram @DaringArmenianWomen and Twitter @DaringArmWomen. For further information, please contact, Audrey Kalajian at daringarmwomen@gmail.com

Armenian Institute Events 2019

SINGING IN EXILE a film by Nathalie Rossetti and Turi Finocchiaro

9 January 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Aram and Virginia, an Armenian couple from the diaspora, transmit an ancestral tradition of chant, which is in danger of disappearing, to a troupe of European actors. During the process of creating a new play, the couple takes the company on a trip to Anatolia where the Armenian civilisation has been destroyed. Along the way, the questioning of the actors brings to the forefront the wealth of this culture: the chant becomes a language of creation and sharing, the breath of life. An initiatory journey where the sounds, the music, the words, the bodies and the cries impart a memory and a future.



Film screening: **AN EVENING WITH HRANT DINK** - Hrant Dink 2005

19 January 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Nouritza Matossian presented the first screening of the filmed chronicle of Hrant Dink's only public appearance in London. At the invitation of the Armenian Institute, Dink spoke to a packed house at the Kensington Central Library on April 5, 2005, on the 10th anniversary of the founding of his bilingual weekly *Agos* and the day after he had addressed the Turkish Parliament in Ankara. In upbeat tones, Dink gave his views on Armenians in Turkey and the Diaspora, his account of the Parliament meeting, his analysis of the politics of the day, his work for reconciliation based on an understanding of genocide history, his hopes for a peaceful resolution and the future of Armenia. The film enabled a rare encounter with this extraordinary person. After the screening, Dr Hratch Tchilingirian, Associate Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, commented on *Context and Challenges in Turkey Today*.

AFTER CHRISTOPHER WALKER: NEW APPROACHES TO MODERN ARMENIAN HISTORY AND THE GENOCIDE by Dr Rebecca Jinks

23 January 2019, King's College London, in association with King's College London Armenian Society

This lecture discussed the work of the late historian of Armenia, Christopher J. Walker, before offering an overview of how the field of Armenian history has changed since Walker's landmark works. In particular, the lecture focused on the different approaches that historians have more recently been applying to the study of the Armenian Genocide (and other genocides), and the different types of sources used in this work. These range from privileging survivor testimonies (both written and oral) as never before, using photography and other visual sources, to studying gender and childhood during the genocide. Together, these new approaches are contributing to a more comprehensive and multi-layered understanding of the Armenian Genocide.



BEAST ON THE MOON by Richard Kalinoski

31 January 2019, Armenian Institute Library

Playwright Richard Kalinoski visited the Armenian Institute to talk with those interested in hearing about the creation of his play *Beast on the Moon*, showing at the Finborough Theatre. *Beast on the Moon*, is the story of a young Armenian couple starting a new life in the US after the genocide. Kalinoski has captured the stories of many and distilled them in this dramatic tale. *Beast on the Moon* won the 2001 Best Play for the Repertory prize as well as four other categories at the *Molière Awards*.

The play has been translated into 20 languages and produced all over the world including Athens, Brussels, London, Moscow, New York, Prague, and others. A native of Wisconsin, USA, Mr Kalinoski has written other plays, including *Men and Cattle*, *My Soldiers*, and more recently, *The Boy Inside* which earned Second Place in the Kennedy Center's Mark David Cohen National Playwriting Contest (2016).

Armenian Institute Events 2019

WRITING WORKSHOP WITH JELENA BUDIMIR (Director of *Beast on the Moon*)

2 February 2019, Armenian Institute Library

Jelena Budimir is Director at *All Ignite Theatre* and of *Beast on the Moon*. She runs writing workshops for Arts Depot's *Creative Circle* and ran the writing programme at Chickenshed Theatre including an annual week of new writing *Write Here, Write Now*. Jelena led a writing workshop to explore, in a fun way, a range of memories and stories through exercises, with the participants. Memories and stories are the root of so many plays and everybody has stories.



