

HYE SHARZHOOM Armenian Action ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՍՄ



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Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

Dr. Talin Suciyan Appointed as 21st Kazan Visiting Professor



Photo: ASP Archive

Dr. Talin Suciyan

STAFF REPORT

Dr. Talin Suciyan was named the 21st Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies at California State University, Fresno for the Spring 2025 semester.

“We are happy to welcome Dr. Suciyan for the spring semester,” said Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Berberian Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program. “Dr. Suciyan will bring a new and active element to the Program.”

“The Kazan Visiting Professorship offers scholars a unique opportunity to work on topics of their choice, covering the wide range of Armenian Studies,” said Dr. Suciyan. “Further, it provides a stimulating and

supportive academic environment with a long tradition of Armenian studies, to meet young generations of Armenians, and to be part of one of the oldest communities in the United States.”

Dr. Suciyan was born and raised in Istanbul and attended Armenian schools. “Armenian institutions in Istanbul, such as the Armenian Patriarchate, the Armenian Hospital, cultural centers established by the alumni organizations, choirs, theatre groups, Armenian periodicals, all provided a vibrant community life for us all,” said Dr. Suciyan. Her later migration to Germany to pursue her academic career changed her life and yet, gave her the opportunity to think, write and reflect on the history of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, Turkey and beyond.

After graduating from the University of Istanbul, she continued her studies in Germany, where she obtained her Ph.D. Based in Munich, Dr. Suciyan has been teaching and researching at the Institute for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Munich for over 15 years. She

SEE [SUCIYAN](#), PAGE 7

Armenian Students Organization Holds Cultural Activities



ASO members and friends at the William Saroyan House Museum in Fresno.

Photo: ASP Archive

ANI SARGSYAN STAFF WRITER

Fresno State’s Armenian Students Organization has been putting together events for students and community members to come together at least once a month. These social gatherings are important in keeping the student body close-knit while

also celebrating and preserving Armenian culture.

In the fall semester, ASO had several successes, including a celebration for Armenian Independence day, a long awaited tailgate, a Halloween party, a fun-filled Friendsgiving, and the creation of a new line of ASO crewnecks (which are available

SEE [ASO](#), PAGE 3

Kef Time IV Brings Armenian Community Together Through Celebration of Armenian Folk Dancing

CAREEN DERKALOUSDIAN STAFF WRITER

“It’s a great event to bring the Armenian community together,” said Kef Time guest Alicia Minasian. “It represents our heritage, and we are so proud of it!”

On Saturday, January 25, 2025, the highly anticipated Kef Time Fresno IV took place at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church Social Hall. Featuring the Kef Time Legacy Band, this event was complete with live music, dinner, and folk dancing. Tickets sold out fast, and there was a record-high attendance of 435 guests, warranting a planned expansion of the venue for next year!

With its lively atmosphere and talented musicians, it’s no wonder that hundreds of guests flocked from across California and the



Photo: Maher Kouranyan

The Kef Time Legacy Band performing on January 25, 2025.

United States to experience the splendor of Kef Time. The band features the vocals of the Hagopian brothers – Philip on *oud* and Andrew on *doumbek* – alongside three exceptionally talented

musicians: Michael Kamalian from Wisconsin on clarinet, Mal Barsamian from Massachusetts on guitar, and Jim Karagozian from Fresno on *kanun*.

SEE [KEF TIME](#) PAGE 7

Documentary on Fresno Armenians Screened

STAFF REPORT

J. Michael Hagopian’s “Strangers in a Promised Land” was recently digitally remastered and was screened at The Vineyards-California Armenian Home. Fresno State Armenian Studies Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian was invited to give an introduction for the film and to discuss the film with guests after the screening.

Narrated by former California Governor George Deukmejian, “Strangers in a Promised Land” includes, among others, the story of artists such as William Saroyan and Varaz Samuelian; the



Photo: ASP Archive

Prof. Der Mugrdchian with guests at the California Armenian Home screening of “Strangers in a Promised Land.”

SEE [DOCUMENTARY](#), PAGE 3

Dr. Zakarian Participates in “Armenia & Byzantium” Workshop at the University of Oxford, February 7-8

‘Armenia & Byzantium without Borders V: Disruption and Resilience’ - Graduate and Early Career Workshop, Univ of Oxford

Dr. David Zakarian reports:

In 2018, as a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Oxford, I had the opportunity to participate in a transformative academic experience – the “Armenia & Byzantium” without Borders workshop. Organized by Prof. Claudia Rapp and Dr. Emilio Bonfiglio at the University of Vienna within the framework of the *Moving Byzantium: Mobility, Microstructure, and Personal*

Photo: ASP Archive



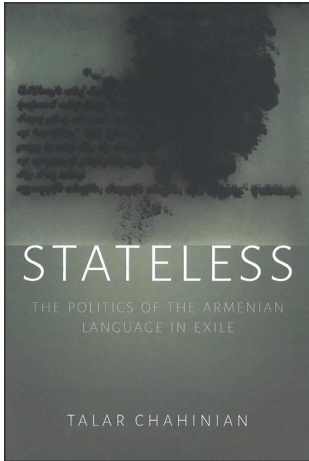
Dr. David Zakarian, fourth from right, with a group of scholars at the “Armenia & Byzantium” workshop.

SEE [WORKSHOP](#), PAGE 6

Armenian Studies Program Book/Video/CD Archival Gifts

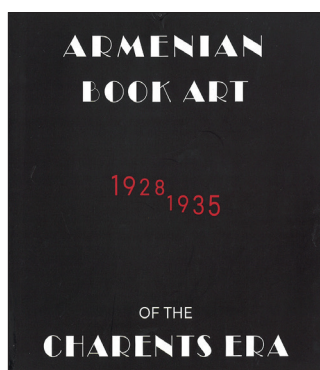
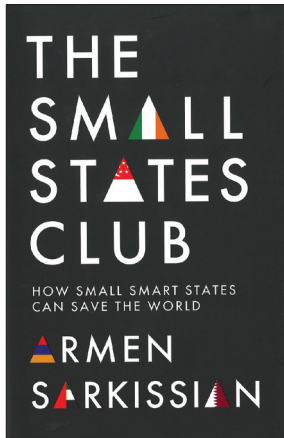
The Armenian Studies Program would like to thank the donors, authors, and publishers for the following books, periodicals, videos, and archival gifts, either offered personally, or to the Program.

Talar Chahinian, Irvine, CA, for a copy of her book, *Stateless: the Politics of the Armenian Language in Exile* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2023) 296 pp., in English. Chahinian offers a rich exploration of Western Armenian literary history in the wake of the 1915 genocide that led to the dispersion of Armenians across the Middle East, Europe, North America, and beyond. She highlights post-World War I Paris and post-World War II Beirut to trace the ways in which literature developed in each diaspora. Chahinian argues that the adoption of 'national' as the literature's organizing logic ultimately limited its vitality and longevity as it ignored the diverse composition of diaspora communities.



