

How 20th-Century Western Music Influenced the
Armenian Art Movement “3rd Floor”

by

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Abstract

My work examines the intricate relation between two very distinct art forms, music and painting, in the context of Armenian postmodern art of the 1980s. It starts with an overview of the interrelation between music and painting in the global context, as observed in the seminal works and philosophies of the artists and art critics of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Then, it explores music's role in the formation of 'underground' culture and, consequently, art movements in the Soviet Union, including in Soviet Armenia. One such movement is the Armenian "3rd Floor" art movement, which was heavily influenced by Western music, as seen in the comments and analyses of the movement's founder, Arman Grigoryan. The exploration of "3rd Floor's" history and its connection to Western music gives us better insight into how it came to be and how the musical aspect added to the concept of this specific art movement.

Keywords: music and painting relation, 20th-century art, 20th-century music, Armenian postmodern art, the 3rd Floor art movement, rock music

Foreword

It all started with one painting, “Anarchy in the U.S.S.R.” Three years ago, Arman Grigoryan, one of the outstanding representatives of contemporary art who has his own say in Armenian art, brought the aforementioned work to Antikyan Gallery. As an avid fan of the punk band Sex Pistols, I was immediately taken with the painting. Aside from my fascination with punk music, the painting also refueled my interest in the Armenian art movement of the 1980s called “3rd Floor,” with Arman Grigoryan himself being one of its founders. Music’s influence and presence were especially prominent in the movement. I read and heard a lot about the exhibitions organized by the “3rd Floor,” and in many of the interviews and essays, bands such as Black Sabbath were cited as one of the inspirations behind the works. I remember watching a video from the exhibition’s opening and seeing all these artworks, many of which referenced punk, rock, and metal music and culture, while Metal Church was playing in the background.



Figure 1. Arman Grigoryan. (2021). *Anarchy in the U.S.S.R.* [oil on canvas].

Arman Grigoryan painted “Anarchy in the U.S.S.R.” in 2021, but as I found out later, it is not the only manifestation of the connection between music and fine art for the author. Before

that, he painted KISS, AC/DC, and other music idols that are on my daily playlist. Thus began my fascination with this matter.

I was already familiar with Arman Grigoryan's work before coming across this particular painting, as I have been drawing virtually all my life. I graduated from The National Center of Aesthetics, named after Henrik Igityan. I studied painting at the studio of the honored artist of Armenia, Teni Vardanyan, and then at the studio of avant-garde artist Ara Hovsepyan, a member of the "3rd Floor." The conversations I had with my two art teachers during the classes, more often than not, revolved around the topic of music, among other things. Both would mention specific bands that belonged to the alternative music category (the band Ministry, for instance) aside from the usual classics, like Led Zeppelin or Black Sabbath. These conversations and Arman's works made me think about the artists and their connection to Western rock and alternative music and how much postmodern art appears to be inspired by it.

How 20th-Century Western Music Influenced the Armenian Art Movement “3rd Floor”

Fine art is perhaps the most important of the foundations of great world cultures. It carries a powerful charge of visual perception, artistic thinking, and broad layers of information.

Prehumans depicted their thoughts, fears, and dreams on rocks. Over the millennia, fine arts recorded an indescribable rise, sometimes reaching divine, perfect beauty. In the most recent period of humanity, fine art acquired a mostly conceptual importance. The musical avant-garde movements and the same substantive movements in the fine arts, which started in the 60s of the previous century, gradually gained momentum in the world and found their reflection in the Armenian reality as well. Such revolutions in art – from futurism to Dada, from surrealism to pop art and conceptual art – moved progressive artists as art movements began to develop in parallel with the burgeoning underground music scenes of the West. These movements were persecuted in the countries of the Soviet Union until the collapse of the “Iron Curtain,” after which they gained the freedom to be bolder and more unrestrained (Ryback, 1990).

Numerous articles and books have been devoted to Armenian art of the late 20th century, such as the recently published book by Iain Robertson, *A Pathway Through Modern & Contemporary Armenian Art* (2022), examining how the artists responded to and survived the political and social environment spanning from the Soviet period to the post-Communist era, which has helped shape contemporary Armenian art. However, none of these books and articles touched upon its blatant connection to Western alternative and underground music, which was a catalyst for this important chapter in the history of Armenian art.

The Condition To Which All Art Aspires: Exploring The Interrelation Between Music And Painting

“All art constantly aspires to the condition of music.”

– Walter Pater, *The School of Giorgione*, 1877

In any art form, there always needs to be an accounting of its opposite condition, which, in the case of visual arts, is the invisible.

Behind every display of the visible, behind pigment and stone, there lies something invisible, teasing, permanent, in some sense indestructible even though the work itself is always destructible: never quite there in the artwork, never quite not there (Albright, 2014, p. 52).

“Painting is about the modalities of nonexistence of the images on the canvases, and of the physical universe itself” (Albright, 2014, p. 58). Artists, even before the age of modernism, placed great value on the invisible in their art, depicting things they could not see. Music is one such entity.

Art historians and musicologists have studied the relationship between music and painting in various ways, from discussions regarding the synesthetic phenomenon and the representational aspect to more concrete ideas about the interactions and shared features between them. It cannot be denied that the interrelation between the visual arts and music exists, as evidenced by the various manifestations in the realm of visual art during the 20th century, a period of rapid change and technological advancement that enabled the emergence of various musical and artistic movements.

