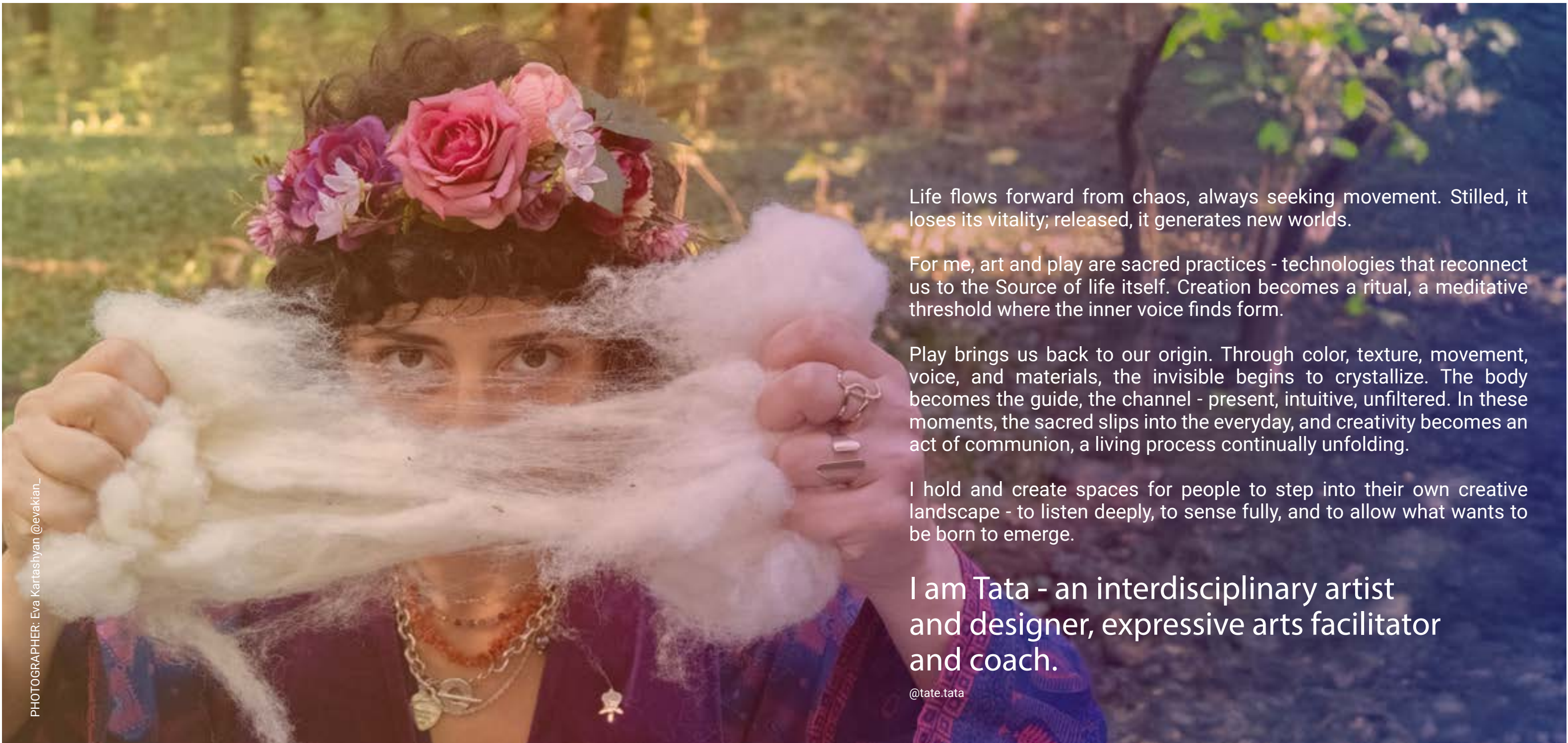


DASEIN.

AN INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE ABOUT THE PRESENCE

Our magazine thrives on creative collaboration, crafting unconventional advertising and creative visuals that spotlight the visionaries behind projects and brands. We unite diverse creative industries with social and cultural activists, redefining narratives in novel contexts. By linking businesses with both mainstream and marginalized creators, we transform unique collaborations into reality. DASEIN fosters global connections, sparking dialogues between local and international talents. Our goal is to represent talented personas both known and emerging who invest in the creative industry of Armenia and Diaspora.





PHOTOGRAPHER: Eva Kartashyan @evakian_

Life flows forward from chaos, always seeking movement. Stilled, it loses its vitality; released, it generates new worlds.

For me, art and play are sacred practices - technologies that reconnect us to the Source of life itself. Creation becomes a ritual, a meditative threshold where the inner voice finds form.

Play brings us back to our origin. Through color, texture, movement, voice, and materials, the invisible begins to crystallize. The body becomes the guide, the channel - present, intuitive, unfiltered. In these moments, the sacred slips into the everyday, and creativity becomes an act of communion, a living process continually unfolding.

I hold and create spaces for people to step into their own creative landscape - to listen deeply, to sense fully, and to allow what wants to be born to emerge.

I am Tata - an interdisciplinary artist and designer, expressive arts facilitator and coach.

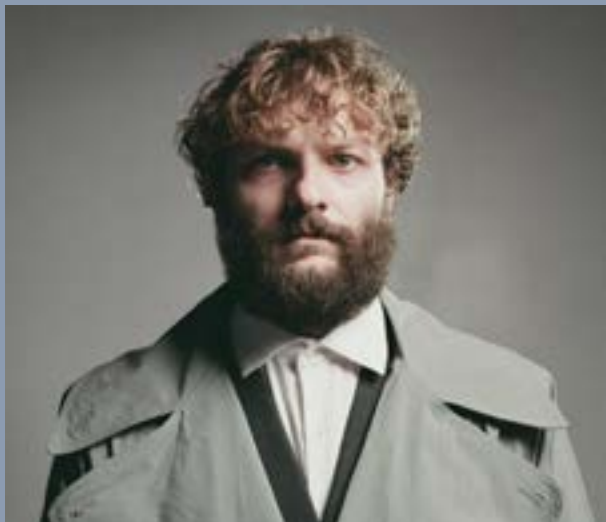
@tate.tata



THE ART OF ADAPTATION

Artificial Intelligence is no longer just a tool; it's a mirror—reshaping how we see, create, and define beauty. In photography, it challenges the instinct of the eye, asking artists to adapt, not to compete. The future of image-making is no longer about the click of a shutter but the dialogue between human intuition and machine perception. Adaptation is not surrender—it's evolution, and the most powerful photographers are those who learn to dance with the algorithm.

Lilit Uni @lilit_uni



@nersavetisyan

Nerses Avetisyan

I'm an actor.

Along the way, I've worked in theatre, TV, film and music too, but it all comes from the same place: paying attention to people and to life as it is.

Most of what I bring to a role comes from what I've lived and what I've noticed in others — how people move under pressure, how they hold themselves in silence, the small truths that don't need performance. That's the part I trust.

Working this way slowly took me into different international festivals, and eventually to the Edinburgh Fringe and the Avignon Festival with the same solo performance. Not as an achievement to show, but as a reminder that the search keeps going.

I try to stay close to work that feels honest and human. The rest, I let pass.



PHOTOGRAPHER: Liit Uni @liit_uni

Sue Grigorian is a fashion stylist with seven years of experience, for whom fashion is not about clothes, but about human states of being. In her work, style becomes a language of the soul — a reflection of time, memory, and character. Each shoot is an exploration of form, light, and emotion, where clothing doesn't simply enhance a person but reveals their inner world.

Sue's creative journey began intuitively, without formal education — guided by her taste, sensitivity, and a natural sense for beauty. She believes that art cannot truly be taught; it lives within those who are able to see.

Working as a freelance stylist, Sue creates imagery for fashion editorials, campaigns, music videos, commercials, and personal stories. Her aesthetic is defined by authenticity, quiet strength, and emotional truth.

A special place in her life belongs to Retrospective — an art space and photo studio founded by Hayk and Vaag Torosyan. For Sue, this project is more than work; it is a continuation of memory, love, and culture. Retrospective embodies retro heritage and timeless art, where every object carries a story.

For her, fashion is not an industry.
It is a way to speak about time, about people, and about feelings that never fade.

@suegrigoryan



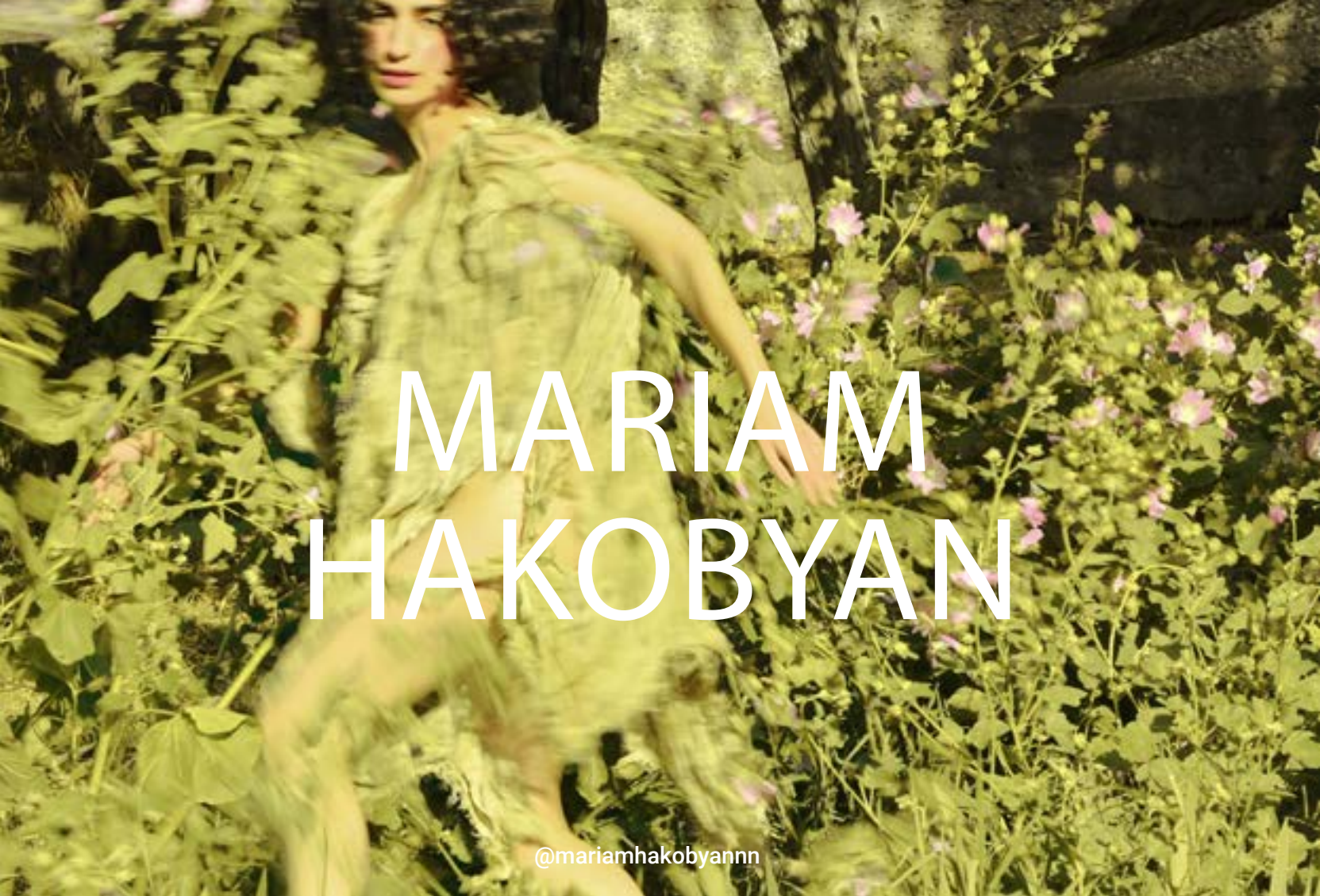
PHOTOGRAPHER: Marat Karapetyan @Marat_Karapetyann

RETROSPECTIVE



A retrospective is a reflective process where a team or individual looks back on past work, events, or experiences to assess what went well, what didn't, and how improvements can be made in the future. Retrospectives are commonly used in Agile project management and other iterative workflows but can also apply broadly to personal or professional development.





MARIAM HAKOBYAN

@mariamhakobyann

I'm Mariam, a visual artist discovering the space where art, science, and emotion connect. I've been drawing for as long as I can remember. As a kid, I loved experimenting and drawing anywhere I could, even where I wasn't supposed to, using my mom's lipstick or scribbling in my brother's books. It was never about the tools, just the need to create, and over time this impulse became a way to explore and understand things I couldn't fully explain.

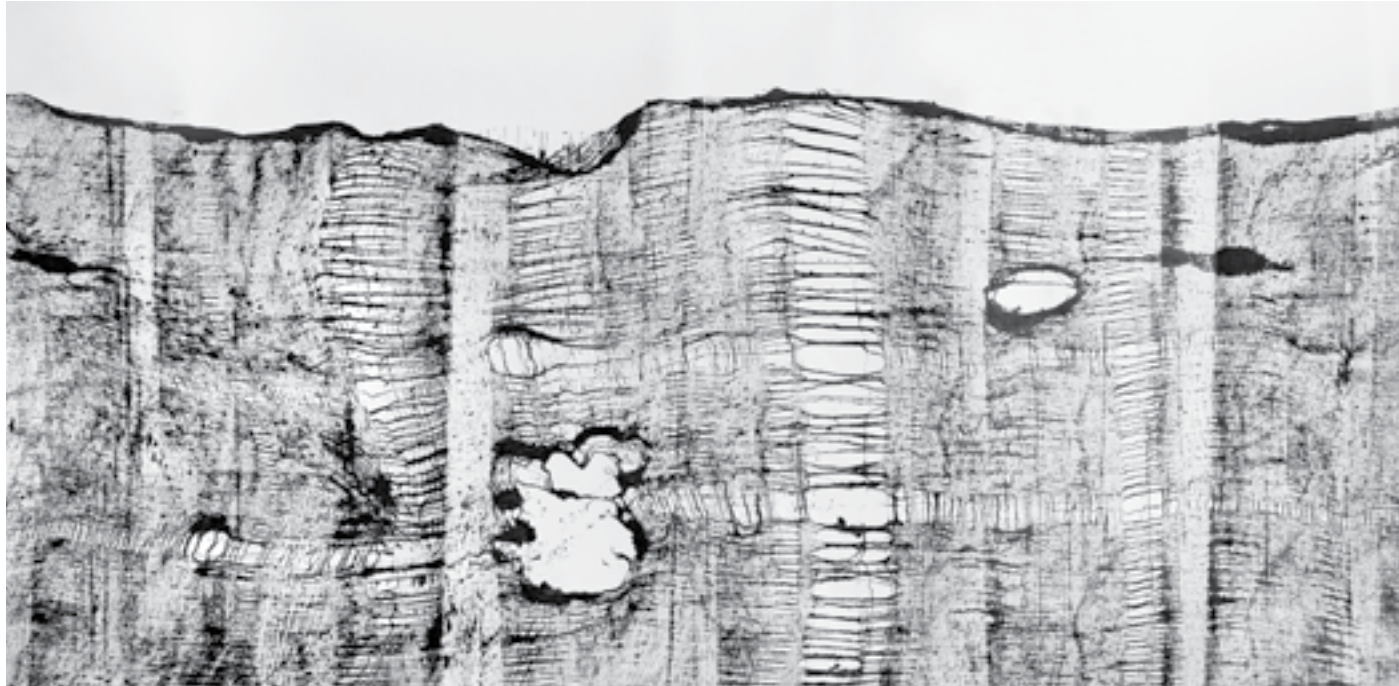


PHOTOGRAPHER: David Galstyan @davgalstian

Colors are central in my work, giving shape to fleeting emotions and thoughts that become visible through painting. Graphic art helps me release thoughts that linger too long in my mind, trapping them on paper like small spells so they stop haunting me at night. Living between observation and imagination, art is experienced as a constant experiment where analysis and feeling blend.

