

# ԱՐՎԵՍՏԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

## ART

---

**MARGARITA KAMALYAN\***

*PhD in Arts, Senior researcher  
Institute of Arts, National Academy of Sciences  
mkamalyan@inbox.ru*

### **ARMENIAN DIASPORIC ARTISTS IN FRANCE: INTEGRATING SUCCESSFULLY, BUT RETAINING THEIR ROOTS**

**Key words:** *French-Armenian painters, national identity, artistic unions, Carzou, Jansem, Melkon Kebedjian, Richard Jeranian.*

#### **Introduction**

The modern Armenian Diaspora was formed as a result of the genocide conducted by the government of the Ottoman Empire (1915–1923). One of its most eminent communities, not only in terms of population, but also artistic achievements, was the one that established itself in France. Paris had attracted many Armenian painters from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the genocide their number increased immensely.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the French capital was a thriving center of arts, which offered painters of all nationalities plenty of opportunities for perfecting their artistic skills, interchange of creative ideas and freedom of artistic expression,

---

\* Հոդվածը ներկայացվել է 08.09.2019, գրախոսվել է 03.09.2019, ընդունվել է տպագրության 05.12.2019:

### Armenian Diasporic Artists in France...

---

experiments and innovations. Thus, many gifted French-Armenian painters, having appeared within the wave of other non-French outstanding painters, were affiliated to the so-called School of Paris (*École de Paris*), succeeded in making their contribution to the artistic treasury of France.

At the same time the Diasporic artists manifested emotional attachment to their lost motherland, a solid sense of national, cultural and historical identity. They founded artistic unions such as *Ani* (1926), *The Union of Free Armenian Artists* (1931) and *Toros Roslin* (1968).

This article analyses the life and oeuvre of celebrated French-Armenian artists Janssem, Carzou, Shart, Richard Jeranian, Zareh Mutafian, Léon Tutundjian, as well as Melkon Kebedjian and Sarkis Katchadourian, aiming to define their Diasporic aesthetics<sup>1</sup>.

#### ***Diasporic Aesthetics in the Art of Janssem, Carzou, Shart, Sarkis Katchadourian, Richard Jeranian, Melkon Kebedjian, Zareh Mutafian and Léon Tutundjian.***

Jean Janssem (Hovhannes Semerdjian, 1920–2013), one of the most renowned French-Armenian artists of the époque, Knight of the French Arts and Literature order (1997), Knight of the French Legion of Honour (2003), Foreign member of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (2002), the holder of Mesrop Mashtots medal (2002) and the winner of numerous prizes and awards was born into an Armenian family in Sölöz, former Armenian part of Turkey in 1920. He arrived in France in 1930 and settled there. Janssem studied at the *École des Arts Décoratifs* in Paris. He participated in numerous group and individual exhibitions in France, Europe at large, America, Asia, and Armenia. Gallery Matignon, opened in Paris in 1978 to promote and distribute his work (now its director is the painter's son Jany Janssem), while two museums are devoted to his art work in Tokyo and Azumino, Japan. A series of 4 documentary films about the painter were produced in 2003.

Janssem was a painter of ample talent. A gifted drawer and colorist. Whatever theme occupied his mind and work of a certain period, be it Venice, Ballerinas, Bullfighting, Masquerades, Processions and carnivals, images of the oppressed or scenes of massacres, they all bear the same mark of individuality: anguish, pain and

---

<sup>1</sup> The current article is based on the report read on the 42<sup>nd</sup> AAH Annual Conference & Bookfair at the University of Edinburgh on April 7–9, 2016.

## Kamalyan M.

---

sorrow incarnated into sharp, ascetic language. The stories of his mother, the victim of the Genocide and the only survivor of a big family, left an implacable trace on Jansem's outlook. "I am not a pessimist by my nature, quite the contrary, but if you investigate more thoroughly, you will find a deep grief in my heart, that's the same grief present in the hearts of all Armenian", confessed Jansem<sup>2</sup>. "What belongs to Jansem and what makes his originality is without doubt his Armenian origin...", writes Georges Boudaille in "Arts" (30 mars 1951)<sup>3</sup>. "The key lies in the roots", – posits the famous French art critic Pierre Mazars<sup>4</sup>.

Some paintings on national themes, like "Armenian Woman" (1946), "Armenian Wedding" (1947), "Funeral" (1981) seem to be only a preface for a series of 34 paintings, created later from 1998 to 2001 and dedicated to Armenian massacres and presented to the Genocide museum in Yerevan in 2002. In a nightmarish atmosphere, coloured in greyish blue tonality, 'human-ghosts', living corpses emerge.