On The Interrelation Between Painting And Music

Art and music have been the subject of many philosophical discussions since the times of Ancient Greece when Plato and Aristotle speculated about the purpose of the arts and their interrelation. They focused on the mimetic relationship between music and the word, specifically, how music serves the word. However, it was not until the 19th century that the notion of ‘art’ as we know it came into being (Miller, 2002). With the boundaries between the arts established, music began to be seen as an independent entity instead of an imitation. Various scholars examined the intermedial relations between the arts, specifically poetry, music, and painting.

Walter Pater And The Anders-Streben Nature Of The Arts

“Good painting is a music and a melody which intellect only can appreciate, and with great difficulty.”

– Michelangelo Buonarotti

In *The School of Giorgione* (1912), Walter Pater describes the process of Anders-streben (‘other-striving’), an art form striving towards the ‘otherness’ of another form. It refers to the partial alienation of an art form from its own limitations to supplement its qualities with another’s. While each art is distinct in its limitations and representation, they all share the same goal of becoming “a matter of pure perception” (1912, p. 138). Instead of the form and subject being separate aspects of an artwork, with the former targeting the intellect and the other the senses, the two need to become a single unit that presents a single effect to the “imaginative reason” (p. 138) where every thought and feeling is born in tandem with its sensible analog or symbol.

It all comes down to what Pater (1912) dubs the “greatest object of Anders-streben” (p. 135) – music. He claims that all art forms strive towards the condition of music because of its ability to obliterate the distinction between form and subject (Pater, 1912).

The Paterian Condition Of The 20th Century Art World

Pater’s ideas about the Anders-streben of arts had carried over to the 20th century as artists began to think of ways for visual art, painting in particular, to go beyond mere imitation of nature and achieve expressiveness and logical order that they associated with music. Roger Fry was one of the first to use the term ‘visual music’ as he described this phenomenon in relation to post-impressionism. Fry (1912) wrote that the artists sought to create rather than imitate reality and, in doing so, “give up all resemblance to natural form, and create a purely abstract language of form – a visual music” (p. 157).

So, music became the model for the visual arts as artists sought to break free from the imitative constraints and, as per Fry’s (1912) wording, ‘find an equivalent for life’ (p. 157). They saw this in the purity of music, and thus, they based their approach on this particular art form, believing it to be the way to achieve this creative freedom.

The Synaesthesia Phenomenon

Synesthesia is the blending or interchangeability of sensory perceptions, where one sense can trigger an experience in another sense. One example is the phenomenon of seeing color when one hears certain sounds. This unity of the senses is, by extension, the unity of the arts (Strick, 2005, p. 15).

Synesthesia was a popular topic during the 19th century, particularly in Romantic and Symbolist thought. It was believed that synaesthetic associations were the result of a heightened

sense of aesthetic awareness in the perceiving subject, something that artists, writers, and musicians tried to evoke in their audiences with their works. The power of this phenomenon lay in the linkage of seemingly unrelated experiences and associations, resulting in the creation of vivid imagery, which transferred ordinary experiences to the realm of art and music, with the latter being the source of such heightened senses (Strick, 2005).

Synaesthesia acted as a mediator between music and visual art, thereby facilitating the development of abstraction. The synaesthetic theory focused on the subjective perception of an individual and tended to break down sensory perception into individual units, where one sensation corresponded with another. Music is best suited for such analogy with its compositional structures, harmony, and abstract notation system. As art strove to the condition of music, it sought to evoke musical associations, which could be best achieved with color (Strick, 2005).

Wassily Kandinsky's Spiritual Relationship with Music

Kandinsky was of the opinion that music, which is free from the obligation to represent any specific subject but still capable of evoking a profound emotional response, provided an ideal model for the artistic effect he wanted to achieve. He aimed to create art that was intensely expressive yet difficult to put into words. Kandinsky was greatly influenced in this regard by his contemporary, Arnold Schoenberg, as his friendship with the composer became the upshot of the exchange of new ideas and innovation (Leach, 2015).

Kandinsky believed that art could and should transcend realism and communicate the spiritual realm of human existence. In his *On the Spiritual in Art* (1946), he discusses artists' natural strive towards representing beyond the natural phenomena, towards the abstract, making

musical analogies to illustrate his point. His ideas echo Pater's ideas, making the artist a perfect representation of the condition of the 20th-century visual arts as described by Roger Fry.

Despite all art expressions being unique, they are in conversation with each other as one art learns from another (Kandinsky, 1946). Striving towards the condition described by Kandinsky entails comparing all these different art forms. Out of them all, music has always been the most abstract art form as it creates a "unique life of musical sounds." It represents someone's inner world or, as the artist calls it, spiritual life rather than a natural phenomenon (Kandinsky, 1946, p. 35). According to Kandinsky (1946), "music achieves results which are beyond the realm of painting" (p. 35). Hence, painting must learn from music to apply the latter's principle to its own medium.

Like any other mode of human expression, art is susceptible to change and evolution, reaching a purely artistic composition. Modern art, especially the realm of painting, has already been going through this process, as observed in the incorporation of rhythm, mathematical abstract construction, color repetition, and manner of setting color into motion, aspects Kandinsky brings up when discussing this phenomenon.

When talking about color, Kandinsky underlines the importance of assigning a subjective characteristic to said color when it must be present in a material form, like in a painting. Here, the artist talks about the "inner note," when something, in this case, color, is not seen materially but imagined in an abstract sense.

This inner note is similar to the tone of a trumpet or an instrument which sounds in our imagination when we hear the word "trumpet" or some other instrument is mentioned.

This sound is not detailed. We associate particular sounds with a solo, from different instruments, from the open air, or a closed room. (Kandinsky, 1946, p. 45)

A comparison between color and musical tones is only relative, similar to how different instruments can reproduce various tones of a violin (Kandinsky, 1946). Throughout his treatise, Kandinsky talks about colors and forms through musical analogies, showing that variations of color are identical to variations in music. He also discusses how colors and forms can be combined to create certain effects.

