

la Biennale di Venezia

53. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni nazionali

GAYANÉ KHACHATURIAN

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Pavilion of Republic of Armenia
at the 53rd International Art Exhibition la Biennale di Venezia

Under the Auspices of
Ministry of Culture of Republic of Armenia

Hosted by
Mekhitarian Armenian Congregation

Organized by
the Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art

With deep sorrow we announce the passing of Gayané Khachaturian on May 1, 2009, in Tbilisi, Georgia, succumbing to cancer.

Organizers of the Pavilion of Armenia are determined to go ahead with the exhibition as a testament to Gayané Khachaturian's rightful place in international contemporary art, as well as in memory of this great artist, gentle person and a total human being.



City Life, 2004
Oil on canvas, 50 x 70 cm

Organizers of the Pavilion of Republic of Armenia at 53rd International Art Exhibition of Venice Biennale wish to express their gratitude to the following institutions and individuals for their assistance and generous contribution for making the pavilion possible:

Ministry of Culture of Republic of Armenia
H. E. Hasmik Poghosyan, Minister

Mekhitarian Armenian Congregation
Most Rev. Fr. Yeghia Kilaghibian, Abbot General

Robert Boghossian and Sons Fund

Sonia and Edward Balassanian Fund for the Arts

Larry Gagosian Gallery

Ani and Samie Totah

Nelli and Gregor Melikian

Czech Airlines



Vartan Karapetian
Local Coordinator in Venice

Works presented at the pavilion
have been loaned by:

Sergey Parajanov Museum of Yerevan
Zaven Sargsyan, Director

Gayané Khachaturian Foundation

Valerie Khanukaev, President

Bagrat Nikogosyan, Trustee

Artashes Aleksanyan, Trustee

The Pavilion of Armenia has been made possible by a partial grant from Valerie Khanukaev in memory of his son Roman Khanukaev.

GAYANÉ KHACHATURIAN

Commissioner and Curator: Edward Balassanian

Honorary Commissioner: Jean Boghossian

Palazzo Zenobio
Moorat Raphael Armenian College
Dorsoduro, Venice

June 7 - November 22, 2009



Gayané Khachaturian in Edjmiadzin, Armenia
Photo by Zaven Sargsyan, 1995

Extract from World Encyclopedia of Naive Art, 1984*

KHACHATURIAN, GAYANE (1942)

USSR

Gayane Khachaturian was born into an Armenian family in Tbilisi, capital of the Soviet republic of Georgia. Her mother was a Zog, member of an ethnic group, which legend associates with Jewish tribes, but which in Armenia are regarded as Armenians and are much respected there. In her teens she attended an art school for children, but after a grave illness, which apparently affected her psychologically, she ventured to work on her own - even though she has to be in the proper mood to create, needs to feel the resisting texture of the painter's medium and works to a musical accompaniment. Hers is an agonizing search for her own manner, for a means of expression, for symbols with which to depict her own characters, the trees, the moon, a horse, or a lion. Her fantasies derive from an inner emotional impulse, while her subject-matter is highly metaphoric, enhanced by a wide gamut of tonal values. All the many phases she has gone through tend towards theatrical make-believe. Her

technical skill derives more from an acquaintance with professional painting than from professional training, while her *Weltanschauung* stems from the typically Caucasian scenery, with its mountains, vividly colored fruits and verdant green, and the peculiar Eastern way of life and mores of the Caucasians, with their national and social attitudes and their eroticism. The world of her painting is flat with no drama, no social upheavals, no personalized or historical reminiscences, no psychological probing: the characters that populate it are not real flesh-and-blood people or beasts, but symbols as static as the elements of a stage set. Rather this is a reflection of a dreamland world devoid of movement and of genre detail. Over the past few years, her works have become more complicated with an increased emphasis on detail and an abstract play of color. Is she really a naive artist? And is she herself naive? Certainly she is not naive in her manner of thought. Yet the knowledge she draws upon to reflect that world in forms and shapes corresponding to her own intuition has not prevailed over her artless sincerity. Her work stems, in effect, from the human heart, and her amazement at the eternal riddles that nature and life propound, coupled with the opportunity offered to her of expressing these riddles in paint in accordance with her own inner observations, are, in substance, naive.

