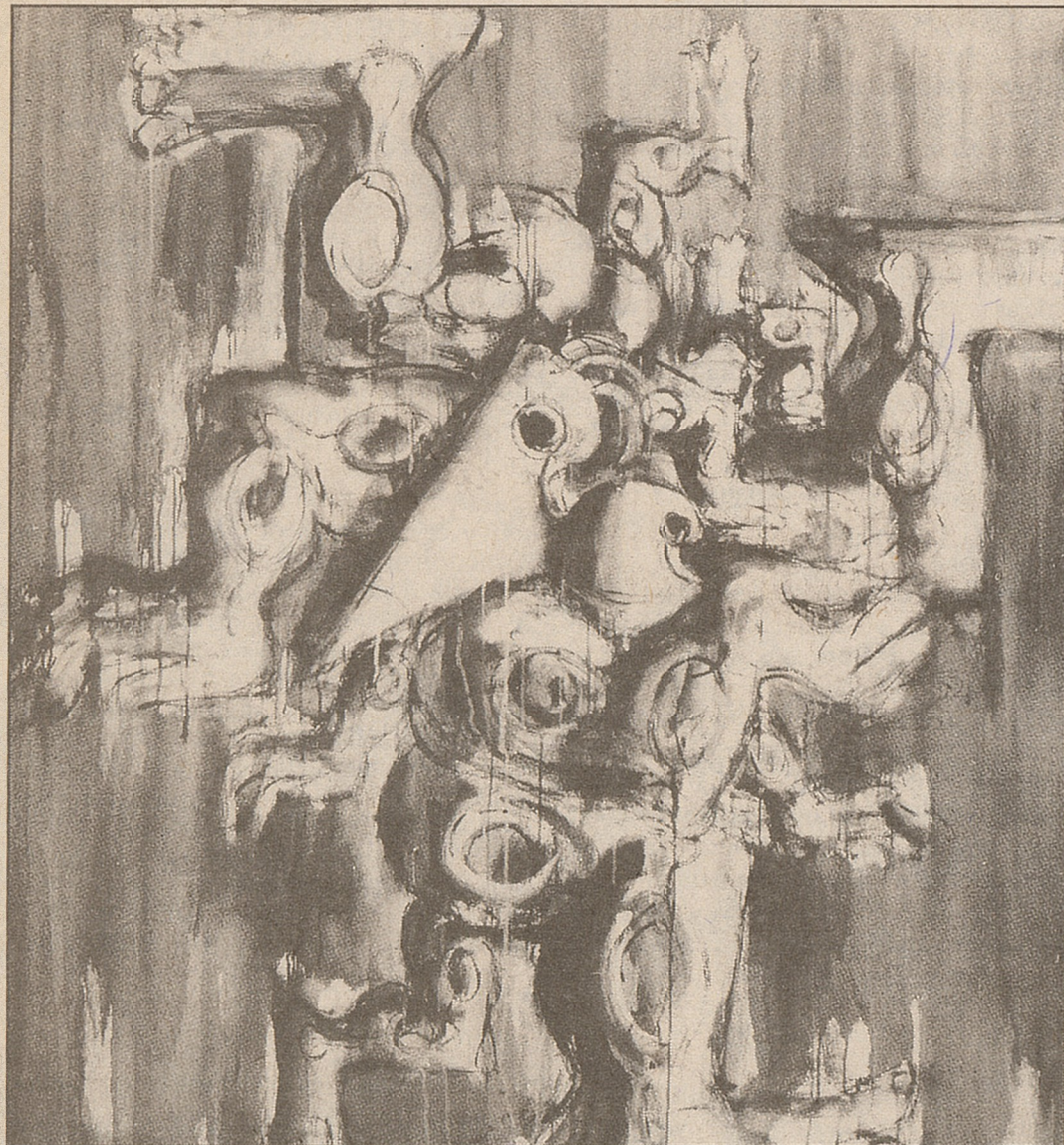




The Metamorphoses period, figure III. 1993

the clan of protomatter that the spirit creates. The human psyche is truly a mystery. What does it transform in creative art?