In any event, sharp colours sound stronger in sharp forms (for example, yellow in a triangle). Those inclined to be deep are intensified by round forms (for example blue in a circle). On the other hand, if a form does not fit the colour, the conjunction should not be considered “inharmonious” but rather as a new possibility and, therefore, as harmony. As the number of colours or forms is endless, the combinations and effects are, also, infinite. (Kandinsky, 1946, pp. 46-47)

In his subsequent treatise, *Point and Line to Plane* (1947), Kandinsky elaborated on his complex ideas about colors and forms, again using music as a reference. He writes that in music, the line is regarded as the most powerful means of expression. Similar to painting, it exists in both time and space (Kandinsky, 1947).

Most musical instruments are of a linear character. The pitch of the various instruments corresponds to the width of the line: a very fine line represents the sound produced by the violin, flute, piccolo; a somewhat thicker line represents the tone of the viola, clarinet; and the lines become more broad via the deeptoned instruments, finally culminating in

the broadest line representing the deepest tones produced by the bass-viol or the tuba.
(Kandinsky, 1947, p. 98)

In one of the chapters, he discusses the parallels of angular lines with colors and the sound of these forms. Kandinsky describes how different angles compose specific forms and what colors are ascribed to them. For instance, he suggests that acute angles form a triangle, right angles form a square, and obtuse angles form a circle, each with a specific color association of yellow, red, and blue, respectively (Kandinsky, 1947).

Thus, Kandinsky argues that true art should communicate with the viewer's soul and connect with the spiritual dimension through abstraction. The way his descriptions and explanations constantly incorporate terms like "harmony," "sound," "note," and names of musical instruments demonstrates the importance and power of the synaesthetic phenomenon in bridging music and visual art to develop abstraction.

Rock Music And The Emergence Of The 'Underground' In The Soviet Union

Music played a significant role in the formation of identity among youth. Popular culture, such as movies, literature, and lifestyle magazines, offered young people a range of ideas, styles, and attitudes that they could use to create meaning and form their own identities in their daily lives. Rock music, in particular, played a similar role, enabling young people to explore and construct their identities through its broad range of messages and themes (Horgby & Nilsson, 2010).

During the 1950s, rock'n'roll music became an integral part of the everyday lives of young people as the symbols, habits, and aesthetics of rock spread from two distinct centers, Great Britain and the USA, bringing cultural influences that bridged the borders between states and the

boundaries between different social groups (Horgby & Nilsson, 2010). As a result, rock music challenged national identities and hegemonic ideas about how young people should express themselves and interact with society and institutions, as they rejected traditional norms and traditions. Music once again became a reflection and catalyst for a longing for freedom from the constraints of traditional society.

In the 1940s, there was an onslaught of anti-American sentiments in the Soviet Union as Andrei Zhdanov, the Soviet Union's "propagandist in chief," sought to get rid of the American influences that threatened to "poison the consciousness of the masses." The campaign against "Americanism" peaked in the early 1950s as the Soviet youths, instead of striving to be model citizens of a socialist nation, imitated American film characters and listened to American music (Ryback, 1990). This intensified fear of American subversion brought with it the ban on jazz music and, consequently, rock'n'roll music.

In the late 1950s, millions of Western rock'n'roll recordings of musicians such as Elvis Presley and Little Richard started to turn up throughout the Soviet Union in the form of discarded X-ray plates, and Armenia was no exception. Like in other Soviet states at the time, there was a circulation of banned music in Armenia, too, with Elvis' catalog pressed into the surface of an X-ray of a broken ankle to be passed around (Ryback, 1990). So, it comes as no surprise that the idea to establish a national rock culture in the Soviet Union originated in Yerevan, the capital of the southern Soviet republic of Armenia. Rafael Mkrtchyan, a concert organizer who had gained wealth by booking concerts in Yerevan, proposed hosting a national rock festival that would bring together the finest rock bands in the Soviet Union. In the summer of 1969, thousands of rock fans gathered in Yerevan over several weekends to hear some of the finest rock musicians in the Soviet Union. This festival, known as the Armenian Woodstock, was

repeated for three consecutive summers until the organizer's arrest ended its run (Ryback, 1990). Despite the festival's short-lived existence, it remained a significant moment in Soviet rock history as the first attempt to establish a national rock culture.

Meanwhile, there was the emerging idea of forming an alternative society within the existing one, to create and justify a cultural sphere separate from traditional cultural institutions (Brown, 2014). This autonomous sphere of culture, the "underground," was a realm where individuals could create without worrying about commercial potential, encouraging the production of content that aligned with personal convictions and did not have a place in the mainstream market. So, the underground was a concept that allowed people to create an alternative culture from below. It was a way of asserting the right to produce art and social value. The goal was to expand and advance through the ownership of means of production in order to create works that inform, stimulate, and provoke rather than just entertain (Brown, 2014).

During the 1970s, the United States of America and the Soviet Union started to engage in cultural exchanges that included not only standard consumer items but also cultural products that coexisted with more underground consumption, such as state-sponsored cultural exchanges involving musical groups from the U.S. that represented a wide range of styles and genres. The Soviet state allowed these tours as a way to accommodate greater cultural openness and pluralism while at the same time maintaining trust in an authoritarian society (Martin, 2016). These small concessions were made to enhance trust with the public. However, the Soviet youth had a strong desire for Western culture and music, which went beyond these concessions. They proved to be resourceful in accessing the objects of their desire as the official ban on Western music, rock and alternative music specifically, gave rise to a thriving black market in records and

audiotapes, thus contributing to the emergence of underground scenes in Soviet states, including Armenia (Ryback, 1990).