Gayane Khachaturian's work is in private collections and in the Museum of Modern Art, Yerevan (capital of the Armenian Republic). She has had several one-woman shows in Yerevan, and has been represented in exhibitions in Tbilisi and elsewhere in Georgia. Articles and essays have been devoted to her and her paintings and a television documentary was made about her in Armenia. Meanwhile her tiny studio has become a tourist attraction. In 1982 she was accepted as a member of the Union of Soviet Artists.

Natalia Shkarovskaya

* Reprinted from "World Encyclopedia of Naive Art: a hundred years of naive art", Oto Bihalji-Merin, Nebojsa-Bato Tomasevic, London - F. Muller, 1984. pp293-4

GAYANÉ KHACHATURIAN p a i n t e r o f d r e a m s

Edward Balassanian

Of 8 million Armenians around the world 3 million live in the present-day Armenia. Armenian Diaspora is culturally very rich and diverse. Artists such as painter Arshile Gorky (USA), seascape painter Hovhannes Ayzavovski (Russia), cinematographer Sergey Parajanov (Georgia) are among many prominent names of the international art scene that are from Armenian Diaspora. Gayané Khachaturian, albeit less known, rightfully belongs to this esteemed group of artists. She was born in Tbilisi, Georgia, and lives and works there to date.

Gayané Khachaturian's works are distinctly allegoric. They are inundated with colorful and rich collection of symbols referring to unending parables and metaphors from her personal past and her collective memories of the Armenian community of her native town. On an occasion she has said that many of "the stories" on her canvases are influenced by the tales her grandmother told her in her childhood.

Her colorful canvases are reminiscent of such world masters as Marc Chagall, Arshile Gorky and even Hieronymus Bosch of a much earlier era. Chagall spoke of the lives, trepidations, joys and grief of his people in the "Old Country" in a representational manner. Arshile Gorky expressed the same in the abstract—witness, his "How My Mother's Embroidered Apron Unfolds in My Life..." Gayané is as story-teller as Chagall. However she is much more personal, delving into deep layers of her own psyche and inner feelings. She is reservedly abstract in the use of colors and forms as Arshile Gorky is, and as intriguing in concept and composition as Hieronymus Bosch. Like Bosch, she often "packs" her canvases with personages turning them into "static" scenes—snapshots—each telling a very personal

story, expressing a feeling from deep inside.

Her works are "theatrical". Each canvas seems like a frozen mis-en-scène of a play—a theater scene. Her portraits resemble personages, dressed up and made up, ready to step on the stage. This attribute seems to be under distinct influence of her friend and contemporary, cinematographer and accomplished painter Sergey Parajanov.

Gayané Khachaturian has been selected to represent Armenia because she is one of the important links on the "chain" stretching from the depths of history—Armenian illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages—to the present day. Her colors, composition concepts and the "story-telling" are all in concert with the roots and branches of the same tree. While Armenian illuminated manuscripts depict the stories of the Gospel, Gayané tells stories of mostly personal and delicate emotions, and often communal issues and concerns.

It is noteworthy that selection of Gayané Khachaturian has independently coincided with the 53rd Venice Biennale Director and Curator Daniel Bimbaum's intent to "explore strings of inspiration that involve several generations and to display the roots as well as the branches that grow into a future not yet defined".

There is a wealth of Armenian artists—Arshile Gorky, Yervand Kotchar, Martiros Sarian, Minas Avetissian and others—who tie Armenia to its past and form the source and the basis whence contemporary Armenian art feeds and on which it lays foundation.

Gayané Khachaturian is one of the few artists still living, who belongs to and represents this invaluable "procession" of treasures.



Gayané Khachaturian In her studio in Tbilisi
Photo by Zaven Sargsyan, 1985

MAGICAL THEATRE OF GAYANÉ KHACHATURIAN

The art of Gayané Khachaturian stands under a special sign—that of absolute coincidence between the uniqueness of artistic endeavor and artist's personal image. Gayané is among those pioneers of new artistic consciousness who draw into their focus all phenomenal aspects of European "actual view" and the radical sensuousness and natural freedom of plastic gesture.

Her compositions appear before us as some precious objects from a Medieval magical shop, which found their natural path into our own civilization and culture. In Gayané's hand matter brings forth a miracle of transformation, animated in its corporality and its readiness for productivity with a living spirit. It opens up its very texture—as simple and primary as life's matrix itself.