In his *Tauromachie* series (1970–1971) Jansem presented the familiar bullfighting scene through the lenses of anguish and grief. "But a Jansem bullfight is unlike any other. There is no representation of the different stages of the proceedings, much less a spectacle. What we see is the reflection of the tragedy of the arena on the faces and even the bodies of the spectators... An atmosphere of terror reigns which seems quite unconnected with such standard, well-ordered rituals as the placing of the *banderillas* and the *pase de la muerte*...", writes P. Mazars<sup>5</sup>. In the series entitled *Mascarade* (1978) dramatism is even more intensified and one can see elements of grotesque, bizarreness, mysticism, tragicomic and surrealistic world of carnivals, masks, dressed alive skeletons. These paintings bear resemblance to Jansem's favourite painter James Ensor's works, and for both of them the mask becomes an instrument of an expressionistic *demasqué*: they reveal the true nature of humans, which is malicious.

A haunting melancholy imposed by a bitter awareness of human injustice was also projected on the images of beggars, miserables and orphans. According to the art critic Jean-Albert Cartier, Jansem's art "marks a return to a man, at the same

---

<sup>2</sup> panorama.am, 31/08/2013 // <https://www.panorama.am/am/news/2013/08/31/jansem/453386>.

<sup>3</sup> In *Avédissian* 1959, 278.

<sup>4</sup> *Mazars* 1974, 28.

<sup>5</sup> *Mazars* 1974, 133.

### Armenian Diasporic Artists in France...

---

time the care to translate his suffering and worries” (Arts, 1er novembre 1954)<sup>6</sup>. Poeticized language, emotionally appealing and truly humanistic nature of these paintings were appreciated by the painter's contemporaries, which is evidenced by the titles, prizes and awards and the studies of the famous French critics of the time<sup>7</sup>.

Another great French-Armenian painter-humanist, who in the post-war period “contributed to the renewal of humanist understanding of the world” (Vincent La Rocca, President of the Community of communes Luberon Durance Verdon) was Jean Carzou (Karnik Zouloumian, 1907–2000)<sup>8</sup>.

One of the most renowned artists of the *Nouvelle École de Paris* was born in 1907 in Aleppo, Syria. In 1925 after obtaining a scholarship to study in Paris he enrolled at the *École Spécial d'Architecture* from which he graduated in 1930. Passion for painting led him to Louvre, the academies in Monparnass. The thorny path to fame, started from self-education as a painter, eventually brought him to the French Academy of Fine Arts on December 7, 1977. Two years later on April 4, 1979, he delivered a speech about contemporary painting, where he also paid tribute to his ancestors by recollecting his roots<sup>9</sup>.

Evidence of the acknowledgement of the graphic artist, painter and stage designer Carzou's talent is testified by the numerous prestigious titles, prizes and awards, including the Order of Merit (1977), France's Order of Arts and Letters (1958), the Legion of Honour (1956), as well as Hallmark Prize (1949, 1951, 1955), etc. Carzou is the first living artist to have been commissioned by the French Ministry of Posts to design a postage stamp. He organized personal exhibitions in the USA, Canada, Japan, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, European countries and Armenia.

“Carzou's style? A characteristic style where unique personality is based on creative duality – existential anguish and its counterpart immanent joy. His work swings between these two poles – between happiness of life and presence of death”<sup>10</sup>. This definition by art critic Andre Verdet perfectly describes the essence of his art. That existential anguish found its true incarnation in palaces in ruins,

---

<sup>6</sup> Avédissian 1959, 280.

<sup>7</sup> Cartier 1957. Zahar 1964. Mazars 1974. Campagne 1999, etc.

<sup>8</sup> La Rocca et al. 2007, 7.

<sup>9</sup> See Keusseyan 1982, 180.

<sup>10</sup> In Aubry et al. 2007, 52.

### Kamalyan M.

---

“semi-nude figures whose hair seem to be electrified by fear” (Roger-Marx Claude. Carzou ou les cités en ruine. Le Figaro Littéraires, 9 juin, 1951)<sup>11</sup>, “phantoms from another world, erased from the memory of men” (Carzou)<sup>12</sup>, deserted landscapes, abandoned cannons. The origin of anguish is to be searched for in the crypts of personal memory, discovering the national tragedy. “... I really saw and experienced everything that enters my paintings... which may correspond to my memories of childhood, adolescence, the war, the exodus”, confesses Carzou (Maximilien Gauthier. Dans L'Atelier de Carzou. Les Nouvelles littéraires, 10 juin 1954)<sup>13</sup>. In 1957 at the gallery David and Garnier these scenes were displayed along other images inspired by “atomic factories, machinist civilization, rockets, disappearance of forests, etc. under the general title *Apocalypse*. Thus, the haunting anguish, coming from past experiences becomes a precaution against irresponsibility, inhumanity of modern machinist civilization. This series of dream-like works with a touch of surrealism was further developed and presented on the walls of the chapel in Manosque (Alpes de Haute-Provence) in 1991, which at the same time became *La Fondation Carzou* – a cultural center, dedicated to the painter. New themes appeared, among them – the symbolic depiction of the Armenian genocide – a three-headed monster, a representative of the government of Young Turks, standing on the pyramid of skulls an image of a woman – tree. Simultaneously, a resolution is proposed: to progression of technology, corruption of morality Carzou opposes innocence, love, return to nature and humanity<sup>14</sup>. Thus, in Carzou's work national drama becomes a fertilizer for creation of humanistically enlightened images expressed in a poetic and highly expressive individual manner.

