THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE — 95 YEARS LATER, IN REMEMBRANCE

An Exhibit to mark the 95th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

April 1-30, 2010 • University of Rhode Island Feinstein Providence Campus Gallery

Hrair B. Aprahamian – b. 1965
“Silent Duduk”
Oil on Canvas
"I should like to see any power of the world destroy this race,  
this small tribe of unimportant people,  
whose wars have all been fought and lost,  
whose structures have crumbled, literature is unread,  
music is unheard, and prayers are no more answered.  
Go ahead, destroy Armenia. See if you can do it.  
Send them into the desert without bread or water.  
Burn their homes and churches.  
Then see if they will not laugh, sing and pray again.  
For when two of them meet anywhere in the world,  
see if they will not create a New Armenia."

William Saroyan
MISSION STATEMENT

STEVEN PENNELL, Coordinator of Urban Arts and Culture
University of Rhode Island Feinstein Providence Campus

It has been our intention for some time now to share and to celebrate the Armenian Community in Rhode Island, and to raise awareness of the history of the Armenian Genocide. We are excited to be working with Bérge Zobian from Gallery Z, who will curate this exhibit in April of 2010. It is our desire to gather artwork, artifacts, posters, objects and photographs to share the History and Culture of the Armenian Community here in Rhode Island including aspects of home life, community life, religious life and to provide information and current historical facts of the Armenian Genocide 95 years ago. The first genocide of the twentieth century.

BÉRGE ARA ZOBIAN, Curator of Exhibition
Photographer, Director of Gallery Z
Providence, Rhode Island

During World War I from 1915-1918, and again from 1920-1923, over one and a half million Armenians perished in the killings and abuse now referred to as the Armenian Genocide. Committed by the political party of the Ottoman Empire commonly known as the Young Turks, the Armenian Genocide was the first genocide of the 20th century. The Turkish government disguised their planned deportation and extermination program as a resettlement plan for the minority Armenian population. In fact, the deported Armenians suffered massacres, starvation, disease, torture, and confiscation of all their possessions. The few that survived became refugees in neighboring countries.

The Armenian Genocide is commemorated each year on April 24th, the date in 1915 when the genocide officially commenced with the murder of hundreds of Armenian leaders in Constantinople. This year, to mark the 95th anniversary of the atrocities, I have joined forces with the Urban Arts and Culture Program of the University of Rhode Island Feinstein Providence Campus to curate an historically and artistically important show: THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE – 95 YEARS LATER, IN REMEMBRANCE.

This informative, academic, and historical exhibition is on display at the URI Feinstein Providence Campus Gallery until April 30th. Two major receptions of the show are planned. The first is a city of Providence Gallery Night reception on Thursday, April 15th from 5-9pm, where several of the show’s artists will be in attendance. The second is the main event of the exhibition with a special program which will take place Saturday, April 17th from 3-5pm. Both events will take place at the URI Feinstein Providence Campus Gallery at 80 Washington Street, Providence, RI.

Many individuals and organizations have made this exhibit possible and I would like to personally thank everyone for their support and participation in our vision.

www.armeniangenocide95years.com
THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE—95 YEARS LATER, IN REMEMBRANCE
April 17, 2010 • 3-5pm

Program

Arrival – 2:30pm

Duduk Selections.................................Mher Saribekyan, David Gevorkian
Aper Balasanyan, Doug James

Armband Distribution..............................Armenian Boy and Girl Scouts
(Homenetmen - HMEM)

Educator Registration.............................Pauline Getzoyan, Esther Kalajian

Program – 3-5pm

Welcome and Overview............................Greg Chopoorian, emcee
Historical Consultant, 2002 film Ararat

Moment of Silence

Opening Prayer....................................Hayr Soorp Simeon Odabashian
Pastor, Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church

Musical Selection..................................David Ayriyan, kemancha
Maestro Konstantin Petrossian, piano

