

## **HAKOB GURDJIAN: FROM SHUSHI TO PARIS\***

**Keywords** – Hakob Gurdjian, Armenia, Artsakh, Shushi, armenian sculpture, portrait, portrait bust, 20<sup>th</sup>-century French Art, Auguste Rodin, the East and the West.

In the background of Shushi's panorama of theatrical, musical, and ethnographic presence and thought, Armenian sculptor Hakob Gurdjian is formed as an individual who is gradually approaching the word sculptor. Being one of the cultural centers of Artsakh and the region and constantly distinguished by its cultural emphasis, Shushi was an important and influential starting point for Gurdjian.

Continuing his education in Moscow and receiving continuous sculptural guidance from the surroundings he was in, Gurdjian eventually found himself in France, where the connection with the word sculptor reached inseparableness. Such a geography of education, of course, also defines and formulates the course and nature of Gurdjian's art. In addition, Gurdjian creates his sculptural language and the visual “dictionary” that describes him as an artist thanks to museum visits, his independent studies and working in the studio of Auguste Rodin. Being the direct bearer of cultures and places and inheriting from the past things that are not even inheritable, Gurdjian created his own style and sculptural language where East and West meet. Since Gurdjian's art “built” a structure with the cornerstones of Armenian culture, which was eventually established in France, this article aims to present the geographical and mental realities that preceded and accompanied the creation of that structure.

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\* Հոդվածն ընդունվել է տպագրության 13.09.2024:

## Introduction

Hakob Gurdjian was born in 1881 in Shushi<sup>1</sup>. He is one of the first Armenian sculptors to receive international recognition. He was educated in France and his artistic style was mainly created and developed there. Still, he significantly responded to the Armenian reality, carried it within himself, brought it into the space of memory and experience and also defined the Armenian reality within the framework of his art, mainly through the portrait sculptures of Armenian figures. Gurdjian's work, as a continuous result, was influenced first by the Russian and then by the French school, taking both as a guiding line and a universal cultural image that formed his style.

Hakob Gurdjian was born into a patriarchal Armenian family. There is not much information about his family, early childhood, and youth, but we know that his father was a retailer, and had eight children, of which Hakob was the sixth. After the untimely death of their parents, the brothers and sisters were raised by their older brother, Grigor. Hakob studied at Shushi Real School from 1889 to 1896, but during his school years, he used to play with mud on the street and make sculptures, as a result of which his elder brother scolded him for dirtying his clothes. In response to all those reproaches, Hakob said: “Mud and stone will be my life”<sup>2</sup>.

Hakob Gurdjian's younger sister, Maro, wrote in Hakob Gurdjian's biography, addressed to art historian Daniel Dznuni, that Hakob began to show his love and ability for plastering very early: “He used to make various toys to make me happy as a child: dolls, kittens, dogs; they were so good that all our friends were amazed”<sup>3</sup>.

From the second half of the 19th century, Shushi became Artsakh's administrative, economic, educational, and cultural center. In the 80s of the 19th century, the city had four churches and one nunnery. Holy All Savior Ghazanchetsots Church, the construction of which continued for 20 years, was especially magnificent. It was built in 1868-1887. In Shushi, in 1881, a Real school was opened, then a library-reading room<sup>4</sup>. The city had two printing houses, one of which was the printing house of the Armenian Spiritual Inspectorate, opened in the 1830s by the efforts of Metropolitan Baghdasar, and the second one was A. Mahtesi-Hakobian's printing house, which was opened in 1877<sup>5</sup>.

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1 **Տոնիկյան Ա.**, Հակոբ Գյուրջյան, Եր., Հայաստանի նկարչի տան և Սփյուռքահայության հետ մշակութային կապի կոմիտեի հրատ., 1966 թ., p. 1.

2 **Պեշկյաշևեան Ն.**, Արձանագործ Յակոբ Գիւրջեան, «Հայրենիք», Նյու Յորք, 02.02.1951:

3 **Մուրադյան Ս.**, Հակոբ Գյուրջյանի մասին, Հուշածեռագրային բաժին, ֆ-48, ձեռագիր տետր, ինվ. 6491, Եր., Հայաստանի ազգային պատկերասրահ, 1960 թ. (թարգմ. Ռուսերենից Աիդա Հարությունյանի).

4 **Աբրահամյան Հ.**, Շուշիի համայնապատկերը (19-րդ դար), էջ 8, 10, Մեսրոպ Մաշտոց համալսարանի լրատու, Ստեփանակերտ, «Դիզակ Պլյուս» հրատ., 2013.

5 **Լալայան Ե.**, Երկեր, հատ. 2, Եր., 1988 թ., p. 94.

However, Armenian, Russian, Turkish, and foreign sources writing about Shushi emphasize it as a cultural center. Petros Adamian, Stepanos and Alma Safrazian, Mari Zabel, Hovhannes Abelian, Gevorg Petrosian, Siranuysh, Satenik Adamian, Hovhannes Zarifian and other actors visited Shushi to play theater performances since the 1880s<sup>6</sup>. Shushi was in the realm of theatrical developments and in the presence of theater figures. Still, Shushi's dramatic life took a complete and regular course after Mkrtych (Nikita) Khandamirian's return from his trips to Paris<sup>7</sup>. Having received an education in France and being aware of the local theatrical events, M. Khandamirian refined his artistic taste and formed the theatrical image of Shushi which he was to create later. Thanks to his efforts, in 1891, the newly built theater in Shushi began to expand its scope of activities. The Khandamirian Theater had a stage meeting all the technical requirements of that period; a spacious hall, a vast and comfortable foyer, and a dormitory for actors were also planned in the building, and the theater library was located on the first floor of the building<sup>8</sup>.

