

GAYANÉ KHACHATURIAN PAINTER OF DREAMS

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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 Ayvazovski (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 Birnbaum'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

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. Akhvlediani 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.