Each work of Gayané has quality of a hieroglyph; it possess force of an utmost visual presence and an inner code of mythical and poetic life, imbued with Goya's "Capriccios" or the "Blue Ballerinas" of Degas. Her forms reveal eternal images, inseparable from human life, as a path which draws into itself all human fates. There are eternal wanderers, "wandering comedians"—as Picasso put it—clowns and clownesses, jugglers and juggleresses, strolling actors who live in the world of flowers and fruits and are subject to impersonal and super-personal forces and energies. They accept the world as they find it and are as spontaneous as children, made part of the great experience of Christian history. Their God-given corporality gives itself naturally to the animating play and in turn rejoices at gifts.

The art of Gayané opens as a landscape with no boundaries—there are cities and objects, animals and plants and stars that disappear and slide within the folds of mysteries and fairy tales. It exists and keeps balance in a state of great vigilance when, as Franz Kafka once said, at least "someone has to stay awake".

Vitaly Patsyukov

Vitaly Patsyukov is Head of Experimental Programs Department of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation at the National Center for Contemporary Arts, Moscow.

GAYANÉ KHACHATURIAN

Biography

Gayané Khachaturian was born in Tbilisi, Georgia in 1942. She lives and works in Tbilisi.

She Studied art at Nikoladze Art School in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Started serious involvement in art after graduation from Youth Workers Republican School in Tbilisi, 1960.

In 1963 made acquaintance of painter A. Bajbeuk-Melikian, who played major role in her artistic formation and started exhibiting professionally since that date.

In 1965 People's Artist of Georgia E. Akhvediani took interest in her work.

From 1967 to 1971 she took part in exhibitions of amateur artists and folk artisans at the State Gallery of Tbilisi, Georgia.

In 1968 her works were presented in the "Decorative Art Magazine", Moscow, USSR.

Gayané Khachaturian's works were included in the Yerevan Museum of Contemporary Art since 1978. Her works are also included in permanent collections of the National Gallery of Armenia, Sergey Parajanov Museum in Yerevan as well as a number of private collections.

Exhibitions

- 1971 First solo exhibition in Armenia at the Artists' Union and the House of Scientists in Yerevan.
- 1972 Solo exhibition at the House of Actors, named after A. Khorava in Tbilisi, Georgia.
National Gallery of Armenia and Museum of Contemporary Art, Yerevan, Armenia
- 1978 "Art of Armenia", Traveling exhibition in Paris, Lyons and Marseilles, France, and Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal.
- 1987 "Art of Armenia", Civico Eremitani Museum, Padua, Italy.
- 1993 "Seven-Colored Muse", National Gallery, Tbilisi, Georgia.
- 1995 "Armenian Contemporary Art", Palace of Justice, Paris, France. Solo exhibition at Palace of Justice, Paris, France.
- 2001 Solo exhibition at Nashchiokin Gallery, Moscow, Russia.
- 2008 Solo exhibition at Tsvetayeva Museum, Moscow, Russia.

Documentary films on Gayané Khachaturian

- "**Gayané**", by Yuri Erznkian, with introduction by Martiros Sarian, 1971, "Armen Film" Studios, Yerevan, Armenia.
- "**Blue Wind, Scent of Almonds**", by Rouben Gevorgians, 1978, "Armen Film" Studios, Yerevan, Armenia.
- "**Gayané Khachaturian**", by Fotos Lambrinos, 1989, Athens, Greece.
- "**Gayané From Tbilisi**", by Levon Grigorian, 2006, Moscow, Russia.



Silvery Lute Players at Dawn, 1990
Oil on canvas, 40 x 86 cm



Where Are We From? Agoulls, 1970
Oil on cardboard, 65 x 185 cm



Angel Meeting the Horseman, 2007
Oil on canvas, 55 x 70 cm

Walk With White Wind and Blue Moon, 1997
Oil on canvas, 52 x 65 cm



Maroon Acacia, 1979
Oil on canvas, 33 x 82 cm



Armen and His Horse, 1978
Oil on canvas, 55 x 75 cm



Still Life, 1970
Oil on canvas, 75 x 106 cm

Red-Haired Jugglers and Dancing Doll, 1976
Oil on canvas, 53 x 72 cm



Dancers in the White Wind, 1994
Oil on canvas, 60 x 55 cm

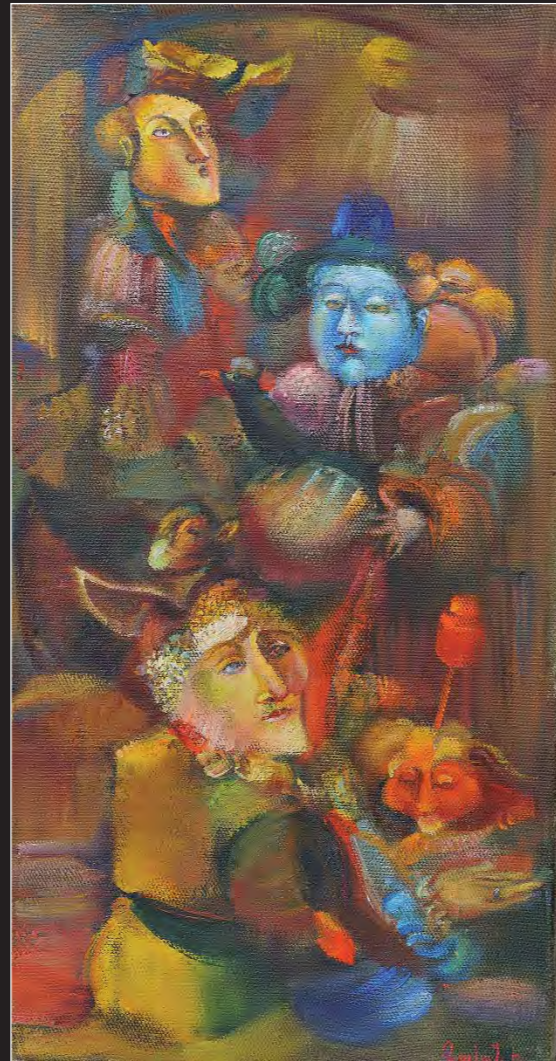
Flower Woman in Mirror, 1992
Oil on canvas 144 x 60 cm





Wine and Veil, 1981
Oil on canvas, 56 x 38 cm

Actors and Comedians, 1986
Oil on canvas, 60 x 30 cm



Actor, Butterfly and Wisper, 1993
Oil on canvas, 20 x 26 cm

GAYANÉ KHACHATURIAN FOUNDATION

Gayané Khachaturian Foundation has been created for the purpose of maintaining artist's rightful place in the history of contemporary art and adequately presenting her work on the international arena.

Founders of the foundation are collectors:
Valeriy Khanukaev, President
Bagrat Nikogosyan, Trustee-Expert
Artashes Aleksanyan, Trustee-International Relations

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ARMENIAN CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL ART ՆՈՐԱՐԱՐ ՓՈՐՅԱՌԱԿԱՆ ԱՐՎԵՏՏԻ ԿԵՆՏՐՈՆ

FOUNDERS: Sonia Balassanian, Founder and Senior Artistic Director; Edward Balassanian, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer
ARTS COUNCIL: David Kareyan Director of Fine Arts Department; Gagik Ghazareh, Director of Cinema, Theater and Video Department
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Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art ("NPAK" in Armenian acronym) is a non-profit foundation active in Armenian arts scene since 1992. It has been founded by New York artist and Armenian poet Sonia Balassanian in cooperation with her husband, architect and planner, Edward Balassanian.

ACCEA/NPAK is a major and unique center for contemporary experimental art in the Southern Caucasus, showing "cutting-edge" art of painting, sculpture, installation, video and performing arts. ACCEA/NPAK motto is "Quest for new frontiers". Its mission is introduction of international contemporary art in Armenia, encouragement and promotion of Armenian contemporary art and securing its presence on the international art scene. Virtually all of the contemporary artists of Armenia have been either discovered or developed in the Center, and have been introduced and promoted on the international arena.

Active departments of the Center in 2009 are Department of Fine Arts (Painting, sculpture, installation, video art, etc.) and Department of Theater, Cinema and Video. Departments of music, architecture and literature are in formation process.

ACCEA/NPAK has organized Armenian Pavilions at Venice Biennale of Art uninterrupted since 1995, along with many international exhibitions in Armenia and abroad.

The most recent international project has been "Art without Borders: Exhibition of Contemporary Art from Armenia, Georgia, Iran and Turkey" which opened in Yerevan in 2006 and has traveled to Tbilisi, Tehran and Istanbul.



armenian center for contemporary experimental art