Historical Background–Armenian Genocide of 1915...........Levon Attarian

Presentation of the Rhode Island “Genocide Educator
of the Year” Award..............................Pauline Getzoyan, Esther Kalajian

Theatrical Presentation................................Armen Garo
“Hishadag's Return: A Contemplation of the Jewish Holocaust and the
Armenian Genocide”..............................Dr. Dorothy Abram, Assistant Professor
Social Sciences Department, Johnson & Wales University

Musical Selection from the album Sandplay...........Arpie Dadoyan, singer

Closing Remarks..................................Greg Chopoorian, emcee

Duduk Selections.................................Mher Saribekyan, David Gevorkian
Aper Balasanyan, Doug James

Question & Answer Session

Reception and Viewing of Art Exhibit
Dorothy Abram – b. 1955 Barrington, Rhode Island

When it was suggested to me that I write a play about the Armenian Genocide, I realized that I, like so many others, knew little about what had happened and why it had happened. I wondered how this issue had been so long neglected in my education and awareness. Missing from global recognition, missing from text books, missing from national consciousness, the Armenian Genocide seemed to fade into the oblivion of contemporary ignorance. The inquiry into this absence began my research for this play. And, I found additional absences in this study. We know other genocides through images that have become iconic to represent the suffering. But not the Armenian Genocide. Why was that? The answer to this question raises the entire discussion of the Armenian Genocide.

I chose to focus on this Absence (of an iconic image of the Armenian Genocide) by focusing on the Presence of the iconic image of the Jewish Holocaust: photograph of the little boy in the Warsaw Ghetto taken by the Nazi General responsible for annihilating the ghetto. Through the Warsaw Ghetto Boy’s presence and the absence of an analogous image to represent the Armenian Genocide, I constructed this play, HISHADAG’S RETURN, on the crucial importance of memory and remembrance to those people lost to the history of atrocity and to the survivors of genocide.

Dr. Dorothy Abram is a playwright and Assistant Professor in the Social Sciences Department of Johnson & Wales University. Focusing on global concerns of human rights, Abram’s plays serve to articulate the experiences and celebrate the cultures of recently-arrived refugees.
As a young idealist, I believed that if the Armenian Genocide occurred in modern times, the world would come to our aid. Unfortunately, this doesn't seem to be the case, because the first Genocide of the 20th century was not the last crime committed against humanity. Events such as the “Armenian Genocide - 95 years later, in Remembrance” help educate the public and raise awareness. After all, regardless of race, color or religion we share a common humanity.

Hagop B. Aprahamian – b. 1965 Worcester, Massachusetts

This show presents a unique opportunity for expression and viewing of the Armenian psyche, as it has been impacted by the Armenian Genocide. The fact that the exhibit is in an academic setting and hopefully will be cause for discussion and learning is another reason. In order to truly move forward we must be able to look back and know what we are looking at. I am hoping this show will give us that opportunity.

Hrair B. Aprahamian – b. 1965 Worcester, Massachusetts

To express my personal view on a subject matter which has always been a point of deep sorrow and troubling conclusions, both in me and other members of my ethnic family. Recording the passing on of those tortured souls who survived under such horrific conditions is important.

Astrid – b. 1939 Greenville, Rhode Island

These two pieces of work serve as an homage to my parents, survivors of the genocide, witness of a denied history. The stories of my parents, who witnessed the history through child’s eyes, was the inspiration for these pieces, the work depicts ruined churches and graves, but marked with crosses that reach to the heavens. William Saroyan is there to remind us that as long as there are two Armenians, there will always be an Armenian Nation.

John Avakian – Sharon, Massachusetts

Early on, I was aware of my father’s painful silence and smoldering anger, and of my mother’s nightmares, but I entered my adult years blocking these memories. Years later, I began researching old books and found countless photos testifying to the Genocide. I read books of authors writing about the Genocide. The re-occurring theme was and is that the Turkish Government continues to deny the first genocide of the 20th century. Our government has avoided recognition because of threats from Turkey. Israel does not recognize the Armenian Genocide. This is unthinkable! As a monoprint/monotype artist, I began to bring Genocide images into my images in
the late 1990’s. My art has been a vehicle to support the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. It is the most compelling reason for me to seek venues for these powerful and heartfelt prints.

