

ARTS MANAGEMENT IN ARMENIA:  
THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL AWARENESS

by

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**Abstract**

The central issue of this paper is to study the arts management system in Armenia while relying on the importance of cultural awareness, specifically through art education, strategic management, and communication. The collapse of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) in 1991, and the socio-economic crisis afterward triggered difficulties for many spheres in Armenia to progress; the art sphere was not an exception. The development of the Armenian art industry still undergoes challenges to refrain from obsolete forms and adjust to the contemporary art world. The first part of the research findings explores the historical background of Armenian art while identifying the political and social reasons that influenced the current state of the industry. The second part of the analysis identifies the significant role of art education in, first of all, human development, and also in the Armenian cultural awareness locally and internationally. Additionally, the second part discerns the business side of the art sphere crucial for the progress of the art industry, mainly concentrating on strategic management and communication. Paper concludes that Armenia, with its cultural heritage, has a great potential to have its creative industries evolved and appeared in the international market.

## **Introduction**

Armenia has always been a country with strong cultural heritage, which passed through years of political, social and economic struggles. Historically, after 1920 Armenia faced numerous challenges. Although, despite of those features, the artistic, social and economical life advanced in Armenia, right after the WWII. Not only the domains of politics, economy, and education started developing, but the art sphere, as well. It has created a strong potential for further developments, which should still be utilized in nowadays. The centuries and millenniums of continuous development of culture identity of Armenia, no doubt, is visible which makes Armenia a cultural jewel on the network of Europe. No doubt, the cultural heritage of a country like Armenia is important to develop, and Armenia has a big potential, with the creativity, spirituality and with horizons. With its unique cultural identity and huge cultural heritage, Armenia has everything in a place to become a significant player in the sphere for art and part of the European global market. Although, the current state of the country with its low awareness of own cultural heritage hinders the future development of, first of all, human progress, then the worldwide cultural recognition.

## Literature Review

Armenia, a small country in the Caucasus region, has shaped its unique cultural identity over the past centuries with creative, historic and spiritual potential for further developments. Armenians have produced huge amount of works in all branches of art that document the experience of the nation by centuries of struggle and war that strongly affected the spread of the culture. The Armenian cultural heritage is enormous, yet not well known internationally and locally, as well. Thus, the responsibility to protect, learn and promote the cultural heritage is fundamental for the progress of the country, the nation and worldwide recognition.

In the mid 1990s, the evolution of cultural theories has changed the views of some social anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict and Franz Boas (2000). They brought forward the question that besides genes, the culture as well cause human behavioral differences. In the book *Culture matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (2000), Harrison and Huntington discuss the importance of cultural values in the political, economic and social development and shape the notion that cultural awareness changes the level of development of a particular nation and fosters its progress. According to Harrison and Huntington (2000), “ If cultural factors do affect human progress and at times obstruct it, however, we are also interested in culture as a dependent variable (Harrison and Huntington, p. 152).” While Harrison and Huntington (2000) discuss the human development in a national scale, Howard Gardner in his work *Art Education and Human Development* (2008), discusses the importance of arts in human development focusing specifically on artistic perceptions of children. Moreover, as a cognitive theorist, Gardner (2008) thinks about the production and acknowledgement of art as non-traditional measure of progress for human intelligence. Gardner believes (2008), the terms “art” and “human development” should be synthesized; the roles of creator, performer and a critic are acquired through artistic awareness and

perceptions. In fact, Gardner's perceptions (2008) about art can be restated and concluded with the book *The Arts and Creation of Mind* (2002) by Elliot Eisner. As an art professor, Eisner believes (2002), art is a very important tool for the development of the mind. Moreover, the forms of thinking are evolved and purified through art by contributing the mind development. Thus, the importance of art and overall culture in the human lives grows, and its appreciation and preservation become critical issues for the world.

Today, among cultural diversities and various challenges, it becomes more and more important to preserve the cultural heritage and pass to younger generations. However, before preservation, the culture should be understood and analyzed in its all complex forms while being examined as well in different contexts, such as political and social. This act of cultural analysis including methodological and theoretical practices came forward in the late 1950s as a term "cultural study". The book *The Cultural Studies Reader* (1999) by Simon During refers to the cultural studies as a "new discipline". Moreover, according to During (1999), the term "cultural studies" is not only interpreted as the study of culture with its historical foundations but also as the general study of contemporary culture. The time nation is aware of its culture, the preservation process starts, first in the mind, then in the real life. Simon During mentions (1999) that the art is the key aspect in defining the cultural studies and is a major component of it. The culture, although cannot be preserved and controlled without specific rules and regulations. Thus, in 1960s, UNESCO brought forward a term "cultural policy" which involves activities regarding heritage, language and diversity. Referring to Simon During's perceptions (1999) that cultural studies also refers to the study of contemporary culture, Bell and Oakley (2015) in their book *Cultural Policy; Key Ideas in Media & Cultural Studies* (2015), provide insight into the cultural studies linked with media and show the importance of cultural policy as a part of cultural studies nowadays. The book (2015),