A French painter of Armenian descent *Shart* (1927–2011) was born in Beyrouth in 1927. In 1948 he entered the *École Nationale des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, he also studied painting at free workshops of Paris, during visits to Carzou's studio and famous world art museums. After a short period of fascination with abstract painting, Shart decided to create a style of his own within representational art.

Shart's artistic outlook and style were shaped by his national identity. “In order to capture the vastest aspect of his oeuvre it is important to know that Shart is Armenian, – writes the author of his monograph Marcel Zahar, – Lamentations

---

<sup>11</sup> In **Fels** 1959, 46.

<sup>12</sup> In **Keusseyan** 1982, 190.

<sup>13</sup> **Fels** 1959, 54.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.fondationcarzou.fr/index.php/fr/la-chapelle>.

### Armenian Diasporic Artists in France...

---

surrounded his cradle, and each of them resonated in him in a terrible sense...”<sup>15</sup>. ”I could have become a nice author and could paint only flowers and delightful scenes. But all the visions accumulated since my childhood stuck to my skin”, said the painter<sup>16</sup>.

“Women in Deportation” (1968), “Genocide of a Nation” (1966), “It was in Der-Zor” (1963, 1964) and other similar images represent horrified, sorrowful or grieving Armenian survivors grouped together, speaking or praying. In their executive manner, technique and compositional arrangement they resemble the drawings of “Christ on the Cross” (1965), “The Pieta” (1965), “Way of the Cross” (1964), “The Saint Family” (1968), etc. Was this accidental? One of Shart's deskbooks was “The Armenian Golgotha” by R.P. Balakian, edited in Austria in 1922. It is known that the Armenians were killed over their faith and their homeland, and in 2015 the Armenian Church proclaimed their collective martyrdom. Thus, the analogy is clear. Shart's oeuvre is also full of churches. “Our painter has converted the churches of all the époques into an image of primitive architecture... The concept of citadel, I think, is his revolt against the injustice which has destroyed the disarmed people... It must protect the innocents and the civilization from the threat of recklessness...” writes M. Zahar<sup>17</sup>. In search for humanity Shart turns to “kind and generous nature” (Shart): landscapes of Venice, Normandy, Brittany, and to kind and peaceful people, fishermen, peasants, whose portraits inhabit his canvases. A number of works depicting a woman with Armenian traits – a mother and her child sometimes with pigeons symbolize the new, peaceful and hopefully better life. Isn't this the same message that was encoded by his famous compatriot Carzou on the walls of Manosqian chapel?

Generalized shapes, vigorous contours and opposition of contrasting colors endow his paintings with a pinch of childish naiveté. At the same time his “austere expressionism without aggression (J.J. Levêque. L'information, 30 avril 1960)<sup>18</sup>, “robust figures, coarsely painted in a pleasantly unique style” (Maximilien Gauthier. Nouvelle littéraire)<sup>19</sup> despite their modernity seem to be originated from medieval Armenian art. “Rough but friendly, violent but tender, medieval but modern,

---

<sup>15</sup> Zahar 1969, 19.

<sup>16</sup> In Zahar 1969, 20.

<sup>17</sup> Zahar 1969, 22.

<sup>18</sup> In Zahar 1969, 39.

<sup>19</sup> In Zahar 1969, 39.

## **Kamalyan M.**

---

expressionistic but lyric, rude but sensible, it seems that all the characters counteract in Shart's oeuvre....”, – wrote "Le Soir" on April 24, 1965 (Y.A. Le Soir, extraits, 24 avril 1965)<sup>20</sup>. Shart organized personal exhibitions in France, Lebanon, USA, Italy and Switzerland.

A painter of international fame, “one of the stars of contemporary painting” (Christiane Cros, Mutfian à Genève. Quand la couleur flamboie, Le Messenger, 1975<sup>21</sup>), “one of the greatest and the most admired painters” (Jean Dalevèze, Les Nouvelles littéraires, 1976)<sup>22</sup>, “incomparable colorist of potent personality” (Raymond Charmet, Nouveau journal, 1965)<sup>23</sup>, honorary member the Academy of Fine arts in Treviso (Italy, 1970) Zareh Mutfian's oeuvre was endowed with “amazing personal outlook” (Dino Villani, Liberta, 1970, Milan)<sup>24</sup> and “colourful expressionism” (Denise David, L'Amateur d'art, 1975)<sup>25</sup>. These are just a few of enthusiastic comments of Italian, French and Armenian press of the time.

