

Glendale
News-Press

New Glendale Library exhibit honors Armenian heritage



Ashot Khudaverdyan's paintings on display during the "Yerevan 2800" art exhibit at the Glendale Central Library. The paintings are part of a special 10-day exhibition at the Glendale Central Library's ReflectSpace and PassageWay galleries to celebrate Yerevan's history. (Courtesy of Glendale Central Library)

By MICHAEL LIVINGSTON

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A new art exhibit will pay homage to Armenia's capital city, a place many Glendale residents call their native home.

To celebrate the 2,800th anniversary of Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, a special 10-day exhibition at the Glendale Central Library's ReflectSpace and PassageWay galleries will celebrate the city's history.

The library's newest exhibit, "Yerevan 2800" will be in its ReflectSpace and PassageWay galleries. It is a joint effort between the city of Glendale and the Library, Arts & Culture Department in collaboration with the Yerevan Municipality Tourism Office.

"We usually approach an exhibit with contemporary art, along with historical images and context," said co-curator Ara Oshagan. "There is a huge population of Yerevanians in Glendale."

The exhibit will feature contemporary art, photography and film from eight artists — Sev Black, Sophia Gasparian, Narine Isajanyan, Edmond Keshishyan, Ashot Khudaverdyan, Karen Mirzoyan, Emily Mkrtychian and Anahid Yahjian — who have Yerevan connections.

The exhibit also comes on the heels of Armenia's "Velvet Revolution," a nonviolent grass-roots movement to remove President Serzh Sargsyan from office. Sargsyan resigned on April 23, and opposition leader Nikol Pashinian was elected prime minister on May 8.

Isajanyan, 41, was in Yerevan a few days before the exhibit opened on Wednesday.

She and her 10-year-old son were in the city for 40 days while Isajanyan worked on a group art exhibit. Isajanyan said the Yerevan people are still in the honeymoon period after the election.

"People were so happy. Everything has changed completely," Isajanyan, 51, said. "They believe the new generation will lead us to new heights."

For her portion of the exhibit, Isajanyan painted abstract pieces that symbolically represent how Yerevanians are never far from their native home.

"In America, there are a lot of nationalities. People are trying to live together," Isajanyan said Friday morning. "This is an opportunity to be together. We are bringing you our

culture, showing who we are and where we come from.”

“In my work, I show how people don’t have to physically be somewhere” to appreciate it, she said.



Artist Sev Black used torches on garbage he collected from the streets and trashcans to make his artwork. (Courtesy of Glendale Central Library)

Artist Black lived in Yerevan for 22 years and brought an interesting piece from his homeland to the exhibit — garbage.

“I’m not offended when people say, ‘What does your garbage represent?’ Sometimes people ask what I do for a living. I say, ‘Garbage collector,’” Black said Friday afternoon.

Sev Black, whose real name is Henrik Khachatryan, is presenting a collection of artwork created in Yerevan in the early 1990s from garbage.

What residents considered useless or expired, Black saw inspiration. He said his pieces are in relation to possession and how society treats inanimate items, and by extension,

people, who matter and don't matter.

"We use them, then throw them away," Black said. "Then, when it [breaks], we throw it away. And we project our way of being onto the people, too. If we can get some profit or something from them, we will have good relations with them. If not, we throw them away."

Black, 63, collected the garbage and then used different torches to create his work.

"They are like my brushes," he said.

Black considers himself a performance artist who sometimes brings the process-making of his work to the audience.

"When I was younger in Yerevan, I burned my art in public," Black said. "In one exhibition, I was burning one piece, then we would go inside to see the other."

Black said Friday he would not be burning anything during the exhibit's opening reception later that night. He will be smiling, as he will be sharing his homeland with people interested in its history, culture and people.

"I lived there all my youth and some of my adult life," Black said. "I am proud."

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