Title: CODE: IIII00020804

Back in 2022, my studio turned into a little chemistry lab. I started playing around with regular medical gauze - soaking it in a glucose solution, drying it out, then using a catalyst to stretch the fibers. That made the gauze stiffer, which was perfect for getting more detailed prints on paper. After letting it sit for about two days, I dipped it in artist's ink and started printing. I've always thought of chemistry as the queen of beauty among the sciences - all those vibrant reactions, the way chemicals interact, and the mix of control and surprise in the process.



Size: 120cm x 60cm

Material: ink on paper

Technique: colagraphy / technical chemical printing

Year: 2022

This artwork was exhibited at The International Print Biennale Yerevan / Armenia 2025



EDGAR KANDRATIAN,

the studio's founder, is a Berlin-based art director and multidisciplinary designer whose work focuses on translating cultural and corporate narratives into visual identities and languages. His strong contextual and intuitive thinking, combined with his discerning sense of aesthetics, results in subtly original designs, visual communication, and creative concepts.

Studio Edgar Kandratian conceives and delivers comprehensive graphic services for exhibitions, campaigns, publications, and visual identity systems—developing concepts across both digital and physical media. The studio's core expertise lies in exhibition and communication design, exhibition graphics, and visual storytelling. Since its founding in 2018, it has worked across the fields of art, culture, and corporate practice.



Visual identity and poster series for Clemens Gritl's solo exhibition
"A Future City from the Past."

2023
Galerie Juliane Hundertmark, Berlin



Visual identity, communication, and exhibition graphics for the exhibition "Donatello: Inventor of the Renaissance."

2022/23
Gemäldegalerie Berlin In collaboration with polyform
Photo: Alexander Butz



Visual identity and campaign for the festivals "100 Years of Bauhaus in Berlin" and "Bauhauswoche Berlin 2019."

2019
In collaboration with Julia Volkmar
Photo: Alexander Butz



Visual identity and campaign for the exhibition "The Germanic Tribes: Archaeological Perspectives."

2020/21
James-Simon-Galerie, Berlin In collaboration with polyform
Photo: Willis Anne



We are RABBITVOLLK, a travel-driven duo created by Mher and Vanane in 2023. We explore landscapes, cities, and the spaces in between — documenting our journeys through video, sound, and minimalistic aesthetics.

Our practice grows from simple rituals: camping in remote places, brewing specialty coffee, listening to how nature speaks. We research natural environments through sound — wind patterns, water acoustics, the quiet structures of forests and mountains. At the same time, we study the architecture and rhythm of different urban spaces, observing how cities move, resonate, and breathe.

Some days one of us is the Rabbit, some days the Vollk (wolf). The mood shifts, the point of view shifts — the journey continues. What stays constant is our curiosity.

Through our vlog, we map coffee and music spots across the world. RABBITVOLLK is our way of traveling, listening, and creating — moving between nature and cities with intention and style.



DIANA DAYAN

Living Artfully – My Journey as a
Prducer, Actress, and Storyteller...



PHOTOGRAPHER: Armen Aghayan @aghayan

People often ask me what I do—and it's always hard to sum it up in one word. I'm an actress, producer, creative director, and visual storyteller. But more than titles, I'd say I'm someone who lives through art. Everything I do—whether it's a photoshoot, a campaign, an exhibition, or a role on screen—is an extension of what I feel, what I observe, and what I believe in.

I started my path in Armenia, working as a model, representing the biggest fashion, jewelry, and hotel brands. That stage of my life taught me so much—not just about beauty or image, but about collaboration, visual identity, and how to carry a message without saying a word. But very early on, I realized that being in front of the camera wasn't enough for me. I wanted to shape the story, not just be in it.

That's when I slowly stepped into production and creative direction. I started building a team, designing campaigns for brands I believed in, and taking on full responsibility for the visuals and storytelling. I love working closely with directors, marketing teams, and photographers—finding the emotional truth of a project and elevating it. I don't like anything fake or soulless. If it doesn't have feeling, I'm not interested.

Later, I started diving deeper into art and exhibitions. My first exhibition in Yerevan, "The Picture is Worth a Thousand Words," was a turning point for me. It was all about body language, expression, and what we say without speaking. I followed that with shows in New York and LA. Every image I create or curate is a reflection of something I've felt or seen in the world around me. I truly believe art can speak when words fail.

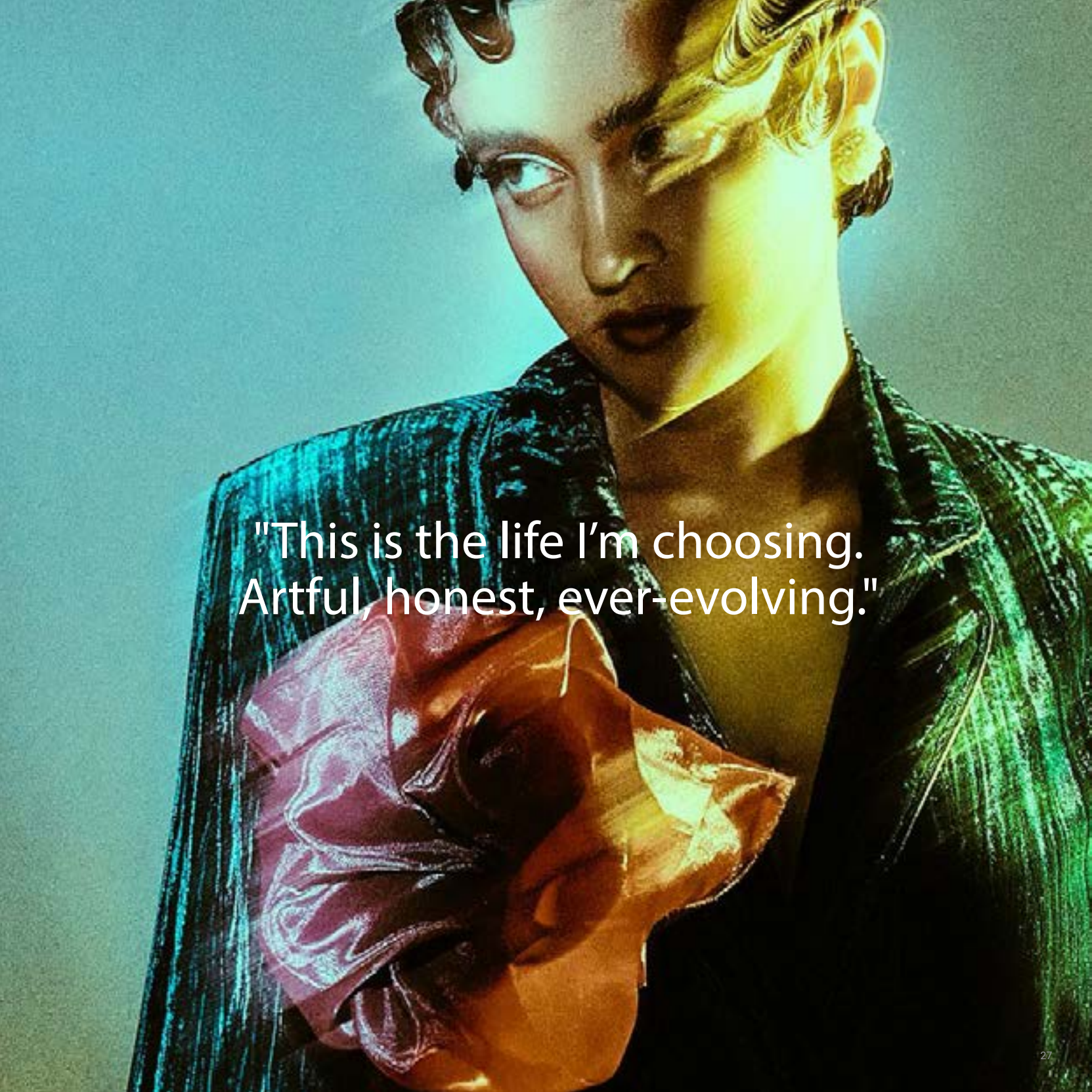
Today, I continue working between cities like Yerevan, New York, and LA. I'm developing more projects in film and acting, and I'm especially excited to be part of an upcoming American movie called "Bodied." It's a bold, artistic, and powerful project that I'm proud to be involved in—and it's a step forward in the kind of acting career I've always envisioned. Being part of a project like this reminds me why I chose this path—to be part of stories that move people, challenge perspectives, and stay in the memory.

Being a public figure, for me, is not about being perfect. I try to keep my space honest and meaningful. I love sharing my work, my thoughts, my process—but always in a way that stays connected to who I really am. I'm not trying to follow trends. I like to live quietly, intentionally, and creatively. The best messages I get are from young girls who say my work helped them believe in their own path, their femininity, or their creativity. That means everything to me.

What I can offer as a public figure is experience—from the inside. I know what it's like to build your own name. I know what it takes to make a project come to life, from zero to final result. I've worked on both small personal shoots and major campaigns, and what I've learned is that if the energy and the values are right—magic happens.

And if I could describe what I'm really passionate about, I'd say this: I love the process. I love building something beautiful from scratch. I love moments that feel real. I love visuals that stay with you. I love it when an idea turns into something you can hold, see, or feel. Whether it's a film, a photo, or just a few seconds on screen—if it touches people, then it matters.

@dinadaian



"This is the life I'm choosing.
Artful, honest, ever-evolving."



ANNA KAMAY

"...Knowing that all over the world, women are awakening and taking radical responsibility for their reproduction and reconnecting with Mother Nature, creating communities online and offline, makes me feel less alone and connected."

1. Personal Path & Feminism

For most of my conscious life, I considered myself a radical feminist and positioned myself as such in social activism, viewing the patriarchy and capitalism as the greatest evils. I never thought about having children, criticizing women who bring new lives into this "cruel world," seemingly driven by "selfishness"—as if orphaned children or stray dogs, who could be adopted instead, weren't enough.

I was getting triggered by colleagues who brought their children to my workplace (if you decide to have children, you should take care of them yourself and not impose their presence on others) or by mothers whose parenting methods didn't align with my views (I used to adhere to "gentle parenting" methods).

With the myth of overpopulation and the climate crisis on my mind, I used to tell myself that I had too much work to do to improve this world, and having children seemed like a waste of my time and energy, holding me back from my potential. I thought that if my maternal instinct ever kicks in, I could always adopt a puppy instead. As an animal lover who has spent much of my life rescuing and bringing street animals into my home, I didn't see much of a difference between the two.

Fast forward through several abortions, journeys across half the world, and a relentless climb up the career ladder — my maternal instinct never kicked in, but I found myself pregnant again at 30, and it felt like now or never; I was still operating under the belief that my biological clock was ticking and time was running out. I knew I was ready to experience motherhood, and I thought I was prepared for it. First, I quit my 9-5 job, started exploring the concept of physiological birth, thanks to a friend who has already done it twice successfully (I was already quite advanced in traditional modalities of healing, such as herbalism and "alternative" medicine, which I learnt from my mother, who never went to doctors). Then, after my daughter's birth, I moved from the city to an Amazigh (Berber) village in the High Atlas Mountains, where my then partner was from, and began exploring the lifestyle of the local people, witnessing sacred rites of passage such as weddings and funerals being honored and practiced despite colonization. I was fascinated by it all and felt loved, supported, and accepted in this community for the first time in my life. Only later did I discover that the Amazigh people had been a matriarchal society in the recent past, and everything made sense.

2. You're widely known as a curator and activist — but how did your journey toward feminist work and women's health begin?

Contemporary feminisms, under the influence of transhumanist ideas, view nature as an unjust system that must be changed so that women can have the "privileges" of men, which continuously distracts us from the importance of recognizing the biological factor.

The main narratives of liberal feminism are the rights of LGBTQ+ communities, the fight against racism, white supremacy, toxic masculinity without praising positive masculinity, the importance of self-care without addressing community care, and, of course, the liberation of women from patriarchal systems, including the "slavery" of marriage/sacred union, pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and child-rearing, and as a mother I felt constantly excluded from the feminist discourse, basically politically homeless. I have been unable to identify with any political movement, whether left or right, because neither of these ideologies considers supporting mothers as essential.

While working on the topic of motherhood in art, I researched the representation of mothers in arts around the world and in post soviet space in particular, and found that most female artists disappear from the scene after becoming mothers, and the few artist mothers who manage to continue their practice do not depict their journey of motherhood in their artworks despite considering themselves feminists, devaluing their experience as mothers, believing that it is not THAT important or interesting.

Basically, the topic of motherhood has always been omitted or underrepresented in the arts, with the only visual representation being Mother Mary breastfeeding baby Jesus in a bliss that is far from the reality of mothering without a village. It was a mind-blowing realization for me: the mother is the portal between the unseen and the seen. Every soul that has ever walked this earth came through her. And yet, she is the most neglected. Motherhood is the last frontier of feminism due to internalised misogyny of women deliberately silencing themselves, thus doing a disservice to the future generations, because if we do not represent our identity and struggles (we were never meant to do this alone: 95% of human history mothers had a supportive community to rely on during early motherhood), nobody can do it for us because as an african proverb goes "when mothers speak, gods listen."