Genocide survivor Zareh Mutfian (1907–1980) was born in Samsun, Turkey in 1907. He acquired professional education at Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan (1927–1931). Before settling in Paris in 1939, he had successfully displayed his works in Milan, Zurich, and Geneva. In France, the influence of Italian school of painting was overshadowed by French Modernist movements, and vivid, bright, violent colours became truly plastic and emotional elements. Remaining in the field of representational art, he gave preferences to landscape, seascape painting and portraiture. Winner of multiple prizes during his lifetime he exposed his works in France, Europe, USA, Armenia, etc.

He applied his talent, vision, and experience not only in painting enchanting views of European landscapes, which aroused impetuous admiration of the critics, but also while turning to the Armenian themes.

The only survivor of a big family, in his early years he suffered the loss of relatives and the hardships of deportation, then life in an orphanage. However, he painted only a few paintings on genocide motives: “The Massacre” (1963, 1964, 1965), “Dead Bodies” (1955), “Genocide Survivors” (1939), “Before Exodus”

---

<sup>20</sup> In **Zahar** 1969, 42.

<sup>21</sup> In **d'ARTHEZ** 1978, 44.

<sup>22</sup> In **d'ARTHEZ** 1978, 46.

<sup>23</sup> In **d'ARTHEZ** 1978, 40.

<sup>24</sup> In **d'ARTHEZ** 1978, 41.

<sup>25</sup> In **d'ARTHEZ** 1978, 44.

### Armenian Diasporic Artists in France...

---

(1966), “A Couple” (1970), etc. – they vary in emotional range. A good portraitist, he liked to paint the portraits of his family, compatriots, and representatives of the Armenian intelligentsia: Archag Tchobanian, Doctor Khachadour Damlamian, Doctor Arshag Poghossian and others.

In 1967 Z. Mutafian was invited to Soviet Armenia to expose his works. It was a true revelation for him. Armenia, with its monasteries and, churches reminded him of his childhood, became a new source of inspiration and a true passion. He admired the “austerity, simplicity, discretion and mystery” (Mutafian), coming from Armenian religious architecture. The latter along with the landscapes of the Armenia under his brush became true symphonies of colour, where chromatic combinations seem to be derived from Armenian medieval miniature paintings. Upon returning he organized exhibitions entitled “Armenia seen by Mutafian” in Paris (1968), Lyon (1972), “Regained Motherland” in New York (1979). In 1970 he published a brochure in Armenian, entitled “In Armenia with a Brush and a Pen”, which was elaborated into a book by his son Claude Mutafian in 1982, where the painter’s 24 essays about his native cultural and historical heritage in Armenian were accompanied by the French translation<sup>26</sup>.

Mutafian was a true patriot, who loved and praised his ethical, historical and cultural heritage both with his brush, and with his pen. His spacious studio in the 9<sup>th</sup> district of Paris, was a gathering place for the Armenian intellectuals.

Mutafian was a disciple of European training and was influenced by the French Modernist schools. However, his artistic language was also affected by his oriental mentality and culture. Even the press of the time wrote about the hybrid character of his art, where the European manner intermixed with Oriental/Armenian mysticism and spirituality<sup>27</sup>.

The French-Armenian painter, graphic artist Richard Jeranian, disciple of École de Paris, like his famous compatriots, was born outside France, but due to his talent, individual style endued with high artistic qualities gained recognition<sup>28</sup>. He was born in 1921, in Sebastia (Western Armenia), and settled in France in the 1930s. He studied painting at the Julian and Grande-Chaumière academies. Winner of prizes and awards, he exposed his works all over the world, in France, USA, Switzerland, Italy, Iran, Lebanon, Russia, Armenia. Since 2010 a website dedicated

---

<sup>26</sup> Mutafian 1982.

<sup>27</sup> d'ARTHEZ 1978, 37–46.

<sup>28</sup> Ville et al. 1974. Peyrefitte et al. 1983.

### **Kamalyan M.**

---

to his oeuvre has officially been launched<sup>29</sup>.

He liked experimenting with surrealism, abstraction, cubism, working in various genres. National identity in his art is mainly manifested through images of Armenian architecture. Like Zareh Mutaflan, he is fascinated with the Armenian monasteries and churches in the cuddle of native nature. Thus, the first visit to Armenia in 1957 was succeeded by numerous voyages, during which he obsessively grasped the views of his regained Motherland. On his website one can find more than 30 works, mostly written in India ink, representing monasteries of Noravank, Geghard, Tatev, Marmarashen, Harichavank, churches of Aghtamar, Haghpat, etc. Despite the big chronological scale (from 1930 to 2007) the style of those works had not undergone major changes. In those highly personalized drawings hatching substitutes colour in creating masses of light and shade. The large scale, solidity and steadfastness of the architectural masses, as well as their rigid verticality, overall asceticism and inseparable unity with nature in a unique way translate the spirituality and asceticism of Armenian Apostolic Church and the beauty of the Armenia's monuments, which gravitate towards eternity. They are also very interesting in terms of archeological accuracy.