In 1895 G. Mirzoian and S. Demurian, who directed A. Tigranian's opera 'Anoush' in 1916-17, organized a choir and gave concerts here. At various times, famous Armenian singers and songwriters Komitas, Kristapor Kara-Murza, Arshak Kostandian, Beglar Amirjanian, Nerses Shahlamian, soloist of the Great Theater, Grigor Syuni (Mirzoian), Daniel Ghazarian, Nikolay Teymurazian, Yeghishe Baghdasarian and others have given concerts in Shushi<sup>9</sup>.

Famous songwriter, composer, musical-social figure, musician, critic, and conductor Kristapor Kara-Murza, while traveling in Karabakh, collected many folk songs.

It is not for nothing that contemporaries called Shushi the "Conservatory of Transcaucasia". Hakob Gurdjian was also a student of that "conservatory", because in 1894, when Kristapor Kara-Murza gathered a choir in Shushi to perform Armenian folk and spiritual songs, the amateur choir involved 13-year-old Hakob Gurdjian<sup>10</sup>. He also sang in the choir as a soloist. Young Hakob Gurdjian was not only interested in

6 Հայրապետյան Թ., Թատերական կյանքը Շուշիում (XIX դարի երկրորդ կես և XX դարի առաջին տասնամյակներ), էջ 310-311, «Շուշին հայոց քաղաքակրթության օրրան. Շուշիի ազատագրման 15-րդ տարեդարձին նվիրված գիտաժողովի նյութեր», Եր., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ., 2007.

7 Օրդյան Գ., Շուշիի Խանդամիրյան թատրոնը, էջ 323, «Շուշին հայոց քաղաքակրթության օրրան. Շուշիի ազատագրման 15-րդ տարեդարձին նվիրված գիտաժողովի նյութեր», Եր., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ., 2007.

8 Խանդամիրյան Բ., Հարությունյան Ս., էջեր Շուշիի հայ թատրոնի անցյալից, Եր., 1978 թ., pp. 11-12.

9 Տե՛ս Բալայան Վ., Արցախի պատմություն. հնադարից մինչև մեր օրեր, Եր., 2002 թ., pp. 290-291:

10 Մղասյան Ա., Շուշեցի մեծ քանդակագործը (Հակոբ Գյուրջյանի ծննդյան 125-ամյակի առթիվ), в кн. Сборник материалов международной конференции «Нагорно-Карабахская Республика: прошлое, настоящее и будущее», Ереван, изд. Ереванского университета, 2007 р. 254.

music, but he was also present in the general cultural life of Shushi, as he played Abisoghom Agha in the Khandamirian Theater and led dances many times<sup>11</sup>. The cultural panorama of Shushi, which was drawn from the 1880s onwards, got its mental continuation step by step in everyday life of young Hakob Gurdjian.

At the end of the 1800s, Armenian archaeological, ethnographic, and scientific studies gained momentum in Shushi, which was the result of the hard work and efforts of Yervand Lalaian. “Ethnographic Journal” was the first Armenian ethnographic periodical. It was published in 26 volumes: the first in 1896 in Shushi, the rest in Tiflis. Materials and studies related to Armenian ethnography, folklore, archeology, history, lithography, law, and art were published in the “Ethnographic Journal.” The founding editor of the journal was Yervand Lalaian, who, after receiving a solid education at the University of Geneva, returned to Transcaucasia, and in 1895-1897, taught in Shushi diocesan school. He brought together the best scientific forces of the time (M. Abeghian, T. Toramanian, H. Atcharian, Leo and others).

In the first edition of “Ethnological Journal” Lalaian states: “We carry the stones and blessed is he who will come with those stones to build the building of national independence and draw the laws of universal evolution”<sup>12</sup>.

## 1. The Chorus, the Repetition

From 1899 to 1904, H. Gurdjian studied at Fiedler's private school of realism in Moscow (Figure 1), mastering the profession of a draughtsman. Ivan Fiedler was the owner and director of a real private school. The school was considered one of the best educational institutions of the time in the city. According to musicologist, and songwriter Leonid Sabaneev's memoirs, among school teachers and students “there were colorful figures and even those who later became famous.”<sup>13</sup>

Physicist, and academician Vasiliy Shuleykin spoke warmly about the school, especially highlighting the teaching staff. Leonid Sabaneev also notes that almost all the school teachers had left-wing political views<sup>14</sup>.

This institution created an environment for Hakob Gurdjian's sculptural interests to emerge and external impulses to be internalized. Architect Ivan Fidler writes about H. Gurdjian in his memoirs: “The school paid attention to the young man's

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11 Մելիք-Փարսադանեանց Ա., Յակովբ Գիւրջեան, «Հայաստանի կոչնակ», Նյու Յորք, 02.04.1949, p. 348.

12 Լալայեան Ե., Հրատարակչից, «Ազգագրական հանդես», Գիրք Ա, Շուշի, 1896 թ., էջ 6:

13 Леонтьев Я., Меленберг А., Место бунта: Московское восстание в декабре 1905 г. стало первым серьёзным опытом городской герильи в России, «Политический журнал», Архив N 1 (96) / 16 января 2006.