discusses the culture in three geographical scales: urban (cities), national (nations) and international. Bell and Oakley (2015) refer to the culture as a developing sphere under the regulation of cultural policy. Moreover, the authors (2015) organize discussion and raise two important questions: how the terms ‘culture’ and ‘policy’ correlate together, and how the notion of cultural policy is utilized in the modern world. According to the book (2015), “The scale of nation, of national government, might seem like the most prominent and obvious scale for cultural policy analysis (Bell and Oakley, 2015, p. 13).” Thus, the analysis of cultural policies of every country occurs mostly in the scales of nation and national government that demonstrate the governmental actions, cultural regulation acts and activities to support the creative industries. Overall, the cultural state of a particular country, preservation of cultural heritage and development of creative industries have ultimate connections with the cultural policies of a state.

Armenians have a long, complicated and epic history. In order to understand the cultural industry of a country, the reference to the nation’s historical path is binding. Although the Armenians witnessed various disasters such as World War I, Armenian Genocide, Russian revolutions and Civil war, and most of them has been killed or displaced, the Armenian cultural heritage has been preserved and is still alive. The book *The Armenians* (1977) by Sisag Varjabedian tells the historical background of Armenians starting from ancient times till Soviet Periods, moreover, including the information regarding all aspects of arts and culture, giving detailed proofs how it has been affected by various historical circumstances. According to Sisag Varjabedian (1977), “Soon after the revolution, the Armenians by their natural genius, constructive talent and hard work, modernized their republic and transformed it into an industrial country. General advancement in the domains of education, learning, literature, arts and science were registered year after year (Varjabedian, 1977, p. 63).” After 1920, Armenia started witnessing

cultural developments that resulted changes in cultural policy making as well. Although some changes occurred, Armenia, however, still does not have developed and shaped cultural industry with adequate cultural policies to maintain the advancements and safeguard the cultural heritage. In addition to Sisag Varjabedian's (1977) views on Armenian history, David Marshall Lang (1981), professor of Caucasian Studies published a book on Armenian history devoting a whole chapter on Armenian artistic cultural field including biographies of Armenian artists and general overview of the cultural field since the Urartian times. According to the book *The Armenians: A people in Exile* (1981), "It is remarkable that a small nation like the Armenians...should distinguish themselves in so many branches of artistic creation. Sometimes the creation takes the form of original folk arts and crafts stone and wood carving, ceramic ware, production of carpets, or of silver filigree works (Lang, 1981, p.172)." No doubt, Armenia's cultural heritage is huge and both David Marshall Lang's (1981) and Sisag Varjabedian's (1977) overviews about historical and cultural heritage are true, however the world is evolving, and in order to maintain the strong value of the heritage, Armenians should walk with the time. The promotion and worldwide recognition is what will keep the value of the Armenian heritage high, as it was long before ago. It is all about developing modern identity and elevating the standards of the artistic cultural field.

Development of creative industries requires many factors including arts management. The latter, indeed, is one of the strongest tools to promote culture, maintain preservation and trigger local, regional and international awareness. Lecturer and researcher Lildia Varbanova in her work *Strategic Management in the Arts* (2013), analyzes various strategic management models and theories while applying them to various cultural organizations. Moreover, the book (2013) includes theories from professionals such as Cantillion, Schumpeter, Ansoff and Drucker with their experiences and guidance on arts management. The core discussion of the book (2013) is mainly

based on art, entrepreneurship and innovation. Varbanova (2013) views the strategic management as a key element for the success of a particular cultural organization. While Lildia Varbanova (2013) discusses the specific field of strategic management, James Heilbrun and Charles Gray (2010) in the book *The economics of art and culture*, examine overall the international art sector and public policies regarding the spheres of fine arts and performing arts. The analysis includes the function of art markets, the problems regarding the finance of various cultural institutions and how the role of a public policy plays in the arts management. In order to discuss the arts management sphere of a particular country, one should have background knowledge on the cultural, historical growth and public policy, as well.

Finally, when an art-related business moves forward and becomes profitable, it requires management system to sustain and develop the business, and that is exactly what the book *Management and the Arts* (2015) tries to teach. The author William Byrnes (2015) analyzes the management of cultural organizations such as museums, galleries, theatres and operas. According to Byrnes (2015), in order to deeply understand how the institutions are managed, the business side of the arts should also be taken into a consideration varying from advertising, marketing, public relations and promotion. Lastly, the development of creative industries strongly requires a sustainable art market where the main actors are cultural entrepreneurs who generate revenue from cultural activities and foster the market. *The independents: Britain's new cultural entrepreneurs* (1999) discusses Britain's cultural industry, indeed, the leading one in the world. According to Charles Leadbeater and Kate Oakley (1999), "The Independents [...] are a driving force of the growth... These new Independents are often producers, designers and micro businesses (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999, p. 299)." The book (1999), refers to the people who create and produce; they

are considered as major growth and development forces for the art market to maintain the growth and potential for the adequate revenue.