Brenda Najimian Magarity, Fresno, CA, for a copy of *Carpet Weavers: Poems by Brenda Najimian Magarity* (Georgetown, Kentucky: Finishing Line Press, 2024) 30 pp., in English. This book of poems embraces themes of identity and longing while reflecting on Brenda Najimian Magarity's connection to her homeland. Najimian Magarity is a second-generation Armenian American, daughter of a homemaker and a dry cleaner/hat blocker. A former high school teacher, she has published poetry, essays, and stories.

Armen Sarkissian and the Armenian Assembly of America, London and Washington, DC, for a copy of *The Small States Club: How Small Smart States Can Save the World* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2023) 265 pp., in English. Armen Sarkissian, former president of Armenia, argues that small states can navigate the complex challenges of the twenty-first century in smarter ways than 'greater' powers. Sarkissian offers captivating portraits of small states, from Africa to Europe to Asia, that have overcome seemingly insuperable odds to establish themselves as oases of political stability, cultural tolerance, technological innovation, financial prudence and scientific research.



Abril Bookstore, Glendale, CA, for a copy of *Armenian Book Art of the Charents Era* (Yerevan: Antares Press, 2024) 155 pp., in English and Armenian. The 1920s and 1930s experienced an unprecedented boom of modern Armenian book art largely connected to Yeghishe Charents. Charents engaged a number of renowned Armenian artists in book illustration and design which created an exceptional cultural phenomenon periodized as the 'Charents era.' This book offers an overview of the works featured in two museum exhibitions held in Yerevan, Armenia showcasing examples of the 'Charents era.'

Julien Zarifian, Poitiers, France, for a copy of his book, *The United States and the Armenian Genocide: History, Memory, Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2024) 310 pp., in English. This book is the first to examine how and why the United States refused to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide until the early 2020s. Although the American government expressed sympathy toward the plight of the Armenians in the 1910s and 1920s, Zarifian explores how, starting in the 1960s, a set of geopolitical and institutional factors led the United States to adopt a policy of genocide nonrecognition that it would cling to for over fifty years.



California State University, Fresno Armenian Studies Program Fall 2025 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Subject Area 3B, Humanities				
• Arm 1A-Elementary Armenian (Class #72630)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	D. Zakarian
General Education-Breadth, Subject Area 3A, Arts				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #73954)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Subject Area 4B, Social and Behavioral Sciences				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #73249)	3	9:00A- 9:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Subject Area UD3, Arts and Humanities				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture (Class #73652) Digital Synchronous	3	9:00A-9:50A	MWF	D. Zakarian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture (Class #73306)	3	2:00P-3:15P	TuTh	D. Zakarian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture (Class #73966) Asynchronous	3	DGT CAMP		H. Ohanessian
Upper Division Armenian Studies Course				
• ArmS 108A-Arm History I (Class #73567)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian

GET A MINOR IN ARMENIAN STUDIES
CONTACT PROF. BARLOW DER MUGRDECHIAN

HYE SHARZHOOM

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Give Your Way to the Armenian Studies Program

There are many
ways to support
the Armenian
Studies Program.

- 1) A gift today could come through the donation of cash, stock, or goods.
- 2) The Armenian Studies Program can also be supported in the future in estate plans.

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Dr. Julien Zarifian Discusses U.S. and Armenian Genocide



Left to right: Dr. David Zakarian, Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Dr. Julien Zarifian, Dr. Talin Suciyan, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

Photo: Natalie Agazarian

LORI AGAZARIAN
STAFF WRITER

On Monday, February 24, 2025, the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program hosted Dr. Julien Zarifian for a lecture about the history, memory, and politics of the Armenian Genocide. Dr. Zarifian is a professor of U.S. History and U.S. civilization, with an emphasis in politics, at the University of Poitiers in France. He visited West Coast universities, including UCLA and USC, to give presentations on his new book, *The United States and the Armenian Genocide: History, Memory, Politics*.

Dr. Zarifian is the author of two books and multiple articles published in journals. He began his undergraduate college career in 2001, where he originally took an interest in the Armenian Genocide and the involvement of other countries, namely Turkey and the United States. He began dedicating his time and research to the question of why the United States never formally recognized the Armenian Genocide as a genocide. He ultimately concluded that the reason the United States never recognized the Armenian Genocide was due to its involvement with Turkey.

When Dr. Zarifian originally began his research, he found that there wasn't much information available about the United States recognition of the Armenian Genocide, which only peaked his interest and inspired his research even further. That's when he discovered that "the answer was even more basic than the question" – Turkey. Without Turkey, there would be no reason for the United States to

refuse to recognize the Armenian Genocide because the United States has political connections with Turkey. If the United States were to recognize the Armenian Genocide, Turkey would change its position towards the United States, which is a risk the United States won't take.

After coming to this realization, Dr. Zarifian was able to focus his research in that direction, making it easier to gather information. He conducted a lot of research, including reading most of the books edited by by Richard G. Hovannisian on the genocide. The opening of the archives of the *Armenian Weekly*, together with other Armenian journals, became readily available and with all of these new sources, Dr. Zarifian was able to gain new perspectives to include in his book.

Dr. Zarifian's book, *The United States and the Armenian Genocide: History, Memory, Politics*, is separated into three main segments: the United States and the Genocide question, the political struggle for genocide recognition by the United States, and the reasons why it took so long for the United States to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Throughout his years of research and writing, Dr. Zarifian found the most stimulating point was the fact that the United States "has a difficult relationship to the past... and with its own past," which impacted recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the United States.

Have you moved?

Please let us know of any change in your address.
email:
barlowd@csufresno.edu

ASO, FROM PAGE 1

for purchase) featuring the Armenian *trchnakir* style. With this solid foundation from last semester, the spring semester is already off to a great start!

In January, ASO hosted a Back-to-School Trivia and Game Night, with members splitting into teams for a game of "Armenian Jeopardy," while enjoying good company and food. With February came a more cultural excursion to the William Saroyan House where students learned about the life and work of

Fresno's famous native son and Armenian writer. After exploring the museum, members went for a meal at Campus Pointe.

Looking ahead, ASO will be hosting a movie night in March, screening the Armenian film "Kyank u Kriv" (Life and War). Following the movie there will be a discussion with Dr. Talin Suciyan.

The ASO officers are working on many exciting things in the coming months, and hope for even more student involvement, connection and fun!