The Armenian Avant-Garde: The “3rd Floor” Movement

The influence of Western music on Armenian youth is especially apparent in the avant-garde art movements of that time, such as the 3rd Floor, which was established in the late 1980s and is considered the first major contemporary art movement in Armenia. The exhibition of the young artists (including Arman Grigoryan, Sev, Ashot Ashot, Karo Mkrtychyan, Heriqnaz Galstyan, Ara Hovsepyan, Kiki, Karine Matsakyan, Araks Nerkararyan, Armen Gevorgyants, Sahak Poghosyan) that opened in the autumn of 1986 in the Artists’ Union was the result of great debates (Arevshatyan, 2003). At first, they were rejected by the Union to exhibit their works there alongside other, more traditional artists. However, after some negotiations, the artists finally got permission to do it on the condition that the exhibition would take place in the conference hall on the third floor, hence the name “3rd Floor.” The 3rd Floor also organized daily discussions related to other fields, such as literature, cinema, and music, ranging from alternative jazz and punk rock to minimalist music (Grigoryan, 2003).



Figure 2. Members of the "3rd Floor" at the opening of the "Graffiti" exhibition, 1992

Unlike Socialist Realism, the concept of which was based on a specific set of prescribed and recommended images, for the 3rd Floor, autonomy meant aesthetic anarchism, which refers to the freedom of mixing images and styles of high and low culture (Harutyunyan, 2017). The group's method of exhibition-making relied on this aesthetic anarchism, the relativization of all values, and the dismantling of hierarchies. The movement did so through a process known as "Hamasteghtsakan arvest" ("crossover art" or "collectively created art"), a term coined by Arman Grigoryan, one of the initiators of the movement, and art critic Nazareth Karoyan, denoting "the operational similarities between dream, neurosis, myth, art, and culture" (Grigoryan & Karoyan, 2019, p. 123).

The group embraced the idea of all-inclusive, free creativity and aimed at direct engagement with the public by incorporating Western signs and symbols (Robertson & Karoyan, 2022). Among such symbols were musical icons they associated with absolute freedom and creativity, such as the heavy metal band Black Sabbath.



Figure 3. Araqelyan, K. (1990). *The 3rd Floor "Plus Minus" exhibition*

The visitors of the 3rd Floor's exhibition were indignant at the displayed artworks not matching reality as the artists' vision included symbols that were not part of the Armenian, or

rather the Soviet, culture. While those people considered Soviet “icons” desirable, the artists’ dreams were related to the West, like an artist’s dream of being at a Led Zeppelin concert instead of seeing local “icons” (Grigoryan & Karoyan, 2019).

It is apparent that the movements of the late 20th-century experimental Armenian art were inspired and influenced by Western music with its connotations of absolute individual and artistic freedom. This relation must be observed by taking into account the global context of how and why such music styles and their corresponding subcultures emerged and how they shaped underground scenes in other countries and cultures.

Research Questions

This capstone project focuses on trying to find the relationship between Armenian postmodern art movement “3rd Floor” and the Western music of that period. Was the Armenian art of that period largely influenced by outside factors, in this case, the music scene of the West? How is that influence demonstrated in the artists’ art, philosophy, and statements? How did that type of music reach Armenia and impact a completely different art form? Was it the sole influence, or was it a combination of other factors as well? Answering these questions helps us understand the relationship between the two distinct art forms and how it influenced this specific art movement.

Methodology

This topic relies on the study of various articles, documents, and books that are essential for understanding 20th-century art and music both in global and local contexts. There is plenty of material on this specific era in art and music history, with a focus on subcultures and movements that were directly or indirectly related to these two art forms. Studying them is crucial for

understanding and recognizing the connections and patterns present in art and music, as they are usually the upshot of the formation of a new movement.

Answering all those questions, specifically in the context of Armenia and the “3rd Floor” movement, also requires extensive research beyond looking into the existing material since this topic has not been explored before, and studying published materials about either art or music in Armenia and elsewhere only gets one so far. It is necessary to refer to the original sources to find all the missing pieces and get a better understanding of this connection. For this reason, I chose to conduct an in-depth interview with the founder of the “3rd Floor,” Arman Grigoryan, whose stories and observations regarding the formation of this unique art movement give insight into music’s presence in the artists’ lives and art.

In addition to studying the available texts on the emerging rock and underground culture in Soviet Armenia and the “3rd Floor” art movement, the capstone employs oral history as its method. The study relies on an in-depth interview and the analysis of the resulting narrative’s content, which provides the necessary information for identifying and defining the implicit connection between that period’s visual art and music.

Oral History

Oral history involves obtaining knowledge from people’s stories through interviews, contributing to knowledge production. It can be utilized by various disciplines, with narrative analysis, including the close textual kind, providing new insights into historical issues (Abrams, 2016).

The main goal of an oral history interview is to induce a narrative from the interviewee. Instead of standardized, close-ended questions that typically elicit a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ from the

respondent, the interviewer needs to adopt an open and semi-structured approach to the interview to encourage lengthier and more elaborate responses (Abrams, 2016, p. 124). The ‘interviewee,’ thus, becomes the ‘narrator,’ the creator of a narrative “informed by and embedded in their cultural world” (Abrams, 2016, p. 107). Thus, the interviewer allows the respondent to share their own narrative independently from the questionnaire. Getting a narrative response is crucial for conducting a narrative analysis of the recording or transcript.