The theme of “the Entrance of Christ to Ani” occupied the painter for a long time. From 1973 to 1996 he recurred to it eight times, creating variations. As known, Christ has never been to Ani, the medieval capital of Armenia. Ani, “the city of a thousand and one churches” in the artist's imagination resembles Jerusalem by its sanctity and importance. Like Jerusalem, it was subsequently destroyed, hence – the paintings “Ani in Ruins” (1974, 1996). Thus, Jeranian conveys a beautifully metaphorical image.

In 2011 the National gallery of Armenia hosted Jeranian's works in Yerevan. For outstanding achievements in the spheres of culture, art, literature, education, social sciences and sports the painter was awarded the Medal of Movses Khorenatsi by the government of Armenia (2011).

Another interesting French-Armenian artist, whose Diasporic aesthetics was shaped by the trauma of the Genocide was Léon Tutundjian (1905/1906–1968). Being born in Amasia (Western Armenia) in 1905/1906, he immigrated to France in 1923. In 1930 he participated in the foundation of the group *Art Concret* with Theo Van Doesburg, Helion, Otto Carlsund and Watz. In 1931 he co-founded the group

---

<sup>29</sup> [www.jeranian.com](http://www.jeranian.com)

### Armenian Diasporic Artists in France...

---

*Abstraction-Creation*. In 1932 interest for abstraction was replaced by surrealism, but from 1958 until his last days Tutundjian's preferences were reversed and he returned to “pure abstraction, where a certain lyricism is not absent”<sup>30</sup>. A man of contradiction: although in the 1920s - 1930s Paris his works “made a violent impression on the small world of people tormented by a new form of art” (painter Jean Hélion)<sup>31</sup>, Tutundjian died unknown, and only after his death was his artistic legacy given appreciation, but according to Larousse online, it is still underestimated<sup>32</sup>.

In the context of his personal history the deserted landscapes, dead trees, ruins, detached and injured hands that inhabit his surrealistic canvases are more than eloquent. Moreover, the art historian Jean Murachanian made an attempt to analyze Tutundjian's art within the paradigm of trauma in the aftermath of the Genocide<sup>33</sup> with the help of Freudian theories of trauma and the contemporary work of Judith Herman, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School applying them to visual art. In her studies Murachanian analyses a pattern of images in Tutundjian's art, which she interprets as self-portraits, and comes to the conclusion that “Tutundjian's pictorial tour de force lays bare the psychic repercussions of his genocide trauma”<sup>34</sup>. Although the self-portraits have undergone changes during periods of abstractionism and surrealism, they retain basic features: distorted wide open eyes, that do not engage the viewer but express horror, head detached from the ground and environment, existing in a void<sup>35</sup>.

French-Armenian artist Melkon Kebedjian (1880-1949) was born in Akn (the Ottoman Empire) in 1880, he immigrated to France in 1923, when he was over forty. According to the Armenian writer and translator Vahram Tsovak, Kebedjian was not very proficient in French and did not contact much with French authors or publishers, while if he did, “his art would have been widely acknowledged by the

---

<sup>30</sup> [www.larousse.fr](http://www.larousse.fr)

<sup>31</sup> In **Deniau** 2017, 24.

<sup>32</sup> The first monograph about Tutundjian's art was published in Paris in 1994 by Gladys Fabre (**Fabre** 1994). In Armenia the first to study the painter's art were art historian Ararat Aghasyan (**Աղասյան** 1991, **Aghasyan** 1995, **Աղասյան** 1997) and Shahen Khachatryan (**Խաչատրյան** 1991):

<sup>33</sup> See **Murachanian** 2011.

<sup>34</sup> **Murachanian** 2011, 139.

<sup>35</sup> On the symbols of Armenian Genocide in Tutundjian surrealistic works see also: **Աբաղյան, ԳարսանՖերյան** 2015:

### **Kamalyan M.**

---

strictest requirements of Parisian art critics”<sup>36</sup>. In 1930 the painter’s first personal exhibition in the studio of the mapologist and geographer Zadik Khanzadian aroused interest. In the preface of the exhibition's catalogue French art critic and symbolist poet Gustave Kahn noted that Kebabdjian “owns personal secrets of magic, and his artistic mysteries cannot be understood by ignoring the history and fate of Armenia”<sup>37</sup>. Indeed the theme of the Genocide and nostalgia, beautiful renditions of Armenian ornaments, illuminated letters inspired from medieval Armenian manuscripts, as well as illustrations to works by Avetik Isahakyan, Missak Manouchian, Vazgen Shushanian, Nshan Beshiktashlian and other Armenian writers, to Archag Tchobanian's "Anahit" journal and other Armenian periodicals occupied a great part of his oeuvre<sup>38</sup>.