Dr. Talin Suciyan Delivers First in a Three-Part Series of Presentations on Armenian Family Archives

NATALIE AGAZARIAN
EDITOR

"This is everyday history... the catastrophic, everyday history that is valuable and needs to be studied," remarked newly appointed Kazan Visiting Professor, Dr. Talin Suciyan. She gave her first lecture, the first in a three-part series on Armenian family archives, on Friday, January 31, 2025.

Dr. Suciyan was born in Istanbul, and after obtaining her Ph.D. in Munich, Germany, began teaching for the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Munich. Her research centers around the Armenian presence in the Ottoman Empire and in modern day Turkey.

Shortly following the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Suciyan and friend Paul Soukiasian discovered a trunk full of letters in his family's home in Philadelphia. The contents contained several letters and postcards detailing the life of Sourpik Tekian and her family.

This discovery led Dr. Suciyan to explore Armenian family archives in three forms of correspondence: letters from survivors, postcards, and letters prior to 1915.

"Sourpik's letters began in September 1922, two months after sending her daughters to America," said Dr. Suciyan. "Her letters afford a direct look into daily life in a time when the surviving Armenian community was facing an institutional and social crisis, leading to a massive wave of Armenian immigration by the end of 1922."

Sourpik and her family lived as *kaghtagans*, a term describing those in perpetual exile or



Photo: Natalie Agazarian

Left to right: Katherine Arslanian, Dr. Talin Suciyan, Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Andrew Hagopian, Dr. David Zakarian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Nicholas Jendian, Sosse Yanez, Talia Solak, and Jordan Mazmanian.

constant separation from their homeland.

The letters reveal the difficult conditions faced by displaced Armenians, who often endured harsh and unjust circumstances. Sourpik writes about her leaky roof, with no hope of repair from her landlord – a sentiment that Dr. Suciyan interprets as a powerful metaphor: "Living in a house that cannot be repaired is symbolic of the situation of Armenians in Turkey."

The letters provide deeper insight into Sourpik's life and thought processes. They reveal her work as a seamstress for a wealthy family, her fears regarding her sons' enlistment, and her personal struggles with leaving her home in Istanbul. Additionally, they shed light on the cultural, social, and financial status of Armenians living in Istanbul at the time.

Dr. Suciyan noted discrepancies in the historical records regarding exact dates, but

her research places Sourpik's birth between 1871 and 1875. The letters also discuss her experiences immigrating to America, offering a glimpse into the challenges and hopes that accompanied her journey. "These letters provide insight into the daily life of a survivor and are interestingly, familiar to my own routine [in Istanbul], even though they are years apart," remarked Dr. Suciyan.

Although the correspondence reflects broader historical events, it also highlights the perseverance and resilience of Istanbul's Armenian community. More importantly, they showcase Sourpik's strength, like that of many women before and after the Genocide, who sacrificed their own desires and needs for the well-being of their families.

"These stories tell us much more about human suffering and aspirations," remarked Dr. David Zakarian following the presentation.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian Presents Armenian Culture to Phoenix Academy Students in Fresno



Photo: ASP Archive

Prof. Der Mugrdechian, right, with Phoenix Secondary Academy Students during the presentation.

STAFF REPORT

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian was a guest speaker at the Phoenix Secondary Academy in Fresno on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. Students at the academy had been studying Armenian culture during the month of January and Prof. Der Mugrdechian was asked to give a presentation on Armenian culture and history.

More than forty students and staff of the Academy atten-

ded the morning talk. Prof. Der Mugrdechian divided his presentation into several parts, beginning with an overview of Armenian history and culture. Following the presentation, stu-

DOCUMENTARY, FROM PAGE 1

Seropian family, who were among the first Armenians to arrive in the region; Malcolm Markarian, the "fig king" of America; and the Bedrosians and Pakchoians, who became leaders in the raisin

dents asked a variety of questions about the Armenians and Armenian history.

Phoenix Secondary Academy is a unique educational program designed to meet the needs of students exhibiting behavioral challenges in grades 7 through 12 for Fresno Unified School District. The program creates an environment in which the staff builds strong relationships with students and parents and work to create positive learning experiences that support future success.

The academic program is structured to provide rigorous class offerings and intensive, focused support in areas of identified student need. Phoenix Secondary offers a wide range of electives including two Career Technical Education courses in Design and Marketing and Sustainable Agriculture.

industry.

The Armenian Film Foundation spearheaded the project to update the 1984 documentary, which is the only film today on the Armenians of the San Joaquin Valley.

Dr. Chahinian Introduces Her New Book on Western Armenian



Left to right: Talia Solak, Katherine Arslanian, Jonathan Chardukian, Andrew Hagopian, Dr. Talar Chahinian, Ani Sargsyan, Mary Khalatyan, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian.

Photo: Natalie Agazarian

ANI SARGSYAN
STAFF WRITER

On Friday, February 7, 2025, the Armenian Studies Program welcomed guest speaker Dr. Talar Chahinian for her lecture “Language Politics and Literary Creation in the Armenian Diaspora’s Formative Years.” Dr. Chahinian spoke about her recent book, *Stateless: The Politics of Armenian Language in Exile*, which focuses on two key moments and locations of Western Armenian literary history: one is post-World War I Paris, and the other is post-World War II Beirut. She examines how a stateless language sustained itself in a diasporic setting. In her book, Dr. Chahinian interrogates “competing models of literary production and their intersection with Western Armenian prolonged linguistic vitality.”

Talar Chahinian holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from UCLA and lectures in the Program for Armenian Studies at UC Irvine, where she is also Visiting Faculty in the Department of Comparative Literature. She is the author of the award-winning *Stateless: The Politics of the Armenian Language in Exile* and co-editor, along with Tsolin Nalbantian and Sossie Kasbarian, of *The Armenian Diaspora and Stateless Power: Collective Identity in the Transnational 20th Century* (Bloomsbury Press, 2023).

Dr. Chahinian began the lecture by working backwards to introduce the key moments that informed her book’s retrospective line of inquiry. She began with some questions that she clarified were not the topics of her book, however they informed the lens through which she examined the process of molding literary belonging in a language in exile in the absence of state institutions. These questions included, “How do we think of Armenian culture, literature and language differently since 1991? What is the politics of language that emerges because of Eastern Armenian being sanctioned by a state? What happens to the status and future of Western Armenian?”

The other approach of her research on this topic, is the status of Western Armenian

today – an endangered language. In 2010, UNESCO qualified Western Armenian as “definitely endangered” in its six scale categorization. This implies that children no longer learn their mother tongue in their home. Dr. Chahinian discussed the Western Armenian presence in the print world, and how the violent origins of dispersion affected the development of literature and language.

Dr. Chahinian explored how the aesthetic development and ideological framework of literature changed. She especially emphasized that in the years following World War I, the Paris-based “Menk” writers imagined the new Western Armenian world as consisting of a “pluralistic transnational network of communities,” and the post-World War II writers who gathered in the Middle East adopted a “homogenous national model” centralized in Beirut.