3. What does feminism mean to you today, in the context of living and working in Armenia?

Since I started my curatorial practice in 2015 I was the

only one taking my daughter to art events and conferences with me, as being a single mother without support I did not have an alternative, and, of course, I had to miss many opportunities because I was not accepted since children were not welcomed, which meant that even though theoretically they did not exclude a large group of people (mothers), they did not create a safe space for them to be represented.

Mothers of dependent children all over the world face inequitable hurdles to be present in spaces where it matters the most because of pregnancy, breastfeeding, and responsibilities related to caretaking. It's a serious problem because it creates a culture of inequity, with mothers generally experiencing greater disadvantages than other groups of women because of biological, prejudicial, and often socially driven care demands. Women do most of the unpaid carework around the world. With solutions seemingly elusive, many women make a calculated decision to forego attendance and suffer the consequences of being "invisible".

4. Birth & Body

I have not always been connected to my body and didn't know how to feel my emotions like most people nowadays, because our personal and collective unhealed traumas create numbness within us, and many adults suppress their feelings with various addictions and medication. I believe that it is required to come into one's body, into one's feelings and emotions, to become an initiated adult.

Acquiring a female friend, who had birthed both her babies outside of the system, was the catalyst for me: I realized it is possible to give birth without going to the hospital, and that until recently, all women gave birth at home on their own terms, and that if my friend could do that, so could I. I was mind-blown, and being the curious cat that I am, wanting the best for my future baby, I started researching.

I discovered it all started in 17th-century France, where hospitals by the catholic church started accepting homeless courtesans to give birth under their roofs, and the foolish French king who had his wife birthing in a horizontal position, which is rarely the optimal position to give birth, while throughout the human history, women gave birth in their homes, supported by midwives and family. Birth was seen as a natural, communal experience — not a medical event. This remained the norm worldwide until the 20th century, when birth was pathologized by the medical industry, and women lost their agency over their bodies during this sacred rite of passage to motherhood.

It was only after my daughter’s birth that I slowly started listening to my body cues and responding to them accordingly (feeding myself when hungry, taking a nap when tired, etc) because I wanted to be the best mother for my child, just like everyone else. I realized that when we are not in connection with our bodies and feelings, we do not truly honor ourselves, so we can not honor others or serve our greater good and humanity. I started paying attention to my feelings: being aware of them, accepting them, fully feeling and integrating them, coming into a wholeness, which to me is the path of humaning.

As women, we are meant to pass through stages: from maiden to mother and then to crone, but most of us are stuck in a loop of insecure teenage girlhood. We are starving for rituals, for elders, for the village that should have caught us when we first bled. For me, everything starts from birth.

The women who take full responsibility for their reproduction carry a power to transform the world faster than anyone else because they are the conscious mothers of our communities. I believe if birth is honored in our culture, and mothers are allowed to make informed decisions concerning their birth choices and provided with the support and care that is needed in the postpartum period for them to recover and form a secure attachment with their babies, humanity would change for the better drastically after only one generation.

5. You gave birth at home — twice — with your children present. What led you to choose this path?

Children are not scared when they witness an undisturbed birth at home; it’s been a normal and natural occurrence in a family throughout history, before it was hijacked by the medical industry. My daughter was 6 years old when she witnessed the birth of her brother, and she was just disappointed it all happened too fast. When my third child was born, my two older kids, 11 and 4, were filming, excited and cheering. I am so glad I got the documentation of my third child’s birth, even though it’s a bit shaky and blurry.

Patologization and medicalization of birth deprive women of the agency to give birth on their own terms, leaving them traumatized and disconnected from their own bodies and their babies, unable to meet their two basic biological needs adequately: the need for love and for self-authenticity(self-expression). Most mothers, for the past few generations traumatized by birth, attack life in their children by domination dressed as care. They withhold their love to make the child obedi-

ent, compromising their basic need for self-authenticity. They shame tears, punish play, mock ambition, and police their bodies, which results in codependency and various addictions.

As a result, newborn babies choose to be loved, and their need for self-authenticity is compromised, leading to adults who do not know who they are or what they want in this life. This is how we ended up with the world we live in: 95% of adults are traumatized at birth and in early childhood, a trauma that can not be healed through the glorified therapy, and unless we heal ourselves and our communities, we are going to continue this vicious circle of intergenerational trauma that is being manifested all around the world through wars and pass it on to the next generation.

6. What was the emotional and physical experience like, and how did it affect your relationship with your body and family?

When I became a mother for the first time 12 years ago, I was overwhelmed, anxious, and depleted. I asked for help...and was met with love, but also limitation. Everyone was struggling in their own way. I felt like even more of a failure, unable to create the village and supportive relationships I knew I needed.

The truth is, our culture isn’t built for thriving life and true support. So by the time I was pregnant with my second child and coronka hit, I stopped waiting—and started creating systems and rhythms that nourish me. Today, I am a mother of three amazing humans, and I’m still holding out hope for the “village” without romanticizing the past.

I’ve stopped shaming my longing to be nurtured. Protected. Held by a man and rooted in a community. Because money and status will never replace what genuine connection and care can offer. The unassisted free births of my sons were the liberation of my body, the initiation into adulthood I didn’t know I needed. I birthed my sons at home, as I had planned, without any intervention. It is impossible to put into words the strength and joy I felt from those unforgettable experiences. I am the owner of my body, I can create and raise a human being in my womb for nine months, give birth to a new human independently, and feed him exclusively with the milk produced by my body for the first six months and several years afterwards which is important not only for creating secure attachment but also, for example, when the child is sick and refuses to eat anything else.

In addition, I can break the vicious circle of intergenerational trauma and not pass it on to my children, thus

changing the future by raising healthy individuals who will continue my legacy and carry on my struggle. I am a superhuman! When women give birth in power, they not only heal themselves but also heal their whole lineage, and I believe, if I could do this, anyone else can.

7. In Armenia, home birth is still taboo. What barriers—legal, cultural, or psychological—do women face if they want to make alternative choices?

Birth outside the medical system is illegal in Armenia, leaving women with no choice but to go to the hospital, where obstetric violence is normalized and the c-section rates are skyrocketing. Mothers, while being severely traumatized during hospital birth, are celebrated for bringing to life boys, as they would grow up to serve and protect the Motherland, thus diminishing the worth of women as mere incubators that produce future soldiers.

I only know one woman who dared to give birth at home in Armenia, and she was obliged to be hospitalized even though she and her newborn baby had no complications and needed no medical assistance, only for the sake of following the law to register the baby. When my first son was born during the coronavirus craze, it was relatively easy to avoid hospitalization because I could blame it on fear of being exposed to the virus. We still had to call an ambulance so they could register the fact that I gave birth to a living child. I stayed home with my newborn, bonding, breastfeeding and resting undisturbed for three days. When I did go to register the baby at the hospital they had no idea what to do with me as I refused to be hospitalized, so they just kept me in the reception area full of sick people with my newborn for long stressful hours, until the Human Defenders’ office advised that it’s the local polyclinic that was supposed to register my newborn. The doctors at the policlinique were shocked and in disbelief when we showed up there with my placenta in a freezer bag. They said they haven’t heard of a homebirth for over 50 years of their practice. We then had the pediatrician visit us at home to check the baby, and she was shocked to see a healthy baby born without medical assistance.

Things got more complicated and stressful for me when my second son was born: I didn’t know they had changed the law, which says that all births outside hospitals must be registered through court or a 500\$ worth DNA test to prove motherhood, which can only be done in Yerevan. I called the ambulance like last time, but this time around, I wasn’t lucky. The ignorant doctors and nurses kept pushing hospitalization, although it’s against human rights and when they fi-

nally left after I insisted that I do not require medical assistance (they checked the baby and I knew he was fine too), I had my first day with my baby sabotaged by the system: police officers, the village doctor and the mayor, followed by social workers intruding into my house and blackmailing me to go to hospital. All the authorities that I contacted agreed that this amendment to the law is unconstitutional. However, they still said it was the only way to proceed with my baby’s registration until the law is changed. After a month of consulting with different specialists and government officials, I had to take the DNA test to prove I am the mother of my baby despite being registered in the local policlinique and having undergone an ultrasound days before I gave birth. The medical staff seeing me with my newborn and checking the placenta hours after he was born.

Motherhood is sacred in the South Caucasus: the worst insult for a man worth killing for in our culture is the one directed at one’s mother, and yet motherhood is devalued and mothers here are working several shifts, doing the bulk of the unpaid care labor, all without economic or emotional support and in the absence of a supportive community.

While the nationalist propaganda encourages women to have children to achieve population growth, Armenia is one of the top three countries in the world with the highest rates of selective abortion.

There is a lack of education for women about their bodies, menstrual cycle, and birth, and an absence of alternatives to hospital birth in Armenia makes it impossible for women to even think about a natural, physiological birth. In our culture, birth is portrayed as a very painful, risky, traumatic event that distorts your body.

A good mother in our society is the one who sacrifices her own needs for the sake of her children, who never complains or goes against societal norms. Ending the myth of maternal martyrdom could have a transformative effect both for our societies, as an independent, fulfilled, and powerful mother figure would become an inspiration both for her sons and her daughters, having a mitigating effect on the alienating power of patriarchy. For this to happen, the story of the mother in her own voice will have to be told and retold. We will have to break the silence and break it again as we try to become better parents for our children and better humans for ourselves and our communities.

8. Women’s Circles

For centuries, women gathered in circles - in songs, in

prayers, in storytelling, and in celebrations of sacred passages of life and death in sisterhood. They were healing circles where every tear was welcomed, every pain witnessed, and every woman could feel part of something greater. But we drifted away from that. We are programmed to compete, to stay silent, to carry everything alone. We forgot that being together is how we thrive as humans. When women unite, something greater happens. Grief turns into water that cleanses, and life begins to flow again. I realized I do not have to go through this alone.

So I ditched the good ole activism and embraced the ancient technology of women’s circles for community healing, committed to finding peace within because I realized that when we come together with a collective intention to heal with open hearts and minds, magic happens: the pain can be shared, carried, and dissolved when one is not alone. This is the power of feminine collective rituals, and to me, it is the only way to break the vicious circle of intergenerational trauma and achieve peace in our communities.

That’s how I started hosting women’s circles, helping my sisters reclaim their power, making sure mothers of young children are included.

As long as we keep looking for cures from the ones creating the problems, we’ll keep moving further from our source, and as long as we keep looking for saviors, we’ll fall from one scam to another. Because we are the only ones we’ve been waiting for. We need to reclaim our authority and embrace radical responsibility for ourselves and our children instead of outsourcing it to the systems(medical, educational, etc) that are not meant for humans to thrive.

9. Can you tell us about the women’s circles you’ve been organizing? Who are they for, and what happens in those spaces?

I started facilitating women’s circles for my friends as an alternative to baby showers, to shift the focus from the baby back onto the mother. At first, I was really anxious, unsure of what would come out of it. When we first gathered, some women said they don’t like emotions, because they see them as a sign of weakness. But it turned out many of them needed that kind of a safe space and honest conversation: women of all ages and from all walks of life opened up to each other, we cried together, shared private stories, we reconnected with ourselves and healed together. It was beautiful.

Mind you, I am not romanticizing the past, and often-times it looks like trying to put together a puzzle with-

out actually seeing the whole picture, however there are still matriarchal societies existing to this day, and I draw my inspiration from the Amazigh people of the High Atlas mountains in Morocco, who preserved their matriarchal traditions despite colonizations, and where, living in a tiny berber village I felt what it means to be supported, loved and celebrated by one’s community for the first time in my life.

After the births of my sons, my mission as a mentor for women to (re)connect with their bodies and to birth their babies in sovereignty became crystal clear to me. With this newfound clarity, I support my sisters in their journeys through conception, pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. I want more healthy people in my community for my children to have healthier relationships, so I need to share my lived experiences and observations with other women because when I share, I am saying this is what happened for ME. There is a possibility that others may resonate and be inspired by it. The circle of the sacred sisterhood is inclusive of ALL our stories, and the spirit of connectedness elevates our consciousness.

Long story short, I realized that my life mission is to help women reconnect with their bodies and Mother Nature. For me, this is the most important feminist issue. I don’t shy away from sharing what works for me, just in case it works for anyone else. I am still figuring out a way to make a living for my family with what I love to do. I realize my mission in this life is challenging, birth and death being taboo topics in our culture, but I do believe we need to face these sacred rites of passage without the culturally programmed fear, as they are integral parts of life.

10. Why do you think these kinds of gatherings are important right now?

We as humans are social creatures, and without a community, people can’t thrive — this is a real issue for me as a mother of three children, currently living in the city where having a community is practically impossible for new mothers who are going through this sacred rite of passage traumatized and in isolation because there is no “village” to support them. Colonial imperialism decimates the spiritual infrastructure of our people, and I believe when people are isolated from their ancestral wisdom and technology to support them through the sacred rites of passages as menarche, birth, and menopause, they are increasingly more vulnerable to warfare and tyranny. It’s basically spiritual warfare.

The capitalist liberal idea of self-care like getting your nails done and such, could actually be care for your

community too, that caring for yourself and caring for those close to you cannot be separated, I always say that we don't gather in a circle to heal and to party but rather to transform to serve our greater good and to generate the energy and courage to serve our communities.

Nowadays, most men and women don't have the community that can help us to be initiated into adulthood, into our personal authority, so women's and men's circles are equally important as they provide safe spaces for self-expression and personal transformation, as it used to be for 95% of the history of humanity.

11. Community & Care

Overcoming isolation in motherhood is a very challenging experience in our individualistic society, where only mothers are responsible for the well-being of their children, and there is no solidarity and support for them, neither from the state nor from the community.

For 95% of human history, babies were raised in tribes — what anthropologists call alloparenting. Everyone pitched in: moms, dads, grandparents, siblings, even neighbors. The “nuclear family” (just two parents doing 24/7) is a brand-new concept in human history. And when we try to do it alone, both mothers and babies show higher stress hormones. Our nervous systems literally weren't built for this; for our brain, it means our tribe has abandoned us. It's not because of spending too much time with our babies but rather too much time without social support, coupled with birth trauma that most women go through during hospital births, that causes Postpartum depression.

Although I raised my daughter alone, fortunately, my sons' fathers support me in parenting however they can, and as I learn to let go of control and accept help, I realize the importance of fathers in children's lives. Every day, I try to take care of my children, making sure to spend individual time with each of them (so they don't feel neglected), taking care of their basic needs, preparing healthy meals, keeping the house clean to a certain livable level, so that the floor is clean enough for my newly walking son. I also have an elderly auntie under my care. I even manage to have social and professional interactions (though many of my friends have become upset with me and now consider me “lost”) and work on my projects.

