

DEATH AND REBIRTH

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Minas Kojayan, Jerusalem, 8 May 2015

Over the ages a nation's death and rebirth have been depicted by many artists in many ways in many media. The recent tableau ("Death and Rebirth") of famous Jerusalem artist Viken Lepejian portrays the destruction of the Armenian nation and its rebirth, using ceramics as 'canvas'.



The ceramic creation begins the long history of the Armenians with the descent of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat and continues on to the present day. The 3 x 1 meter ceramic tile begins with the eye of the Creator, under Whose protection stretches the symbol of the Armenian nation, Greater and Lesser Ararat. On the slopes of the snow-covered twin peaks the Armenians have built their belief system, embraced the true faith, waged heroic struggles in their mountains and on the battlefields of Avarayr and Sardarabad, developed their unique culture, language and literature, and their rich and original architecture.

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The peace-loving Armenian people are depicted with special care and with millennia-old symbols, expressing admiration for national and human values, love of freedom, which the enemy tried to scotch with the monstrous plan to erase Armenians from the face of the Earth. But Armenians have risen like the Phoenix and declared to the world, "We exist, we will persevere, and we will multiply."

Lepejian is a unique artist in his field. After graduating from the Sts. Tarkmantchats Varjaran (Holy Translators' School) in Jerusalem, he received his higher education (1969-1975) at the Fine Arts Academy in Yerevan, Armenia. He owns a studio/art store on one of the busiest streets in the Armenian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. His works have been displayed at international exhibitions and can be found all over the globe.

"Death and Rebirth" is Lepejian's tribute to the memory of two-million innocent Armenians who perished in the 1915 Genocide.

The official opening of the Armenian saga in ceramics took place on April 23, 2015, at the Armenian Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate, in the presence of Armenian and foreign dignitaries.

Characters and Details of 'Death and Rebirth'

(From left to right; from top to bottom)

The Eye of the Creator. The eye of God protects the world.

The twin peaks of Mount Ararat. The sacred, Biblical Mount Ararat, a symbol of the eternal Armenian nation, emerges from the darkness of the Flood. Noah's Ark rests atop Ararat.

The Cathedral of Echmiadzin (303 A.D.). The everlasting center of the Armenian faith was built by the instruction of the Only-Begotten Son of God.

The Matenadaran. The Yerevan library houses some 14,000 manuscripts about the Armenian language and literature, history, science, and illustrative art.

Mesrop Mashtots (on the right). The early 5th century creator of the Armenian alphabet. The first teacher of the Armenian language; pioneer in the protection of the Armenian identity.

The Zvartnots Cathedral (641-646). One of the unique edifices of Armenian architecture. It was built on an original concept and by the order of Catholicos Nerses III, also known as Nerses the Builder.

The Church of St. Hripsime (618). One of the masterpieces of Armenian architecture. It was built on the grounds where St. Hripsime and her companions were martyred at the end of the 3rd century.

Commander-in-Chief Vartan Mamigonian (on the left). The brave Armenian general who fought for and was martyred in defense of Armenian Christianity and identity (451).

The Tri-Colored Dancers represent Armenian culture (song and dance), surrounded by stylized Armenian vines and pomegranates.

Mother Armenia. With her ever-present gaze and giant sword, she protects the Armenian people. She is ready to draw her sword to protect her extended family (across from the Monument to the Unknown Soldier in Yerevan's Victory Park).

The Armenian Cross displays three symbols of Armenian identity: the Cross, the Tree of Life, and Eternity.

The St. Geghard Monastery (1215) housed the spearhead with which the Roman centurion pierced the rib of our Lord on the Cross.

Khor Virab (3rd to 17th centuries). The main church was built on top of the deep abyss of the

dungeon where St. Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned. There he survived for 13 years and then, by the order of King Trdat III was released and converted to Christianity the Armenian royalty and people.

The National Opera and Philharmonic Theatre. The cultural center of reborn Armenia. Since 1988 it has been turned into 'Freedom' Square where Armenians give voice to their political, economic, social... claims.

General Antranig Ozanian (1865-1927) was the fearless and unparalleled leader of the freedom fighters and heroes of the Armenian liberation movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. To the left and to the right of General Antranig are the warriors who fought for liberation and self-defense.

The Black Chain represents conquered Historic Armenia--from the Black to the Caspian to the Mediterranean Seas.

The Memorial Complex at Sardarabad. From May 24 to May 26, 1918, during one of the greatest life-and-death battles against the Ottoman Empire, Armenian volunteers and soldiers repelled the advances of the Turkish Army and saved most of Eastern Armenia and the survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

Gomidas Vartabed (1869-1935) was one of the victims of the Armenian Genocide. He collected and arranged Armenian folk songs, saving them from extinction. He also created and performed Armenian sacred music.

The Red Dots/Circles represent the principal locations and regions in Historic Armenia where Armenians were subjected to extermination in the last century.

Destroyed Armenian Cities and Spiritual Centers. The city of Ani and its churches are evidence of that destruction.

The Genocide Memorial is located in Yerevan. It is dedicated to the victims of the Genocide. The inclining columns represent the Turkish-occupied provinces of Historic Armenia.



(R-L) Viken (Vic) Lepejian and his son Bedros

'Death and Rebirth' will tour several capitals, including Washington.