Creative industry is one of the developing spheres in the world that require preserved cultural heritage, stiff art market and cultural entrepreneurs. However, in order to maintain all these three, the nation, in its turn, should learn, preserve and promote the cultural heritage while creating a platform for worldwide recognition.

## **Research Questions and Methodology**

The central question of this paper is to study the role of education and communication in the sphere of art in Armenia while analyzing the impacts of the awareness of cultural heritage on the human progress and worldwide cultural recognition. Focused on the analysis of Armenian art since the 20th century, the first section of the research findings will explore the historical, socioeconomic and political conditions in Armenia that directly affected the current state of the art sphere. The second section of the analysis will draw the inference from the first part to understand how these conditions influenced the current art sphere in Armenia; the influence will be discussed regarding the human development and cultural awareness locally, regionally and internationally. The main supporting fields of inquiry in the second part will be education and communication; the aim is to understand the roles of these tools in human progress and cultural awareness for the future improvements of the Armenian art sphere.

Due to limited scholarly and literary sources on Armenian art, the methodology of the research paper focuses mainly on primary research. The latter includes observations, content analysis, face-to-face interviews, and online surveys. To gain information on the current and previous state of the Armenian art sphere, and to explore the further opportunities of developments, people with different backgrounds were interviewed for the secondary research. The experiences vary from art curators, art critics, to artists and school directors. Among those people are included artist and founder of “Arev” art gallery Arev Petrosyan, art historian, curator, entrepreneur, and educator Nairi Khachadourian, the director of “Ayb” high school Aram Pakhchanian and head of the Literature Department in Yeghishe Charents Museum Marine Haroyan. In addition to interviews, the one Google Form Survey has been administered from April 10 - April 17 2019) through social media platforms, mainly Facebook and Instagram. The number

of respondents reached 331; age ranges were respectively, 13-17, 18-24, 25-40 and 40- 65. The survey was covering questions about the attitudes towards art and art education, visits to cultural institutions and the influences of art on human development. Also, the paper is based on the collection of textual data and its analysis, cross-referenced with theories regarding, art, art education, cultural policies and culture as a whole.

## Research Findings and Analysis

### *Part I: Constructing Armenian Art*

The definition of what constitutes *art* is still in debates and alters with time, never settling for one general description, whereas, an early understanding of the concept of art relates to the ancient Latin word *ars*, meaning “skill” or “craft.” In fact, for defined as “study primarily concerned with human creativity and social life, such as languages, literature, and history” (English Oxford Living Dictionaries), the word art appeared to encompass drops of historical, cultural, if not, political phenomena of a small and humble country, Armenia, still striving to preserve its cultural identity. A particular young artist, Ani Ishkhanian, influenced by Arshil Gorky and Kochar, stated, “The Armenian culture is so rich in this craft, there is always something you’ve missed the first time around.” The artistic heritage of Armenians built throughout the history is exquisite and profound, in a sense that it embraces a whole history; even the contemporary artworks, despite their modern vitality, kept old traditions, memories, and stories. Meanwhile, the creation of Armenian art as an essential component of Armenian culture, carried strong identity, albeit its spread, awareness, and production had been under pressure and restrictions since ancient times.

As an attractive location on the crossroads of East and West, Armenia was a ground for large empires such as Romans, Persians, Byzantines, Turks, and Mongols for a very long time; thus, the inheritance of foreigners’ cultural patterns, styles and motives was undeniable. The creation of the own culture was also not easy to accomplish. In fact, “When Armenia fell under the domination of the Parthians and Persians, Armenians did not have the liberty to create a proper national cultural life (Varjabedian, 1982, p. 59).” Armenia struggled through many ages to hold on

and preserve its massive culture and maintain the Armenian identity while transmitting to future generations. Art was not produced, but the Armenians did not settle and created occupations for arts productions under pressure; it carried through powerful empires and reach to these days. Armenian art has transformed in many ways but yet has kept consistency on its roots and heritage. Even though Armenia has fought and lost many battles, been tortured and traumatized, the nation survived and maintained its cultural identity.

#### *Armenians Abroad, XIX - XX centuries*

The incessant struggle of Armenians for their cultural heritage did not have its resolution during the Middle Ages; furthermore, it passed the borders of Armenia continued abroad. Although in the 19th century the majority of Armenians lived within boundaries of the country, Armenian art continued to develop led by strong “art escorts” such Ivan Konstantinovich Aivazovsky, known as one of the greatest marine artists. In fact, the Armenian art of the eighteenth-twentieth centuries cannot be appraised without the specular highlight of cultural connections with Russia, Western Europe, and Eastern countries. The period is characterized by the growing number of Armenian artists who were educated in institutions abroad and never returned to their motherland. Providentially, this “cultural emigration” let to various innovations in the Armenian art; notable was the emergence of new themes and genres in drawing, such as landscapes (also architectural) and scenes of everyday life. Surprisingly, poster and stage designs began to develop parallel with portrait and book illustrations.