Dr. Chahinian gave several examples of vocabulary transformation. The word *genocide*, used to have different terminology to express this experience that “language would fail in expressing,” resulting in a plurality of terms. The same is for the case of the word *diaspora*.

This group of Armenians were first referred to as *Trkahayutyun* (Turkish Armenians), then it became more common to describe them with phrases like “Dispersed Armenians,” “Community Armenians,” “Migrant Armenians,” “Armenians Abroad,” before finally being referred to as the Diaspora.

Dr. Chahinian briefly talked about the competing models – post-World War I Paris, and the post-World War II years based in Beirut. “On one hand, we have a model that grounds its narratives in the host nation’s locale,” stated Dr. Chahinian, “It uses Western Armenian as a medium to represent the experience of exile. On the other hand, we have a model that evades the host nation’s locale and rather grounds itself in the language.”

Dr. Talar Chahinian explored more about her book in the lecture, bringing the competing models to light and reflecting the influence they had on the Western Armenian language.

“Armenians in Film” - Six Short Films by Armenian Filmmakers Combine Art with Reality at CineCulture

ANAHID VALENCIA
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Studies Program partnered with CineCulture, AGBU Arts, and the Armenian General Benevolent Union Greater Fresno Chapter to host “Armenians in Film” on Friday, February 21. “Armenians in Film” consisted of six short films by Armenian directors, including Ophelia Harutunyan and Katia Spivakova, who participated in a discussion after the screening.

The films were titled “All I Need,” “The Ticket,” “It Takes a Village,” “The Egg,” “Romeo,” and “Areg and Manushak.” They explored themes of perseverance, culture, the connection between the past and present, the value of female friendship and the importance of expression.

“I think that sometimes we think that people who are Armenian live a world away. We have so many similarities and parallels between our cultures that I really saw myself there and it was very relatable,” said audience member Leia Lozano.

“Armenians in Film” began with brief introductions given by Prof. Mary Husain, the director of CineCulture, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, the Berberian Coordinator of Armenian Studies.

The first short film of the six was “All I Need,” directed by Katia Spivakova. “All I Need” had twinges of eerie nostalgia, as it led viewers through the story of a modern woman, Tania, revisiting her childhood home in Shushi, Karabagh, while she was faced with her family’s history of survival during the Armenian Genocide.

Tania walks through her unkempt childhood home in a wave of remembrance as the focus shifts to the poignant scenes of her past. In one, her grandfather is hidden in a trunk as a Muslim woman sits upon it and is interrogated by Turkish officials, accusing her of being a liar.

To get them to leave, the woman reveals her hair from her *hijab*; a sacred part of a Muslim woman’s body, which non-related men traditionally are not to see.

“All I Need” is intense, whimsical, and emotional. The final scene is of Tania leaving the house and setting it in flames. Each flame and roar symbolizes an innate connection between Tania and her family history, as the Armenian Genocide is a tragedy that lives on in all Armenians.

“The inspiration of the film is really the true story that my mom told us, about our great-grandfather, who was from Artsakh. His friend, a Turkish woman, saved him during the Genocide,” Spivakova said in the discussion after the screening. “I wanted to make the connection between the spirit of this modern woman and [her history], [that it was] more of an energetic connection that I had in mind.”

“Romeo,” directed by Marina



Photo: Natalie Agazarian

Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, director Ophelia Harutunyan, Dr. Mary Husain, Sylvie Khatchikian, and Jonathan Chardukian.

Arzumanova, is an example of the true, inevitable love for art that artists possess. Romeo Melikyan is an artist who lives near the border of Armenia and Azerbaijan and deeply dreads war, because it robs him of his desire to create.

Though Romeo finds himself creating pieces of art inspired by the ugly, industrial side of his surroundings, Romeo has an innate love for the natural joys in life.

“People are so cold, they need something,” Romeo said in the film. Toward the end of “Romeo,” he meets a child who has an interest in pursuing art, a scene that symbolizes the continuity of expression.

Arzumanova’s film gives the impression that art is personified into something that creates itself, and Romeo is the middle-man.

“The Ticket” is directed by Kevork Aslanyan and tells the story of a boy traveling by bus through an entire city using a single ticket.

The boy leaves home and his mother, to whom he brings back an item of clothing. Near the end of the film, he loses his ticket and gets off the bus quickly, only to find it in a bittersweet, comedic reveal shortly later. Once he returns home he presents the gift to his mother, who is grateful and touched by his kindness.

“The Ticket” is a film of familial love, dedication, and sacrifice. One of the most touching aspects of the film is the idea of a young boy exerting such great amounts of independence and navigating the unknown, all for the sake of making his mother happy.

Ophelia Harutunyan’s “It Takes a Village” places powerful emphasis on the importance of female friendship. The film takes place in an Armenian village where the husbands of the women are either away on business or simply not in the picture.

The main character, Mariam’s, birthday is approaching, and her anticipation of her husband’s return home and his phone call grows throughout the scenes. Once Mariam’s birthday comes, her friends and family shower her with affection and a sense of community.

Mariam and her daughter

prepare for her husband’s phone call and answer it with shining eyes, only to discover that her husband cannot return home when they expected him to and that he did not even buy the plane ticket. Her disappointment was all-consuming, until she got a call notifying her that her friend, Anush, had gone into labor.

Anush’s husband is away too, and the thought of giving birth to their baby without him is painful for her. However, with a village of women surrounding her, the baby was born. “It Takes a Village” is a true enactment of the title itself.

“I was inspired to write a fictional story and so that’s how it kind of came to be,” said director Ophelia Harutunyan. “When I visited the villages, I saw a lot of resilient women and I was struck by how strong they were, yet they didn’t realize it and so I wanted to make a film to honor them and to really draw a portrait of Armenian women.”

“The Egg,” directed by Vahan Grigoryan, is a comedic tale of an aspiring actor who works as a children’s entertainer, dressed as a chicken. Throughout the film, the main character listens to a motivational recording and, humorously, continuously finds eggs around him that progressively get larger. The film ends with a scene of the main character’s eyes poking through a gargantuan egg.

Finally, Ruben Van Leer’s “Areg and Manushak” features musician Tigran Hamasyan and is a cinematic showing of the power of music. The title of the film is also the title of Hamasyan’s song that he performs overlooking the Armenian mountains, that draws in a crowd and resembles a place of worship.

Hamasyan was inspired by the spirituality of the mythical bird and thus created the song, “Areg and Manushak.” The film features a beautiful, soulful performance with the piano, where Hamasyan’s voice penetrates through the mountains and over the hills.