David Ayriyan – b. 1933 Baku, Azerbaijan, resides in Johnston, Rhode Island
Kemancha player – family originates from Nagorno Karabagh

David Ayriyan was born into an ethnic Armenian musical family and received his initial musical training from his father Gregory Ayriyan who played the tar (an instrument resembling a European lute). From his studies starting at age 18 at Baku Conservatory to becoming a full-time member of the Baku Philharmonic, teaching at the Yerevan Conservatory, and finally moving to the United States, David has become one of the great musicians of our era with his technical mastery, his versatility, his knowledge, his adaptability, his vast repertoire of different genres, and his virtuosity.

Lara B. – b.1977 Oakland, California

Optimism is depicted amidst the surrounding darkness by the radiant portrait of an Armenian mother clenching her two young children. The fortitude of a mother’s love symbolizes the tenacity of the Armenian spirit in overcoming the horrific tragedies of a brutal past.

John M. Berberian – b. 1969 Providence, Rhode Island

In loving tribute to Misak and Agavne - survivors of the 1915 genocide - who married and gave me their legacy of survival.

After years of bravely facing the challenges of their new life in America, they later acquired and restored the historic Columbus Theatre. Their unfailing commitment to each other made my family proud.

Nilton Cardenas – b. 1972 Cranston, Rhode Island

With brush in hand, I unite in this shout of celebration and the deep silence of a country that does not let us forget the bitter and painful pages of history. A nation that continues to grow with their traditions and culture, where the people inside and outside the country make their voices heard in the dawn of each day.

Arpie Dadoyan – b. 1948 Glendale, Arizona

When Berge of Gallery Z invited me to participate in the main event of the exhibit I was moved to tears and at the same time honored to be amongst such great artists who will exhibit their work during the month of April. The date also coincides with the release of my new vocal album “Sandplay”. But the main motivation of my participation is to honor the memory of the victims of this catastrophic event in such a celebratory way as to witness the resilience, perseverance and hard work of a people once condemned to extinction. Happy trails to us all.
Yevkine de Greef – b. 1934 Ville-Mont-Royal, Canada

My participation in this exhibition witnesses the attachment of a people to its roots and its memory. It is also a tribute to universal human value, so that history will not repeat itself anywhere else.

Adrienne Der Marderosian – Belmont, Massachusetts

As an artist of Armenian descent, I am interested in testifying to the strength and endurance of the Armenian people through my pictorial imagery. Despite the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide, it is important to recognize that the spirit, culture, and traditions of the Armenians remain.

Judith Ferrara – b. 1942 Worcester, Massachusetts

This painting’s image and title are meant to provoke thoughts about genocide, in keeping with the theme of this exhibition. The single, agonized face represents the incalculable number of people who have died as a result of genocide, which must begin with one victim, in one place, during one moment.

Beth Ferreira – b. 1982 Rehoboth, Massachusetts

Working on the “Armenian Genocide Exhibition” has opened my eyes to an event that until present I was unaware of. My ignorance in this matter has brought to the forefront how well this event has been veiled from the general public. The images and headline from “Armenian Genocide Press Releases” spoke to me in a way that made the event a reality. Once I was exposed to the facts of this horrible Genocide I felt compelled to participate and share in an educational manner my new found awareness by gathering images and assembling collages.

Armen Garo – b. 1955 Rehoboth, Massachusetts

Truth is the nightmare of injustice that sleeps too long.

Chris Gasparian – b.1982 Huntington Station, New York

Being of Armenian descent and having lived in Armenia I understand how deeply ingrained the Genocide of 1915 is in our people’s history and how it continues to impede our progression in the 21st century. The ensuing frustration can at times be best communicated through artistic expression.
Alexander Grigorian – b. 1927 Yerevan, Armenia

Emma Grigoryan – b. 1943 New York, New York

I am participating in this exhibition because I am Armenian. I was born in Armenia and am proud to belong to a nation with rich historical past that has passed through centuries of struggle, yet has kept its hope, faith and love alive.