Natasha's son Vsevolod, whom Rudolf adopted and who is himself an artist, says that today when people talk of the crisis and the commercialization of the visual arts, there is a man, who does not bend and does not compromise, even in the financial sense. Though one of the richest of Moscow artists, with many orders, suddenly he chucked up everything to start anew.

I am an island. Natasha and Vsevolod provide the bridge between me and the entire world. My subconscious keeps working all the time. Which is why I speak at least of the two states. Realism is not copying of nature, but disclosing the hidden that we cannot see. I do not see myself as a formalist at all: in fact I detest formalism.

But when you drew your magnificent shoe?

That was not imitation. I saw the miracle in the shoe. When you cannot see the miracle you are not an artist. That is the entire difference. One becomes a real creator only when one produces something different that does not exist in nature, but that is as logical and employs the same grammar

as the visible world. Only then is one creator...

The Adam that became the human race

Are your two heart attacks the price you have to pay for the resistance with which you have to live in this world, or punishment for some sin?

I have always lived in detriment to my health. It is detrimented to smoke, to drink, to receive friends, to sleep but little and work much. The surprising thing is though that I felt ten times better after my heart attack than before it. I quit smoking and sensed an incredible uplift. I recalled that when 15–16 I could draw without stopping from 20 to 22 hours running. I used to walk some 30 kilometres. I did the same physical exercises I did as a young man, though I was already 55. However, seven months later I had my second heart attack. I grew much worse had difficulty breathing, and realized that there I would die, that I had to come to Moscow. And so I came, and here I was cured.

So you experienced the Karabakh events and the Armenian earthquake over here?

When the earthquake struck I flew to Leninakan, but came back ill. I couldn't listen to the sounds of the buried living. Friends sent me off, taking good of me. One was the philosopher Levon Abramian. In 1988, I opened a one-man show in Yerevan, wishing to lend my people courage. I did everything at my own expense and everything I earned I donated to the people of Karabakh.

Is Karabakh reflected in your work?

Thematically no, but spiritually yes. The human tragedy has always there, even before Karabakh and I keenly sensed it. Tragedy is given to man. Then I'm Armenian. The genocide is in the blood. I never wanted to be an outwardly national artist. What is national in the artist? The plasticity, the proportions. These mountains these trees, these people, these passions. It all starts out with national culture but then it appears to be world culture. I remember how surprised I was when I once felt kin with Japanese art. I am an Italian and am a Frenchman and the black man is also me as well as Picasso and the caveman. I am an artist and I must carry everything within myself. I am not me. I am everything. I am the Adam that became the human race. Indeed, if we were again to gather this human race together, we would have just the one Adam.

What do you think about what has happened in the USSR, Russia and Armenia?

It all had to happen. It's all set down in the Apocalypse. It was all destined long ago.

Are you afraid of death?

No. I simply think about my near ones. They will lose me, but I will not lose them.

Are you a happy man?

Yes. Right now. If not for the London period I would not be a happy man.

But when you produced that shoe or that little landscape weren't you really happy? Do you remember what you felt?

It was love. It was all love. An incredible love for what I perceived. That is another kind of happiness. I always sensed that the world in me had yet to be expressed. Now I have come to this exhibition, – I after all, had no room in my studio that would allow me to see it all. The greatest happiness an artist can feel is to see everything. I liked it. Which means my head is screwed on the right way. It is the first time I feel this.

The discovery of a man beneath the unusual symbol of the khachkar, a stone cross, in its special personal representation at the Artist's House in Moscow continues.

Olga Kuchkina

Rudolf Khachatryan (1937–2007)

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Rudolf Khachatryan's Metamorphoses

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Рудольф Хачатрян (1937–2007)

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