As a result, although it may seem from the outside that I “manage everything,” I often don't have time for self-care. I haven't practiced yoga for a long time (though when I had no children, it was part of my daily routine), and I can go for days without having time to comb

my hair, do my nails, take a bath, or just sleep. Every day I have to choose between sleep and time alone, which are my true luxuries besides having a supportive community around.

12. What do you see as the biggest issues facing women's health—especially reproductive and mental health—in Armenia today?

Motherhood is devalued in our culture, even though in conservative societies like ours there's still pressure on women who choose not to have children, a kind of metacognitive dissonance exists: you're supposed to procreate, but you also know that you'll most likely face obstetric violence—and afterward, you might develop something like Stockholm syndrome, convincing yourself and everyone else that your doctor “saved” your and/or your baby's life.

You'll probably end up raising your child mostly on your own, since there's little state support, no real “village,” and not much solidarity from the community or the state. If you're lucky, you might have a mother or mother-in-law who wants and can help you. If not, you'll have to work and earn enough to cover daycare and a nanny, because kindergartens close at 5 PM while your workday doesn't end until much later.

And this all happens in a society where having a child is often seen as an act of patriotism—a way to increase the population, something praiseworthy and noble. Meanwhile, women's bodies are often viewed as incubators for producing future soldiers or, at best, people who will serve the army. In postwar Armenia, there have even been public calls and a state-supported program for single women without partners to become mothers through IVF treatment and surrogacy, yet the state provides no real support for single mothers, and society continues to show deep intolerance toward women who have children outside of marriage.

13. In your opinion, how can art and activism help heal or support women in navigating trauma, birth, motherhood, and identity?

I believe supporting childcare would overcome a major hurdle to amplifying mothers' voices in key spheres like peacebuilding, human rights, and education. There are several ways to do this, including financial support for individual childcare, on-site nanny, or self-organization, where mothers take turns in caring for the children while others focus on work.

I've been advocating for institutions and spaces to consider maternal needs because when they do so, everybody wins. Offering childcare, accommodating families, and providing appropriate resources are ways that institutions can show they CARE not only for the able-bodied, childfree, trust fund kids but for ALL women. To the extent institutions can meet the needs of mothers in arts, they are well-positioned to retain female talent and enjoy the advantages of a diverse leadership team.

This year I attended the first ever child-friendly festival in Armenia - Barev Fest, and even though there was a designated kid zone, the kids self-organized and played in multi-age groups and it was so beautiful to watch how easy it can be to integrate children in spaces without much effort, just officially announcing that there will be a kids zone was enough, it made me tear up because it's a first for Armenia even though it's a common practice all over the world.

14. Looking Ahead

As a result of colonization, Armenians have lost all the ancestral healing techniques that we once possessed as an ancient nation. After Sovietization of Armenia, most healers and midwives were sent away to gulags, which I consider a modern-day witch hunt, and the feminine wisdom that was transferred from one generation to the next through oral history got lost and almost forgotten. I am positive that it's an imperative for us to document and revive our ancestral technologies to heal ourselves and serve our communities.

15. If you could change just one thing about how Armenian society treats women's health or bodies, what would it be?

Normalizing birth and death is crucial for our healing, not only on the individual but collective level. The health of children is contingent upon the health of mothers. There is a proverb: “If you want to know the health of a nation, look at the health of mothers”. If the mothers are centered and taken care of mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, you can be sure that this community understands the blueprint of thriving life and the human continuum. And controversially, a community that does not center mothers is auto-destructive and contributes to ill-health on Earth.

Legalizing birth outside the medical system, educating young girls about their bodies, and supporting mothers who are shaping the future generation is a must if we want to thrive as a people.



16. What gives you hope?

They say having kids and planting seeds means one has hope for the future, and I do both. Being a pioneer of free birth in Armenia, a role model for young women, walking the talk is a very lonely experience indeed, but I do believe my destiny is perfectly aligned with this location and time to serve my community. Growing up, I did not have wise elders to look up to, I am completely self-taught and proud of it, but I can't overrate the importance of mentorship, and I am willing to be that wise crone for others I never had myself growing up.

Knowing that all over the world, women are awakening, taking radical responsibility for their reproduction, reconnecting with Mother Nature, creating intentional communities online and offline, makes me feel less lonely and connected to mothers worldwide, who striving for a better future. on Earth.

Legalizing birth outside the medical system, educating young girls about their bodies, and supporting mothers who are shaping the future generation is a must if we want to thrive as a people.

@anna_kamay

ARGISHTI ANTONYAN

I allow myself to set aside limiting considerations such as practicality or functionality, and instead focus on pure expression.



I am Argishti Antonyan.

Fashion has fascinated me for as long as I can remember, and I always knew it was the field I wanted to dedicate myself to. After years of experimenting in different directions, in 2023, I founded my brand Heritage Selective.

Alongside the work I do within Heritage Selective, I am also involved in styling — a practice that is fundamentally different from design. At first glance, these two disciplines may seem interconnected, but in reality, both creatively and organizationally, they require completely different resources.

What excites me most about styling is working with something already created and transforming it into a new visual. When I build visuals, I use the opposite approach to design: I allow myself to set aside limiting considerations such as practicality or functionality, and instead focus on pure expression.

@argishtantonyan



**HERITAGE
SELECTIVE**

Heritage Selective, on the other hand, is the space where all of my ideas come together. Unlike styling, design always begins with an idea — and that initial spark is what inspires me the most. Every new idea brings with it a challenge: to transform it into the most complete tangible visual possible.

From the very beginning, Heritage Selective has been shaped by my personal perceptions. I am influenced by everything around me — people, objects, anything visible — and by the emotional impact they leave on me, from joy to melancholy. I believe my work has been successful in this regard, because I am surrounded by people who continually inspire me and are always ready to support even my most daring ideas.

Heritage Selective creates clothing and accessories for everyone — pieces that can be worn in any context, from the everyday to the extraordinary

@heritageselective



CAPITALISM IS NOT JUST A WAY OF DOING BUSINESS

Julia Kislev cultural and social activist, artist,
founder of the cafe "Mama Jan" in Yerevan.

@juliakislev



PHOTOGRAPHER: DASEIN

Capitalism is not just a way of doing business, an economy, or a political system. Capitalism is a system of values—perhaps, first and foremost, a system of values. We view all our activities, inspirations, creativity, and creation through the lens of financial feasibility. That which brings the highest profit is deemed good; that which does not generate money is considered a waste of time. This is precisely how we lose the meaning of reality and, gradually, our connection with ourselves—our real, living, and human essence.

If someone opens a shoe factory, they do so not to create shoes but to "make money." Some may argue—what's wrong with that? Demand determines supply, the manufacturer will produce the most purchased and desired footwear, and both sides will be satisfied. But the problem is that, in this process, the meaning is inverted—not human-product-money, but money-product-human. What kind of existence will such a consciousness define? In this value system, not only the product but also the person becomes a secondary function serving the flow of money. Losing their intrinsic meaning, they lose their individuality, and in the case of a human, even their soul.



PHOTOGRAPHER: DASEIN

If it were only about the movement of money, it would still be only half the problem. But if the purpose of production is making money, then efficiency will evidently be measured by its quantity. (For comparison, if the goal of production were to provide people with quality footwear according to their actual needs, an excessive quantity would be less important than other factors, as it would not be relevant to the meaning.) Here, along with surplus money—what is called added value—capital itself emerges. More precisely, financial capital and, under conditions of private ownership, private financial capital.

If one observes this entity and its behavior without bias, it is easy to notice that it exhibits certain characteristics of a living organism—cyclicity (beginning and end), movement, instincts, and, most importantly, its own life energy and will. It lacks only a body, as this entire entity exists purely in the human mind. Thus, through humans, capital acquires a body and begins to act in the real world, using its host as an instrument to carry out its will and life objectives. This can be compared to the behavior of a parasite or virus that uses its host for its own purposes.

So, what exactly is the will of capital, and why is it harmful to humans? A simple observation of this mental parasite or virus reveals that its fundamental dynamic consists of two opposing forces that create the tension necessary for its survival—the desire to constantly grow in quantity while simultaneously shrinking in volume. In other words, the number of zeros must steadily increase, but they must concentrate in the smallest possible point—in one hands.

Thus, capital, taking over human consciousness, makes a person lose their own human meanings—those related to their own life purpose—and "work for it." A fitting metaphor is pirate stories about treasure hunts. A group of pirates searches for treasure, eager to multiply capital. But once they find the treasure, they begin killing each other in front of the open chest of gold, driven by capital's second will—to concentrate.

How this principle manifests in our reality is something everyone can understand by examining contemporary and historical events through this perspective and drawing their own conclusions. But it is absolutely clear that in a system based on private financial capital, its influence is all-encompassing and evidently destructive to humanity.

Of course, it is worth considering other types of capital based on a different understanding—capital as a set of means and opportunities for creating things and processes in reality that exceed what a single person could achieve with their two hands. The goal of such creation would be meaning—the satisfaction of real human needs. Here, financial capital may still exist, but not in private form (or state-owned, which is essentially the same, as it entails the same degree of concentration), but rather as public capital, which is by definition decentralized. Additionally, numerous forms of symbolic capital may come into play—communication and cooperation skills, reputation, the instinct of mutual assistance, and more.

What would our lives look like if such forms of capital were the foundation of our value system? Hardly perfect—but what is perfection? However, it is obvious that we would be in much closer contact with our own meanings and, as a result, more whole and connected with the integrated world. Perhaps, in such a reality, our fears and insecurities would not push us toward destructive actions as often. Perhaps we would not be so desperately in need of a "worldview" and would not be so willing to give away (not even sell, but completely and unconditionally surrender) our soul and body to any scoundrel (who is himself consumed by the virus of capital) who offers us the illusion of meaning while using us as a resource to multiply, yet again, capital—seeing us as nothing more than organic fertilizer for their "field of miracles."



"Music unites, speaks louder than words and speaks through love language to humanity..."

MAXWELL

Maxwell, a Yerevan-based artist, is a co-founder of Woozy Tunes, a local club night events that aims to empower the local DJ and producer scene. His musical style, influenced by dark italo, trance, and house music, is evident in his daily sets. Maxwell has gained significant recognition for his energetic performances within the Armenian underground music scene. Additionally, his music has been featured on various European podcasts and labels. His romantic melodies possess the ability to captivate even the most discerning listeners.

@maxwellvarzhapetyan




Café Arakil is a uniquely meaningful place in Berlin, born from the desire to create a space where Armenian coffee and warm gata meet resistance, political consciousness, and cultural exchange.

Our principles are clear: discrimination of any kind—whether racist, sexist, queerphobic, or classist—has no place here. Arakil stands as a safer space for marginalized voices, for those who resist patriarchal, colonial, and exploitative systems—regardless of whether they belong to the Armenian community or not.



arakil
café



Profit is not our priority. What matters to us is creating genuine connections, fostering education, and encouraging meaningful exchange. Arakil is a sanctuary for political and cultural learning, a space for workshops, conversations, collective reflection, and acts of solidarity. We collaborate with anticolonial and antifascist collectives, host artistic projects, and open our doors to dialogues that often find no room elsewhere.

We envision Café Arakil as a nest for our globally scattered community—a place open to all who stand against oppression and strive for a future built on solidarity.

P.S. Our recent events were marked by political remembrance, cultural exchange, and solidarity gatherings. Through performances, traditional games, music, and communal meals, we created spaces where resistance, memory, and collective strength come alive—beyond capitalism and exclusion.

For more, you can check out our Instagram, and for contact please reach out to info@cafe-arakil.org.

Hermannstraße 86, 12051 Berlin



@karolmmmel

CAROLINA MELQUMYAN

Actress, model, singer, and creator of the brand “karol._bags.”

Or simply — someone who creates beauty.

From scratch. With character.

With soul.

The journey started back in sixth grade — acting school, stage, competitions, performances. Since childhood — constant motion: a restaurant at home, pots as tripods, volleyball in the morning, choir in the evening, and a photoshoot on a stool in between. Sewing, music, improvisation. Piano — self-taught. Ukulele? Learned it in a day. If something sparks interest — it gets done. No “Can I?” Only “I must.” In the mix — aerial gymnastics, volleyball, breakdance, C-walk, crafting, skirts for grandma, wallets for mom, toys for my brother, and building machines from construction kits. A hyperactive childhood with no pause. Always searching for something new — and even cooler.

When the time came to choose — Armenia it was. Learned the alphabet in two weeks, watched a few local series, and got into a theater university — on the Armenian-language faculty. That’s where the real path began: from stage — to camera, from a minion costume and delivery jobs — to castings, shoots, projects, and contracts. Music videos, commercials, stage performances. Worked with Iveta Mukuchyan, Artash Asatryan, shot for Burger King, Sirooni salon in LA, and of course, Acba Bank. Not just a campaign — my face was on banners all over Yerevan. Someone called my mom and said, “Did you see? Your daughter is all over the city.” She replied, “Daughter... I’m in shock.” And many more projects followed.

Now it’s all about shoots, music, photos, movement, and the brand. Bags aren’t just accessories — they’re an inner monologue sewn into fabric.

If there’s desire — there’s a way. That’s how the brand was born. First — just for myself. Then — for everyone who feels the same way. From scratch. Handmade. With soul. Because creativity isn’t about “maybe.” It’s about: “I want — so I will.”

Hang me upside down and say, “You’re a bubble.” I’ll play it. I love absurdity. I love the weird. I love to transform. Every shoot is a chance to find out who I am today. And honestly? I never know. That’s the thrill. Multifaceted — not as a pose, but as a truth. On set, I often hear: “Do you ever stop?” The answer is — no. And I don’t want to.

There are agents in this story, and people who showed up at the right moment, but I’ve learned to be my own engine, support system, and voice. I’m not afraid to search for opportunities myself — there’s freedom in that.

Now — it’s growth, forward motion, ambition: films, runways, stages. What used to be a dream — is now in motion.

...creativity isn't about "maybe."
It's about: "I want — so I will."



mntp
we know
furniture

Monotopia is an up and coming furniture dealership and concept store in Armenia, with long awaited brands and items appearing in the local market, presenting international discourse of industrial design and surrounding disciplines. From masters like Le Corbusier's previously never manufactured lights to experimental resin furniture, Monotopia aims to disrupt the established format of design shopping in Armenia.