The art of this self-taught immigrant seems to be marginalized from the mainstream. However, like his more famous compatriots’ works, it was highly worthy and potent, both in terms of content and artistic expression. Upon looking at his art one wonders on the talent, virtuosity of his paintings, where the touch of surrealism, poetic expressionism, mysticism are combined with profound symbolic meaning. Philosophy of life, issues of morality, meditation upon the eternal and ephemeral, the cost of greediness and all-permissiveness convey highly humanistic and universal message, which is still relevant today.

In the art of Sarkis Katchadourian the East and West criss-cross, mutually enrich each other. He was born in Malatia (Turkey) in 1886. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, and later - at the École des Arts Décoratifs of Paris, where he gained the first medal. Upon his artistic formation great was the impact of the French Impressionism and the Fauvist art, and also the German symbolism, with which he got acquainted during his stay in Munich. Being one of the founders of the First Union of Armenian artists in 1916, in Tiflis, he participated in their group exhibitions in Tiflis, Yerevan, Constantinople from 1917 to 1921.

From 1915 to 1921 Katchadourian created a gallery of portraits of the Armenian fugitives piled in Etchmiadzin, Yerevan, Tiflis, Batumi, at stations, courtyards of churches and monasteries, dressed in national clothes, displaying a wide range of emotional states. During the same period his brush gave birth to

---

<sup>36</sup> In **Չուրասուղեան** 1989, 334.

<sup>37</sup> In **Չուրասուղեան** 1989, 334.

<sup>38</sup> See **Չուրասուղեան** 1989, 327–339.

## Armenian Diasporic Artists in France...

---

---

images of Armenian feasts and views of Armenian nature<sup>39</sup>.

These works were on display at his personal exhibitions organized in Cairo, Alexandria (1922), Vienna (1923), Paris and Brussels (1924), London (1925). In 1924 an album consisting of 43 colored reproductions under the title of “Armenia” was published in Vienna<sup>40</sup>. The articles preceding the reproductions were multilingual and written by Jozef Strzygowsky (in German), Frederic Macler (in French), A. Levetus (in English), holy father Nerses Akinian (in Armenian), etc.

Paradoxically, the adoption of the European artistic language promoted the creation of truly national images, testifying to the vitality of the Armenian national cultural heritage. “Though he has learned much from the West, he has not allowed western influence to prevail over his native thought and expression”, wrote British-Austrian art historian, journalist Amelia Levetus<sup>41</sup>. Whereas, the renowned English graphic artist Franck Brangwyn wrote: “... We have to thank this artist for familiarizing us with his picturesque country, splendors of which have not been noticed by European artists. And all this is rendered with rich coloring, depth of feeling and force of expression which make Katchadourian a national painter of his country, whom we welcome in the European artistic world” (R.A. Londres, 1925)<sup>42</sup>.

In 1926 the painter settled in Paris, where along with his compatriots Hovsep Pushman (president), Raphael Chichmanian, Edgar Chahine and Vardan Mahokian he founded the Group of Armenian artists *Ani*. The group united Diasporic Armenian artists in successive group exhibitions organized in Paris (1927, 1930), Brussels (1928).

### **Conclusion**

As a result of the Genocide and forced dispersal of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Armenians found themselves in France. Paris of that time was a fruitful ground for talents to develop and manifest themselves. They managed to integrate into the French society, distinguish themselves and contribute to the cultural treasury of France by producing works of high artistic merit and humanistic content, endowed with lyricism, spiritual and philosophical contemplation. A return to humanity in the post-war context was very relevant. Their contribution to the culture of France was acknowledged by the state,

---

<sup>39</sup> Աղասյան 2004, 407–411:

<sup>40</sup> Strzygowsky et al. MCMXXIV.

<sup>41</sup> Strzygowsky et al. MCMXXIV. 14.

<sup>42</sup> Avédissian 1959, 251.

cultural organizations and art critics, which resulted in titles, numerous prizes and awards, as well as studies and reviews.

Adopting the methods of European art, French-Armenian painters produced oeuvre which was more or less influenced by their own culture, belief and memory.

The tragedy of the Genocide left an indelible mark on their personalities. They perceived the world through the lenses of anguish and deep sorrow imposed by their experience, and were in a continuous search for humanity and a sense of life. Direct reference to the tragedy was presented in the themes of massacres, deportation, martyrdom, survival.

Nostalgia, homesickness was another theme through which the Diasporic aesthetics of French-Armenian artists was manifested. Armenia with its medieval churches and monasteries and Armenian-speaking people provided a sense of affiliation, a feeling of regained motherland. Galleries of Armenian religious architectural pearls and Armenian people in national clothes were successfully exposed to European public and highly appreciated, while testifying to the spirit and vitality of the Armenian cultural heritage.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Aghasyan A.** 1995, Léon (Lewon) Tutundjian, Armenien Wiederentdeckung einer alten Kulturlandschaft. Museum Bochum, 387–388.

**Avédissian O.** 1959, Peintres et sculpteurs Arméniens du 19ème siècle a nos jours précédé d'un aperçu sur l'art ancien, Le Caire, «Amis de la culture Arménienne», 493 p.

**Cartier J.-A.** 1957, Janssem, Genève, Pierre Cailler, 33 p.

**Carzou** 2007, Catalogue réalisé à l'occasion de l'exposition Carzou organisée par la mairie d'Orsay du 16 mai au 10 juin 2007. Préface par Aubry M.-H., Lauriat M. et Carzou J.-M. Paris, « SIO », 59 p.

**Carzou** 2007, Fondation Carzou, exposition du centenaire. Préface par La Rocca V., Antiq P., Moynier J. et Carzou J.-M. 2007, Marseille, « Transbordeurs », 83 p.

**Carzou.** Mon Apocalypse // <http://www.fondationcarzou.fr/index.php/fr/la-chapelle>.

**d'ARTHEZ S.** 1978, Mutaſian: Avec une biographie, une bibliographie et une documentation complète sur le peintre et son oeuvre. Quelques extraits de presse et 64 reproductions, dont 15 en couleurs, Paris, « S.E.G. », 139 p.

**Deniau M.** 2017, Léon Tutundjian, biomorphic and geometric reversies. Introduction to the work of Léon Tutundjian, Introduction by Fabre G., Paris, « Fondation Léon Tutundjian », 72 p.

**Fels F.** 1959, Carzou, Avec une biographie, une bibliographie et une documentation complète sur le peintre et son oeuvre, Genève, Pierre Cailler, 88 p.+ ill.

**Gladys F.** 1994, Tutundjian, Paris, «Éditions du Regards», 175 p.

**Janssem Dessins** 1999, Préface par Campagne J.-M. Paris, «Galerie Matignon», 176 p.

## Armenian Diasporic Artists in France...

**Jeranian (Album)** 1983, Préface par Peyrefitte R., Bercoff A, Antonova I., Mourgue G., Chabanon J., Dornand G., Ville R. Paris, «Arts Contemporains», 95 p.

**Jeranian R.**, Avec une biographie, une bibliographie et une documentation complète sur le peintre et son oeuvre. Preface par Ville R., Mourgue G., Chabanon J., Bercoff A., Bernand G. 1974, «Arts contemporains», 136 p., ill.

**Keusseyan K.** 1982, Carzou, Painter of a magic world, Michigan, «AGBU», 201 p., ill.

**Mazars P.** 1974, Jansem, Monte-Carlo, «André Sauret», 186 p.

**Murachanian J.** 2011, Léon Tutundjian-Trauma in Art, The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies, Volume 1 of Armenian studies, «Transaction» publisher, 121-142 pp.

**Murachanian J.-L.** 2011, Léon Tutundjian: Trauma, Identity and Modern Art in the Aftermath of Genocide, Michigan, «Proquest», Umi Dissertation Publishing, 348 p.

**Mutafian Z.** 1982, Chant d'Arménie. 24 articles en Arménien avec leur traduction française, 82 reproductions de tableaux, préface par Mutafian C., Saint-Lazare, Venise, « Tipolitografia Armena », 221 p.

**Sarkis Katchadourian.** Armenia. Album. Préface par Strzygowsky J., Macler F., Levetus A. et al. MCMXXIV., Wien, 21 p.

[www.jeranian.com](http://www.jeranian.com).

[www.larousse.fr](http://www.larousse.fr).

**Zahar M.** 1964, Jansem, Genève, « Pierre Cailler », 45 p.

**Zahar M.** 1969, Shart. Avec une biographie, une bibliographie et une documentation complète sur le peintre et son oeuvre. Genève, « Pierre Cailler », 43 p., ill.

**Աբաղյան Ա., Գարսեֆերյան Ի.** 2015, Հայոց Մեծ Եղեռնի խորհրդանիշները Լևոն Թութունջյանի սյուրռեալիստական աշխատանքներում, Կանթեղ գիտական հոդվածների ժողովածու, N 1, էջ 241–249, Երևան, «Ասողիկ» հրատարակչություն:

**Աղասյան Ա.** 1991, Հայաստան-Ֆրանսիա. գեղարվեստական կապերը XX դարում, Սովետական արվեստ, Երևան, Հրատարակչություն արվեստի վարչության, Հ. 4, էջ 17–22:

**Աղասյան Ա.** 1997, Լևոն Թութունջյանի երրորդ վերադարձը, Հայ-Ֆրանսիական պատմաաշակութային առնչություններ, Միջազգային երկրորդ կոնֆերանս (Երևան, 8–9 սեպտեմբերի, 1995), Զեկուցումների ժողովածու, Երևան, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ հրատարակչություն, էջ 15–21:

**Աղասյան Ա.** 2004, Սարգիս Խաչատուրյանի արվեստը Արևելք-Արևմուտք խաչմերուկում, Հայագիտության արդի վիճակը և զարգացման հեռանկարները, Զեկուցումների ժողովածու, Երևան, «Տիգրան Մեծ», էջ 407–411:

«...իմ մեջ խորը վիշտ կտեսնենք»... Ժանսեմ, [panorama.am](http://panorama.am), 31/08/2013 // <https://www.panorama.am/am/news/2013/08/31/jansem/453386>:

**Խաչատրյան Շ.** 1991, Ֆրանսահայ կերպարվեստ, Երևան, «Անահիտ», էջ 69–72:

**Չուգասզեան Լ.** 1989, Մելքոն Քեպասպճեան գունաւոր երազների նկարիչ, Բազմավեպ հայագիտական-բանասիրական-գրական հանդես, ՃԽԷ. տարի, թիւ 1–4, ՌՆԼԸ-ՌՆԼԹ, Վենետիկ-Ս. Ղազար, էջ 327–339:

---

---

**ՀԱՅ ՆԿԱՐԻՉՆԵՐԸ ՖՐԱՆՍԻԱՅՈՒՄ. ՀԱՋՈՂՎԱԾ  
ԻՆՏԵԳՐՈՒՄ՝ ՍԵՓԱԿԱՆ ԱՐՄԱՏՆԵՐԻ ՊԱՀՊԱՆՄԱՄԲ**

**ՔԱՄԱԼՅԱՆ Մ.**

**Ամփոփում**

**Քանալի բառեր՝** ֆրանսահայ նկարիչներ, ազգային ինքնություն, գեղարվեստական միություններ, Գառզու, Ժանսեմ, Մելքոն Քեպապչյան, Ռիշար Ժերանյան:

Ժամանակակից Հայկական Սփյուռքը ձևավորվել է Օսմանյան կառավարության կողմից իրականացված ցեղասպանության արդյունքում (1915–1923): Գեղարվեստական առումով ամենաակնառուն է Ֆրանսիայի սփյուռքահայ համայնքը: Ծագումով հայ ֆրանսիացի նկարիչները ուսումնասիրում և յուրացնում էին ժամանակակից եվրոպական արվեստի մեթոդները՝ ստեղծելով աշխատանքներ, որոնցում զգացվում էր սեփական մշակութային ժառանգության, հավատի և ազգային հիշողության ազդեցությունը: Նրանք ստեղծում էին գեղարվեստական միություններ, ինչպիսիք էին «Անին» (1926), «Ազատ արվեստագետների միությունը» (1931) և «Թորոս Ռոսլինը» (1968), որոնք գնահատվում էին ըստ արժանվույն: Այս արվեստագետների նպատակն էր արտահայտել իրենց շնորհակալությունը Ֆրանսիային՝ ցուցադրելով իրենց ներհյուսումը Ֆրանսիական մշակույթին և միևնույն ժամանակ ապացուցելով սեփական ազգային, պատմական և մշակութային ժառանգության ոգին և կենսունակությունը: Այդ նկարիչների՝ գեղարվեստական առումով բարձրաժեք և հումանիստական ստեղծագործությունները Ֆրանսիան ընդունեց որպես ներդրում իր սեփական մշակութային գանձանակ: Սփյուռքահայ նկարիչներ Գառզուի, Ժանսեմի, Շարթի, Մելքոն Քեպապչյանի, Զարեհ Մութաֆյանի, Ռիշար Ժերանյանի օրինակով սույն հոդվածը նպատակ ունի լուսաբանելու, թե ինչպես ֆրանսիահայ նկարիչներին հաջողվեց այս կամ այն չափով ինտեգրվել ֆրանսիական մշակույթի մեջ՝ պահպանելով ազգային ինքնությունն ու ոգին:

## АРМЯНСКИЕ ХУДОЖНИКИ ВО ФРАНЦИИ: УСПЕШНАЯ ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ С СОХРАНЕНИЕМ СВОИХ КОРНЕЙ

КАМАЛЯН М.

### Резюме

**Ключевые слова:** французско-армянские художники, национальная идентичность, художественные сообщества, Карзу, Жансем, Мелкон Кепапчян, Ришар Жеранян.

Армянская диаспора сформировалась в результате геноцида армян в Османской империи (1915–1923). Одной из наиболее выдающихся общин не только с точки зрения населения, но и художественных достижений была диаспора Франции. Французские художники армянского происхождения изучали и усваивали методы современного европейского искусства, создавая работы, которые так или иначе были обусловлены культурными традициями, верой и национальной памятью. Они основали художественные сообщества, такие как «Ани» (1926), «Сообщество свободных армянских художников» (1931) и «Торос Рослин» (1968), и многие из них снискали заслуженную славу. Их целью было выразить свою признательность Франции и продемонстрировать степень своей интегрированности во французскую культуру, но с сохранением своего культурного, исторического и национального наследия. Творчество армянских художников Карзу, Жансема, Шарта, Мелкона Кепапчяна, Заре Мутафяна, Ришара Жераняна явилось вкладом в мировую культуру.