In 1828, “Armenian artists such as Ivan Aizavoskvky and later Martiros Saryan went to Saint Petersburg to study in the Imperial Academy of Arts (1757) or to Moscow to attend the Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (1749) in the city (Mirzakhanyan, Hakobyan,

Ghazaryan, Hakobyan, 2017, p. 45). ” Later, in the late 19th century Armenian artists chose the destination to Europe, specifically Paris, to study in the most famous, at that time, educational institutions, Académie Julian (1867) and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière (1904).

Apart from Russia and Europe, Tbilisi (Tiflis), capital of Georgia in the Caucasus region, maintained the strongest cultural connections with Armenians from the early 19th century; it was a safe artistic shelter for Armenian painters, writers, musicians who sought to create and develop their art. In fact, according to Tourfort, Armenians constituted three-quarters of the Georgian population at the end of the 18th century. Under the Russian Empire, the Armenian cultural life blossomed within the borders of Georgia and Tbilisi became the center of the artistic revival of Armenians. Hakob Hovnatanian (1806-1881), also known as “The Raphael of Tiflis,” was a member of the Hovnatanyan family, a leading Armenian family of painters including generations from the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The painter worked and lived in Tbilisi till the end of his life from 1830-1880 and his works are most comprehensive representations of the Hovnatanyan family; “the series of his portraits are witness to the spirit and atmosphere of his epoch. His portraits stress the individuality of his models and their position in the social hierarchy.” Hovnatanian while being a master in miniature, illustrations, and portraiture, he was eager to foster the arts education; thus established modern Armenian painting school and determined his significant role in the history of Armenian painting.

Many Armenian artists of the 19th century from the diasporas remained in contact with Armenia while some settled back to the motherland. Armenians kept a dying culture alive, and the creation of their art revived the Armenian heritage. During the 19th century, European art critics and galleries began to notice the Armenian artists who were residing in the European lands. Whereas the Armenian art developed during the eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century,

the implementations of the Armenian art studies initiated in the early twentieth century by most notably recognized scholars, Catholicos of Cilicia, Karekin I ( Garegin A. Hovsepian) and Sirarpie Der Nersessian, an Armenian art historian specialized in Armenian and Byzantine studies.

### *Soviet Armenia, 1920-1991*

By the 1890s, Armenians were strongly pressed for political reforms to ban the discriminatory practices against Christianity. The revolutionary spirit and strong cultural identity of Armenia fostering the brutality of the Ottoman Empire led to a tremendous loss for Armenians. In 1914, World War I exploded; the outbreak created the best conditions for the resolution of the “Armenian Question.” In 1915, the Ottoman Empire committed Armenian Genocide changing the destiny of the whole nation. The majority was fortune to death, whereas some escaped but never were able to let go of the haunting experience.

The spread of the Armenians after the Genocide developed the Armenian arts outside the borders as the Armenians in the diasporas craved to be a part of Armenia; yet lived in their new settlements. Armenians that fled to the diasporas preserved the Armenian identity and sought to transmit the cultural heritage to the future generations. Surprisingly, the number of Armenian painters had grown considerably. Artists took traditional Armenian concepts combining the influences from their new settlements while embracing their emotional memories and painful experience. European ideas helped Armenians develop their endowment of creating masterpieces. Armenia's brought new aspects and ideas to the non-Armenian cultures as well. For example, the Armenian artist Arshil Gorky is known to be one of the first artists who brought surrealist and abstract concepts to America and influencing the establishment of the two powerful artistic

movements, Surrealism and Abstractism. As time went on, the Armenian artworks expanded in their concepts, styles, and themes.

In 1920, Armenia had become the part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (Armenia SSR). This major turnover, no doubt, brought forward many challenges, although could not ban the artistic spirit of the Armenian artists. The Russian Revolution, initiated in 1917, established specific norms for the nations to the service of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In fact, the cultural life of Armenia was mostly depending on the affairs taking place in Moscow. Although already at the beginning of the 1930s the “Union of Soviet Artists” had established and thought to boost the arts, the internal disparities still occurred. Thus, the development of an ideological-aesthetic platform for such a huge country was urgent. In this respect, some major acts were implemented, notable which was the emergence of the term Socialist Realism; it had fully constructed the culture of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) mainly the artistic domains. In point of fact, all arts spheres should have been following the doctrine of Socialist Realism which was the only official style for artists to acquire from 1923-1988. The style encompassed the communist values, thus the reality of those times; it was perceived as idealized realistic art. Whereas the state control over any art production was strictly regulated, Armenians were establishing some communities and using all the reachable opportunities to create art.

In 1923, the Association of Armenian Painters was established in Yerevan. There is an undeniable fact that the Armenian fine arts in the Soviet period, specifically during the years of Socialist Realism 1923-1988 marked unprecedented ruse, fostering creative achievements. These years were marked by the lives and creativity of artists such as Martiros Sarian, Hakob Kojoyan, Panos Terlemezian, Sedrak Arakelian, Hovhannes Zardarian, Minas Avetisian, Grigor Khanjian.