The first project of Marianna Karapetyan, the founder of Monotopia and Electric Architects, was a competition entry of a bar stool design, which ended up winning among 400 International participants and getting highly praised by the almighty Gaetano Pesce. This led to her passionate obsession with furniture starting more than two decades ago. It has been a bit of a rough start with her first attempt, where lately joined partners took over the company with established resources and the showroom, after causing large financial losses to her, turned it into another counterfeit-based dealership service displaying no knowledge of design whatsoever. But this unfortunate event led to the chance of starting Monotopia, the way it was meant and dreamt to be originally.

Learning, admiring and collecting cherished pieces led to an urge to curate an outstanding collection of iconic and emerging brands to represent in Monotopia. As architects and designers, the team at Monotopia appreciates the value of knowledge and talent behind each product, they share the passion for industrial design and spaces transformed by beautiful things, enriching lives and triggering senses. Every brand and every item in Monotopia is meticulously chosen and curated to represent the designs and technologies they admire.

They aspire to revolutionize how people interact with their living spaces, cultivating an environment where individuals thoughtfully curate their surroundings, selecting items that not only enhance their living experience but also reflect their personal narratives. They aim to inspire a shift toward spaces as unique as the people who inhabit them, promoting a lifestyle of intentional and mindful living.



PHOTOGRAPHER: Lilit Uni @lilit_uni
MODEL: Rosa Kirakosyan @rosakirakosian
STYLIST: Ashi Muradyan @ashi_muradian
MUA/HAIR: Susanna Tsaturyan @sunnysusmua





JENNY AGLITS

In my painting, I seek to create a space where destruction and construction coexist.



Shushi #1, 2021, 195x195, oil on canvas

ARTIST STATEMENT

Drawing from images of regions marked by war, abandonment, and collapse, I engage in a process of reverse archaeology—not digging into what was lost, but building a new one from what has been destroyed.

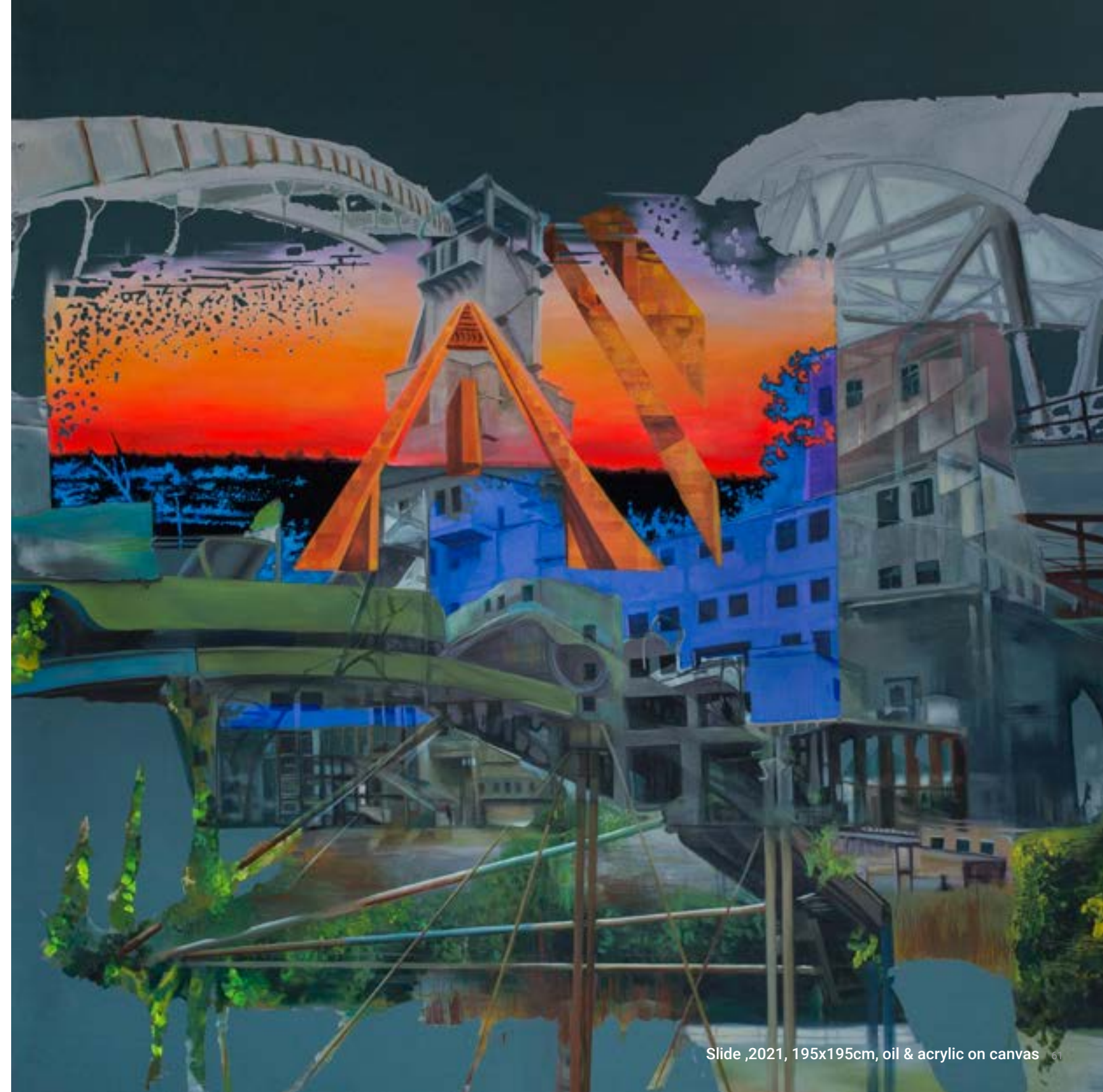
Through a multilayered practice of adding, scraping, and defining, I construct worlds made of color. The paint itself becomes my guide—its movement leads the painting, setting its rhythm and breath. In this dialogue between pigment and surface, landscapes dissolve into forms and stains, breaking apart and coming together again.

Layers of ruin, strangeness, and memory accumulate on the canvas, allowing me to reconstruct my own sense of loss—born from migration and the ongoing search for belonging.

The extended process of painting becomes an alternative timeline, a way of building a new world out of the remains of the old.

Throughout this journey, I release my grip on the original image and let abstraction take over. This continuous dialogue between me and the surface remains an ongoing testimony to confrontation, experimentation, and encounter.

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e/ts

ELECTRIC ARCHITECTS

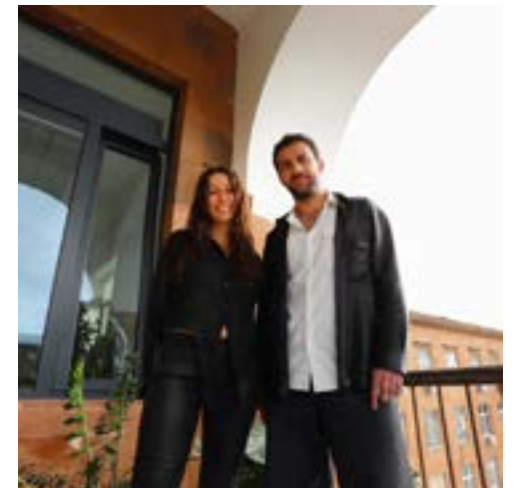
“Electric City - 25 Visions for Yerevan”.

Electric Architects is a Moscow-born but Yerevan-based studio working at the intersection of architecture, urban strategies, and design research. Their process is cinematic—every project treated as a scenario, every space composed with narrative tension. They represented Armenia at the 2025 Venice Architecture Biennale, staged Total Drama Festival—the largest contemporary art event in the country. Their work spans cities, interiors, landscapes, and narratives.

As they call it - their recent scenes included: TUMO Centre in Masis - a new modular typology for TUMO centres, The largest wooden structure in Armenia — a dramatic horse stable complex in raw timber, Moscow’s most expensive residential building, three cafés in London, two in Abu Dhabi, dozens in Armenia, two wineries, each blending context with invention, Sunday Towers multifunctional complex of 100.000 m2, two Urbansim oriented project based learning units with AYB School, founded “Electric Studios” collectible furniture brand, and “Monotopia” furniture dealership source and many more.

In 2024-2025, the electric architects studio, and in particular its urban planning department, created a series of projects dedicated to the urban environment of Yerevan. The projects concerned both entire streets and individual squares, as well as parks, small squares, street furniture and research into the problems of public spaces. In addition, events were held that created a modern discourse around the topic of urban planning and its importance for the city and the country as a whole. All projects were made as a gift to the city, at the behest of professional duty and good intentions aimed at the development of the republic and the capital.

The high expertise of architects and planners, as well as reliance on the best international practices in the field of urbanism, made it possible to create high-quality and fast solutions that are suitable specifically for yerevan. However, despite this, it should be noted that for a higher-quality and systematic result, a single strategic document for urban planning should be developed. Such work requires a lot of time and personnel resources, but is necessary for the development of the urban environment within the framework of recognized European and western standards.





Yerevan 2750 Anniversary Park. Located directly beside the city's central square, 2750 Park is a historic green enclave with deep Soviet-era roots and an established canopy of mature trees. The project preserves the park's identity by restoring its original linear fountains running the full length of the site, bringing them back to working condition rather than replacing them. A system of lightweight canopies is introduced to expand shaded zones, while all cafés are consolidated into a few contemporary pavilions to declutter the space without sacrificing amenities. The ground plane is reimagined with modern loose-fill surfacing, adding a refined yet soft character without erasing the park's historical depth. Designed as a flexible, open framework, the park will serve as a main stage for the city's recurring food festivals, seasonal fairs, and large public events, reinforcing its role as an active civic arena.



Gevorg Kochar street. In the very heart of Yerevan, Kochar Street is being transformed into a vibrant cultural corridor adjacent to both the city's Drama Theatre and its contemporary experimental "Drama Laboratory." Surrounded by universities and a young urban audience, the street is redesigned as a wide pedestrian zone with cafés at ground level, strong visual identity, and generous tree coverage. A cascade-like topography and a thin water line enrich the spatial experience, while vivid colors and an orthogonal grid-based design give the space a crisp, contemporary character. The surface is executed in a durable bound stone aggregate, ensuring longevity without losing tactile appeal. Conceived as an open-air art platform, Kochar Street merges youth energy, theater culture, and urban design into a single public stage.



Freedom square. Located directly beside the city's central square, 2750 Park is a historic



Yerevan 2750 Anniversary Park



Saryan square (in collaboration with Roman Grigoryan). Directly opposite the Saryan Museum, this small urban square is being reconceived after years of underuse as an overlooked children's playground. The project leverages the site's sharp slope to craft a contemporary multi-level playscape while simultaneously forming a refined public terrace for everyday urban life along Yerevan's most active cultural street. Minimalist in language and built in aesthetic architectural concrete, the design introduces modern play equipment and well-formed seating zones, turning a neglected fragment into a compact but high-intensity social space at the city's core.



Poplavok Park. Poplavok Park is a large central green space with a Soviet-modernist legacy, defined by its artificial lake and mature tree canopy. The redevelopment preserves the park's historical structure while introducing contemporary infrastructure: a unified modern children's area replacing the outdated, haphazard playgrounds,

clear walking routes, modern surfacing, and new urban furniture. A central focus is returning the water to the city, enhancing the lake and shaping its waterfront into a timber-decked promenade — a welcome respite in the city's summer heat. A contemporary pavilion and café areas are nestled under the trees, activating the space without disturbing the landscape. The result is a generous, walkable, family-friendly park that honors its modernist roots while reconnecting the city with its water and civic life.



Poplavom Park

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Pavilion of the Republic of Armenia at the 19th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Microarchitecture Through AI: Making New Memories with Ancient Monuments

For the **19th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia** the Republic of Armenia is presenting a project “**Microarchitecture Through AI: Making New Memories with Ancient Monuments.**”

This interdisciplinary project is led by **curator Marianna Karapetyan** and **brings together a team of architects, researchers, and technologists from Electric Architects, TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, CALFA, and MoNumEd.**

This innovative project explores the fallibility of cultural memory and offers a critique of architectural preservation in the face of loss of heritage due to climate change—through environmental stress, climate-induced conflict, and societal neglect driven by adaptation struggles. The exhibition questions how emerging technologies can expand our understanding of architectural memory, pushing beyond mere preservation to create new, living forms of cultural expression.

At the heart of the pavilion is a generative AI model trained on the extensive digital archive developed by **TUMO's Armenian Heritage Scanning Project**, which has digitized hundreds of ancient Armenian sites using **3D scanning technology**. This vast archive is more than a tool for documentation; it serves as a starting point for reexamining traditional notions of preservation and exploring the essence of cultural heritage. Through the integration of **AI-driven tools** developed by **CALFA and MoNumEd**, the project investigates how artificial intelligence can reimagine architectural legacy to create new spatial compositions that capture a unique architectural DNA and produce thought-provoking adaptations.

Microarchitecture Through AI offers a new perspective on cultural reconstruction, one that looks beyond replicating monuments lost to climate change, conflict, or neglect. In this dynamic process, the traditional concept of microarchitecture is expanded—not only in terms of scale but also through the rearrangement of small-scale architectural elements within a cohesive structure. This approach mirrors the very nature of cultural memory: not a static record of the past, but a fluid, transformative force that continuously adapts and reinvents itself.

From Digital Abstraction to Stone Carving

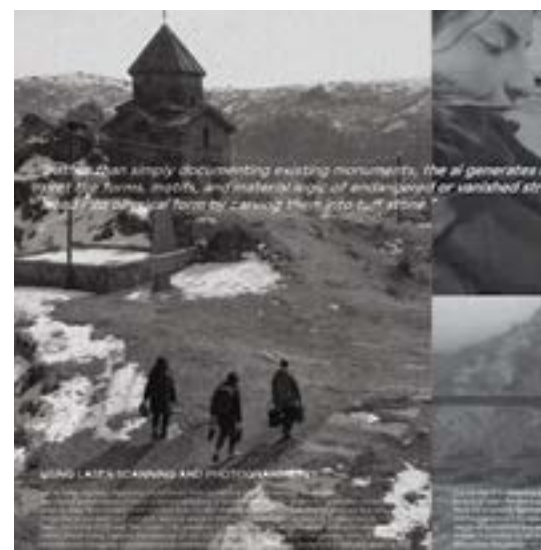
A key highlight of the Armenian Pavilion's exploration is the transition from the digital to the material. AI-generated designs do not remain confined to virtual space; they are brought to life in **tuff stone**, the material most closely associated with Armenia's architectural heritage. This fusion of the digital and the physical underscores the paradox of working with AI: often seen as an abstract, intangible force, here it becomes a tangible reality, grounded in the very material that has shaped Armenian monuments for centuries.