“Armenians in Film” took viewers through several different emotions, places, and time periods. The audience seemed to be inwardly touched by the various sentiments explored throughout the films, showcasing the connectedness that culture can bring to all.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian Elected SAS President for 2025



Top row, left to right: Armen Marsoobian, Asya Darbinyan, and Melanie S. Tanielian. Middle row, left to right: Elyse Semerdjian, Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and Helen Makhdounian. Bottom row, left to right: Talinn Grigor, Houri Berberian, and Bedros Torosian.

Photo: ASP Archive

STAFF REPORT

The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) elected Barlow Der Mugrdechian as its new president, following a meeting of the SAS Executive Council on Saturday, November 30. Der Mugrdechian, Berberian Director of the Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno, succeeds outgoing president Christina Maranci (Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies, Harvard University) in the leadership role.

The election of new officers also saw Elyse Semerdjian (Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair of Armenian Genocide Studies, Clark University) named vice president, Helen Makhdounian (Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Program Fellow, Vanderbilt University) as secretary, and Armen T. Marsoobian (Professor of Philosophy, Southern Connecticut State University), taking on the role of treasurer. Melanie S. Tanielian (Associate Professor of History, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), Asya Darbinyan (Executive Director of Chhange [Center for Holocaust, Human Rights & Genocide Education] at Brookdale Community College, New Jersey), and Bedros Torosian (UC Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow, History Department, UC Davis) were appointed as advisors.

Incoming *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* (JSAS) editors Houri Berberian (Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies and Director of the Center for Armenian Studies, University of California, Irvine) and Talinn Grigor (Professor of Art and Architectural History, University of California, Davis,) will serve as ex-officio officers of the SAS Executive Council.

In his remarks, Der Mugrdechian thanked the outgoing leadership team, including Maranci, vice president

Rachel Goshgarian (Associate Professor of History, Lafayette College), secretary Shushan Karapetian (Director, Institute of Armenian Studies, University of Southern California), and Tamar Boyadjian, editor-in-chief of the *Journal for the Society for Armenian Studies* (Stanford University), for their years of service.

"It is a privilege to be elected as the new president of the Society for Armenian Studies and I look forward to collaboratively working with my colleagues," said Der Mugrdechian. "SAS plays a vital role in providing a forum for scholars to exchange ideas. Our members work across a range of disciplines, but all their research is rooted in the study of Armenia and the Armenian people. This research, shared with the academic community and the public, helps raise awareness about Armenian culture."

Der Mugrdechian served previously as SAS President in 2001-2004 and 2015-2017.

The announcement comes on the heels of a milestone year for SAS, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2024. The anniversary was marked by a major international conference, "Armenian Studies: Evolving Connections and Conversations," held at Harvard University from September 13-15. The conference, organized by SAS in collaboration with the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), was co-sponsored by multiple Armenian Studies Chairs and Programs in the United States. Over fifty scholars from throughout the world participated in the three-day conference.

Under Der Mugrdechian's leadership, SAS is expected to continue its commitment to advancing Armenian Studies and fostering collaboration among scholars globally.

The SAS website, societyforarmenianstudies.com, provides information about events and activities.

Dr. David Zakarian Presents Research at the AIEA 16th General Conference in Switzerland

STAFF REPORT

During the winter break, Dr. David Zakarian participated in the 16th General Conference of the International Association of the Armenian Studies (AIEA), held at the University of Geneva and the University of Lausanne from January 9-11, 2025. The conference brought together many leading scholars in Armenian Studies from around the world, focusing on various aspects of Armenian history, literature, and manuscript studies, from the ancient to the modern period. There were 22 parallel sessions spread across three days, with around 100 scholars presenting papers in Armenian, English, and French. It was physically impossible to attend all the talks, and every participant was encouraged to attend sessions they found pertinent to their interests. Therefore, this report offers only a selective overview of the conference, and due to space constraints, many other insightful and significant papers could not be included.

Keynote Lectures

Three keynote lectures covered the late antique, medieval, and modern periods of Armenian history. The conference opened with a keynote lecture by Jost Gippert (University of Hamburg), titled "Approaching the Early Centuries: Palimpsests and Their Significance for the History of Armenian Literacy." According to Gippert, "The written heritage of the early centuries of Armenian literacy mostly consists of palimpsests, i.e. manuscripts on parchment that were later erased and overwritten." He provided an overview of Armenian palimpsests, highlighting their importance for understanding the evolution of Armenian literary traditions. He discussed the ERC project *DeLiCaTe* and the identification of over 10,000 palimpsests, emphasizing their relevance in reconstructing lost texts.

The second keynote lecture, "The Catholicosate of Aghuank' in the Hierarchical Structure of the Armenian Church," was by Vahe Torosyan (Deputy Director of Scientific Affairs of the Matenadaran). This address examined the historical and ecclesiastical realignment of Armenian territories following their annexation by Sasanian Iran, focusing on the incorporation of the churches of Utik 'and Arts'akh into the jurisdiction of the Church of Aghuank' (Caucasian Albania). Through an analysis of primary sources and scholarly research, Torosyan argued that the Catholicosate of Aghuank' functioned within the hierarchical structure of the Armenian Church, which explains the lack of opposition to the transfer and the absence of efforts to reclaim the churches after the marzpanate's abolition.

On the last day of the conference, Suzan Meryem Kalayci (University of Oxford)



Photo: ASP Archive

Emilio Bonfiglio (University of Hamburg), David Zakarian (Fresno State), Robin Meyer (University of Lausanne), Kevork Bardakjian (University of Michigan), Andy Hilken (IMAFO, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna), Karen Jalalyan (Leibniz Institute, Budapest).

delivered the third keynote lecture titled "Dark Times - Reflections on the Armenian Genocide." Her presentation addressed the historiographical and psychological aspects of genocide memory, exploring the interplay of denial and remembrance in modern narratives.

Panel on Armenian Manuscripts and Textual Studies

Given his expertise and research interests in ancient and medieval history, David Zakarian participated in several sessions dedicated to early Christian Armenian texts and medieval manuscripts, engaging in scholarly discussions on these subjects. In particular, of great interest was the session on "Philology and Manuscript Studies" chaired by Bernard Coulie (Université catholique de Louvain). This session featured four presentations that shed new light on Armenian textual traditions. Emilio Bonfiglio (University of Hamburg) discussed a ninth- or tenth-century palimpsest from *Agathangelos' History of the Armenians*, a valuable primary source housed in the library of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Vienna.

Tim Greenwood (University of St Andrews) also revisited *Agathangelos' History*, focusing on its Greek recension (Vg), initially studied by Gérard Garitte in 1946. He argued that Vg, rather than being a derivative late translation, represents an independent Armenian tradition that likely emerged in the first half of the sixth century within Roman Armenia, thus highlighting the importance of individual study of each recension of this text, very popular in the medieval period, as they provide unique insight into the milieu in which they were created.

The 18th-century Bodleian Library Armenian manuscript (MS. Arm. f. 7), which preserves two distinct Armenian texts on Ezekiel's throne vision, was discussed by Theo M. van Lint (University of Oxford). His presentation contextualized these texts within the broader tradition of Armenian apocalyptic literature, linking them to the theological works of Vardan

Arewelts'i (13th c.).

Another very interesting paper was presented by Knar Harutyunyan (Matenadaran). Harutyunyan presented recent advancements in cataloguing Armenian manuscripts at the Matenadaran, highlighting previously misattributed texts, including a 13th-century manuscript now identified as an 11th-century commentary by Anania Sanahnetsi. This paper opened a small window into what important work is currently being done in the Matenadaran.

Discussion on Historical and Political Contexts

From the "Contemporary History" session Khachatur Stepanyan's (Armenian State Pedagogical University) paper titled "The Issue of Nagorno-Karabakh's Annexation to Soviet Azerbaijan in the Diasporan Press (1920-1930s)" was of great interest. Stepanyan analyzed how the Armenian diaspora press engaged with the forced Sovietisation of Karabakh (Artsakh), providing new perspectives on the historiographical debate surrounding the region's political status. "This was the only issue concerning Armenia and Armenians that all major diasporan newspapers and magazines had an identical approach, irrespective of their political affiliations," Stepanyan stressed.

New Methodological Approaches

Several papers also demonstrated how digital methodologies are transforming Armenian historical studies through data modelling, manuscript analysis, and architectural heritage preservation.

Conclusion

The AIEA 2025 Conference was a significant event for scholars engaged in Armenian Studies. The discussions on manuscript traditions, textual transmission, and historical memory contributed to the broader understanding of Armenian heritage. Dr. Zakarian's participation in these sessions reinforced his engagement with ongoing research in Armenian philology and historiography.

Dr. Talin Suciyan Gives Presentation on Armenian Postcards Collected from Villages and Towns



Photo: Barlow DerMugdehchian

Left to right: Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Sylvie Khatchikian, Carreen Derkalousdian, Dr. David Zakarian, Dr. Talin Suciyan, Katherine Arslanian, and Talia Solak.

CAREEN DERKALOUSDIAN
STAFF WRITER

“At the beginning of the 20th century, after the Armenian Genocide, there were two groups of people among the Armenians: those who survived and those who started to gather the remnants,” said Dr. Talin Suciyan.

On Friday, February 28, 2025, Dr. Talin Suciyan, the 21st Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies presented her second lecture, entitled “Preserved with Compassion: Collections of Hope.” This second presentation of her three-part lecture series focused on one of the largest known collections of postcards of Ottoman Armenian villages and towns, dating both before and after 1915.

After the Armenian Genocide, those who survived tried to rebuild their lives which were devastated by the Ottoman Empire’s heinous crimes. Some of these survivors began to collect letters, postcards, travel documents, photographs, and other materials, “rescuing and reconstructing a lost world” as Dr. Suciyan beautifully put it. “Those who collected...wanted to seal the end of the story with their own hands.”

A prime example of such noble gatherers are Berç and Nadya Fenerci, who are not only postcard collectors, but artists of a historical masterpiece – a visual narrative that weaves together postcards, maps of villages, images of gardens and working farmers, and photos of painters and prominent leaders of Armenians.

Mr. Fenerci is an Armenian from Istanbul, and in his youth, he attended local Armenian schools and had a passion for collecting stamps.

One day, after discovering a postcard sent by his grandfather, the young Berç decided to collect postcards related to Armenians, interested in the stories that they had to tell.

He went to great lengths to compile his collection, even traveling across Europe to purchase postcards from auctions. Over decades, Fenerci compiled and organized a collection of approximately 1,000 postcards from the Caucasus, Iran, upper Mesopotamia, Palestine, Cilicia,

Asia Minor, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Italy as well as the towns and villages of the old country.

The first panel of the Fenerci collection displays Armenian kings and prominent figures of Armenian history and continues with monumental buildings of Armenian architecture, monasteries, and churches.

After moving to Canada in 1995, Fenerci began exhibiting his collection across North American cities. Dr. Suciyan described how she came across his collection in Montreal in 2023 when Mrs. Fenerci invited her to their home to view the masterpiece.

It was there that Dr. Suciyan found postcards related to her own research about the fate of Armenian orphans in Greece after 1922. The collection has some very rare postcards, documents, and correspondences from orphans in Greece, specifically from the islands of Corfu and Syra, which are today referred to as Kerkyra and Syros, respectively. Dr. Suciyan explained that after the Greek defeat in the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922), Armenians were looking for any way to escape the Ottoman Empire.

Around this time, the Armenian administration in Istanbul made the decision to empty the Armenian orphanages and send the children to Greece.

Many *kaghtagans* [those in perpetual exile], ended up in Greece, enduring a grueling journey by ship, often facing malnutrition and outbreaks of disease.

Once in Greece they continued to suffer long decades of dire living conditions, Armenian orphans among them.

In the aftermath of the war, Greece was not in a stable enough condition to receive the tens of thousands of Armenian exiles let alone the one million Greeks from Asia Minor (of which approximately 10% were actually Armenians).

Dr. Suciyan highlighted that Greece lacked the infrastructure to shelter the orphans and meet their daily needs. Despite the country’s instability, 16,000 orphans arrived to Greece under the responsibility of the Near East Relief (NER) organization, 9,000

of whom were Armenians.

Mr. Fenerci’s collection compiles together several postcards sent by the orphans to their siblings. Dr. Suciyan presented images and translations of some of these postcards, the first one being sent from Koharig Tchorbajian in Athens to her brother Vahe in 1924. In this sweet correspondence, Koharig wishes her brother a merry Christmas and encourages him to be cheerful. Dr. Suciyan introduced another postcard sent from the Syra Girls Orphanage to the Syra Boys Orphanage, emphasizing that girls and boys were strictly separated to the point that siblings could only communicate by sending postcards.

According to Dr. Suciyan, the beginning of 1923 marked the complete dispersion of the Armenian orphans around the world.

The Armenian Delegation registered 45,000 orphans, with 22,000 being hosted by Armenia, 8,600 in Lebanon, and 8,500 in Greece.

The rest of the children were sent to countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Switzerland, Italy, and Israel.

The NER does not state where the children went after 1930, and just like the *kaghtagans*, the fates of Armenian and non-Armenian orphans remain vague and blurred.

“The collector Berç Fenerci must have understood the catastrophic situation that the orphans were going through,” noted Dr. Suciyan.

“He devoted a considerable place in his panels to the issue of dispersed Armenian orphans around the world.”

Despite the many tribulations faced by exiles, it is the dedication to the preservation of truth, much like Mr. Fenerci’s, that keeps their stories alive, ensuring that their resilience is never forgotten.

The Syra Orphanage is now a military zone and Dr. Suciyan described how the military personnel are well-educated and sensitive about its history.

As a glimmer of hope that truth never dies, they have established a museum at the entrance of the military base dedicated to the orphanage, even being so careful as to preserve the children’s toys, which are now around 100 years old.

With Dr. Suciyan’s ongoing research over the last twelve years about this dark period in Armenian history and collectors of artifacts such as Mr. Fenerci, light can be shed on the past in a way that both honors it and ensures that its atrocities are not repeated.

Dr. Suciyan ended her lecture with a meaningful quote from Armenian writer and educator Antranig Tsarukyan. “The un-addressed orphanhood of the people without childhood continues to live within our families, deep within our souls, waiting to be recognized, addressed, and honored.”

Nishkian Family Archive on Armenian Studies Flickr Page



Photo: ASP Archive

Karnig Nishkian, left, with brother Hagop Nishkian.

SOSSE YANEZ

SPECIAL TO HYE SHARZHOOM

The Nishkian Family Photo Archive has been made public on the Armenian Studies Program’s Flickr account: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/armenianstudies/albums/72177720323171031>.

The Nishkian Archive contains 60 scanned images, primarily photographs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although some photographs are captioned on the back, most are not labeled. There are also newspaper articles and a partial autobiography of Karnig Nishkian written on notebook paper. Despite the absence of the autobiography’s subsequent pages, the first page gives a peek at the Nishkian family’s life during the late 19th century.

According to the manuscript, Karnig’s father Mardiros owned a dry goods store in Erzerum in the late 19th century. In 1874, his brother Hagop M. was dispatched to Constantinople, where he maintained the family business, sending fancy goods to their father in Erzerum. Hagop also had a side business dealing rugs with a man in Philadelphia.

Karnig’s autobiography references a secret organization founded in 1879-1880 [perhaps the Defenders of the Homeland] that protected Armenians from marauding Kurds and Turks, who, unchecked by authorities, were destroying life and property. Around 1882, the organization was discovered and its leaders were taken prisoner by the Ottoman government.

One of Karnig’s brothers, Garabed M., was a leader in the organization and sentenced to 13 years in prison. Unfortunately, the one-page autobiography ends

here. However, Paul E. Vandor’s *History of Fresno County California with Biographical Sketches* (1919) offers some insight on the Nishkians’ beginnings in Fresno as well as their revolutionary activities in Western Armenia.

Vandor describes Garabed M. Nishkian as a “well-educated, broad-minded, charitable, and prominent man.”

He was born in Erzerum in 1855 and grew up to be a patriotic leader and the only survivor of a group that rebelled against Turkish atrocities.

Carrying a copy of his death sentence with him, Garabed fled to America in 1883, eventually settling in California upon seeing the potential to grow raisins. Vandor writes, “Shortly after his arrival, [Garabed] was photographed, holding the death sentence in his hand, with chains on one side of him and the American flag as the emblem of liberty on the other.”

Garabed then went on to arrange the transportation of his mother, four brothers, and sister. They engaged in viticulture in the Scandinavian Colony from 1890 until 1899 when they purchased their own vineyard on Whites Bridge Road. Garabed passed away in December of 1915.

The Nishkian Family Photo Archive contains photographs and documents about Nishkian’s Cyclery, established by Hagop’s son Kalam.

Born in Erzerum in 1881, Kalam arrived with his family in 1888. Like most of the pioneering Nishkians, he and his immediate family initially lived in the Scandinavian Colony of Fresno, which lay in what is today east Fresno. Around 1900, the young entrepreneur opened up a small bicycle shop on Tulare Street.

In the early twentieth century, bicycle shops also included the latest technologies of the day, including phonographs.

Later, Kalam opened a large-scale phonograph business at 1046 Broadway which he maintained until his passing in 1925.

In a 1968 *Fresno Bee* article, Kalem Dashjian, a former repairman at Nishkian’s cyclery, recalled that phonographs were sold for from \$125-\$300 a piece. The music store had six rooms where customers could listen to records. The mezzanine was used for private dancing parties on weekends.

WORKSHOP, FROM PAGE 1

Agency project, this two-day event introduced an innovative format designed to foster scholarly exchange.

Participants submitted their papers in advance to senior academics who served as respondents, providing structured feedback and prompting in-depth discussions after each paper’s presentation. As an early-career scholar, I found this experience invaluable. My respondent, Dr. Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, offered profound insights,

highlighting aspects I had overlooked or had been unaware of, significantly enriching my research.

At the conclusion of the workshop, Prof. Claudia Rapp and Dr. Emilio Bonfiglio invited me, along with Prof. Theo Maarten van Lint, the Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies at Oxford, to explore the possibility of expanding the workshop into a long-term collaboration between Oxford and Vienna. What began as a single event soon grew into

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(received as of March 7, 2025)

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Photo: Meher Kourouyan

Kef Time participants enjoying the evening.

KEF TIME, FROM PAGE 1

Upon entering the venue, one could see friends and family enjoying a meal together, excited about the music and dancing that awaited. There were radiant, beaming faces all around as laughter and chatter echoed throughout the hall. “Kef Time” is a place where old friends reconnect and where new friends meet. It is a place where Armenians from all backgrounds and generations can unite in song and (mostly) synchronous dance.

As soon as the band started playing, guests were eager to hit the dance floor! A regular “Kef Time” attendee, Zaroohi Der Mugrdechian, often leads the *shoorchbars* (line dances) and teaches the dance steps to those around her. Like a chain reaction, guests gradually pick up the steps and pass them on to their fellow dancers, creating a supportive atmosphere of community. Especially meaningful is seeing the Armenian youth eager to learn new dances and immerse themselves in the traditions of their culture, highlighting their appreciation for their heritage.

“I love seeing our whole community from all over the United States come together to have fun, celebrate our heritage, and enjoy one another!” remarked “Kef Time” attendee Morgan Marashian.

Later in the evening, the “Kef Time Legacy” band paid tribute

“Armenians in the Ottoman Middle East,” and will give three public lectures at Fresno State on the family archives of Armenian Genocide survivors.

It will primarily utilize a largely untapped and overlooked source, correspondences kept by dispersed Armenian families.

WORKSHOP, FROM PAGE 6

a regular academic initiative, strengthening ties between institutions and fostering a new generation of scholars in Armeno-Byzantine studies.

Since its inception in Vienna, the workshop has been held in Oxford (2019, 2023) and Vienna (2021), continuously expanding its reach. Today, the event is a collaborative effort between the University of Oxford, the University of Vienna, the University of Hamburg, and California State University, Fresno.