14 Романюк С., Из истории московских переулков. Глава XXI. М., 1988.

abilities, and some of his works were “showcased” in the school window”<sup>15</sup>. In those years H. Gurdjian got close to the Russian sculptor, graphic designer, member of the Society for Travelling Art Exhibitions *Передвижники* *Peredvizhniki* “The Wanderers” Nikolai Andreev<sup>16</sup>. He also got to know the sculptor Paolo Troubetzkoy, who had recently moved to Moscow, who had already gained great fame in Italy, the USA and France. On the advice of Ivan Fidler, the young man, obsessed with sculpture, showed his works to P. Troubetzkoy. As he notes. “Before going to Paris, I received some advice from the sculptor Troubetzkoy, who exceptionally gave me full opportunity to work freely in his studio, because he did not like to have students”<sup>17</sup>.

In 1900, H. Gurdjian met artist Stepan Aghajanian in Shushi during the summer holidays. Stepan Aghajanian returned to Shushi immediately after finishing his studies at the Julian Academy in Paris. Long-term conversations, and joint studies emphasized H. Gurdjian’s belief in the essence of his formulation “Mud and stone will be my life”.

With his personality, Hakob Gurdjian seemed to appear where there were culture and art; he could form an attitude towards himself, gain friends and surround himself with like-minded people. The people he met were guides, words of affirmation and return to his dreams, perhaps goals or visions that still seemed unreal, in the absence of materiality, to come true. Yervand Lalaian was perhaps the first of those people, a teacher who, after graduating from the University of Geneva, working for the Mekhitarists in Vienna for half a year, studying at the School of Anthropology in Paris, then after completing the pedagogy course at the University of London and receiving a pedagogic qualification<sup>18</sup>, came to Shushi and engaged in teaching, and Hakob Gurdjian was one of his students. During his studies at the Moscow Real School, H. Gurdjian was close to father and son Ivan Fiedlers, who eventually found refuge in Paris, where father Fiedler opened a Russian gymnasium (probably in 1908)<sup>19</sup> and son studied at a higher school of architecture (graduated in 1914)<sup>20</sup>. During his studies at Fidler's Real School, as was already mentioned, H. Gurdjian got acquainted with the sculptor Paolo Troubetzkoy, who, although did not receive a systematic education, was part of the artistic currents of Italy, the USA and France<sup>21</sup>. The period of summer

15 **Драмбян Р.**, Акоп Гюрджян. Ереван, Изд-во АН Арм ССР, 1973, р. 14.

16 **Агасян А.**, Мастера армянского изобразительного искусства нового времени и Шуши, р. 131., «Феномен Шуши историко-политологическое исследование (коллективная монография)», N 1-2 (25-26), 2013.

17 **Драмбян Р.**, *ibidem*.

18 **Լալայան Ե.**, Երկեր (հատոր I), Հայկական ՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ., Եր., 1983 թ., р. 8.

19 **Фортинский С.**, Елизавета Сергеевна Кругликова. Жизнь и творчество, Ленинград, «Художник РСФСР», 1969.

20 **Мнухин Л., Авриль М., Лосская В.**, Российское зарубежье во Франции 1919-2000, Москва, «Наука», 2008.

21 **Домогацкая С.**, Паоло Трубетцкой и Россия, <https://www.tg-m.ru/articles/2-2009-23/paolo-trubetskoi-i-rossiya>, 2009 / (մուտք՝ 13.06.2024).

holidays introduced Gurdjian to Stepan Aghajanian, who studied at the painting studio in Marseille (1886-1890), then at the Julian Academy in Paris (1897-1900), and returned to Shushi in 1900<sup>22</sup>.

As can be seen, many people around Gurdjian had gone through Parisian education, as Smbat Shahaziz noted writing about Stepanos Nazariants: “His inner man was assimilated and strengthened with such endurance that what was then called a ban became for him a source of new diligence”<sup>23</sup>. H. Gurdjian communicated with those who educated and formed their “inner man.” It is known that P. Troubetzkoy advised Gurdjian to continue sculpting and, if possible, to continue his studies in Paris. Also, Aghajanian, still in Shushi, seeing Gurdjian's abilities, encouraged him with his advice and finally offered to enter the same institution that he had graduated from, Julian's Academy<sup>24</sup>.

## 2. The Point of Return to the Self

After graduating from Fiedler's Real School, in 1904-1906, H. Gurdjian served as a volunteer soldier in the engineering battalion of Baku. During those years, he witnessed the mass massacres of Armenians,<sup>25</sup> which later, in 1912, he relived and formulated as a work with the large sculptural plaster composition “Migration” (1912, plaster, 21x19x8, NGA, Figure 2). In 1906, he married Haykanush Ghalamian, the daughter of a man of means Gerasim Ghalamian from Shushi and left for France. The Ghalamian family, taking care of the well-being of their daughter's new family, wanted Hakob to study law or medicine; in addition, they sponsored Gurdjian's studies in France, so in 1906, he entered the Medical Faculty of the University of Montpellier,<sup>26</sup> studied anthropotomy, but this profession could not maintain H. Gurdjian's interest, he resisted the future prosperity offered by profession and, in 1907 entered the Académie Julian in Paris (Figure 3, 4). The foreign travelers who visited Shushi called it “Armenians” little Paris,” and having been born in the “miniature” of Paris, Hakob Gurdjian went to live and study in the real, “big French Paris”.

At Julian Academy in Paris, Gurdjian's teachers were sculptors Paul Landowski, Raoul Charles Verlet and Henri-Léon Greber. They did not believe that the young man had not received a sculptural education before entering the academy because his preparation was already great but H. Gurdjian answered that his only

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22 Ստեփան Աղաջանյան. <http://www.matyan.am/?p=983&l=am/> (մուտք՝ 13.06.2024):

23 **Նանունյան Ռ.**, Հուշեր և հոդվածներ Ստեփանոս Նազարյանի մասին, «Գիտություն» հրատ., Եր., 1996 թ..

24 **Իգիթյան Հ.**, Հակոբ Գյուրջյան, Եր., «Հայաստան» հրատ., 1966 թ., էջ 6.

25 **Մարգարյան Ա.**, Հակոբ Գյուրջյան, Եր., Հայաստանի ազգային պատկերասրահի հրատ., 2007 թ., p. 91.

26 **Մարգարյան Ա.**, *ibidem*.

school until that day was the mud of the streets of Shushi, he had not been to any other school apart from that school. In two years, H. Gurdjian graduated from the Julian Academy with medals and orders (Figure 5, 6) but voluntarily remained there for another year<sup>27</sup>. During his studies at the Academy, he attended Auguste Rodin's studio, where he indirectly apprenticed to Rodin<sup>28</sup>.

In 1911, he sent a work to the Salon of the National Society of Fine Arts; Guillaume Jeannot noticed his highly nuanced “Bust of a Girl” and exhibited it at Gilles Place. After being exhibited at the salon of French artists twice, in 1913 and 1914, H. Gurdjian left France, being called up for military service in Russia because he had to fulfill his military duty in the First World War<sup>29</sup>.

In 1916, he lived in Tiflis for several months, created portraits of Alexander Shirvanzade, Melik Azariants, Zoravar Andranik<sup>30</sup> (not preserved) and others, and participated in the exhibitions of the Union of Armenian Artists. In Moscow, he participated in the exhibition of “*Мир Искусства*” *Mir Iskusstva* “World of Art” company, which he had worked with since 1912. Most of the oral stories about the works created by Gurdjian have been preserved during that period. In 1917-1921, Gurdjian's life was in a tense and difficult work process, communist ideas, and cultural programs. He got involved in the works of “Monumental Propaganda”<sup>31</sup>. After the October Revolution, the Soviet government ordered the construction of a monument dedicated to the artist Vrubel; the sculptor worked on the Vrubel monument for two years, the clay model was ready, but they could not provide the necessary heating in the studio, and in those cold conditions, Gurdjian's two years of work crumbled. In general, many of Gurdjian's monumental projects failed or were not implemented for some reasons (monuments of Khachatur Abovian, Alexander Pushkin, Zoravar Andranik, Minin and Pozharsky, the memorial of the Armenian soldiers who died for France in the First World War, the bust of Nerses Ashtaraketsi for the Nersisian School in Tiflis, etc.)<sup>32</sup>.

Among these projects was the monument to Karl Marx. In 1919, the Moscow Soviet organized a competition for the design of a monument to Karl Marx to be erected on Sverdlov Square. V. Lenin participated in the discussion of the submitted

27 Պեշիկբաշեան Ա., *ibidem*.

28 Մուրադյան Ա., Հակոբ Գյուրջյանի մասին, Հուշածեռագրային բաժին, ք-48, ձեռագիր տետր, ինվ. 6491, Եր., Հայաստանի ազգային պատկերասրահ, 1960.

29 Կօթիկ Ա., Յակոբ Գիւրջյան, Փարիզ, «Լէ ժէմօ» հրատ., 1952 թ., pp. 2-5.

30 Until 1937, it was owned by the artist G. Sharbabchian (Драмбян, 1973, 34).

31 The Plan of Monumental Propaganda emerged in 1918 as a result of the propaganda policy of the Soviet government. The initial plan was to demolish the monuments of ‘tsars and their servants’ and erect monuments for the ‘victims of the revolution.’ In 1918, various lists of names were approved, which included ‘revolutionaries and public figures’ from Spartacus and Brutus to G. V. Plekhanov and N. I. Kibalchich, as well as writers, poets, composers, and artists. (Монументальная пропаганда. <https://rusavangard.ru/online/history/monumentalnaya-propaganda/>).

32 Մարգարյան Ա., *ibidem*, pp. 8-9.

sketches. Of all the works, preference was given to the project of the creative group “Relief” of the Fine Arts Department of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) People's Commissariat for Education (or directly translated as the “People's Commissariat for Enlightenment”); among the creative group were S. Alyoshin, H. Gurdjian, M. Zhuravsky S. Koltsov, S. Mezentsev and I. Rachmanov. On 20 April 1920, the project of the monument was approved at the meeting of the People's Committee. A group of sculptors consisting of Alyoshin, Gurdjian and Koltsov were assigned to begin the creation of the monument. The 15-meter-high podium-like granite pedestal of the monument was crowned with a group sculpture representing six figures placed in the form of a closed spiral. It was the project of Marx's first monument, with an allegorical composition<sup>33</sup>. In 1920, on May 1, the ceremony of founding the monument “Liberated Labor” took place, in which Lenin, Lunacharsky (whose bust was also sculpted by Gurdjian in these years; it is located in the house-museum of A. Lunacharsky), Krupskaya and others took part. The film footage from this ceremony is known, where next to Lenin, we can see Gurdjian (Figure 7). The film footage gained tremendous popularity in those years, it could be seen on postcards, in articles referring to Lenin, and in biographical pages about him. However, despite the process that had already started, this huge project could not be implemented in those difficult times.

Among the unrealized projects is also the commemorative plaque dedicated to the memory of comrades-fighters who fell for the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution. On 9 May 1918, the newspaper “Известия” *Izvestija* “News” published an announcement of a closed award ceremony; the plaque to which preference was given was to be placed on Red Square. Famous sculptors from Moscow participated in the award ceremony, including Hakob Gurdjian, whose work won the second prize (by the decision of the Executive Committee of the Moscow City Council, the first prize was awarded to S. Kononov's work). Hakob Gurdjian's work was made of plaster and has not been preserved. Still, the photo of the work was published in the 7th issue (1918) of the “Творчество” *Tvorchestvo* “Creative Work” magazine, along with the words of admiration of the columnist about Gurdjian's work<sup>34</sup>. In 1921, after receiving the news that his studio in Paris was destroyed, and the works were smashed and burned, Gurdjian returned to Paris with the permission of the Soviet authorities<sup>35</sup>.

Gurdjian's sister Maro Muradian writes: “Only from the awareness that everything is lost, that he is left with nothing, as Tatiana informed us, Hakob was in

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33 Հարությունյան Լ., էջեր Հակոբ Գյուրջյանի կյանքից, «Սովետական Հայաստան», Եր., N 2, 1978 թ., p. 11.

34 Ղազարյան Մ., Միայն լուսանկարը, «Սովետական արվեստ», Եր., N 11, 1967, p.64.

35 Սուրադյան Մ., Հակոբ Գյուրջյանի մասին, Հուշածեռագրային բաժին, ֆ-48, ձեռագիր տետր, ինվ. 6491, Եր., Հայաստանի ազգային պատկերասրահ, 1960:



agony, he could not imagine that so many years of work, strength, health, had all come to nothing, he became seriously ill. Well, on this nervous ground, his hand became slightly paralyzed. During that period, the doctors temporarily forbid him to work.”<sup>36</sup> The return to Paris coincided with difficult and complex feelings, but Gurdjian's wife, Tatiana, whom the sculptor had married in Moscow after his divorce from Haykanush Ghalamian, was by his side.

Restarting, perhaps, requires a stronger will because if you have to restart, then you had a failure before, so it is difficult to believe in success again, to overcome the past, but after working in Tours for some time, Gurdjian opened a small studio in Paris and conducted courses. And it was during this period that he met Tigran Khan Kelekian, an antiquities dealer, collector, and philanthropist in Paris, who became the first appreciator of his art, and it was a meaningful assessment because Tigran Khan Kelekian enjoyed great prestige in artistic circles; his approval of any work of art was already a value and an omen opening the way. He used to buy Hakob Gurdjian's works, and exhibit them in his shops,<sup>37</sup> thereby bringing recognition to the sculptor. In 1921, Gurdjian also created the bust of Tigran Khan Kelekian (1921, plaster, 33x26.5x21, NGA, Figure 8).

In 1923 Gurdjian left for New York. In 1924, his solo exhibition was opened in “Kingor Gallery.” In 1925, he became a permanent participant in the “Salon des Tuileries” in Paris<sup>38</sup>. He created the project of the monument to the Armenian soldiers who died for France in the First World War (not realized, colored plaster, 39x22.5x24.5, NGA, Figure 9).

In 1926, a solo exhibition at the “Hotel Jean Charpentier” exhibition hall in Paris was opened (Figure 10). After these solo exhibitions in New York and Paris, Gurdjian had great success. In 1928, he received an official invitation to participate at the Belgian sculpture exhibition at the Belgian Palace of Fine Arts (Figure 11), where success did not leave him; all the exhibited works were sold, and he received personal praises from the King Albert I and the Queen. The Belgian government bought one of his works; Gurdjian sculpted a bust of Henry Le Bœuf, founder of the Belgian Chamber of Fine Arts. In Belgium, he also got to know father and son Chamkertenians, whose statues he also made. In particular, he found a friend and an artistic ideologue in his son, Nerses Chamkertenian.

At different stages of Gurdjian's biography, some people acted as supporters, friends, and the embodiment of moral ideals, who guide, orient, help and encourage him; we have already mentioned such individuals many times. Poghos Nubar Pasha was one of those great individuals, who was interested in Gurdjian's art. Like almost all such individuals, Gurdjian referred to Poghos Nubar Pasha in his art.

36 Մուրադյան Ա., Հակոբ Գյուրջյանի մասին, 1960 .

37 Մելիք Փարսատանեանց Ա., Յակովբ Գիւրջեան, «Հայաստանի կոչնակ», Նիւ Եորք, 02.04.1949, p. 324.

38 Մարգարյան Ա., ibidem, p. 92.

In 1927 he participated in an exhibition of French art in Japan. In 1928 in the exhibitions of the “Ani” Company of Armenian Fine Artists in Paris, Brussels, Antwerp. The Luxembourg Museum (now the Paris Museum of Modern Art) acquired Gurdjian's “Head of a Negro”. Gurdjian participated in the exhibition of Russian art in Paris (1930), Prague (1936), in the exhibition of S. Diaghilev's Russian ballet at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris (1939). In 1941 he participated in the exhibition of Armenian artists in Paris<sup>39</sup>.

Hakob Gurdjian's works have been exhibited in Tokyo, Oslo, Antwerp, Brussels and elsewhere. He had solo exhibitions in New York (1924), Paris (1926, posthumously in 1952), and the National Gallery of Armenia (posthumously in 1959)<sup>40</sup>.

In the last years of his life, H. Gurdjian suffered from heart disease and he was strictly forbidden to work, it was necessary to lead a quiet and reserved life<sup>41</sup>, but even in this status, he secretly made the “Negro’s head” sculpture from plaster (1948, plaster, 40x24x37.5, NGA (National Gallery of Armenia), Figure 12), which became his last work. Hakob Gurdjian died on 23 December 1948.