By carving speculative, machine-generated forms into stone, the project highlights the dynamic tension between tradition and design. It raises profound questions about authorship in architecture: **Is AI merely a tool for human creativity, or does it assert itself as a creative agent in the process of generating form?** What happens when we step back and let the machine reinterpret historical motifs on its own terms? Microarchitecture Through AI invites visitors to grapple with these questions, presenting an architectural future and collective memory shaped by AI—encouraging reflection on how technology might reimagine the past and transform the future of design.

Artificial Intelligence as a Creative Agent

AI in design is often viewed as a tool for optimization—streamlining processes, enhancing efficiency, and amplifying productivity. However, the Armenian Pavilion takes a different approach. Here, AI is leveraged not for its effectiveness, but for its potential to introduce novelty, generating **new forms, anomalies, and surprising variations**. As AI interprets and reimagines architectural memory, it mirrors and subverts our biases, cultural influences, and histories. It offers a glimpse into how technology can shape our evolving understanding of identity and place, inviting reflection on the complex relationship between tradition and innovation, consequently AI becomes a catalyst for rethinking not just design, but the very act of perpetuating architectural traditions in the face of heritage loss.


By training an AI model on digital renditions of ancient stone monuments and carving back into stone the often hallucinatory designs generated by the model, the Armenian Pavilion invites visitors to reconsider the role of memory in architecture and the challenge of preserving cultural heritage. The exhibition explores the ways in which technology can act as both a **preserver and a disruptor** of tradition, challenging conventional restoration methods and proposing a new, adaptive approach to heritage preservation.





THE CITIES THAT DO NOT EXIST

Photography and reflections by INKOTECH



@inkotech_1984

TOM HOOLIGANOV INKOTECH

When we dream, we walk through cities that we have never visited. Their streets echo familiar patterns, their buildings resemble fragments of places we once knew — yet they are not the same. These dreamscapes are woven from memory and imagination, built from the shadows of reality and the weight of nostalgia.

Armenia, and Yerevan in particular, became such a space for me. Through the lens, I did not only capture what stood before me — I revealed what had already lived inside. The architecture, the mountains, the monumental forms of stone and concrete all carried echoes of somewhere else, somewhere I could not quite place, as if my camera had unlocked the geography of déjà vu.

Each photograph is less a document and more a doorway. It opens to a city that simultaneously exists and does not. A city where past and future collapse into the present moment, where memory becomes indistinguishable from dream. Looking at these works, one cannot help but ask: if we create such places in our sleep, are they not real in some sense? If they exist in our minds, might they exist somewhere else — parallel, waiting, watching?

The monumental structures of Yerevan seem to stand as witnesses to this possibility. Bridges that stretch like arteries across the void, fountains carved like organs of memory, facades that glow as if lit from within — these are not simply urban spaces. They are metaphysical markers, symbols of a dialogue between the visible and the invisible.

And perhaps this is the true purpose of photography: not merely to record what is, but to capture what could be. A photograph becomes a fragment of the atlas of our subconscious, charting territories that exist between the real and the imagined. Armenia becomes not just a place on a map, but an archetype of memory itself — a city of questions, a city of echoes, a city of dreams.

These images are not about Armenia as a destination, but Armenia as an essence: the memory of a place that is both here and elsewhere. Standing before these structures, felt the sensation of returning, though I had never been here before. This is the paradox of memory and dream: we recognize what we cannot have known.

The photographs, then, are attempts to hold onto this paradox. They are whispers of spaces where architecture becomes thought, where mountains rise like half-remembered myths, and where light falls not only on stone, but on the fragile border between what we live and what we imagine.

In the end, these works are not answers but invitations — to wander, to question, and perhaps to accept that the cities of our dreams are as real as the cities of our waking lives.

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Tom Hooliganov / INKOTECH is a creative vision born from the roots of nightlife and large-scale productions. I have worked with global festivals such as DGTL and ADE music festival, as well as with world-renowned clubs and football institutions like Real Madrid and FC Barcelona. My lens has captured iconic artists including Sven Väth, Âme (Innervisions), Solomun, Stephan Bodzin, and Moderatt.

Today, I collaborate with techno labels in Barcelona, creating visual content for track releases, open-air raves, and campaigns led by leading PR agencies. My philosophy is rooted in architectural aesthetics and subconscious perception — translating dreams, emotions, and the pulse of electronic music into timeless visual narratives.



TATEV HOVAKIMYAN



At around 13 or 14, I felt a need for a parallel world—something beyond the environment and space in which I lived. I gradually discovered the world of cinema, then later theatre, and eventually, painting began to fascinate me deeply. These worlds became the parallel realities that offered me self-affirmation, born from my search for identity.

The realities I experience through film, theatre, or even a single painting—like one of Botticelli's works—have profoundly shaped me. Some films have changed my life; there are many. The world has created countless parallel realities for people like me who are searching for themselves. Works that transformed my understanding of how the world is built and how people can be perceived include Game of Thrones, Breaking Bad, the films of Lanthimos, Scorsese, Paul Thomas Anderson, Wes Anderson, Nolan, and Denis Villeneuve's Incendies, as well as Sorrentino—many, many others.

Theatre is a transformation of reality that happens right before your eyes. And I became one of those who transform reality—whether on a small or large scale, it doesn't matter. What matters is that I realized that, at some point in my youth, I dreamed of creating my own realities, and now I truly am creating them.






TELMAN & VALENTINA

This project is not just about photographs, but about a story of connection, authenticity, and the strength we find in each other. It is about the quiet comfort of shared moments and the spark of creativity that friendship brings. These photographs capture the way we inspire each other — not as characters, but as friends who share both life and art.

As actors, we spend a lot of time playing different characters, but in this project, it's just us — two friends enjoying the process of creating side by side. For us, that's the real gift: turning friendship into art, and art into a memory we'll always carry.

@telmankhachatryan | @valentinadavitavyan





Goddess Anahit, my modern interpretation.
This is not just an image, it's art, my vision of
ancient feminine power and beauty reimagined
in a contemporary context.

COLLABORATION WITH:
@tumostudios
@hazeyerevan

MODEL: @marinasoloyan
PHOTOGRAPHER: @vazgi
PERSONAL PORTRAITS: @ph.izabe11

MY NAME IS

GARIK HARUTYUNYAN

I am Armenian, born in Armenia, but when I was one year old, my parents moved to Russia. Three years ago, I came back home to Armenia. Here, I finally allowed myself to be who I truly am: free, genuine, and creative.

I am a stylist, colorist, and influencer. Since childhood, I have had a unique way of seeing the world. I have always noticed details, shapes, colors, and the energy that flows between them. At 17, I studied management, graduated, and worked in that field for some time. But the longer I stayed there, the more I felt that I was living someone else's life. My path is creativity, freedom, and beauty that comes not from rules but from the soul.

Today, my workplace is a space where not just hairstyles are created, but emotions. Through hair and image, I express what words cannot say: inner strength, vulnerability, emotion, and individuality. For me, hair is a canvas where I paint my vision of the world, of people, and of the energy around them. Every color and every shape is an act of self-expression, my dialogue with freedom.

I often think about why many people in Armenia are afraid to be creative, afraid of bold haircuts, unusual colors, or being judged. But beauty is not a frame. Beauty is a way of being yourself.

And I feel it is time for change. I want to start a small revolution in Yerevan to inspire people not to fear self-expression, not to fear color, shape, or difference. So that no one hides their individuality under the weight of others' opinions.

Sometimes I look at the Yerevan sky from the studio window and think how incredible it is to be here, surrounded by mountains, light, and inspiration. My day begins with coffee, silence, and the thought that today I can once again give someone confidence, beauty, and freedom.

My work is not just about hair. It is about energy, vision, and transformation. When a person looks in the mirror and sees not a mask but their true self, that is the real meaning of what I do. I often notice how, after working with me or even just talking to me, people change. They become calmer, more confident, and more radiant. Sometimes, one conversation is enough for someone to finally allow themselves to be who they have always been inside.

I want my work to carry light, freedom, and courage and to inspire people to feel, to dream, and to be themselves. I believe that beauty can be a revolution, quiet, sincere, and deeply personal. And if even one person, after my work, dares to be themselves, then it was all worth it.



Performer and choreographer, Toma Aydinyan creates her own movement language, blending complex dance moves and simple gestures borrowed from everyday life. Her inquisitive dance style - a result of the education and inspiration she received from various teachers throughout her 20-year career - includes playing with different qualities of movement and sensation, weaving poetry in motion, finding versatility in movement through improvisation and experimentation.

She has worked as a guest dancer, choreographer and teacher across Italy, Germany, France, UK, Greece, Kuwait etc.

@tomaydinyan



TOMA AYDINYAN



THE HERITAGE REIMAGINED

Drawing from the timeless heritage of Iranian headwear, the collection bridges ancient silhouettes and cultural symbolism with the refined clarity of modern design.

Each creation reimagines the forms once worn by travelers, poets, and royals, distilled into sculptural, contemporary shapes. Through the softness of felt, the precision of structure, and the quiet strength of minimal lines, the pieces narrate a story of identity, evolution, and status.



@ariga_to_



LILIT GALSTYAN X SAYYES AGENCY

Each of us has faced a moment of feeling out of place - surrounded by people, yet disconnected. Sometimes, the only way to preserve authenticity is to escape the endless celebration of vanity and the masquerade of hypocrisy.

Story

Four friends leave behind a glamorous party and run away to the lake. Exhausted by the artificiality of social facades, they seek something real - a return to what their souls truly crave. In the end, they catch a great fish - a symbol of renewal, connection, and inner peace. For them, fishing becomes a quiet rebellion - a way to reject pretense and choose honesty, friendship, and self-reflection instead. When you choose yourself and those close to you, you rediscover the moment of life.

The final frame - fish in hand - stands as a metaphor for victory over human imperfection. Its composition draws inspiration from Steven Spielberg's iconic film Jaws (1975), where fishermen proudly pose with their catch.

Photographer & Art Director - Lilit

As a photographer and art director, I was deeply inspired by the idea of escaping from reality and finding one's own magic in one's own world. I wanted to connect this feeling with still life - to tell ordinary people about their own magic, the beauty of life, and the harmony of colors that surrounds them every day.

Through this story, I aimed to show that even the simplest moments can carry quiet wonder - if we only choose to see them.

ART-DIRECTION: @timshulakov @lil.it.galstyan | PRODUCER: @darslune @timshulakov | PHOTOGRAPHER: @lil.it.galstyan | VIDEO: @alen.bagdasaryan
STYLING: @lil.it.galstyan | CLOTHES: @5conceptstore_ @zavtrazanovo | MODELS: @phily_amani @livlevon @dinasargsyann | AGENCY: @sayyes.models



Timofey, Art Director at SAYYES models:

"This shoot became a kind of emotional outlet for me after an unpleasant situation with a performer's cancellation in Armenia. Unfortunately, nowadays people often hide behind religion, judge others, yet commit terrible acts themselves.

I wouldn't want this work to become a point of conflict - on the contrary, let it remind people that it's important to choose your own feelings and, above all, look within yourself."

Stylistic Inspiration - Lilit

While working on the styling, I felt surrounded by both vintage and modern still life energy. I was inspired by the colors of Celine's latest collection and wanted to create something simple yet expressive.

I also wanted to show how much fashion and inspiration I find in the clothing of everyday professions - like fishermen. Their outfits almost never change, yet they always look timeless and stylish. It's about finding elegance and poetry in the ordinary - where practicality meets quiet grace.

We also decided to keep the cross - a subtle yet powerful element, the meaning of which we prefer not to reveal.

The girl with the blurred face.

Unfortunately, we couldn't show the model because her parents didn't allow it - they considered the clothes "too revealing." And that once again shows how people create artificial boundaries and restrict creative freedom.

MAN IN TOWN



Man in Town is an Armenian contemporary menswear brand under the creative direction of Armen Galyan. Every collection is designed and produced in Armenia. The Man in Town protagonist is a modern city dweller — attuned to the rhythm of the streets, drawn to comfort and aesthetics, inspired by art, and moving with a sense of lightness and inner freedom. His wardrobe intertwines elements of classic menswear, contemporary casual style, and athletic silhouettes. Each collection carries an artistic accent — a reflection of the inner world of a man who lives in the city, breathes its air, and helps shape its image.

@armengalyan @manintown_evn



MARIAM KESHABYAN

Hey there, I'm **Keshabyan**, an artist from **Yerevan, Armenia**. This is a little story about what I do and who I am.

I've always been surrounded by creativity — music, design, art — it's just how my life has always been. I studied music first — cello, piano, choir — and later became an interior designer. Design came naturally, but music always had my heart. About five years ago, with the help of a good friend, I accidentally became a DJ, and that brought me back into the world of music again. Since then, I've just kept going — creating, mixing, and filling your times with emotions to remember.

I love to **collaborate** with other people (artists and not only). Every person brings a different vibe, a different view of the world, and that's where everything starts. We learn, learn and learn. And I want to share something with you, something to learn or feel, through my voice.

You can find some of my **collabs and mixes** on **YouTube, SoundCloud, spotify and Instagram**.

I've realized that in every little thing, I love some **contrast**, and I believe **contrast brings balance**, just like in life, it's all about balance. I love being a part of **everyone's joy**, and I love the **energy people give me** when I share my music — or the music I love and collect. Lately, it's been happening in many beautiful places around **Armenia** and beyond.

I love **life**, love **feeling it**, and love **creating** in every way possible. I love winter mountains and summer oceans — of course it could be seen in my music either. (from Rabiz to techno and broken beats to jazzy soulsss) And I hope that I'll create something really **interesting and beautiful for all of us** with this journey.

@keshabyan_

ARMEN SARGSYAN

I'm Armen, a comedian and a scriptwriter who's doing his job, it's because I love to laugh, even laugh at myself. And I'd like everyone to be capable of it.

Friendship means a lot to me, cuz I love my friends too much. And I try to learn from them and create with them. You know what? No one has friends as I do.

@armen__sargsian

@albanovanessian @lp00ze

ALBAN OVANESSIAN & ABEL HARTOONI

ALBAN OVANESSIAN - This conversation holds particular value because it takes place within a space that foregrounds Armenian artistic voices. Speaking with someone who shares, even partially, that cultural lineage creates a resonance that feels increasingly vital—especially within the queer Armenian community in Brussels. These affinities, though often subtle, carry weight.



ABEL HARTOONI - Yes. Identity isn't simply a fixed category—it opens up ways of relating ; even if a dialogue like ours could just as easily resonate with another diasporic voice. But I'd like to turn to The Color of Pomegranates, a film I know has influenced your work.