According to *Socialist Realism and Fine Arts in Soviet Armenia* (2017), “ In that historic period that was relatively short, but resplendent in phenomena of political, socio-economic and cultural aspect, as well as with critical events (Aghasyan, 2017 p. 46)” a connoisseur of the Modern and Contemporary Art History Ararat Aghasyan writes, “ the Armenian Fine Arts met the difficulties, challenges, and accomplishments. There were conditions - accessible in Soviet Armenia - for speedy qualitative and quantitative progress in the sphere of Fine Arts (Aghasyan, 2017 p. 46).”

The preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage did not occur within the borders only. The diasporans, as well, were maintaining the Armenian cultural identity in their settlements. In 1926, in Paris, Armenians established the Union of French-Armenian Artists of Paris (ANI) in 1926; later, the Society of Friends of the Armenian Culture was founded in Cairo in 1943; the Toros Roslin Association in Beirut in 1966; and the Union of Armenian Painters in Boston. The artists' eager to create and preserve the Armenian identity did not disappear even during World War II. Oppositely, their creativity grew exponentially; Armenian artists contributed tremendously by creating various propaganda posters, cartoons, artworks, and even typography. They acquired the military style in a way to satisfy the vigorous spirits of nations and encourage people for the sake of history. Interestingly, between 1941 and 1945 around 12 exhibitions were held in Armenia, which, no doubt, states about the unstoppable artistic spirit of Armenians.

Even though the period of Soviet Socialism was a challenging period for the development of most nations of the Soviet Socialist Republic, we cannot but state that the Armenian Fine Arts experienced unprecedented growth with many achievements. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a wide range of both local and international opinions and views were expressed to completely refute every single aspect related to the Soviet political or economic systems. The same criticism was also directed against cultural values

*Contemporary Armenia*

Although the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) collapsed in 1991, the Armenian art until very recently had been the part of the Fine Arts system of the USSR; despite the fact, Armenian art school has always been standing out with its warmth and spirituality. During the period of USSR, Armenians created various masterpieces, and the Armenian Fine Arts were experiencing remarkable progress in terms of new ideas, themes, and technical implementations. “With the turn of the century, it seemed, the artistic principles will change, new paths will be created for further innovations”, however, the beginning of contemporary Armenian art period did not have positive results at first (Zakharyan, 2016, p. 95). Armenia underwent apocalipsis on a large scale, and agony due to lack of mostly economic connections occurred during the USSR period. The Nagorno-Karabakh war, in its turn, affected the cultural and economic development of the country; although “the healing” was not far away. Even during those harsh “dark and cold years”, when Armenia was experiencing the crisis of energy and basic consumer needs, the Armenians did not back down thanks to their tough spirit. Those years, no doubt, stopped the progress of Armenians while reminding about severe difficulties in the fields of arts and culture as well. Gagik Abrahamyan who was a post secretary of the Artists’ Union once stated, “ We were hardly trying to maintain the spirit of our painters; with many difficulties, but we were organizing large exhibitions in Los Angeles (1990), Paris and Luxembourg (1991), Beijing (1993), Moscow (1997-1998) and other countries of the world (Zakharyan, 2016).” The struggles for the wellbeing, progress of the artists and for the growth of the Armenian culture continues till nowadays. In fact, the rich Armenian cultural heritage with a huge historical background is a powerful tool for further advancements in the sphere of art.

## *Part II: Awareness of Armenian Cultural Heritage*

In his book *Post-Capitalist Society* (1993) Austrian-born American author Peter Drucker stated, “Knowledge is power. In post-capitalism, power comes from transmitting information to make it productive, not hiding it (Peter Drucker, 1993).” Nowadays, as many countries gradually experience the evolution of capitalist society, some factors of production such as capital, land, labor, and entrepreneurship no longer serve as a basis for developments and wealth creation. Many sources regarding business and economics, still emphasize the four production factors; however, the recent market leader book *Understanding Business* (2016), identifies the *knowledge* as the most crucial factor of production in today’s economy, in fact, by referencing Peter Drucker’s thoughts. The UK’s one of the leading global and independent think tank Overseas Development Institute (ODI) whose work mainly directs to the international development and humanitarian issues, discern *knowledge* as a key to their Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) approach. The latter aims to facilitate improved knowledge in the development and humanitarian sectors. As a matter of fact, the approach is divided into five essential categories: strategy development, management techniques, collaboration mechanism, knowledge sharing, and learning process and knowledge capture and storage. RAPID approach confronts challenges, develops solutions and creates a change, which are keys for the developing countries and the world as a whole.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socio-economic crisis of “dark and cold years,” Armenia is still rebuilding not only its politics, economy, and welfare but also the cultural industries which, indeed, generally stand on and evolve through the cultural awareness. For defined as “ the knowledge of, understanding of and experiences with one’s own culture as well as others’ cultures that inform one’s ability to navigate new experiences” (IGI Global international