Nareg Haroutunian – b. 1966 Fort Lee, New Jersey

It is a privilege to be involved in such a commemoration through the spirit of art - for it helps us pay our respects to the victims of the Genocide and at the same demonstrate through the arts the talent of a nation whose fire cannot be put out not by the Ottoman Turks or any other evil force.

Daniel Varoujan Hejinian – b. 1950 Chelmsford, Massachusetts

The mission of Peace of Art is to use art as an educational tool to bring awareness to the universal human condition through art and promote peaceful solutions to conflict.

Lucine Kasbarian – b. 1965 Belmont, Massachusetts

Author Lucine Kasbarian was brought up in an Armenian-speaking home where humor, politics and the arts shared equal stage. She first began producing political cartoons in response to the appalling murder of journalist Hrant Dink and as a way to constructively express her outrage over social injustice and realpolitik. As a cartoonist, Lucine’s intention is to spotlight realities and hypocrisies that do not receive adequate coverage in mainstream media; to see her work appear in media outlets that reflect the traditions of a truly free press; and to drive the points home in absurdist, paradoxical ways by drawing from history, popular culture and personal experience.

Hrair Hawk Khatcherian – b. 1961 Montreal, Canada

Stephen Koharian – b. 1982 Portland, Maine

The Armenian Genocide is a fact. Turkey will not accept responsibility for their crimes and my government will not sign it into law. Turks raped and murdered my family. Most people are unaware that this genocide occurred. This reality blinds me with anger and taints every aspect of my life.
Taylor Manter – b. 1984 Providence, Rhode Island

My painted roses are in memory of all those who were executed on April 24th 1915.

Cynthia Motian McGuirl – b. 1963 Thomaston, Maine

My dreams hold a strong message from my Armenian ancestors to tell their stories. I create artwork of these dreams and narratives. Human rights, the perception of history, women’s rights, and justice are all important themes in my work.

Ian Mohon – b.1975 Providence, Rhode Island

I included my work in the Armenian Genocide exhibit for its ability to give a voice to those lost and forgotten heroes who without their Sacrifice our world would not be as it is. Those people whose forgotten souls stand at the edge of our vision always ready to remind us of our past.


Kevork Mourad is an artist of Armenian origin from Syria who has exhibited and performed widely and internationally. Early on, he developed a technique of spontaneous painting, in which he shares the stage with musicians. Collaborators have included Djivan Gasparyan, George Winston, Kinan Azmeh, Ken Ueno, Brooklyn Rider, Yo-Yo-Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble. Performed at the Brooklyn Lyceum, the Chelsea Museum of Art in NY, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Rhode Island School of Design, the Rubin Museum of NY, the Chicago Institute of Art, the Museum of Natural History through Carnegie Hall, and the Nara Museum in Japan, among others…

Chris Murphy – b.1987 Providence, Rhode Island

As an outsider to this struggle for recognition I feel privileged to be included in this exhibition. I created this sculpture to honor the strength of identity I have witnessed in the Armenian people. This body is broken; a starved soul left to dry out in the desert – his history not forgotten.

Sevan Naccashian – b. 1968 Montreal, Canada

I feel honored for taking part as a painter in this historically and artistically important exhibition, THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE—95 YEARS LATER, IN REMEMBRANCE. I find it important to highlight the history of the Armenian Genocide with archival material and educational presentations, while also showcasing the surviving culture through today’s Art and celebrating it.
Sossy Nercessian – b. 1948 Arlington, Massachusetts

My works are the plea for reconciliation between nature and mankind, for love and peace. Whenever a massacre or a genocide has occurred, no matter in what frame work in time, or race or nation, the sacrifice of the human soul has to be honored, not to repeat it again, and justice rendered. As it is said by Daniel Webster, (1845): “Justice is the great interest of man on earth. It is the ligament which holds civilized beings and civilized nations together.”

“Rebirth”, was created at a time where war, conflicts were predominant, and the strong desire to get out of the conflicting elements, and to have a new life, in spite of the difficulties for growth, peace and tranquility. This pertains to any timeframe, and to any situation in life, where the desire for life is strong enough to overcome difficulties, and burst out, as if to breathe the fresh air, instead of the suffocation.

“Uprooted - Immigration”: With this work, I wanted to portray when one is uprooted from their own homeland, cut off from the roots, and migrated to another country, flourishing the present location, branching out, blossoming, and yet, something inside is dried up because of the separation from the homeland, like the dried up branches, and the heart shaped stones stuck to the branches, symbolize, the hardening of one’s heart in order to numb the pain of separation.

Marsha Nouritza Odabashian – b. 1954 Dedham, Massachusetts

Why do I want to be represented in the exhibition, “The Armenian Genocide – 95 Years Later?” The genocidal experience is both universal and personal, resonating for all and yet with unique meaning for anyone touched by it. Here, I juxtapose images that scroll through Armenian history, encompassing our ancient and rich artistic past (“In The Shade of the Peacock”), the Genocide and Armenia’s relationship with other cultures (“The Bystanders”), and a mourning for what was lost but not forgotten (“Parables”). I hope to strike familiar and new chords with viewers who will see images that affirm and enhance their perceptions of a dynamic and complex cultural, spiritual and natural past -- lost in the corporeal realm yet shared in collective memory, evolving with time, longing for rebirth.

Julian Penrose – b.1961 Providence, Rhode Island

The piece I have created to honor the Armenian Genocide explores our relationship to family, home and culture. Our relationship and participation in family is the backbone to a full rounded life. The loss of family members, in any manner, alters our psyche. The framework of wood, metal, ceramic and leather symbolizes Mother Earth, provider of material for use in home and culture. The face that emerges out of the woodwork is sad, tired, hard, bold, strong, and soft all at once. Its metal eye and its pursed lips bisected by its long, observant nose symbolize the crevasse and emptiness caused by the separation and division of family. Inside the face, tucked away in the cerebral recesses next to my lost father’s image, I borrowed an image from Arshile Gorky in remembrance of the loss of family in Armenian culture.
Genocide is a word spoken too often by the nightly news to the point that it has lost its true horror. Millions have been wiped from the world leaving behind what seems like little impression. Yet the true horror and effect of genocide is felt by all. It is important that as a collective we do not forget.

“Family Diminished” - I have spent endless hours examining the historic heinous photographs of the Armenian Genocide. My being was shattered to the bone viewing these abhorrent images, while my eyes bleed viewing the overwhelming sadness, pain, anguish, distrust and fear in the eyes looking at me from the photographs. Equally disturbing is viewing these same ancient unresolved emotions in the eyes of my dear contemporary Armenian friends, patiently still waiting for justice. My heart cries for the human race that we have allowed this to remain without restitution. In Honor of my Dear Armenian friend Berge.

“Sword Game” - At times, Turkish soldiers found amusement by burying swords in the earth, points up, looking like piercing severed sapling trees. One woman at a time was chosen to come sit herself on the tip of the sword. A slow agonizing death occurred as the sword worked its way through her body. All the other horrified Armenian women and girls were forced to bear witness to the excruciating crime while waiting their own turn.

Why? Because.
The Armenian genocide pursued us through the twentieth century.
Haunted us into the new Millennium.
Despite this abominable holocaust,
like stars in the darkness
Armenia glows and rises.