ALBAN OVANESSION - For GRIEF(hub), I worked by extracting and reconfiguring the film's entire soundscape, church bells, women's voices, ritual textures. The gestures in the film, obscure yet potent, struck me as deeply choreographic. What fascinated me was the emotional stillness—those expressionless faces set against a backdrop of visual excess. That tension shaped the work. I wasn't interested in recreating scenes, but in evoking presences—through gesture, ritual, and a sense of inherited memory.

ABEL HARTOONI - There's a moment in the film where the repeated phrase shifts from "you wear fire" to "you wear black." That turn always felt to me both sensual and unsettling.

ALBAN OVANESSION - And the film plays constantly with gender fluidity—especially through the ambiguous figures of children.

ABEL HARTOONI - At one point, the protagonist becomes Sayat Nova. I remember reading an essay by an Iranian-Armenian filmmaker who suggested that Parajanov may have been addressing his own queerness in a subtle, poetic register. That ambiguity opens space for multiple projections.

ALBAN OVANESSION - Hmm.

ABEL HARTOONI - You've taken something already fragmented and pushed it further—transforming it into a kind of second-order collage through performance.

ALBAN OVANESSION - Exactly. I'm less attached to the original object than to what lingers after it—the traces that can be carried, embodied, reanimated.

ABEL HARTOONI - Let's move to your current work hardcore. Where did it begin?

ALBAN OVANESSION - It started with a question: what comes after liberation. I was seeing queer bodies repeatedly framed through trauma, and while that narrative is real, I was curious about something beyond it. Could we imagine a post-emancipatory space?



There’s a line from Virginia Woolf that stayed with me “I needed to bang my head against some hard door in order to call myself back to my body.” That’s the kind of intensity I was after—not pain, but presence. I invited four performers and asked each of them: what is your hardcore practice? One of them comes from pole dance—no formal training, but immense physical precision and improvisational force. I wasn’t seeking virtuosity, but conviction—an embodied intensity.

ABEL HARTOONI - Do they perform together as an ensemble?

ALBAN OVANESSION - Yes, though not in unison. The work isn’t about synchrony. It’s about convergence and divergence—crossings, ruptures, alignments, delays. They circulate in and out of shared structures, always in motion.

ABEL HARTOONI - Does the term hardcore reference 1990s club culture?

ALBAN OVANESSION - Not explicitly. Hardcore, for me, speaks to physical endurance. Holding a bridge position for five minutes—that’s hardcore. It’s about the temporality of exertion. Sonically, I’m collaborating with close friends to construct a landscape that moves between apocalypse and renaissance—layered, textured, queer. Not just high-impact beats, but nuance and depth.

ABEL HARTOONI: When does it premiere?

ALBAN OVANESSION - From September 23 to 27 at Théâtre de la Balsamine. It’s my first full-scale group work, developed over five weeks. I began with one-on-one sessions to build trust, then moved into collective choreographic processes. The lighting design will be improvised in real time—responsive to the performers, shaped by their rhythm, not imposed.

ABEL HARTOONI - It sounds like a piece grounded in both relational ethics and political imagination. Somehow you can sense that the sole coming together of these bodies in a certain space together could substitute the utopia. In a way the present-tense of these bodies merges with the futurity of utopia. Again, for me this is yet another way of embodying a disjointed time in your work.

ALBAN OVANESSION - It is. When someone asked why I wanted to make **HARDCORE**, I said: because these performers are my superheroes. If they belong to me, they can belong to you. That, for me, is the essence of queerness—choosing your icons and holding them close."

ALBAN OVANESSION - « My first encounter with the artistic field came through the world of fashion and journalism. At the time, my work focused on dressing the body in the most maximalist, hyperbolic, and ostentatious ways. Yet, this approach awakened in me a strong need to shift my attention, to strip things back and concentrate on the body itself: to think up, to question, and to recontextualize the body itself.

Following a drastic shift into contemporary dance and performance, I was offered numerous opportunities that allowed me to explore, physically and choreographically, a central question : What is the performative body ?

My interests within this practice lie in the simple act of embodying things that have no physical form, be it a social condition, a personal experience, an aesthetic, and beyond.

The physical materialization of these non-corporeal elements becomes a way to generate functionality, dramaturgical substance, and narrative, all explored through their interaction with a cultural, social, political, sexual, or functional body.

The outcomes of these investigations give rise to visual narratives where different media, light, sound, text, scenography, costume, installation, etc, intersect and converse.

Informed by the intersection of my French-Armenian cultural background and a queer, non-binary perspective, my practice functions as a body-laboratory within an underground and poetic framework that re-examines tools, systems, and modes of representation.

Considering my identity as a lens for research has deeply shaped both the content and structure of my work. What I am / Who I am directly informs what I do. »

ABEL HARTOONI is a Brussels-based Iranian Armenian visual artist, sound maker, curator and researcher. His practice explores painting both as a medium for embodiment, and as a tool for reflecting on power and value.

Hartooni is a current resident at KULT XL ateliers in Brussels. His work has been presented at Montoro 12 in Brussels, Noman's Gallery in Amsterdam, O gallery and Soo Contemporary in Tehran, Trefpunt in Ghent, and Vleeshal in Middelburg.

He has co-curated exhibitions including, “DrieDee: Hatching from Scratch” at Kunsthal Mechelen (2024), “Eye Becomes Water” at Het Paviljoen (2025), “For Sometime I’ve been Standing” at Kunsthal Gent (2025) “Setting the table” at Pilar Brussels (2025).





GOR KROYAN

@gorkroyan

Once Ina asked me for a photo and two words about myself. I want those words to offer a benefit, not just define me. After all, every moment is new, but I embrace life through different sensory experiences, and those are what matter.

I live through feelings and thoughts that transcend into feelings. The most invigorating feeling is when I am completely nude in the lap of nature. I can feel the current rising through my feet. Once, playing barefoot with a mixer, I felt the electricity pass through my body and realized I wanted that flow always. The only way was being naked in nature's embrace.

Try to find the strength to be naked in nature, even just once, alone. And if you see moss, hold your hands on it. You'll see the powerful waves that pass through your palms.

Sometimes I feel fear, envy, and anger, but the choice of how I respond to them defines me. I choose to feel them as pure sensory experiences in my body—that is how I become free from them. I believe every emotion manifests physically; my task is simply to find and acknowledge where they reside. By doing this, I learn something new, and the next time, I can simply enjoy the fullness of all emotions.

I photograph the same thing a hundred times, but always choose the first shot. You can't capture the same feeling twice. So, I don't try to find that feeling; I accept that, like the first exposure, it's already gone.

I walk a lot, and when I listen to an audiobook, the part of the book is etched into my brain in correlation with the place. This association is so powerful that pacing by the same places gives you a different feeling from a new world and a page of the book. Now, the new districts and streets of Marash are the chapters of Castaneda's *A Journey to Ixtlan* for me.

I'm happy that I know how to lace shoes so they never untie. And when you pull your socks up, it feels like you are refreshed—the hair on your skin moves upward with the fabric, as if life starts anew.

I always ask people to let me try the coffee I make for them—because bad coffee is truly not worth drinking. Sometimes, they refuse, and when they just say, "Yeah, good coffee," the taste remains a mystery to me. Their simple approval is not enough; I need to know the flavor for myself. Our pink house is built around flavor. At the very center is Anahit's kitchen—our "Medina," the center. I know now that everyone wakes up restless due to a brief chemical reaction. Just knowing this helps me wake up feeling lighter. And now my very first words are "I love myself" right after waking up.

I always drop a heart on Google Maps whenever my heart beats in a unique way, and I have a collection across Armenia.

I'm grateful to be born in this technologically rich period, fascinated by AI, but I found a way to completely turn off the horrible AI processing in iPhone photos, which makes them miraculous. The photos you see were taken by Hrant Sahakyan (my profile), and the image inside the tent was shot by my daughter, Nane Kroyan, when I completed this exact text.

One important note - Let the light bulbs at home be yellow (e.g., 2700K) instead of blue, so it doesn't feel like a hospital, instead, it makes you feel warm in the evening. Moreover, you can buy RGB lights, and sometimes you can play with colors.

EMMA HAKOBIAN



PHOTOGRAPHER: Tigran Hovhannisyan @enkkki



Communication / production / media - that's my permanent red thread.

I translate noise into signal, ideas into action. Brands, orgs, people - I help them find a voice that actually carries.

I'm a PR specialist, I'm a producer. Not two jobs - one engine.

Strategy draws the map, production burns the road, and the work crosses borders it wasn't "supposed" to.

Started front-of-camera - TV host, journalist. Then I stepped back - on purpose - to build the stories instead of just introducing them. Television taught me tempo and precision.

Art and culture taught me why.

With my partner, we built /ism. talents/ management/production - a studio for stories that refuse to sit still.

Now we're in the trenches with the Dramatic Theatre in Armenia, pushing arts marketing like it's stagecraft: tight narratives, bold moves, feelings first. Make the theatre feel new - not plastic. Keep the heritage - not the dust.

Every project is a wire between people, ideas, emotions. We plug the current in and let it hum - turning creativity into consequence, voice into echo.

"Don't just tell the story - rig it, light it, and make it impossible to ignore."

@emmahakobian



BAGRAT SAROYAN THE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

I used to be a soccer player, or so I thought, or tried to be.
I chased the games, I wore the shoes, but something never quite fit me.

I tried all kinds, from courts to floors, and even danced beneath the stage light.
But on my first and only show, I fell before I took the flight.

I used to be a soccer player, or maybe not, it slipped away.
"Perhaps by accident," one said, a dream misplaced along the way.

And yet I wonder, now and then, if not; in games, where do I play?
Perhaps the field was not of grass, but words and thoughts I cast each day.

And now, another voice appears: "Perhaps the lens is where you're seen.
Try camera, try scene, become a man of light, a man of screen.

***The director of photography, they say, sees silence move within the frame.
So I became that watchful eye: Saroyan Bagrat, director of photography's name!***

As it's often said, for much, much more, please take a look at these projects and moves:
The Road, Teach for Armenia, Saghsara, The Tales of the Blue Sky, Sye, Outliving Shakespeare... And more!

Maybe you'll be the one to prove that I am now the man of the camera,
not by accident, but by faith.

@saroyanbagrat



ANNA MANVELYAN

Fragile Terrains

My work exists at the threshold between visibility and withdrawal. My drawings emerge in that in-between space where control meets chance; where the body engages with lines; and where paper becomes a field of displaced and re-layered traces.

I am interested in moments of vulnerability, of being enveloped in transparency — not as a weakness, but as a condition for the emergence of meaning. When I draw, I sense my hand's interaction with the materials: the way charcoal breaks, ink spreads and graphite digs into the paper. I cannot fully control these processes. And therein lies their beauty.

My inner images are memories of light falling in empty rooms, the feeling of skin changing and structures dissolving. Fragments of an inner storm; attempts to articulate what lies between the microscopic and atmospheric abstractions.

The same gestures, the same circular movements, the same searching lines, again and again. It is a ritual; it is an incantation. Circling obsessively around the same reason until it opens up. Raw and uncensored things belong to the terrain of truth, to feelings that are too big for polite words.

Photography adds another dimension of temporality to my practice by expanding it. While drawing captures the moment of an inner eruption, the camera captures moments of disappearance: light settling over surfaces like memories; shadows redefining forms; and details revealing in a fraction of a second what has always been sought: the different states of seeing and feeling.

Fragility is not the enemy of beauty; it is its essence, just as intense feelings are not the enemy of clarity, but its source.

@analysis030



Black Tulip

The most beautiful things are hidden from the eyes of the world.

The human mind is capable of envisioning things, ideas, entire worlds, beyond even our wildest dreams. And often, all it needs is a push. Something to bridge the gap between the tangible and the fantastical, allowing us to uncover where they become one.

Once we traverse the boundary separating a vision from its manifestation – its expression in the physical world – and truly ponder its beauty, we can surmise its origins, with appreciation of how it first came to life... and what it has since come to be.

The '≈' epitomizes the notion of birth, documents the formation of life, and explores the crystallization of ideas and messages through bodily shapes elegantly shrouded from the naked eye. A translucent piece of fabric represents the frontier that symbolically separates the viewer from the fertile female form and its contortions. Each image in the 10- piece series chronicles a stage of body formation, and with it, the blossom of the 'tulip' that gradually unfolds through the progressing frames. The approach marks a departure from the photographer's usual style, which has generally focused on facial expressions and the intriguing intricacies of a person's complexion.

The 'Black Tulip' is extraordinary precisely because it all began in the darkness – concealed from the curious gaze of the world. With each shot taken, its author was compelled to make the journey from imagination to reality, and both visualize each image and the exact place that it would assume in the series.

Experience the mystery, And the elusive miracle of life taking shape, As seen through the lens of Vartan Kelechian.





"It is just happened that I captured the essence of Human daily life, joy & struggle"

Born on the 22nd of June 1979 in Beirut city, to an Armenian father and a Lebanese mother. My familial story is not different from those of my counterparts, but it is due to my father's visual aesthetic, and my mom's willingness to humor his amateur passion of photography that I grew to see, view and observe my surroundings, if not differently, then definitely more attentively. Throughout the years, I've tried to translate the visuals streaming in through my cornea and reflect them through my father's "Canomatic" camera. Such moments were the spice my life relished on, specifically when I decided to purchase my first Canon EOS 300D in 2003.

Unfortunately, Destiny didn't allow me much playtime with my gadgets, as I had to carry on social responsibilities, which required a complete deviation from my passion towards a more stable career path, or so it seemed...

"I believe every one of us in the world has a gift to discover, smart are the ones who use it well".
And thus began my journey...

Vartan Kelechian @vartan.kay



Khsh.fm is an online radio that believes every moment has a soundtrack. The brand's playlist begins with three: the moment Hayk founded the station, the moment Gor joined to bring structure, and the moment Gag came in to complete the trio.

It all started as MMJ.fm. At first, it wasn't a brand - it was Hayk's personal online radio for friends: handpicked tracks, mostly jazz, crafted for mood, simplicity, and daily life. Later, when Gor joined, the idea began evolving beyond just streaming - into building a community, recording DJ sets with Yerevan artists in unique spaces, and capturing the pulse between music and moment. Then Gag entered the mix and added the final spark.

Later, through a collaboration with Kesberan Creative Collective, MMJ.fm turned into Khsh.fm. The brand evolved around the idea that we often live inside our dreams. We imagine that life will truly begin once we reach them - and in that process, we lose our real life: the everyday. We start treating the everyday as something separate from us - repetitive, average, sometimes boring. We do certain things as if they were mere tasks: grocery shopping, going to work, washing dishes, and so on. But the everyday is made up of these seemingly dull little moments. To truly enjoy life, we have to start seeing these short, ordinary situations as moments.

