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Glendale Central Library to host to Armenian Genocide exhibits

Siranush Ghazanchyan · March 14, 2018, 10:21 1 minute read

The Downtown Central Library will host two simultaneous art exhibits that explore the concept of generational trauma associated with the Armenian Genocide, *Glendale News-Press* reports.

The main exhibit, “Nonlinear Histories,” is co-curated by Ara and Anahid Oshagan as well as Isin Önol and features the works of seven artists who examine their generational ties to the Armenian Genocide by reimagining inherited artifacts.

It will run from March 17 through May 6.

The collections are inspired by the theory of “postmemory” by literature scholar and author Marianne Hirsch, which refers primarily to how the children of Holocaust survivors cope with inherited trauma.

Artists featured include Jean Marie Casbarian, Eileen Claveloux, Didem Erk, Hrayr Eulmessekian, Silvina Der Meguerditchian, Hrair Sarkissian and Glendale resident Harry Vorperian.

Ara Oshagan said there’s been no “post-memory” exhibit on the Armenian genocide, adding that it’s one of the most important

concepts that tries to address ways in which second- and third-generation survivors deal with trauma.

“We sought out artists who work in this mode, dealing with grandparents and how their trauma is transported across this chasm. There is an attempt to reach across and connect with things that happen before [the] disruption [of genocide],” he said.

Artist Der Meguerditchian’s “Treasures” features 130 pages from a handwritten notebook on health remedies inherited from her great-grandmother, a genocide survivor. The notebook is one of the artifacts that she inherited from her uncle after she stopped him from unknowingly throwing it away.

“I hope the public will see what we are trying to see,” she said. “People need a space to reflect and see because lots of second and third generations were silenced by trauma, but our grand kids can now articulate a lot of things — it is necessary.”

The work from another artist, Vorperian, reimagines his grandmother’s ornate crochets into a lively garden of lilies constructed from various materials. The lilies function as public art, displayed outside the gallery and can be found throughout the library.

“[Her] colorful, large-scale wall tapestries adorned our walls, while her throw pillows, tablecloths and bed covers were spread all over the house,” Vorperian said in a statement. “It felt like living in some magical flower field somewhere in the Netherlands — or, indeed, Marash, the perennial source of my grandmother’s leaps of imagination.”

The second exhibit, “Prosperity, Loss, and Survival: A Photographic Journey from the Dildilian Family Archive,” opens March 24 and is co-curated by Armen Marsoobian. It is an organized family archive of memoirs and photographs, which were created before and survived through the Armenian Genocide.

“Armenians trace our roots back to that space [before the genocide] and having this extensive breadth of a collection is really a moment where we can stop and reflect,” Ara Oshagan said.