The 2025 workshop opened on February 7 at Oxford’s Radcliffe Humanities Building with a public keynote lecture by

Dr. Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, titled “Disruption and Resilience: Environmental Histories of Armenia and Byzantium between Two Little Ice Ages and Two Plagues.” The evening concluded with a wine reception, allowing participants and attendees to engage in further discussions in a more informal setting.

The second day, February 8, featured four thematic sessions, each chaired by distinguished scholars and followed by formal respondent feedback and open discussions:

I had the pleasure of chairing the second session, entitled “Entangled Histories between Armenia and Byzantium.” It featured research on figures

such as Philaretos Brakhamios and Armenian noble alliances, presented by Nathan Websdale (University of Oxford) and Samvel Grigoryan (UCLA/Austrian Academy of Sciences), with responses by Dr. Preiser-Kapeller.

The workshop concluded with an engaging discussion moderated by the organizing committee – Prof. Theo Maarten van Lint, Prof. Claudia Rapp, Dr. Emilio Bonfiglio, and myself – where we reflected on the insights gained and the future directions of the initiative. The event continues to evolve, strengthening academic networks and encouraging interdisciplinary research in this dynamic field.

to the late Buddy Sarkissian, esteemed percussionist and founding member of the original “Kef Time Band.” The Legacy band celebrated Buddy’s 100th birthday, performing the song “Drumsalero” in his honor. The song was composed by Fred Elias to highlight Buddy’s talent, and Buddy’s drum was featured onstage for the duration of the dance. His daughter, Teena Sarkissian, was present at “Kef Time” and was deeply moved by the band’s honoring of her father’s accomplishments.

As the evening drew on, there was never a dull moment on the dance floor. Andrew Hagopian’s drum solos were a crowd-favorite, fueling the energy of dancers and mesmerizing guests! The audience cheered and clapped along to the infectious beat.



Illustration by Anastasia Eritzian

When the traditional Armenian song “Tamzara” began, guests knew just what to do and eagerly partnered up. This simple yet fun dance consists of skipping to your partner and clapping their hands twice, before switching sides and clapping again. Other dances were more complex, requiring just as much brain power as muscle memory. There is nothing quite like the eureka moment when the dance finally clicks, and you can lift up your eyes from your feet as the steps become like second nature.

Each song was someone’s favorite, having different meaning to everyone. The melodies have the power to remind us of home and stir up fond memories. They reflect the resilience of an entire race.

“We are celebrating our culture and who we are as a people and a nation,” said “Kef Time” guest Sofie Yergat.

Everyone can agree that Kef Time’s significance runs deep. Walk into the social hall and at first glance, you see a lively dance floor. Look deeper, and you find at the heart of “Kef Time” the preservation of an entire culture – a testament that thousands of miles from the homeland, there is a community keeping its traditions alive. Whether you are eager to connect with your Armenian roots or looking for an excuse to bust a move, there is one thing left to do: put Kef Time Fresno V on your bucket list!

IN APPRECIATION

There were hundreds of people gathered in a spacious hall,
Generations of families, young and old,
Who were patiently waiting for the music to start,
Which would elevate their spirits, tickle their toes and ready to stomp.

As the music began, ready dancers hand in hand
Were in close communication without a word being said.
It was the magic power of endearing familiar music
that triggered their senses,
Which in turn led them to do the traditional Armenian dances.

Far from the lands where our roots lie deep,
And our sainted ancestors, whom we never knew, but always with us
and dear,
Comes this compelling music, centuries old.
Which hypnotizes us and becomes a driving force.

It is up to us, seizing the moment
To remember our loved ones and their endured torment,
To keep alive their sacred memory,
And above all, their unfulfilled, long awaiting legacy.

It is our sacred responsibility to keep alive our culture and tradition. Some day we must be ready to take the music and dance back to their rightful places: Erzerum, Van, Kharpert, Moosh, Sassoon, and others. Kef Time Fresno is on the right track.

Thank you Richard Hagopian and his talented grandsons, Andrew and Phillip, for caring and contributing to the longevity of Armenian music and dance.

NAZIK KOTCHOLOSIAN MESSERLIAN

My Sweet Land
A film by SAREEN HAIRABEDIAN

Friday, April 27 • 5:30pm
Leon S. and Pete P. Peters
Educational Center
5010 N. Woodrow Ave., Fresno State

Free admission

My Sweet Land is a coming-of-age story set against a multi-generational war in the post-Soviet Caucasus Mountains. It follows an 11-year-old boy named Vrej, growing up in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) who dreams of becoming a dentist in his picture-postcard village with its roaming ducks and golden bees. His sweet land, however, is strewn with mines from previous wars, shaping a country that remains unrecognized to the world. Vrej's life takes a sudden turn when war erupts, forcing him to flee with his family. He spends his days in exile impatiently waiting for victory, but reality takes a different turn: Armenians lose the war. Upon returning to his surviving village, he confronts the devastation, new power dynamics, and education that prepares children for near-future battles. Vrej must learn the rules of war... But can he carry a nation's hopes on his young shoulders? The film is a testament to the people of Artsakh, where hope and trauma had shaped their resilience across generations.

“My Sweet Land”
Friday, April 27 • 5:30pm
Free Admission

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Leon S. Peters Foundation Makes Generous Donation of \$30,000 to Support Armenian Studies

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdachian announced that the Leon S. Peters Foundation has continued their generous support of Armenian Studies with a grant of \$30,000 for 2025. Their support for the Program over the past thirteen years has reached \$390,000.

This continues the tradition of the Peters Foundation in supporting the Program's Annual Lecture Series, as well as a variety of other activities, including scholarships, outreach activities, and general support for the Program.

2025 ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION PROGRAM

THURSDAY, APRIL 24
FRESNO STATE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MONUMENT
6:30 PM | LAYING OF FLOWERS
7:00 PM | PROGRAM

Mary Papazian, PhD
Keynote Speaker

Commemorating the 110th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and the 10th anniversary of the Fresno State Armenian Genocide monument

The Armenian Studies Program and Armenian Students Organization

“Armenian Genocide Commemoration”

on the occasion of the 110th anniversary

Armenian Genocide Monument Fresno State

Thursday, April 24, 12:00pm-1:00pm

Keynote speaker:
Dr. David Zakarian
Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies

The Armenian Studies Program presents

“Letters from Purgatory”

Dr. Talin Suciyan
Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies

Friday, March 28, 2025 • 7:00pm

Smittcamp Alumni House • Free Admission
2625 E. Matoian Way, Fresno State

The Armenian Studies Program presents

“Denial of the Armenian Genocide in the Digital Age: Refashioning the ‘Events of 1915’ on the Internet and Beyond”

Dr. Bedross Der Matossian
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Friday, April 11, 2025 • 7:00pm

University Business Center, Free Admission
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