Because drinking coffee is just a habit - drinking coffee while listening to Erasmo Carlos' Gente Aberta, imagining the Latin sun and the gentle summer breeze - that's a moment. Khsh.fm creates and supports music in many forms, offering lessons, production, collaborations, and events. Most importantly, KHSH.fm is a space and community for local enthusiasts who truly appreciate music.

Beyond personal listening, Khsh.fm also offers professional in-venue music solutions for businesses. They address common issues Armenian businesses face, such as using uncurated, unlicensed, or poorly managed music - which leads to compromised customer experiences, legal risks, and operational inefficiencies. Khsh.fm helps businesses ensure legal compliance, and optimize operations by providing expertly curated and professionally managed music services - transforming background music into a strategic asset.


With a growing base of unique artists, KHSH provides specially licensed playlists designed to match the atmosphere and rhythm of every business moment - from morning coffee spots to late-night bars.

A portrait of a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a white fur collar and large black hoop earrings. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

...no matter how many opportunities you have,
or what your profession is — observe and listen.
Expand your worldview and don't be afraid of
the unknown.

@indigodiasol

DIA
INDIGO

A close-up photograph of a person's face, specifically their eyes and nose, partially obscured by large, vibrant green leaves. The person has a small hoop earring in their left ear.

I'm Diana — a multidisciplinary artist, a devoted lover of music, and a nomad. Throughout my life, I've moved constantly: changing countries, languages, and cultures. For the past ten years, I've been living in Belgium and have completed my studies at an art faculty. Immigration has been a painful theme for me, but it's during these challenging years that I truly grew — both as a person and as a creator.

Through art and solitary walks with headphones, I was expressing myself and exploring, discovering more about my creative potential and who I am as a maker. Yes, I could spend hours talking about my achievements and deliver pretentious speeches about the life of an artist — but I don't want to. My message is simple: no matter how many opportunities you have, or what your profession is — observe and listen. Expand your worldview and don't be afraid of the unknown.





I believe that when you follow your passion and live up only to your own expectations—staying loyal even to your delusions—you eventually harvest great success and an abundance of joyful achievements. They might not be visible to others at first, but they truly serve your soul, and that's when you become free.

So I stick to my plan, act from passion and excitement, and I'm always ready to pay the price—being misunderstood, judged, abandoned, undervalued, or unappreciated.

I challenge my fears to uncover the gifts hidden beneath them, and my art reflects those inner dialogues—messages, reminders, and hints to myself.

I don't create my works; I channel them. That's why they carry a truth that belongs to everyone. And if it resonates—that's what connects me and you.

Ina Mich @inamichaelian

I build dreamlike worlds shaped by bold light, sculptural textures, and the quiet tension between presence and illusion. My photography moves beyond fashion into a space where emotion becomes architecture, and every frame feels like a fragment of a living performance. I strive to create images that don't just portray a moment, but evoke a world—intimate, surreal, and unmistakably my own



ARMEN AGHAYAN


PHOTOGRAPHER: @aghayan
MODEL: @yourkatte/wot models
STYLE: @helen.chik
DESIGNER: @h.lelenh
MAKE UP: @arpinee_galstyan





NIKOLAY HAYRAPETYAN

I just want music videos to feel alive again.

A man with sunglasses and a white tank top is riding a dark horse through a lush green forest. Another horse is visible in the background. The scene is captured in a cinematic style with soft lighting.

I miss the days when everyone waited for a video release like it was an event — when the visuals added an emotion the song alone couldn't give. I want to feel that spark again, the way I felt the first time I heard and watched M83's Wait, or when I saw Freestyler by Bomfunk MC's and had no idea what was happening, but loved every second of it. I'm still hoping to experience that kind of emotion again.

@kolyahayrapetyan

HAYK KAROYI

PHOTOGRAPHER: Lush Hakobian @lush.hakobian



I think my relationship with music started long before I understood it. As a child in Yerevan — walking near the 3rd Mas metro station, passing old record shops, or waiting inside the Opera House while my sister rehearsed ballet — a few seconds of sound could completely shift my world. Even the smell of that building stayed inside me. Those small moments — and a lot of them — became the quiet foundation of who I am today.

I officially began music at 11, studying piano, but classical etudes never felt like my path. What truly called me were the sounds coming from the next classroom: the traditional Armenian woodwinds. Within a year, I switched instruments, and that decision shaped my whole life.

When I entered the conservatory, I needed to work, so I began playing at weddings, funerals, and ceremonies in every region of Armenia. I learned hundreds of songs from masters of all generations — maybe even a thousand musicians over ten years. No university could teach what that period gave me. I was a student traveling everywhere by taxi — a “rich student,” as I like to joke. But truly, I’m still grateful to the woodwinds for carrying me through that chapter.

Later, with friends, I started jamming and mixing everything without genre boundaries. Improvisation became my home. Even though I studied traditional instruments, I was always searching for my own way of playing. My professors weren’t always happy about that, but I felt free.

After the army, I became curious about electronic music. I opened GarageBand without any knowledge and just started playing with sounds. Honestly, I still do many things by instinct — if you love something deeply, the learning comes naturally. Step by step, I met friends who were masters of electronic music, and they inspired me to explore even further.

Through all of this, the woodwinds never left me. They are not tools — they are companions. I don’t try to use them; I try to serve them. For me, loving an instrument is like loving a person: the deeper you go, the more respect you feel.

I believe in long relationships with the things I love — with sound, with instruments, with people. Every day, even with one small step, I try to go deeper.

@haykkaroyi



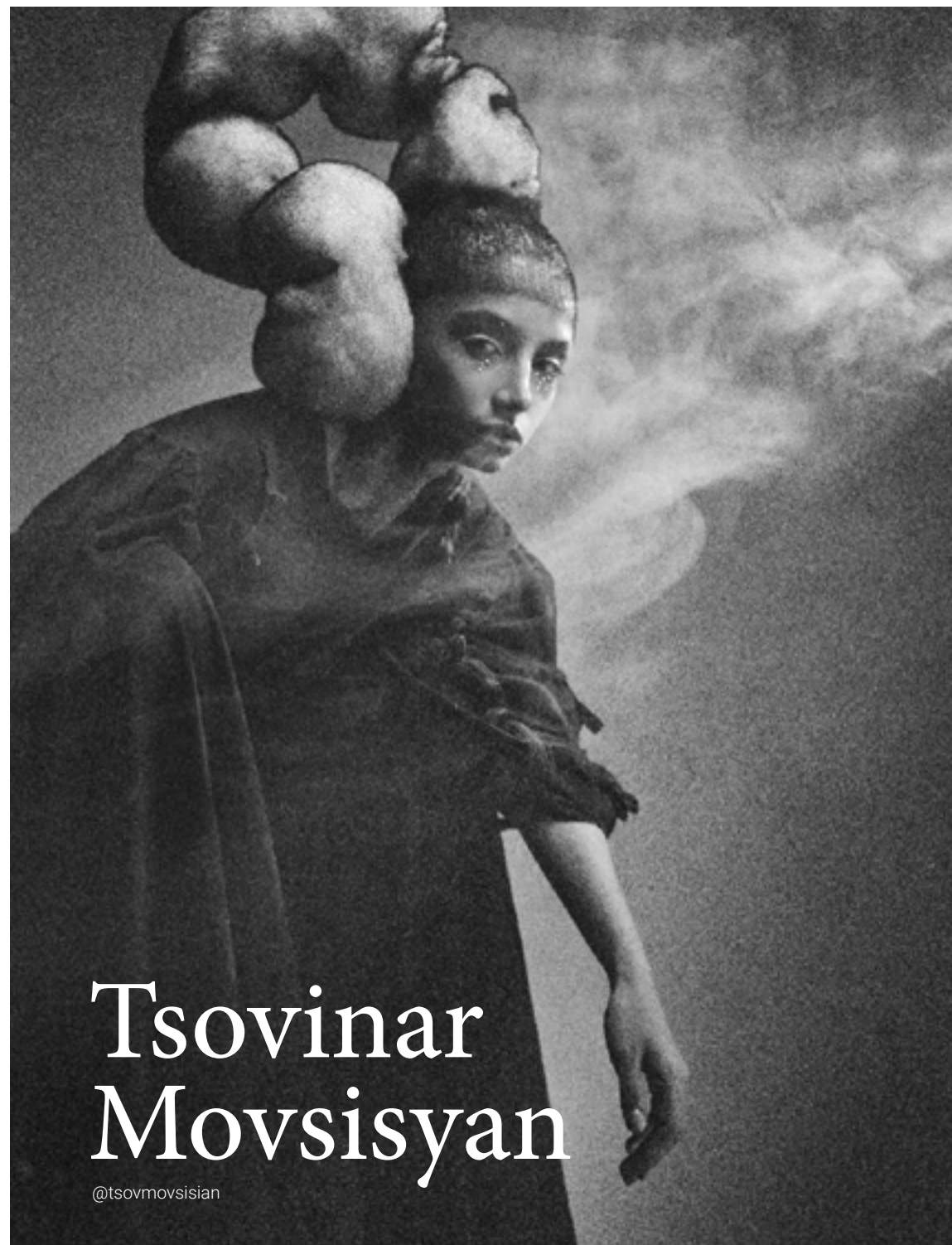
STYLE & PHOTO: @marat

I've been dancing since I was three, and movement has always been my native language — a space where emotion, discipline, and beauty meet. For me, dance is an ongoing study of aesthetics and the body — an exploration of how form and feeling coexist.

Modeling grew naturally from that same sensitivity. The lens became another stage — one where I could translate rhythm into stillness and shape emotion through the body's lines and presence. My modeling isn't separate from dance; it's an extension of it — a way to transform pain, strength, and grace into visual language.

Working in Armenia means creating with intention. It takes resilience, imagination, and a constant desire for growth. I find inspiration in diversity — in embodying different moods, characters, and narratives. Through each artistic role, I discover new versions of myself: softer, stronger, freer.

Art, for me, is honesty. It's not about perfection — it's about transformation, about turning every movement and every emotion into something beautiful, alive, and real.



Tsovinar
Movsisyan

@tsovmovsisian

PHOTO: @damyan STYLE: @marine_sahakyan



@armenian_animal_aid

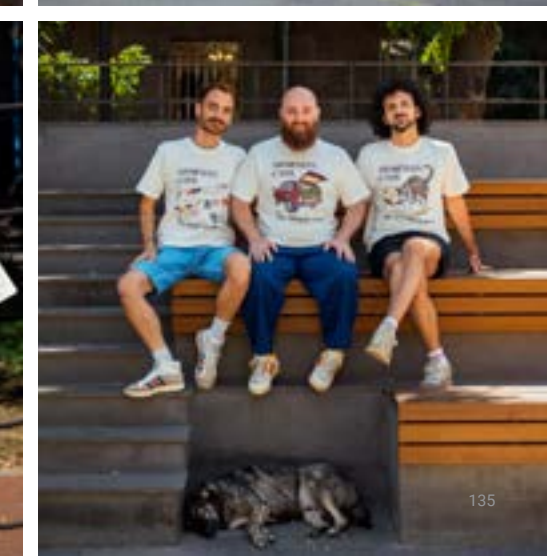
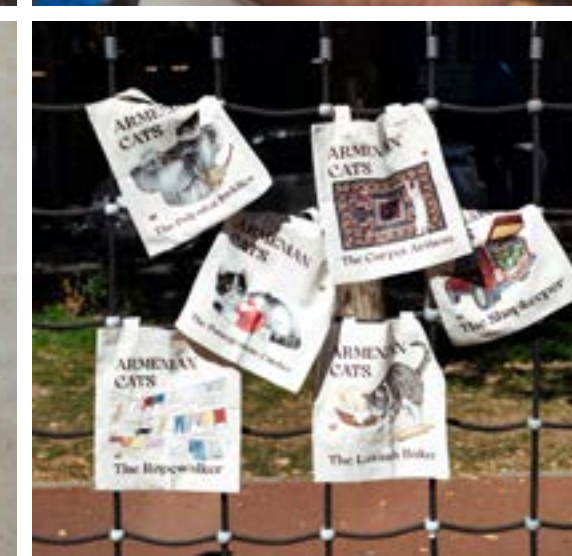


ARMENIAN ANIMAL AID

ARMENIAN ANIMAL AID is a non-profit animal rights organization based in Zurich/ Switzerland, Berlin / Germany and Yerevan, Armenia. While officially launched as an NGO in July 2023, we have been actively advocating for animals for many years. Our diverse team comprises artists, social workers, managers, designers, activists, and individuals deeply passionate about animal welfare.

In addition to our efforts in establishing and supporting an animal shelter in Yerevan, we strongly believe in the power of art, culture, and education to influence people's behavior towards animals. Through various projects such as art exhibitions, film screenings, performances, and public events, we aim to raise awareness about animal rights and generate funds for our shelter.

Also we launched our fashion / merch editions to depict Armenian culture and showcase animal welfare issues. Through fashion and clothing we can create visibility of those topics and give space to animal rights in our every day life.





Yerevan has always evolved through the people who create, question, and reimagine the world around them. Every meaningful cultural shift in our city has begun with individuals who introduced a new sensibility and were ready to move beyond familiar boundaries. Today, that spirit is especially visible in the work of the new generation.

The changes taking place in Yerevan show how closely the city's growth and its cultural life are connected. As we shape the city's future, we want to ensure that creativity has room to grow-through spaces that encourage expression, initiatives that bring communities together, and collaborations that open Yerevan to a wider cultural dialogue. Culture is not a separate sphere; it is part of how the city defines itself and how it speaks to the world.

This is why our partnership with platforms like DASEIN matters. The journal highlights the people and ideas that reflect Yerevan as it is today. It brings together stories from across our cultural life-alongside the work of already well-known and pioneering artists-and presents a contemporary view of the city's creative environment.

Our support for the journal reflects our belief in this momentum and in the potential it carries for Yerevan's future. The city will continue to stand with those who imagine, build, and contribute to its cultural life.

Tigran Avinyan
Mayor of Yerevan
@mayorofyv

We are a dynamic team of creative individuals with diverse backgrounds, including film directing, art, design, music, and fashion. Our collective mission is to craft compelling and shareable content for our magazine while also cultivating connections with talented individuals, both locally and globally, to expand our creative network.

Founders:
Ina Abrahamyan
Anna Vahrami
Vanane Borian

www.daseinzine.com



@dasein_zine



*All the texts in DASEIN are authored by the contributors.