Narrative Research

Narrative is a process of making or telling a story; it is the order or arrangement in which events occur over time (Andrews et al., 2017). Since human experience is also inherently temporal, meaning it is organized and constrained within the framework of time and structured by it, the histories that people construct are “creative means of exploring and describing realities” instead of objective accounts of events (Andrews et al., 2017, p. 44). There is no direct access to experience, which only acquires meaning when woven into a story. It is embedded in the story that is narrated, in the way it is remembered and told. Thus, studying experience can only be done through its representations (Denzin, 2017).

A narrative is an accumulation of meanings and realities as its construction progresses, offering insights into the formation and workings of the social world. Stories have a cultural context without reference to which they cannot be understood, challenging the idea that there are objective realities wholly independent of the languages and cultural patterns used to represent them (Andrews et al., 2017). For many narrative theorists, describing a sequence of events by organizing beginnings, middles, and ends or past, present, and future affects the formation of individual histories. These individual ‘histories’ focus on creating and maintaining meaning by mirroring the “activity of lives as they are lived” in “activities of reflection, representation,

accounting, and storytelling” (Andrews et al., 2017, p. 45). Human subjectivity is shaped by various available narratives contingent upon social and cultural positioning. Thus, narratives are often contradictory and fragmented, as “there is no such thing as a coherent story” (Andrews et al., 2017, p. 47).

There are two approaches to oral history narrative analysis: either analyzing the shape of the narrative or the content (Abrams, 2016). I found the latter more relevant to my research since the information I sought was in what was said rather than how it was said. My aim with the interview was to obtain the missing information about music’s presence and role in the “3rd Floor” from Arman Grigoryan’s stories and narrative, where the narrator often referred to music when talking about art or the “3rd Floor.”

Research Findings and Analysis

In the autumn of 1988, members of the 3rd Floor did a performance with the symbolic name *The Official Art Has Died - Hail to the Union of Artists from the Netherworld*. The event was reminiscent of the theme of Black Sabbath’s songs about the resurrection of an antihero. It’s worth noting that one of the sketches for the 3rd Floor exhibition poster was done in the style of Black Sabbath’s album “Sabotage” (Azatyan, 2008, p. 44). At the annual official exhibition of the Artists’ Union, they appeared as resurrected ghosts, dressed up like their heavy metal heroes – members of Black Sabbath and KISS. They walked into one of the Union’s exhibitions and declared the death of official art.

The artists were like characters from a phantasmagorical play; one was a blind man with nuts in his eyes, the other had a Kiss-style make-up on his face. The procession of these heroes from the abyss (perhaps a metaphor for the cultures repressed by the Soviet

regime) walked silently through the exhibition. After viewing the works, the ghostly procession left the show (Azatyan, 2008, p. 44).



Figure 4. The 3rd Floor. (1988). "The Official Art Has Died- Hail to the Union of Artists from the Netherworld" exhibition



Figure 5. The 3rd Floor. (1988). "The Official Art Has Died- Hail to the Union of Artists from the Netherworld" exhibition

The performance sentenced outdated official art to metaphorical death, negating the Socialist Realist institution of art which was “bureaucratic, whose values were determined by a state-invented standard of mastery, not even academic mastery, but on anti-Western false thesis” (Arman, personal communication, April 21, 2024).

Եր կեղծիքի դեմ ես ու Քիքին մտածում էինք ոնց կարելի ա պայքարել, որ երևա որ մենք լրիվ ուրիշ բան ենք անում: Դրա համար պիտի լինի արստրակցիոնիզմ: Մեզ մոտ միշտ արստրակտ և պոպ-արտ էր: Երկու չընդունված, սովետի կողմից մերժվող ուղղություն: /Kiki and I were thinking about how to fight against this fakeness, so that it shows that we are doing something completely different. For that there must be abstractionism. We always included abstract and pop-art, two art movements rejected by the Soviet Union (Arman, personal communication, April 21, 2024).

To highlight the difference between the group and the established art institution they opposed, the group’s inaugural exhibition included punk rock and jazz music, which Grigoryan considered to be “modern philharmonic music” (Arman, personal communication, April 21, 2024).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, cultural and literary periodicals were filled with feature articles that introduced various Western rock bands. Arman Grigoryan was an avid rock music listener during his youth. He kept up with the international alternative music scene of that time by reading magazines and listening to the radio. As a result, many of his works include references to rock and metal music, featuring bands like AC/DC, Van Halen, and KISS.

77 թ. Detroit Rock City-ն շքմելու տպավորություն ա թողել ինձ վրա: Ալիս Կուպերի Billion Dollars Baby, Եր նույն ժամանակ եմ լսել, հորաքրոջս աղջկան էին նվիրել, անընդհատ գնում լսում էի, մի հաստ ցնցող տպավորություն էր թողել վրաս: /The ‘77 Detroit Rock City left a stunning impression on me. I heard Alice Cooper’s Billion Dollars Baby in the same year; it was given to my aunt’s daughter. I kept listening to it; it left a shocking impression on me (Arman, personal communication, April 21, 2024).

Since music is a more mass art, it naturally affects painting. To him, rock music had this mysterious quality with its sound and the ways in which it was performed, which undoubtedly left a lasting impression on postmodernist artists like himself (Arman, personal communication, April 21, 2024). The artist would take music magazines, cut out pictures of AC/DC to put them under an epidiascope, and draw them.