In 1958, according to Hakob Gurdjian's will, his widow, Tatiana Gurdjian (née Ericson), after Hakob Gurdjian’s death, married the French-Armenian journalist, public figure, and theater and film make-up artist Hakob Arakelian. With the help of Arakelian and the French-Armenian cultural figure Aghasi Darbinian, who had been a member of the Board of the French-Armenian Cultural Society since 1950, she donated 460 sculptural works and Gurdjian’s personal archive to Armenia (NGA). In 1963, the collection of Gurdjian's works was further supplemented by another forty-two sculptures donated by Hakob Arakelian (Paris)<sup>42</sup>.

Some of Hakob Gurdjian's works are also in the Royal Museum of Brussels, Centre Pompidou, the National Gallery of Jeux de Pomme in Paris, the Armenian Museum of Lebanon, and private collections.

## Conclusion

The imaginary encounter of the East and the West essentially sums up the language art historians use to refer to Hakob Gurdjian's art, because both art critics and the press call Gurdjian “a sculptor whose art makes East meet West”<sup>43</sup>. It turns out that

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39 Մարգարյան Ա., *ibidem*, p. 92.

40 Մարգարյան Ա., *ibidem*.

41 Մարգարյան Ա., *ibidem*, p. 15.

42 Մարգարյան Ա., *ibidem*, p. 92.

43 Read Appleton H., Akop Gurdjen, Whose Sculpture Makes East Meet West!, «The Brooklyn Daily Eagle», № 4, 1924, [https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/terms=Gurdjen&match=2/\(un.unp%2013.06.2024\)](https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/terms=Gurdjen&match=2/(un.unp%2013.06.2024)).

such vast geographical spaces met, were connected, and related in the domain of the art of one person, Hakob Gurdjian.

Gurdjian is isolated and almost out of touch with the 20<sup>th</sup>-century impetuous eruption of modernism, new directions, currents, and principles of interpretation of the work of art, and attempts to expand the content of the understanding of the work of art in general. Perhaps it is a willful display of loyalty and a conscientious devotion to his preference.

In the second half of the 1910s, we can sense the cubistic impact on Gurdjian's art, which gave rhythm and geometric form to his works through clear accents. But in general, Gurdjian remained true to his style and the foundation of influences that came as references mainly from ancient civilizations. Around his pure independence, he collects interpretations that create a dialogue with his art, and these interpretations are dissolved in his "autograph" through synthesis.

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Ամփոփում

## ՀԱԿՈՒ ԳՅՈՒՐԶՅԱՆ. ՇՈՒՇԻՑ ՓԱՐԻԶ

Աիդա Գ. Հարությունյան

**Բանալի բառեր** – Հակոբ Գյուրջյան, Հայաստան, Արցախ, Շուշի, հայ քանդակագործություն, դիմապատկեր, դիմաքանդակ, 20-րդ դարի ֆրանսիական արվեստ, Օգյուստ Ռոդեն, Արևելք և Արևմուտք:

XIX դարի երկրորդ կեսից Շուշիի մասին գրող հայկական, ռուսական և օտարալեզու աղբյուրները այն առանձնացնում են որպես մշակութային կենտրոն: Շուշիում մեծ ակտիվություն ուներ թատերական և երաժշտական կյանքը. թատերական կյանքը լիարժեք և կանոնավոր ընթացք է ստանում Մկրտիչ (Նիկիտա) Խանդամիրյանի փարիզյան ուղևորություններից վերադառնալուց հետո: 1895 թ. այստեղ

երգչախումբ են կազմակերպել և համերգներ տվել Գ. Միրզոյանը, Ս. Դենուրյանը, Ք. Կարա-Մուրզան, որը, շրջագայելով Արցախում, հավաքագրել է բազմաթիվ ժողովրդական երգեր:

Այս ամենը նաև հասարակական ազդեցության մեծ շրջանակ է ընդգրկել և ներգրավման առումով ունեցել է բարեփոխիչ և միջավայր սահմանող դեր: Հակոբ Գյուրջյանի առօրյայում նույնպես մշակութային այս ներկայությունն ակտիվ էր, բացի այդ՝ նրա վրա մեծ ազդեցություն է թողել ազգագրագետ, բանասիտ, հնագետ Երվանդ Լալայանը, որը Շուշիի ռեալական ուսումնարանում Հակոբ Գյուրջյանի հայոց լեզվի ուսուցիչն էր: Նրա շնորհիվ՝ Գյուրջյանը շրջում է ամբողջ արևելահայաստանով, այցելում է հատկապես եկեղեցիներ, և այդ փորձառութունը, անշուշտ, անջնջելիորեն տպավորվում է նրա հիշողության մեջ:

Հայ քանդակագործ Հակոբ Գյուրջյանը ձևավորվում է որպես անհատ Շուշիի թատերական, երաժշտական, ազգագրական իրականության խորապատկերում և գնալով ավելի ու ավելի է մոտենում «քանդակագործ» հասկացությանը:

Շարունակելով կրթությունը Մոսկվայում և քանդակագործական ուղղորդում ստանալով այն միջավայրերից, որտեղ գտնվում էր, Գյուրջյանն ի վերջո հայտնվեց Ֆրանսիայում, որտեղ «քանդակագործ» հասկացության հետ նրա կապը հասավ անքակտելիության: Կրթության այսպիսի աշխարհագրությունը սահմանում և ձևակերպում է Գյուրջյանի արվեստի զարգացման ընթացքը և բնույթը: Բացի այդ՝ Գյուրջյանը թանգարանային այցերի, ինքնուրույն ուսումնասիրությունների և Օգյուստ Ռոդենի արվեստանոցում աշխատելու շնորհիվ ստեղծում է իր քանդակային լեզուն և տեսողական այն «բառարանը», որը նկարագրում է նրան որպես արվեստագետ: Լինելով տարբեր մշակույթների ու միջավայրերի անմիջական կրողը և անցյալից ներբերելով այնպիսի տարրեր, որոնք նույնիսկ ժառանգական չեն, Գյուրջյանը ստեղծեց իր ոճը, որտեղ հանդիպում են Արևելքն ու Արևմուտքը:

Քանի որ Գյուրջյանի արվեստը «կառուցվել է» հայկական մշակույթի հիմնաքարերով և ի վերջո հաստատվել է Ֆրանսիայում, ներկա հողվածում ներկայացվում են աշխարհագրական և մտավոր այն իրողությունները, որոնք եղել են նման կառույցի ստեղծումից առաջ և դրա ընթացքում:

## АКОП ГЮРДЖЯН: ИЗ ШУШИ В ПАРИЖ

Аида Г. Арутюнян

**Ключевые слова:** Акоп Гюрджян, Армения, Арцах, Шуши, Армянская скульптура, портрет, скульптурный портрет, французское искусство XX в., Огюст Роден, Восток и Запад.

На фоне панорамы театрального, музыкального и этнографического присутствия и мыслей о Шуши армянский скульптор Акоп Гюрджян формируется как личность, постепенно все ближе и ближе приближаясь к понятию «скульптор». Будучи одним из культурных центров Арцаха и всего региона и всегда отличающийся своей культурной направленностью, Шуши был для Гюрджяна важной и влияющей на его творчество отправной точкой.

Продолжил образование в Москве, получал регулярное скульптурное руководство от среды, в которой он находился, и в конце концов Гюрджян оказался во Франции, где связь со понятием «скульптор» стала неразрывной. Такая география образования, конечно же, определяет и формирует характер искусства Гюрджяна. Кроме того, благодаря посещениям музеев, самостоятельным занятиям и работе в мастерской Огюста Родена, Гюрджян создает свой скульптурный язык и визуальный «словарь», характеризующий его как художника. Будучи непосредственным носителем разных культур, он, унаследовав от прошлого то, что не передается даже по наследству. Гюрджян создал свой собственный стиль и скульптурный язык, где встречаются Восток и Запад.

Поскольку искусство Гюрджяна «построило» структуру, основанную на краеугольных камнях армянской культуры, которая в конечном итоге утвердилась во Франции, данная статья представляет собой попытку представить географические и ментальные реалии, которые происходили в творчестве Гюрджяна до и во время создания этой структуры.

## Figures



Figure 1. P. Pavlov, *Hakob Gurdjian During His Studies at Fiedler's Private Real School*, 1904. Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. Photo: Memorial Department.



Figure 2. Hakob Gurdjian, *Migration*, 1912. Plaster, 21x19x8 cm. Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. in Irina Badalyan Իրինա Բադալյան, *Hakob Gyowrjyan Հակոբ Գյուրջյան*, Yerevan, 1982, 18. © Babken Mavisakalyan. Photo: Memorial Department.





Figure 3. *Hakob Gurdjian at the Julian Academy, 1908.* Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. Photo: Memorial Department.





Figure 4. *Group Photograph in the Studio of the Julian Academy* (Hakob Gurdjian is in the left part of the bottom row). Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. Photo: Memorial Department.



Figure 5. *Hakob Gurdjian's Medal From the Julian Academy* (obverse). Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. Photo: Memorial Department.

ՎԷՎ համահայկական հանդես, ԺԶ (ԻԲ) տարի, թիվ 3 (87), հունիս-սեպտեմբեր, 2024



Figure 6. *Hakob Gurdjian's Medal From the Julian Academy* (reverse). Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. Photo: Memorial Department.



Figure 7. *Vladimir Lenin at the Founding Ceremony of the Monument "Liberated Labor"*, 1 May 1920 (from left: Hakob Gurdjian). Moscow. Photo: <https://fotolenin.narod.ru/1920.html>.

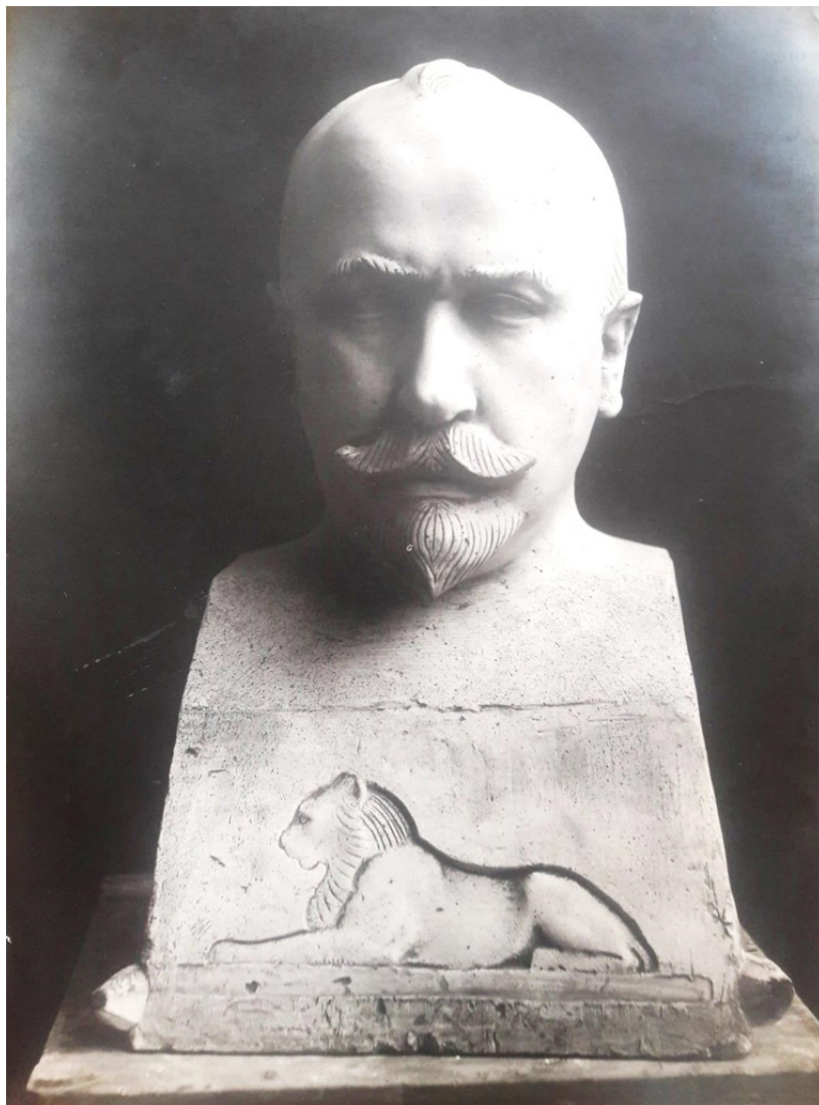


Figure 8. Hakob Gurdjian, *The Bust of Tigran Khan Kelekian*, 1921. Plaster, 33x26,5x21 cm. Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. © Ch. Lansiaux. Photo: Memorial Department.





Figure 9. Hakob Gurdjian, *The Model of the Monument to the Armenian Soldiers Who Died for France in the First World War*, 1925. Colored plaster, 39x22.5x24.5 cm. Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. Photo: Memorial Department.



Figure 10. *Hakob Gurdjian's Solo Exhibition at the "Hotel Jean Charpentier" Exhibition Hall, 1926.* Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia, Photo: Memorial Department.



Figure 11., *Exhibition Hall at the Belgian Palace of Fine Arts, 1928.* Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. © Paul Becker. Photo: Memorial Department.

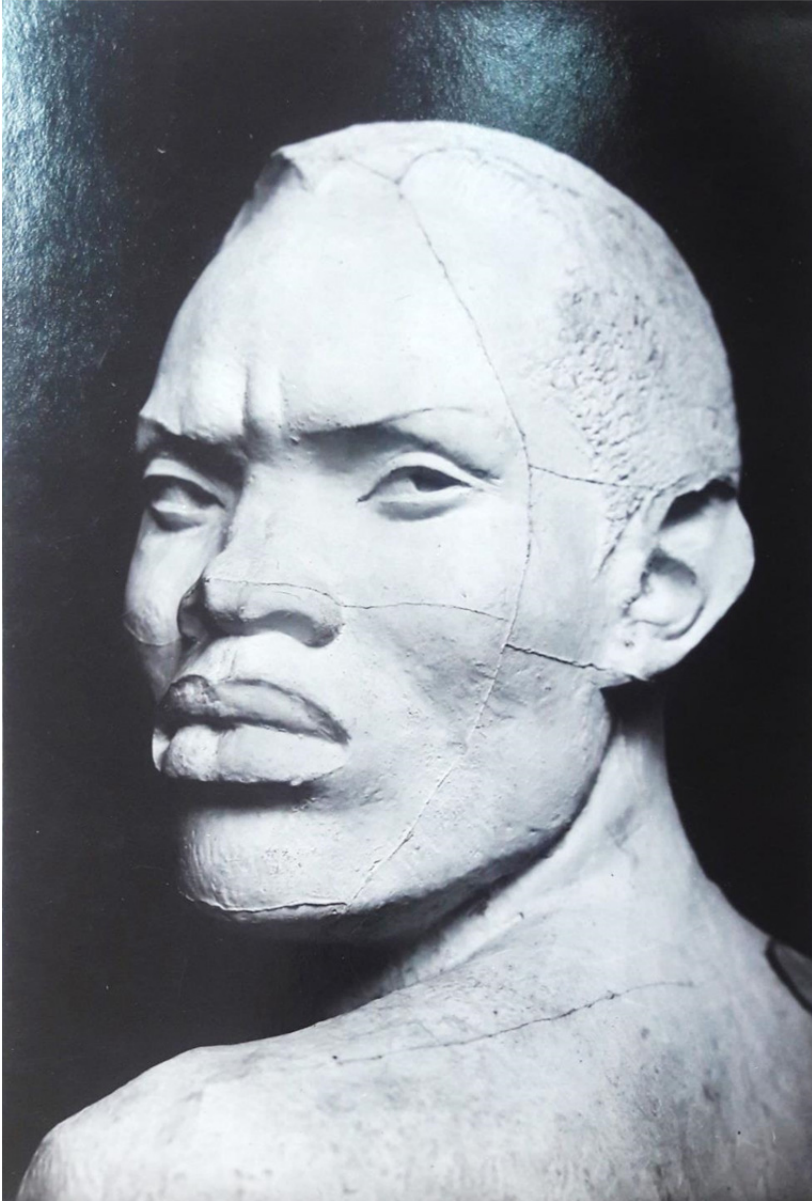


Figure 12. Hakob Gurdjian, *Head of a Negro*, 1948. Plaster, 40x24x37.5 cm. Yerevan: National Gallery of Armenia. Photo: Memorial Department

## Օգտագործված գրականության և աղբյուրների ցանկ

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