The Armenian Genocide that took place in 1915 is part of my history as an Armenian Artist and has a large impact on my art today. As a result, there is celebration of life, love, family, culture and unconditional love to Humanity in my Art. My works in this Exhibition are from the series “Celebration Of Unconditional Love”.
Medina Topalian – b. 1965 East Greenwich, Rhode Island

“Der Zor”- Why I was inspired to create this piece: When one grieves, there must be an outlet for that grief or it destroys the human psyche. An artist possesses the gift of being able to release his/her pain through the brush with color, stroke and line. The grief resultant of the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians in 1915, a crime gone unpunished and denied by its perpetrators, the Ottoman Turks, has been trans-generational. In “Der Zor” I attempt to deal not only with my grandmother’s pain but also with my own. I seek to convey to the viewer the sheer hopelessness of the thousands that perished as well as to explore that element in the human soul that is indestructible – that enables transcendence. “Der Zor” communicates deep grief, desolation and abandonment. But from that dark place comes the light of transcendence - transcendence from the physical world of suffering. It is this light that inspires hope and strength. It is this light that enabled my grandmother to survive.

“Der Zor” is a gift to my grandmother Akabi Mooradian... It demonstrates my understanding of her pain and how by carrying that with me, it has become my own...

Tigran Tsitoghdzyan – b. 1976 Queens, New York

It's about the present and the past, their strong relation and the same time such a fragile connection. It's about today's indifferent crowd and the battle of the memory vs time. It's about this torn and fragile line of our memory from generation to generation, where I feel myself responsible as an artist and human being to be part in the chain of my heritage and history.

Varky Kaprielian – b. 1951 Providence, Rhode Island

Continued policy of the U.S. government that refuses to recognize the Armenian Genocide and to honor the memory of all who perished at the hands of the Turks.

Sirarpi Heghinian Walzer – b. 1958 Lexington, Massachusetts

My artworks give insight into the personal experience of genocide while challenging indifference and maintaining memory. We seem to need symbolic expressions to help us understand and deal with the complex nature of events so horrific that reason and emotion fail to grasp their magnitude, and yet to keep our humanity we need to understand them ... where words and explanations fail, we look for images.

To me Art is a healing process; Art can address the gaps in healing and understanding that cannot be addressed otherwise. From Picasso's ‘Guernica’, and Peter Eisenman's recently opened Holocaust memorial in Berlin; art has proved a powerful medium for representing such atrocities and attempting to find healing after genocide.
I am honored to present my soul-inspired art as a legacy whose father and grandmother both witnessed and survived the Armenian Genocide. My grandmother’s stories and the sensitivity of my upbringing have inspired my life and my expression of art and music. I present this work in commemoration of all of those whose lives were shortened…
Yevkine de Greef – b. 1934
“Tree of Life”

John Avakian
“If I Begin to Cry”

Jason Roberts – b. 1968
“The March Without Water”

Daniel Varoujan Hejinian – b. 1950
“Falling Bull”

Nilton Cardenas – b. 1972
“Hope in Darkness”
Kevork Mourad – b. 1970
“Untitled”

Hrair Hawk Katcherian – b. 1961
“Untitled Church”

Lara B. – b. 1977
“The Psyche of an Armenian Mother”

Sevan Naccachian – b. 1968
“Hope”

Marsha Nouritza Odabashian – b. 1954
“Bystanders”
John Avakian
“Arm of Justice”

Nareg Haroutunian – b. 1966
“Prayer”

Medina Topalian – b. 1965
“Der Zor”

Bérge Ara Zobian – b. 1957
“Self-Portrait – Shedediye, Der El Zor, 1982”
Thank You

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Bérge Ara Zobian, Director, and the Staff of Gallery Z

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Hayr Soorp Simeon Odabashian

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St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School, Watertown, Massachusetts

Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, Providence, Rhode Island

Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church, Providence, Rhode Island
Taylor Manter – b. 1984
“Roses for Red Sunday”

Sossy Nercessian – b. 1948
“Uprooted Immigration”

Tigran Tsitoghdzyan – b. 1976
“Time I”
“Time II”

Hagop B. Aprahamian – b. 1965
“Ask Your Grandfather About Justice”

Sirarpi Heghinian Walzer – b. 1958
“Conundrum II”
Stephen Koharian – b. 1982
“Turkishness”
Oil on Canvas

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