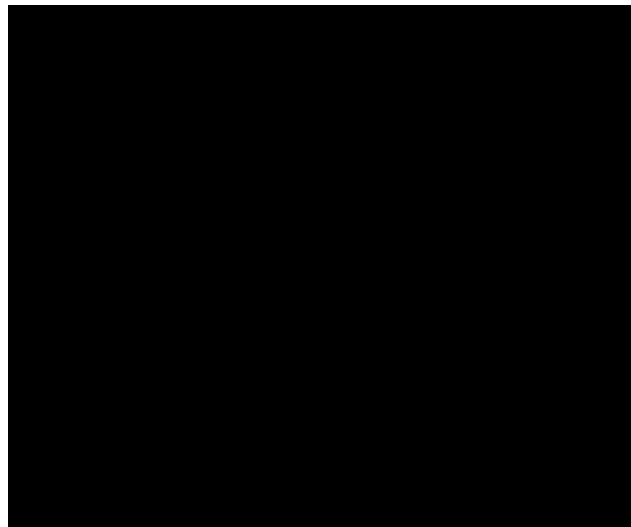


Figure 6. Arman Grigoryan. (1994). *Armenians Love Rembrandt*
[oil on canvas].

In 1977, in the last grade of school, Arman discovered the rock band Sex Pistols and the punk movement.

Առաջին անգամ Մեքս Փիսթոլզ լսեցի ռադիոյով: Հետո արդեն հայթայթում էի սովետական ամսագրեր՝ օրինակ Ровестник-ը, որտեղ շատ էին գրում պանկ մշակույթը քննադատող հոդվածներ... Մենք բառերը չէինք հասկանում: Հա, էդ մի քանի բառը գիտեի, որ ռադիոյով լսել էի 77 թվին, 17 տարեկան էի, էդքանը, էի «սպազա չկա» և այլն:/I heard Sex Pistols on the radio for the first time. Then I was looking for Soviet magazines, for example, Ровестник

(Rovestnik, meaning “a peer” in Russian), where many articles criticizing punk culture were written... We did not understand the words. Yes, I knew those few words I heard on the radio in 1977 when I was 17. “There is no future,” and so on. That’s all (Arman, personal communication, April 21, 2024).

Although few people in the Soviet republics knew English, the artist knew enough to understand John Lydon’s sneers of “No future” and “I don’t know what I want, but I know how to get it” (later Arman Grigoryan, too, created an artwork titled “No Future”).



Figure 7. Arman Grigoryan. (2020). *No Future* [oil on canvas].

Still, even in music where lyrics are a crucial part of a song, like in punk music, for Arman, the most important element remains the rhythm. Formalism was persecuted in the Soviet Union, which was why people gave importance to the song without understanding the lyrics (Arman, personal communication, April 21, 2024). He applied the idea of music’s rhythm being over its content and meaning to his art and contemporary art in general. For this reason, Arman found disco music fascinating, with its steady, thumping rhythm and repetitive lyrics that were usually no more than two or three words.

Բան չեն ասում, դիսկոն լրիվ դադա ա: Եվ անընդհատ ռիթմի վրա ա: / They do not say anything, disco is completely Dada. And it is constantly on the beat
(Arman, personal communication, April 21, 2024).

For Arman Grigoryan, abstraction was a crucial part of the 3rd Floor movement's art since it was the foundation and “language” of contemporary art. If people do not understand abstraction, then they do not understand contemporary art (Arman, personal communication, April 21, 2024). His ideas seem to echo Kandinsky's ideas about the importance of striving towards the abstract. Kandinsky also discussed at length the musicality of visual arts, particularly painting, which lends to the art form's abstractness. For many centuries, music has primarily been a form of art that is used to create a unique life of musical sounds. Rather than representing natural phenomena, it is usually an expression of the artist's spiritual life. Kandinsky (1946) stated that a painter who is not satisfied with simply representing natural phenomena, no matter how artistic it may be, becomes envious of the ease and simplicity with which music achieves the aim of creating an inner life. Thus, artists would turn to music and try to express it in their own medium. This is what has led to the modern focus in painting on concepts like rhythm, mathematical abstract construction, repetition of color, and ways to create movement with color (Kandinsky, 1946).

Before impressionism, art focused on depicting historical subjects and mythological scenes. It was, as Roger Fry described, about imitation rather than creation (Fry, 1912). This shift into the postmodern approach of rejecting formalism also arrived, albeit much later, in the Soviet Union and Soviet Armenia. Between the '70s-80s, the Soviet visual arts depended on text and meaning, which Arman Grigoryan refers to as the “word trap” when talking about the art of that period and how it gave great significance to literature and certain ideologies. Thus, the “3rd

Floor” strived to combat this constraint on creative expression with total dismantling and redefinition of state-defined criteria and ideology of what art should be. And abstraction turned out to be the solution to this problem, which, in turn, can be achieved by adapting the musical qualities of rhythm and composition to their own medium.

Limitations And Avenues For Future Research

Initially, I planned to interview several members of the “3rd Floor;” however, due to time constraints, I only managed to interview Arman Grigoryan. This study essentially relies on a single interview. Despite the fact that the interviewee in question is the founder of the movement and, thus, someone who can provide a lot of fascinating material to work with, there is still the need for more than one perspective on this subject. It is important to get the stories and analyses of the other artists as well to get the complete picture of such a subjective and complex phenomenon as music’s influence on the “3rd Floor’s” art. There is also the matter of most of the artists being out of reach, making it impossible to get everyone’s opinions and accounts.

Since this topic in the context of Armenian art has not been explored before, it was difficult and rather time-consuming to find information relevant to the research. While I did come across articles and books discussing similar cases in other contexts, some essential books that could have contributed significantly to my research were not available to me. As a result, further comprehensive research is necessary to fill in the gaps and provide a more thorough understanding of the topic.