academic publisher), the *cultural awareness* appears to be the term for nations to study, preserve and foster their cultural heritage while creating and producing the new. At first, the society should be aware of its own cultural heritage. As Lawrence Harrison and Samuel Huntington state in the book *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (2000), the level of human development changes throughout the own cultural awareness, and the importance of cultural values, whether it's tangible or intangible, foster the progress of a particular nation (Harrison and Huntington, 2000). Additionally, Simon During in his work *The Cultural Studies Reader* (1999) constructs the idea that whenever the nation is aware of its own culture, it starts to preserve the heritage, first of all, in his mind, then in real life. The preservation process of cultural heritage, in fact, is a crucial factor in the cultural development of a particular country and for further advancements, as well. After the nation is aware of its cultural heritage, it should start spreading the knowledge locally, regionally and globally through educational, communication, management and other techniques. In this case, the country will enlarge an audience, and, eventually, the culture will not only be delivering aesthetics and reflecting a history but, rather, functioning as a supporting component for the country socially and financially. During the conference "Cultural Heritage in Armenia: Challenges and Responsibilities" (2018), the head of EU Delegation to Armenia, Piotr Świtalski mentioned, "EU believes that the cultural heritage of the country like Armenia is important to develop. Creative industries in Europe create every fifth new job bringing a lot of money. And Armenia with this big potential, with creativity, spirituality, and horizons, can be an important player in the European global market. [...] Cultural heritage can be an engine for development in Armenia (2018)." Therefore, Armenians can take the cultural heritage they have from ancient times and develop the modern identity of Armenian arts and cultural activities, while combining the richness of the heritage with the leadership in design, architecture and modern arts.

In the contemporary world, it is believed that development of, in this case, art sphere is mainly controlled by art management (also known as “art administration”), which includes business operation techniques and procedures. The art management lies under three categories of the Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) approach: strategy development, management techniques, and collaboration mechanism. Specifically, the duties of art management include rational resource management, budgeting, public relations (PR) and marketing, as well as staff management and fundraising. Nevertheless, besides art management (which, no doubt, is a powerful instrument in the 21st century), the awareness of one’s cultural heritage and growth of the art sphere should have deep and strong roots which is only possible through education, or as one category of RAPID approach claims: knowledge sharing and learning process.

Still in the 20th-century, scientist Albert Einstein proclaimed: “ The value of an education in a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts, but the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks.” During the past several decades, research studies examined the importance of education through the arts. However, the reliance on STEM educational system (curriculum based on four disciplines - science, technology, engineering and mathematics) that directly meets the needs of today's economy, keeps away a lot of countries, including, Armenia, from adopting the STEAM system of education ( adding “A”- arts, in the STEM). According to the New York Times article (2006), the study by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City asserted improvements in six categories of literacy and critical thinking skills among students taking part in art education programs. The group of children were assessed by the discussions of passages from the book “Kira-Kira,” and analyzing Arshile Gorky’s painting. The study (2006) confirmed, “... the hypothesis is that the use of both talking about art and using inquiry to help students tease apart the meaning of paintings help them learn

how to tease apart the meanings of texts, too. They apply those skills to reading (New York Times, 2006)..” Moreover, the recent national survey (2016) among Americans has shown that an overwhelming part of the public, 88% of 3020 respondents, agree that art is a vital part of a well-rounded education for K-12 students in the United States and Canada. Additionally, according to the results of a survey (2019) on arts management and cultural awareness in Armenia, 83.4 % of 331 respondents believed that art should be taught in the Armenian educational institutions from a young age as a mandatory subject. In fact, art is an essential component of not only the informal education which happens outside of the classroom through museums, libraries and various after-school programs but also the formal classroom-based education.

Today, very few Armenian educational institutions include art in their curriculum, and “Ayb” school is one of those believing in the importance of art education and wishing to affect Armenia’s development. One of the founders of Ayb school, Aram Pakhchanian defines modern education through four major separate branches: knowledge, physical fitness, art and development of the person as a part of the community. He believes, “ [...] not only art gives knowledge, which is critically important, but also provides a foundation for the further personal growth of a person [...] the connection with art is important as it defines the structure of one’s personality.” Also, another important outcome of the art education that Aram Pakhchanian mentioned is the harmony especially among the teenage group when the person is constantly stressed by many factors; “your body is complicated in that period, your life is complicated, your future is undefined, and you constantly seek harmony. Art provides that relaxation which helps other subjects and all your activities as a young personality.”

For defined as an approach that “involves drawing from multiple disciplines to redefine problems outside of boundaries and reach solutions based on a new understanding of complex

situations” (“Definitions and Translations”), multidisciplinary thinking is quite a new term entering today’s society. However, the need for touching a particular theme from different angles is what society needs now for growth and differentiation. The art historian and curator Nairi Khatchadourian highlights the multidisciplinary thinking and approach to be developed in schools: “when creating the curriculum, teachers have to integrate different disciplines - such as art history, when illustrating and analyzing a topic, issue, theme [...] it is very important to approach one given topic through different lenses [...] it would empower the child, develop his/her critical thinking and practical skills.” Thus, art education will develop multidisciplinary thinking in a person affecting his/her approach to the modern world.

American developmental psychologist Howard Gardner in his work *Art Education and Human Development* (2008) discusses the artistic awareness and perceptions of children and claims the crucial need of letter “A”( arts, artsy) in the STEAM educational system. As believing that art affects the progress of human intelligence, Gardner claims that art and human development go along together; art education should start from the early ages. It is scientifically proven that often children are better performing at solving tasks requiring creative solutions than adults; the reason is that the prefrontal cortex of the adult’s brain is more developed than in the brain of a child. The developed prefrontal cortex of the brain causes adults to see things in their exact way. Thus, children are more inclined to have the ability to perceive the environment more inventive and think “out of the box” rather than adults. Marine Haroyan, the head of the Literature Department in Yeghishe Charents Museum in Yerevan, who has been conducting art educational programs for school children in the museums and has worked with children, both literate and illiterate, for a long time claims that the perception of art, especially the fine arts, is complicated, especially if it is not a very realistic picture. She believes, “There is a gap that needs to be filled

from childhood in understanding and perceiving something [...] what can be easily taught at a younger age becomes more complicated afterward.” Besides the critical thinking and problem solving, the most significant and core factor for today's fast developing world which art education sow in people, is creativity. The latter affects the development of the mind, reflects on feelings and experience, and enhances the learning abilities. Nowadays, creativity is considered to be the top requirements to succeed. According to the article *Learning to Think Outside the Box* (2014) in New York Times, critical thinking has long been viewed as the essential skill for success; however, in this globalized world, it is not enough. “Creativity moves beyond mere synthesis and evaluation and is “the higher order skill” (New York Times, 2014). ” In fact, in 2010, “creativity” was recognized as the most critical factor for success in the I. B. M. survey of 1500 CEOs in 33 industries. The global marketplace today requires creativity, and art education is one of the primary sources in shaping creative minds. Last but not least, art education, both formal and informal, is the source of cultural awareness and empathy. Art is a platform for people to be acquainted not only with their own culture but others’ as well. People will be able to acquire the ability for empathy; it will enable them to get in touch with people from different backgrounds and nationalities, further promoting and educating own culture to those are not aware of it. While art education since young age shapes the personality of a human being and impacts on the intellectual, physical and social development generally, it does teach the person to understand, value and create art. As Aram Pakhchanian states, “ [...] we should have our own people understanding and valuing art; you do that by teaching kids to understand art at the schools, which is a graduate process. When you educate people, you create market. People with the right understanding of art define the market.” The understanding of art during the years of school is a foundation for youngsters who have the desire to develop their careers in various fields of art, whether as an artist, art curator, art

gallery manager or an art appraiser. Indeed, this becomes the starting point for the development of an art management system in the particular country: to have educated and experienced specialists who will control and invest in the system, which Armenia, unfortunately, lacks at this point. Educational institutions teaching art need experts, such as art history teachers or artists who are educated enough to develop a strong art generations. Aram Pakhchanian when asked about the selection criteria of good art teachers in “Ayb” high school mentioned, “ It is not about the knowledge, but it is about communication skills. Not all art teachers are good in communication, in emotional empathy, and emotional intelligence. It is about challenging people properly [...] So the art people should learn to follow the procedure...” It is important to mention that according to the survey (2019) on arts management and cultural awareness in Armenia, 83.3% (respondents) out of 336 respondents thought that art should be taught in schools as a mandatory subjects from a young age. In spite of the art education at schools, people pursuing to create their professional career in the fields of art need the high art education which most Armenians seek abroad. The Armenian art industry requires educated professionals varying from artists, art historians, art critics and art curators who will shape the Armenian art market with their creativity and most importantly, knowledge. The art education specialists today should follow the trends, organize the educational programs in a way, they match the demands and evolution of the industry. Although, some Armenian artists, such as Arev Petrosyan, found their individual approach and have the financial resources to regularly present and promote their works, organize their exhibitions themselves, the most identified issue of the Armenian art market still remains the need of art curators. The word curator comes from the old French word *curateur* and, in later use, from the Latin word *curare*, which means “ to take care”. The perception on the duties of an art curator are different; many believe they are people in charge of exhibitions and only. But their role is much

more captivating and significant for the art markets. Referring to the categories of the RAPID approach, art curators are those who contribute to the art management system in developing collaboration mechanisms and management techniques. Curator Nairi Khatchadourian believes that one of the crucial duties of a curator is to create the link between key players; in this way, in fact, the collaboration mechanism is being developed while giving the opportunity for specialists and experts of different backgrounds and occupations join together and collaborate on a given project. Nairi Khatchadourian defines the role of a curator as “a person who - by tradition preserves, studies, displays works of art, yet constantly creating bridges between key players, opening the boundaries between artwork-audience-exhibition space and reviewing the narratives. Curators challenge received notions and institutional contexts and foreground the contributions of artists in the art historical discourse”. In terms of key players, she means all people involved in the art world or exhibition project: they are artists, researchers, critics, gallerists, dealers, museum professionals, etc. For example, in any type of exhibition, whether it is going to be in a gallery, factory or a museum, outside in the park, exhibition designers have to be in a team, lighting designers, catalog designers, editors have to work in a team; it is a collaboration process. The curator is the one establishing the interconnectedness and the smooth communication for the collaboration to happen and the desired outcome to achieve. Hence, the curator is someone coming from different backgrounds such as art history, anthropology, cultural studies, social sciences, etc.

The RAPID approach includes a category of strategy development, which is a key for most industries, in this case, creative industries. As defined a constant planning and monitoring process, strategic management is tool including all the requirements for an organization's goals and objectives. Lidia Varbanova, a lecturer and researcher in the field of art, in her work *Strategic Management in the Arts* (2013) analyzes various strategic management models and theories

varying from Cantillon, Schumpeter, Ansoff, and Drucker. According to Varbanova (2013), “Strategic management is an essential element that drives an organization to success, yet much cultural organization has to apply strategic thinking and entrepreneurial actions within the management function (Varbanova, 2013).” The development of the art management of a particular country relies on proper business models that will eventually foster the art market and let artists both create and make a living out of it. Today, in Armenia, very few artists have the opportunity to rely on the money they make from their artworks. Others are not guaranteed that their artworks will bring revenue to rely on for a living. William J. Byrnes in the book *Management and the Arts* (2015), raises the importance of the business side of the arts; it should also be taken into a consideration varying from advertising, marketing, public relations, and promotion. In this case, Arev Petrosyan mentions, “Everyone should do his job. The artist cannot create with one hand and present himself with the other hand. The artist does not have to be in the business; it is very difficult for us to be free to create and at the same time, manage a business.” The art industry personnel is not limited to only artists or art curators. It is a huge place where the key players are also marketing specialists, financial and PR manager. Armenian art industry requires professionals that will work with artists and carry the business side of the art industry. In a world where promotion is a key factor for businesses to grow, Armenian artists are in a desperate need to have their works presented to the world. This, no doubt, is a tremendous part of the cultural awareness of the Armenian heritage. Besides promoting artists and their artworks, other important components of cultural awareness and cultural promotion are museums and galleries. There are few small galleries in Armenia, and they usually display and sell works of 19th and 20th-century art. According to Arev Petrosyan, “There are so many problems regarding gallery management in Armenia. First of all, we do not have proper showrooms, and for a country who has a huge cultural

heritage, it is a strong requirement. In regards to museums, old interior designs, wrong lightning, poor conditions of the storages are worth issues to raise if Armenia wants to see its art industry developing.” Museums and galleries are institutions where people are exposed to a particular culture, and where the cultural awareness of the country begins. While Armenia retains a heritage worth presenting to the world, it is crucial to have museums and galleries in Armenia properly managed and constructed. During the Art and Business Symposium (2018) held by AGBU Armenia, a keynote speaker Thomaï Serdari, brand strategist and adjunct professor at Parsons Design School mentioned, “ ... I loved the History Museum of Armenia because it showed me the continuity of the culture [...] and when I was exposed to Soviet urban planning, it showed me the disconnect. You need to change that; you need to hire people who are young, who know design, art, and architecture, to renovate and innovate as if there was no gap. Be playful open up, because, in this way, you are going to let people in.”

Armenian heritage is a powerful engine in becoming an important artistic player not only regionally but internationally as well. Although, still, Armenia fails to get over its past and foster the development of an art sphere. Armenian art industry should break away of its current state, walk with the evolution of the industry while satisfying the contemporary needs of the world.

### **Limitations and Avenues for Further Research**

The term “heritage” has developed over time. According to UNESCO, “ Heritage, encompasses tangible and intangible, natural and cultural assets inherited from the past and transmitted to future generations by their irreplaceable value.” It is a powerful tool for countries to maintain their identity and be defined for their specific features. Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) approach is comprised of several categories to facilitate the development of countries; capture and storage is a crucial category for developing the creative industries. Armenian cultural heritage, before being exposed to the world, needs to be conserved. The process of preserving cultural heritage is a primary step in shaping creative industries. The country should have a firm cultural base to have the potential for future developments, and preservation of the cultural heritage is a huge implementation which should be constantly executed.

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## **Appendix**

### ***Survey Responses Link:***

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1b\\_tQ8AIXpZ4MFsqbIcKQu\\_7HFkfZ5WcbnIr4a33Yvew/e\\_dit#responses](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1b_tQ8AIXpZ4MFsqbIcKQu_7HFkfZ5WcbnIr4a33Yvew/e_dit#responses)

### ***Interview Recordings:***

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10H3BM3RrhwOzH8DbKXzfe5crm0DxAcEc>