HISTORY OF *BEAST ON THE MOON*

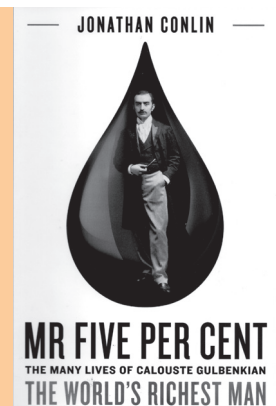
8 February 2019, Finborough Theatre

Hosted by Nouritza Matossian in association with the Armenian Institute. Matossian was in conversation with the cast and director for a post-show discussion and Q&A. The discussion touched on the history of the play from its very beginnings in London and explored the cultural and emotional phantoms which threaten to break apart the immigrant couple.

Book launch: **MR FIVE PER CENT: THE MANY LIVES OF CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN, THE WORLD'S RICHEST MAN** By Jonathan Conlin

21 February 2019, Armenian Church of St Sarkis

When Calouste Gulbenkian died in 1955 at the age of 86, he was the richest man in the world and known as 'Mr Five Per Cent' for his share of Middle East oil production. For half a century and through two world wars he brokered top-level oil deals, convincing governments and oil barons alike of his impartiality as an 'honest broker', and his advice was sought by Ottoman Sultans and Joseph Stalin alike. Today the companies Gulbenkian created, including Royal Dutch Shell and Total, are household names. Less well known is the lasting impact the international accords he negotiated had on the subsequent fortunes of Iraq, Venezuela, and many other oil-producing countries. Gulbenkian's secrecy has meant that this remarkable legacy has remained hidden - until now. The son of a wealthy Armenian merchant in Istanbul, he was an investor, a deal-maker and a buccaneering entrepreneur. He thrived in the west, prospering in spite of popular anti-immigrant prejudice. He never forgot his Armenian roots and endowed St Sarkis Church in London and the Gulbenkian Library in Jerusalem as well as donating to many other Armenian institutions and causes. He became a British citizen and lived most of his life in England and France. He went to Portugal during the Second World War, remaining there for most of his last 13 years. A Foundation named after him was created in Lisbon, and his art collection is currently displayed magnificently there, a lasting monument to his taste and determination.



In Conversation: **AN EVENING WITH DR RAZMIK PANOSSIAN & DR ARMINE ISHKANIAN**

23 February 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Dr Razmik Panossian was in conversation with Dr Armine Ishkanian (London School of Economics) talking about the first five years of Dr Panossian's work directing the Armenian Communities Department (ACD) at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Panossian initiated a number of projects himself and has supported many more in response to what he learned. These are spread around the world and include a focus on Western Armenian teaching but also on music and the arts, research by students and academics, scholarships, collaborations and other projects. The conversation explored these, their impacts, and future direction of the ACD.

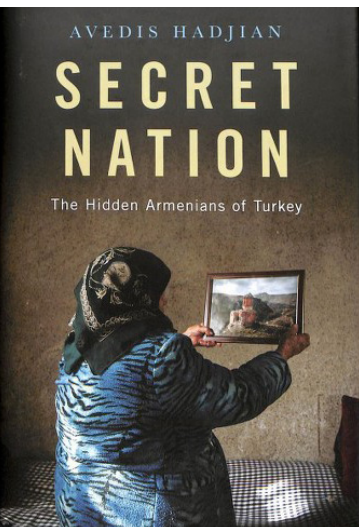


Armenian Institute Events 2019

Film screening: **WE ARE EGYPTIAN ARMENIANS**

16 March 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

We Are Egyptian Armenians is a message of tolerance and acceptance of others. It outlines Egypt during the time when it opened its doors to people from all over the world to live, work and share their culture with the society they live in. Through the Armenians who came to Egypt after the Massacres of 1915 we followed the stories that were shared and transmitted from generation to generation. This documentary shows how Egypt gave the Armenians equal rights as citizens and allowed them to preserve their language, culture and heritage by building their own schools, sporting clubs and churches. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the Armenians contributed to the Egyptian social and economic life by giving their best to their new homeland. Production: Waheed Sobhi. Director: Waheed Sobhi, Hanan Ezzat. Script: Eva Dadrian.



Book launch: **SECRET NATION: THE HIDDEN ARMENIANS OF TURKEY** by Avedis Hadjian

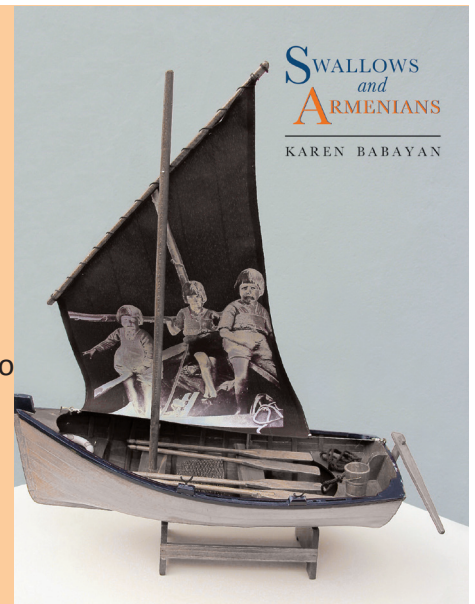
23 March 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

It has long been assumed that no Armenian presence remained in eastern Turkey after the 1915 massacres. As a result of the Armenian Genocide, those who survived in Anatolia were assimilated as Muslims, with most losing all traces of their Christian identity. In fact, some did survive and together with their children managed during the last century to conceal their origins. Many of these survivors were orphans, adopted by Turks, only discovering their true identity late into their adult lives. Outwardly, they are Turks or Kurds and while some are practising Muslims, others continue to uphold Christian and Armenian traditions behind closed doors. In recent years, a growing number of secret Armenians have begun to emerge from the shadows. Avedis Hadjian has travelled to the towns and villages once densely populated by Armenians, recording stories of survival and discovery from those who remain in a region that is deemed unsafe for the people who once lived there. This book takes the reader to the heart of these hidden communities for the first time, unearthing their unique heritage and identity. Revealing the lives of a peoples that have been trapped in a history of denial for more than a century, *Secret Nation* is essential reading for anyone with an interest in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide in the very places where the events occurred.

SWALLOWS AND ARMENIANS by Karen Babayan

30 March 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

The fictional Walker children are much-loved characters in Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*, a quintessentially English family in an archetypal English children's classic. But it was an Anglo-Armenian family that provided the inspiration for the Walkers, and now with a new book of short stories, fellow Anglo-Armenian artist Karen Babayan has embarked on a mission to firmly re-establish the connection using newly-appraised correspondence and diaries. Taqui, Susan, Mavis (known to her family as Titty), Roger and Brigit Altounyan lived in Aleppo in Syria. They met Ransome during a summer holiday of sailing, fishing and camping in the Lake District in 1928. Their experiences of learning to sail on Coniston Water inspired the author and journalist to write his first book of fiction for children. See pages 4-5 for more.



Armenian Institute Events 2019



ANJAR 1939-2019: A FILM, A BOOK by Hossep Baboyan and Vartivar Jaklian

7 April 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Anjar, a town of several thousand inhabitants, is located in Lebanon's Bekaa valley. It was conceived, designed and its initial construction begun between the end of the 1930s and the early 1940s. Anjar was built from scratch by its majority Armenian population, survivors of the Armenian Genocide, originally from Musa Dagh in present-day Turkey. In collaboration with Anjar City Municipality,

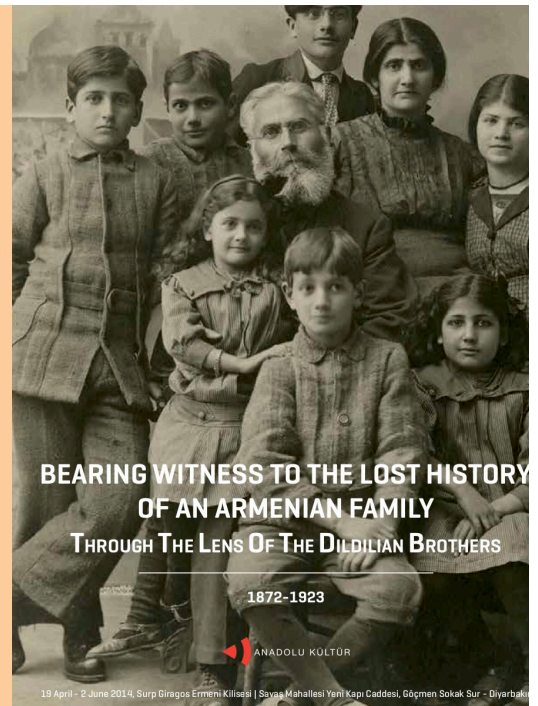
Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society, the Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena, Hossep Baboyan and Vartivar Jaklian are developing a documentary film and book on Anjar about its urban planning and architectural heritage. The film includes footage of interviews with Anjar residents as well as the cityscape taken over the past few years. One hundred photographs, documenting the architecture of Anjar along with essays and drawings will make up the book. This ambitious and unique project represents groundbreaking multidisciplinary work. The presentation included a preview of the photographs to be exhibited in Anjar in September 2019 as well as an excerpt from the film.

PRESENCING AN ABSENCE: ACCOUNTABILITY AND MEMORY IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE By Dr Armen Marsoobian

Marsoobian

6 June 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

The erasure of most signs of the Armenian presence in its historic homeland was particularly pronounced during and after the genocide. Tentative steps of redress have taken place in the last decade, both within and outside of Turkey. A number of memory projects employing a variety of media to repair this cultural loss have taken place. These along with Marsoobian's own decade-long memory project employing family memoir and photography were described during the talk. These projects both personalise the trauma and highlight the resilience of Armenians. This project is based upon an historic archive of Ottoman-era photographs, glass negatives, drawings and original documents preserved by the Dildilian family, many of whose members were professional photographers. Based upon extensive memoirs, a richly illustrated narrative of this extended family was recreated.



THE CANTORELLI CHOIR: SACRED MUSIC, FOLK-SONGS, MOTETS AND MADRIGALS

15 June 2019, Armenian Church of St Sarkis, in association with the Armenian Institute and St Sarkis Parish Council.

The Cantorelli, a vocal octet based in West Yorkshire, have an extensive repertoire of European choral music. In this 150th anniversary year of the birth of Komitas, this concert featured his arrangements of traditional

songs. Members of Cantorelli fell in love with Armenian singing during their visit to Yerevan, Tatev and Dilijan. They undertook the challenge of sourcing the sheet music and learning the religious and secular songs in a new language, determined to add Armenian pieces to their repertoire.

Armenian Institute Events 2019

ARMENIAN TOWN HALL MEETING

20 June 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Photo courtesy of Raffi Youredjian

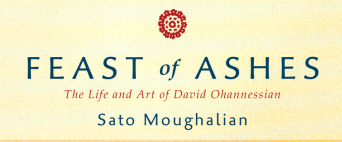
A discussion on the Velvet Revolution assessed the impact the new Armenian government has had since it came to power in 2018, exploring its economic, foreign and social policies; where has it been making great strides, what areas need more attention, what does the future of Armenia look like, and has the momentum of the revolution lost its steam? Featuring panellists from across different sectors, the meeting explored these topics and more. Featured speakers were Lilit Gevorgyan - Russia and CIS principal economist at IHS Markit; Andre Simonian - singer/songwriter/producer; Arthur Poghosyan - Associate Director, Financial Institutions at EBRD; Tatevik Muradyan - Broker at Lockton Companies.



Book launch: **FEAST OF ASHES: THE LIFE AND ART OF DAVID OHANNESSIAN** By Sato Moughalian

22 June 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Feast of Ashes is the life story of Armenian ceramicist David Ohannessian, whose work changed the face of Jerusalem—and a granddaughter's search for his legacy. Along the cobbled streets and golden walls of Jerusalem, brilliantly glazed tiles catch the eye. These colourful wares—known as Armenian ceramics—are iconic features of the Holy City. Silently, these works of ceramic art—art that graces homes and museums around the world—also represent a riveting story of resilience and survival. In the final years of the Ottoman Empire, as hundreds of thousands of Armenians were forcibly marched to their deaths, one man carried the secrets of this age-old art with him into exile toward Syria. In 1919 David Ohannessian founded the art of Armenian pottery in Jerusalem, where his work and that of his followers is now celebrated as a local treasure.



Born in an isolated Anatolian mountain village, Ohannessian mastered a centuries-old art form in Kütahya, witnessed the rise of violent nationalism in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire, endured arrest and deportation in the Armenian Genocide, founded a new ceramics tradition in Jerusalem under the British Mandate, and spent his final years, uprooted, in Cairo and Beirut. *Feast of Ashes* weaves together family narratives with newly unearthed archival findings into a detailed account of the transfer of an Anatolian art to Jerusalem and the survival of one family.

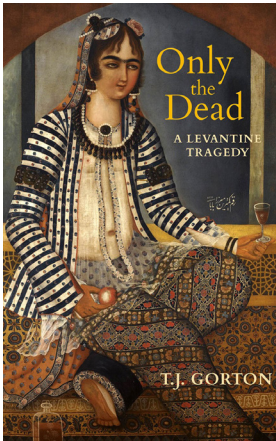
SUBLIME AND CELESTIAL: PIETRO BIANCHINI AND A VENETIAN ODE FOR THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCH By Deacon Haig Utidjian

7 July 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

This lecture presented a transcription and arrangement of the ode Հնարեալը յԱստուծոյ (*Elect of God*) by the greatest unsung hero in Armenian sacred music – the Venetian composer, violinist and conductor Pietro Bianchini (1828-1905), as performed in the 19th in San Lazzaro in Venice. It serves as a wonderful witness from an age and milieu enriched by enormously fruitful interactions between Armenian and European music, literature and theology, and involving such extraordinary personages as Yeghia Tntesian, Fr. Ghewond Alishan and Abp. Ignatios Kiwreghian. The presentation was a culmination of research carried out at the archives of St. Mark's in Venice, the Armenian island of San Lazzaro and at the Library of Congress, and included live and recorded musical illustrations.



Armenian Institute Events 2019

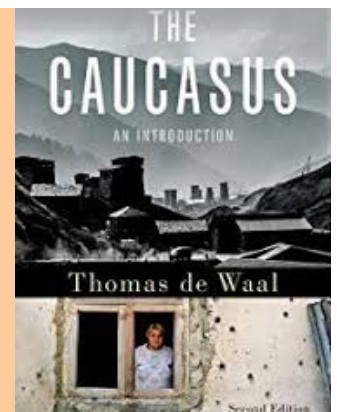


Book launch: **ONLY THE DEAD: A LEVANTINE TRAGEDY** By T. J. Gorton
 12 September 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall, organised in association with AGBU Young Professionals of London.

As old Vartan sits reading mystical Persian poetry amongst the dust and disintegration of war-torn Beirut, the fluted pillars of his decaying house wreathed in shadows, his thoughts wander back, inevitably, to another conflict, many years before. *Only the Dead* is the story of Vartan Nakashian, a young Armenian from Aleppo caught in the midst of a world war that is proving catastrophic for his people. We follow his journey of love, espionage, tragedy, betrayal and revenge across the tumultuous Levant of 1915–18, as the crucible of war and genocide makes a man of the boy we first encountered. Now advanced in years, Vartan ruminates on life, loss, guilt and the many adventures and horrors of his youth, seeing them mirrored in the fresh catastrophe of the Lebanese Civil War. This book – based in part on a true story – is about the struggle to reconcile conflicting loyalties and affections, the desire for revenge, the search for atonement and poetry’s power to make sense of the human condition.

Book launch: **CAUCASUS: AN INTRODUCTION** By Thomas de Waal
 19 September 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Thomas de Waal’s book on the South Caucasus, *The Caucasus: An Introduction* gives the general reader a fascinating tour of the history and contemporary politics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Its second edition brings the story up to date with a new chapter which takes in Armenia’s Velvet Revolution. As well as giving us an authoritative guide to the politics and conflicts of the region, de Waal finds time to tell us about Georgian wine, Baku Jazz and how the coast of Abkhazia was known as “Soviet Florida.” Stimulating and rich in detail, *The Caucasus* is the perfect guide to this incredible region.



Film screening: **TANIEL** By Garo Berberian
 5 October 2019, Armenian Church of St Sarkis

Taniel is a multi-award-winning short arthouse film about the last days of Taniel Varoujan. Film Noir in style, *Taniel* pays homage to the era of dramatic filmmaking with extreme lighting and camera angles. The narrative is mostly heard through poetry, with Varoujan poems in Armenian expressing the emotions in each of the scenes; and narrative poetry in English delivered with an emotive depth of feeling by Sean Bean. *Taniel* is currently taking part in the film festival circuit and has been recognised with two awards at the Bermuda International Film Festival, Best Short Film awards at ARPA and L’age D’Or International Film Festivals and Don Quixote special mention award at Avanca Festival, amongst others. The film was also selected by a number of festivals all over the world, including Sydney, Toronto, the Golden Apricot International Film Festival, and Shetland’s Screenplay Festival, curated by Mark Kermode.

DO YOU KNOW MY NAME? DARING ARMENIAN WOMEN PROJECT London launch: Video screening and discussion

7 November 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Do You Know My Name is the first of a series of video collages produced by the *Daring Armenian Women Project* (DAW). This London launch of the collage followed its October 25 premiere in Yerevan. The montage showcases Armenian women from all over the world who are often overlooked, honouring their courage, intelligence, talent, and resilience. The DAW curation team, Melissa Bilal, Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, Audrey Kalajian (creator), Susan Pattie, and Judith Saryan, have researched and identified women’s contributions in fields as diverse as sacred music, boxing, and medicine. See pages 18-19 for more.

Armenian Institute Events 2019

Rita Ovanessoff Art Exhibition (see page 18 for more)

30 November and 1 December 2019, Ovanessoff Residence London

AI Language Students Presentations

4 December 2019, Armenian Institute Library

This year we began a new series of short public talks by our students on subjects of their choice and interest. These are in West or East Armenian and range from 8 to 20 minutes. Members of the public were encouraged to join us to learn about the varied subjects they will cover and to practise their own Armenian. **Donald Hindoyan** (West Armenian) gave a talk in West Armenian devoted to the French-Armenian painter Carzou (1907 -- 2000). **Andre Martirosyan** (East Armenian) talked about Franz Kafka's popular novel *The Metamorphosis* and its various interpretations by literary critics. **Stephen Masters'** (East Armenian) talk was entitled *Giving New Life to a Neglected Novel*, and was about the digitising of a 1946 copy of *I Ask You, Ladies and Gentlemen*, by Leon Z. Surmelian, paving the way for AI's republication.

Book Launch: **I Ask You, Ladies and Gentlemen** by Leon Surmelian; with Dr Becky Jinks, Richard Anooshian & Dr Susan Pattie

12 December 2019, The Wiener Holocaust Library; 15 December 2019, Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Leon Surmelian's memoir recounts his experiences of the forced deportations and genocide of Armenians in 1915, but also describes in detail and humour the very human interactions between family members, multi-ethnic neighbours, strangers along his route, as he searches for safety. His string of places of fragile security includes a longer stay in Armenia where he finds work trying to help as the country undergoes great changes. A new edition was published by AI. Please see page 17 for more.

Obituary - Rolf Gehlhaar

"Rolf was the beating heart of possibility. A monumental loss to the world."

Charles Hazlewood, conductor.

Rolf Gehlhaar (1943) was a pioneer of electronic computer-aided music, a distinguished composer, thinker, inventor and performer, who revolutionised the lives of disabled musicians.

Rolf was born in Breslau, Germany (now Wroclaw, Poland) in 1943. He was the son of a German rocket scientist who moved the family to the USA in 1953 where Rolf studied philosophy at Yale University and music at University of California at Berkeley.

Rolf Gehlhaar died on 7 July 2019 after suffering a stroke. He came to prominence in the late 1960s while performing with the celebrated avant-garde composer Karlheinz Stockhausen and acting as his assistant. He composed 50 works for orchestra and electronics and more recently he was known as co-founder of accessible music technology organisation Human Instruments and Professor of Experimental Music at Coventry University.

While interviewing Stockhausen for her book in 1971 Nouritza Matossian met Rolf and their passion and exploration of new music bound them creatively for the next 48 years. They married in London in 1976 and had two sons, Hagop and Vahakn and a grand daughter, Sequoia. Rolf was an enthusiast of all things Armenian and composed works inspired by the music. He often attended the Armenian Institute events even with failing health.

Latterly he was best known as a father of interactive installations with his famous Sound Space at the Centre Pompidou in Paris 1985, showcasing a futuristic techno-vision *Les Immatériaux* where the public became the performers. He dedicated his last decades to enabling disabled musicians to play again on a level playing field and co-founding the Para-Orchestra. He envisaged computer-based virtual instruments. Virtuoso trumpeter Clarence Adoo with severe spinal injury could control his laptop by blowing into a tube "to get more than half my life back after a serious accident". Together with his son, designer/musician Vahakn, they invented other devices and most recently the Haptic Baton for blind musicians (Bardez 2019).

Rolf Gehlhaar's intellect knew no bounds, his heart no fatigue, his charm no eclipse. On 25th July the young carried him into the sunlit St Yeghiche Church to the sound of birdsong, singing bells and his own synthesisers and vowed his legacy will live on. How mighty is the absence of a loved one. www.gehlhaar.org



Thank You

We are immensely grateful to our Benefactors, Grants, Supporters and Volunteers for their great generosity in helping us reach this pivotal moment at the Armenian Institute. Our upcoming move to a new, specially designed space and the arrival of a large grant are thanks to the following people, Foundations and Trusts.

The **Tanielian family** of London are making available to AI a beautiful space in the Farringdon area where the library can be housed on special shelves funded by the **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation**. The **St Sarkis Charity Trust** and **Benlian Trust** are funding welcome parties, visits by important experts, and consultations to make the transition as productive as possible. Our new major donors, **Richard Anoushian**, the estate of **Krikor Didonian**, **Bedo and Tania Eghianyan**, **Raffi Manoukian**, **Belinda Keheyan**, along with Benefactors **Diana and Panos Katsouris**, **Nouritza Matossian**, and **Violet Tatevossian** are taking care of daily expenses and helping to outfit the space with the new equipment and furnishings needed. A special thank you to architect **Keyvan Lankarani** who has generously given his time and expertise in drawing numerous versions of possible layouts, enabling us to use the space well. A very special thanks to **Garo Medazoumian FCA**, for examining our annual accounts and providing the Independent Examiner's Report to the Charity Commission. Our volunteers have worked many hours throughout this past year in preparation for the move: **Nariné Der Hagopian**, **Levon Clark**, **Ed Corbett**, **Samvel Markosyan**, as well as members of our Board of Trustees and Advisory Committee. The numbers of **Friends** and **Patrons** are growing and we are very grateful for all their continuing support and interest.

Finally, our latest news, as outlined in the article by Chair of Trustees, Dr. Rebecca Jinks (p12-13): we are the very fortunate recipients of a substantial grant from the **National Lottery Heritage Fund**. This, along with the new space, is truly a turning point for AI and we extend a very big thank you to the National Lottery for this opportunity to grow and increase our outreach.

European Armenian Games

This year the European Armenian Games are being held in London, over the Easter Weekend, April 10-13th. It will be the 24th Games bringing together European Diasporan Armenians to play sport and make new friends – although as the years go by, the European part, like the Eurovision contest, has been more widely interpreted. Having been held in

Geneva, Barcelona, and Amsterdam to name a few, this will be the first time it is being held in London. As always, the event will host hundreds of young Armenians playing futsal, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, chess, and backgammon, as well as drawing the slightly older generation to join the party and *barahantes* held in the evenings. This year, in addition to the games, the organisers will be hosting a small



street festival at the games venue with stalls similar to those of the Armenian Summer Festival held by the Church - including AI - attracting more people. Raffi Eghianyan, in charge of bringing the EAG to London, said that the London EAG committee is hoping to make the event the biggest and most ambitious games hosted to date.

We hope it will be a great event and wish the best of luck to all the players. For more information please see euroarmeniangames.eu or email eaglondon2020@gmail.com.



In other Armenian news...

Armenian communities worldwide celebrated the 150th anniversary of Komitas...Turkey's Armenian community voted in Bishop Sahak Mashalyan as its new patriarch...Kim Kardashian visited Armenia again and dined with the President, Dr. Armen Sarkissian...the World Congress on Information Technology was held in Yerevan with Alexis Ohanian and Serj Tankian amidst its roster of keynote speakers...the Rosas de Ouro Samba School dedicated their float in the São Paulo Carnival to Armenia (see below)...the last Genocide survivors Asdghig Alemian and Eugenie Papazian, passed away at 109 and 105 years of age respectively...the interim Libyan government adopted a resolution recognising the Armenian Genocide...



Karoun, Karoun, singer Adis Harmandian passed away on 1 September...in Dubai, the Burj Khalifa was lit up with the colours of the Armenian flag to celebrate Armenian independence day...the Rock, aka Dwayne Johnson, married Armenian Lauren Hashian, daughter of the late *Boston* drummer John 'Sib' Hashian...Romania declared October 12 as a day of Armenian language and culture...



Russian Armenian boxer Artem Ganesyan became the WBO junior middleweight champion...Arsen Harutyunyan won gold at the European Wrestling championships...Philip Dodd, the English poet, was inspired by Yerevan in his latest collection of poems, *Last Flocks of the Geese*... Andy Madadian (above), the Armenian-Iranian singer known as the 'Persian Elvis' received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame...Steve Zailian, the Armenian-American screenwriter, was nominated for Oscar for *The Irishman*... Archaeologists discovered an ancient aqueduct near Khor Virap...Armenia commemorated the 30th anniversary of the pogroms against the Armenian community of Baku... the Armenian app PicsArt was the 14th most downloaded app worldwide in 2019, beating uber and twitter amongst others...Vartine Ohanian became the first female Armenian to be appointed as a Minister in Lebanon... Prince Charles visited the Armenian Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem...

Yes, I wish to support the Armenian Institute and become a Friend/Patron/Benefactor of the Institute.

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Would you like to support the work of the Armenian Institute? Become a Friend by filling in the attached form and sending it to Armenian Institute, Armenian Church Hall, Iverna Gardens, London W8 6TP. If you do not want to cut up your copy of Bardez please contact us at info@armenianinstitute.org.uk or donate on-line at <https://www.armenianinstitute.org.uk/>. If you would like to make a specific donation, for example towards the cost of the move, please do let us know.