Conclusion

The relationship between music and fine arts has deep connections that have not been fully explored from either a music theory or art studies perspective. There are no established

methodological principles that can regularize this phenomenon. Some philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel, have touched on this to some extent. Music is a mood expressed by sounds, and rhythm is a way to shape that mood. The urge to turn music into an image was not entirely accidental. The connection between music and fine arts is present both in the moments of creation and in the moments of perception. The composer creates music with the mood of the text, and the listener comes to the idea, the thought, and, therefore, the image.

The artist turns the content of the episode into a form, and the viewer turns the form into content. The influence and interaction between music and fine arts occur not only with content features but also with rhythm and composition. Certain genres and stylistic types in music correspond to other types of culture. For example, classicism found its manifestation in fine arts, sculpture, architecture, and music, while baroque and surrealism found their embodiment in fine arts, cinema, and music. There are also well-known personal and creative connections between artists such as the cubist painter and sculptor Picasso and the poet Apollinaire, the sculptor Rodin and the poet Rilke. Impressionism, which was initially formed in painting (Manet, Monet, Degas, etc.), also left its influence on music (Debussy, Ravel, etc.). As in painting, the impressionist music of the same period, too, strived “not to express a feeling or tell a story but rather to evoke a mood or atmosphere with the help of suggestive titles and occasional reminiscences of dance rhythms, sounds imitating nature, and characteristic bits of melody” (Leach, 2015, p. 110).

This research study attempts to emphasize the inextricable connection between the values that result from human factors, at least in the context of the period that interests and inspires me the most. The rhythm and composition that are highlighted in the comprehensive content of the “3rd Floor” movement still require deeper study, which I hope will be realized in the not-too-distant future. These artists continue to be faithful to their ideology and the principles of their

socio-economic and political struggle, spreading their vision under the conditions of the new formation. Most of these people continue to create in Armenia, and their work can be seen in Antikyan Gallery located in the center of Yerevan. Today, as living legends, they continue to inspire with their ideas and educate generations, instilling contemporary ideas of freedom.

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Appendix

Appendix A Consent Form

Չամաճայնութեան հավաստագիր

Չամաճայնագիր մասնակցելու դիպլոմային ծրագրի իրականացման Չայաստանի ամերիկյան համալսարանում: Սույնով հավաստում եմ, որ համաճայն եմ մասնակցել ՉԱՐ Չունանիտար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Չուրիկ Ադդարեանի (հեռ. 060 612769, էլ. հասցե hourig.attarian@aua.am) ղեկավարութեամբ Նարե Արևշատյանի կողմից դիպլոմային աշխատանքի նախագծի հարցազրույցին:

Նախագծի նպատակը

Տեղյակ եմ, որ այս նախագծի նպատակն է հասկանալ, թե ինչպիսի կապ կա Չայկական պոստմոդերն արվեստի և արևմտյան երաժշտության միջև: Նարե Արևշատյանի անցկացրած հարցազրույցի նպատակը հայ ժամանակակից արվեստագետների ստեղծագործությունների միջոցով արևմտյան նորարարական երաժշտական մտքի կապը բացահայտելն ու լուսաբանելն է ընդհանուր նախագծի համատեքստում:

Ընթացակարգը

Չասկանում եմ, որ հարցազրույցը անցկացվելու է մասնակցի տանը կամ մեկ այլ պատշաճ վայրում, և տեսագրվելու և/կամ ձայնագրվելու է: Որպես մասնակից ես պատմելու եմ թե ինչպես 80-ականներին ձևավորված երիտասարդ նկարիչների խումբը ազատության մասին իր սահմանումը ներկայացրեց և ուղի հարթեց հաջորդ սերունդների համար: Տեղյակ եմ, որ հարցազրույցները տևելու են մոտ մեկ ժամ, բայց այդուհանդերձ մասնակիցները կարող են որևէ պահի դադարեցնել հարցազրույցը, հրաժարվել պատասխանել որևէ հարցի, կամ որևէ պահի դուրս գալ նախագծից: Չասկանում եմ, որ եթե ցանկանամ հարցազրույցը երկու ժամից ավելի երկարաձգել, ինձ այդ հնարավորությունը կընձեռվի:

Ռիսկեր և օգուտներ

Տեղյակ եմ, որ որևէ պահի կարող եմ դադարեցնել հարցազրույցը, ընդմիջել կամ հրաժարվել շարունակել: Չաշվի առնելով, որ ուսանողների նախագծերը ներլսարանային ցուցադրման մաս են կազմելու (կայքով և/կամ հրատարակումներով), իմ պատմությունը և կարծիքները, իմ թույլտվությամբ, նույնպես ներկայացվելու է:

Մասնակցության պայմանները

Որպես մասնակից ինձ հասանելի կլինեն ձայնագրված և գրի առնված տվյալները՝ դրանք ստուգելու նպատակով: Նախագծի ամբողջ տևողության ընթացքում, ես հնարավորություն կունենամ վերանայել ու հաստատել անգլերեն թարգմանությունը, եթե նյութը հայերեն է:

- ___ Հասկանում եմ, որ որևէ պահի կարող եմ հետ վերցնել համաձայնությունս ու հրաժարվել մասնակցել նախագծին՝ առանց բացասական հետևանքների:
- ___ Հասկանում եմ, որ այս նախագծի տվյալները գիտաուսումնական նպատակներով կարող են հրատարակվել՝ տպագիր կամ թվային տարբերակներով:

Իմ հարցազրույցի **ինքնության բացահայտման և վերարտադրման առումով**

- ___ Համաձայն եմ, որ **ինքնությունս հայտնի լինի**: Հասկանում եմ, որ ինքնությունս կարող է բացահայտվել այս հարցազրույցի արդյունքում հրատարակված նյութերում:
- ___ Համաձայն եմ գիտաուսումնական նպատակներով այս հարցազրույցի նկարների ու ձայնագրությունների վերարտադրմանը որևէ հաղորդամիջոցով (վեբ կայքեր, և այլն):

ԿԱՄ

- ___ Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ մասնակցությունն այս ուսումնասիրությանը **գաղտնի է**: Ես հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինքնությունը չի բացահայտվի այլ ցանկացած հրապարակման կամ ներկայացման մեջ, որոնք կլինեն այս հարցազրույցի արդյունքը, կօգտագործվի ծածկանուն:
- ___ Համաձայն եմ, որ չնայած իմ հարցազրույցից որոշ նյութեր կարող են հրատարակվել, սակայն ոչ մի ձայնագրություն չի կարող վերարտադրվել:

Այն դեպքում, երբ լուսանկարներ, իրեր կամ փաստաթղթեր են նկարվել կամ սկանավորվել

- ___ Համաձայն եմ, որ ուսումնասիրություն անող ուսանողը պատճենահանի լուսանկարներ ու փաստաթղթեր նախագծի շրջանակներում օգտագործելու համար:

ՈՒՇԱԴԻՐ ԿԱՐԴԱՑԵԼ ԵՄ ՎԵՐԸ ՇԱՐԱԴԻՎԱԾԸ և ՀԱՍԿԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ԱՅՍ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆԱԳՐԻ ԿԵՏԵՐԸ: ՀՈԺԱՐԱԿԱՄ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑԵԼ ԱՅՍ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆԸ:

Մասնակից՝

Անուն ազգանուն _____

Ստորագրություն _____ Ամսաթիվ _____

Հարցազրույց վարող՝

Անուն ազգանուն Նարե Արևշատյան

Ստորագրություն _____ Ամսաթիվ _____

Եթե որպես դիպլոմային ծրագրի մասնակից որևէ պահի հարցեր կունենաք ձեր իրավունքների վերաբերյալ, կարող եք կապվել ՀԱՀ Հումանիտար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Հուրիկ Ադդարեանի հետ (հեռ. 060 612769, Էլ. հասցե՝ hourig.attarian@aqa.am):

Appendix B Interview Guideline

Արման Գրիգորյան

1. Ինչպե՞ս և ի՞նչ պայմաններում տեղի ունեցավ ձեր մուտքը ժամանակակից արվեստի դաշտ:
2. Ես գիտեմ, որ ձեր հայացքները արվեստի վերաբերյալ առաջին հերթին ձևավորվել են ձեր ընտանիքում: Ի՞նչն է ձեզ մղել ուսումնասիրել այնուհետև նաև ստեղծել արվեստ:
3. Ո՞ր նկարիչն է ձեզ ոգեշնչել երիտասարդ տարիքում:
4. Ո՞ր երաժշտական խումբն է ձեզ ոգեշնչել նույն ժամանակաշրջանում:

Պոստմոդեռն Արվեստ

5. Ի՞նչ է պոստմոդեռն արվեստը:
6. Ո՞ր թվականներն է ընդգրկում:
7. Որո՞նք են այդ շրջանի առանձնահատկությունները:

8. Ի՞նչ նախադրյալներ կային նոր արվեստի ձևավորման համար:

Արևմուտքն ու Սովետական Միությունը

9. Ինչպիսի՞ն էր իրավիճակն արևմուտքում:

10. Ինչպե՞ս էին ներթափանցում արվեստի նորարարությունները սովետական տարածք:

11. Ինչքանո՞վ էր երաժշտությունը արտացոլում քաղաքական և սոցիալ/հասարակական իրավիճակը:

Չայկական պոստմոդեռն արվեստ

12. Ի՞նչ էր կատարվում Չայաստանում նշված ժամանակաշրջանում:

13. Ինչի՞ն էին ընդդիմանում կամ ի՞նչ երևույթների էին անդրադառնում հայկական արվեստային շարժումները:

3-րդ Չարկ

14. 3-րդ Չարկ շարժման սկիզբը:

15. Արման Գրիգորյան արվեստագետը, որպես 3-րդ Չարկ շարժման հիմնադիր:

16. Ինչպե՞ս և ինչո՞ւ սկսեց կազմավորվել 3-րդ Չարկը:

17. Ովքե՞ր էին կորիզը:

18. Ի՞նչն էր նրանց կապում արևմտյան արժեքների հետ:

19. Ի՞նչ երաժշտություն էր նրանց ոգեշնչում: Ի՞նչ երաժշտություն էր ոգեշնչում Արման Գրիգորյանին:

Երաժշտությունը կերպարվեստում

20. Առհասարակ ի՞նչ դեր է խաղում երաժշտությունը կերպարվեստում:

21. Ովքե՞ր էին հայտնի նկարիչներից արտացոլում երաժշտության և կերպարվեստի կապը:

22. Ինչո՞ւ Beatles կամ Sex Pistols` ըստ Արման Գրիգորյանի:

22.1. Ինչպե՞ս փոխվեց Բիթլերի երաժշտությունը Յոկոյի և Լենոնի սիրավեպից սկսած:

23. Յոկոյի և Բիթլզի արվեստը փոխազդեցությունների վառ օրինակ է: Ինչո՞ւ է դա կարևոր:

24. Գիծը, գույնը, երաժշտությունը, ազատությունը... Ո՞րն է ժամանակակից արվեստի ձևակերպումը ըստ Արման Գրիգորյանի:

Վերջաբան

25. Ինչքանո՞վ է ձեր արվեստը կրում 3-րդ Զարկի ազդեցությունը:

26. Այսքան տարիներ անց ո՞նց էք վերաբերվում 3-րդ Զարկի թողած ժառանգությունը: