



Members of the Renovation Committee with artist, Arev Petrosyan and art installation expert, James Leacock.

## Unveiling of New Lobby Artwork and Rug

**By Sara Sarkisian Bell**  
*Renovation Committee member*

Late this summer, we were blessed to witness the long-awaited unveiling of the beautiful new lobby rug as well as the new wall mural. During the planning of the renovation, the Renovation Committee worked with the architectural design team to establish the desired concept for the rug and the wall. Once the concept was set, the Committee was fortunate to work with the Hagopian team on the design of the rug and also with artist Arev Petrosyan on the wall.

The Hagopian family's generosity brought to fruition the magnificent inset lobby rug. Their amazing knowledge

and experience with Armenian rugs allowed the rug design to be developed, and this was quite a challenge due to the immense scale of the installation. The design of the rug is based on the Khach-Khoran Rug (1909) from the Lori region currently on display in the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum. The Renovation Committee worked closely with the Hagopians to finalize the new rug's design and select the final colors to complement the newly renovated space. Very, Rev. Fr. Aren Jebejian, Dn. Rubik Mailian, and the Hagopians participated in the blessing of the rug at the end of August.

**MURAL**

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The other new addition to our lobby is the incredible new mural called “Deep Mystery” created in Yerevan by artist Arev Petrosyan. It took some time for the Committee to find Arev, but they knew when they saw examples of her work that she was the perfect choice to create the new lobby feature wall. The Committee worked closely over Zoom with Arev over the last year to finalize on the design concept and all the details. Arev worked tirelessly through the spring months of this year to create the mural, which consists of seven plexiglass panels creating a total composition that is over twenty-seven feet long and seven feet tall. Arev was deeply inspired by her visit to Detroit in the summer of 2022 when Dn. Rubik Mailian sang sacred music for her in our sanctuary. The artwork speaks to the Armenian spirit and specifically to our community, with words from a 17th century illuminated manuscript in our Museum regarding St. John the Baptist and inspirational imagery from our altar

painting. The tree imagery reflects the growing generations of our Armenian community along with the symbol of Mount Ararat. The mural was unveiled in September while Dn. Rubik sang the same *sharagans* he sang for Arev last year. The event was capped off by a show of Arev’s work and her presentation regarding the creation of “Deep Mystery” and her history as an artist.

The Renovation Committee is also deeply grateful to James Leacock and his installation team. Their expert skills allowed them to easily meet the challenge of installing such a monumental work in museum-quality fashion. Our community is also immensely grateful for the generosity of Michael and Linda Karibian, whose generosity on behalf of George and Anne Latzkian allowed the work of creating this art to be undertaken. These two incredible works, the mural and the rug, will undoubtedly be enjoyed and appreciated by many generations to come.



The mural is blessed!



Installation of the “Deep Mystery” mural.



Donors Michael and Linda Karibian flank artist Arev Petrosyan



## "DEEP MYSTERY" – Comments by the artist

### Little bit about Story

Exactly one year ago, I was invited to this church by Father Aren. Here I got to know a group of wonderful people, whose love and dedication to serve the church and the Armenian community, amazed me. I stood in front of the white wall, where there was supposed to be the picture, painting, the story of which first rang in my ears, yes, I'm not wrong... from the beginning it rang, rang from the sounds of ARAVOT LUSO, by Mr. Rubik... who was specially invited that early morning to sing "Sharakans" in this magic church... later over many mornings, in distant Armenia, in my studio, the sounds of Sharakan "Aravor Luso" will provide me as inner light, perhaps light that guided me here.

### Description of the painting

And so, today, here, I present to you the painting that, in my opinion, fully represents our identity, our faith, our culture, connection with nature, the exceptional and unique power of the Armenian alphabet and letters as an important element of national identity and strong power of our unity.

It is presented with modern technique, on plexiglass, with a variety of materials. A multi-layered image, (by the way, the number of layers is 21) done with mixed techniques, in some places with collage solutions. Light, bright, non-shouting colors, graphic approaches, silver and gold leaves give the impression of spontaneous light. The reflection seems to make us participants of the moment and our presence will prove the importance of being as an integral part of the present time.

At first glance the transparency in some places gives feeling of the lightness, weightlessness. But I would like to mention that it's quite heavy; seems unbelievable but it's about 210 kg, 462 pounds by the way. Looking back, I'm wondering, if it's really done by me? These huge and heavy wall paintings, were really created by this small Arev? Funny and unbelievable but yes, it's me ...

But this is all about material and performance. and profoundly, this painting is a set of collective mysteries that tell about our journey, national memory, power of faith, divine power, unity and eternal ontology - history.

In the upper part of the central point of the painting you will see the symbol of the church. From the various corners of the whole painting a stream of irregular, free-flying birds, concentrating to the center, as if by magnetic force brings them as a group, on the image of the Holy Spirit, from which the divine

light radiates. I can compare this image with now today, those who present today, here, gathered in this bright hearth.

I think it is important to talk about the tree - it is not just a tree that I used for beauty. It stands as a symbol of the Armenian man, as a symbol of the family, the continuation of the gene. Every branch gives birth to a new branch, leading us to infinity, showing past, present and future. The tree also has visible divisions, generations that make up our past, present and future. It begins and grows by being nourished by the culture, in the inner part of the tree, I used a fragment of a carpet as a soil base. a symbol of culture. I believe, and it is a fact that the type of Armenian man is exactly that, creative.

In the left corner is the Armenian script, taken from 1683 "SURB Stepanos" MEGRY prayer book kept in St. John Church museum - it serves here not only as prayer, or for reading but it is engraved as the ARMENIAN letter, which has accompanied us in all times, giving us exceptional language thinking and identity awareness.

In the central part, the Bible mountain, Masis, Ararat stands majestically, silent and powerful, unshakable. It seems to tell about the Armenian man, his history of centuries, about the creation of the world. With its inexplicable beauty and majesty, it gives us hope for success and victories. He seems to know the story of every family, the history of Armenian life. And I am probably one of the lucky ones who see his presence every morning from the balcony of my house.

The complete picture is collected from the right and left sides, with patterns taken from carpets. It symbolizes our cultural past, traditions, our creative national profile. I used the famous "Sun Carpet" (XIX Artsakh, Gathering, "Diagonal Shield Carpet," XIX Syunik) strengthening the connection between Artsakh and Armenia as one national value.

And finally, summarizing this work I have done for months, I want to present it with deep conviction that it should be presented to the generations, passing on to them our national values, centuries-old traditions, our consciousness and faith.

One bright day, my great-grandchildren, will stand in front of this image. I believe that "Aravor Luso" will be heard in their hearts at that very moment.

I also believe that God is love, and we should make every effort to preserve that love in ourselves. A part of God, without which life is nothing.

With love,  
Arev Petrosyan

*Edited for print publication*

# “Deep Mystery” Mural:

*Remarks by Dr. Ara Belian*

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, we gather to celebrate a remarkable artist, Arev Petrosyan. Her art beautifully connects, but is definitely not defined or limited, to her Armenian heritage. Her work showcases an unwavering dedication to creativity.

Coming from a family deeply rooted in the arts, Arev’s artistic journey began early in life. Her father, the esteemed sculptor Benik Petrosyan, and her mother, Alice Adamyan, a virtuoso violinist and educator, nurtured her profound appreciation for the arts.

Upon graduating from the College of Fine Arts in Yerevan, Arev embarked on a career designing television studios and sets, quickly establishing herself as the most prominent studio designer in Armenia. However, in 2005, she experienced a transformative artistic breakthrough, venturing into vibrant and dynamic mixed-media art - exclusively on plexiglass. This unconventional choice soon became her signature.

This breakthrough gained international recognition, leading her to participate in exhibitions and art events worldwide.

In 2015, Arev received an ‘Honored Artist of Armenia’ Medal from the President of Armenia. That same year, she opened the Arev Art Gallery in the heart of Yerevan, housing her work alongside sculptures by her brother, Areg Petrosyan, and pieces by her late father, Benik Petrosyan. The gallery became a hub for cultural events, from book presentations to live classical music and wine nights.

In 2014, Arev Petrosyan gifted a monumental artwork to the Holy Trinity Church in Fresno, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the first Armenian church in the United States. This piece celebrated a century of faith and heritage while deepening her ties to the Armenian community in America. Interestingly, this artwork was serendipitously discovered by one of our own parishioners, prompting our church to invite Arev to create the mural that now graces our lobby.

Just last night, I had the privilege of a private unveiling of our church’s mural. I learned that it was inspired by the deep, meditative voice of Deacon Rubik Mailian, who sang in the sanctuary during Arev’s visit to our church. His voice resonates throughout the mural!

The work also showcases her unique style, featuring gold and silver leaf in her iconic plexiglass medium. I invite you all to attend the official unveiling and blessing of the mural tomorrow after the Divine Liturgy.

Arev’s work is deeply intriguing, exceptionally unique, and cutting-edge. Her art delves into the viewer’s spiritual journey, and will continue to leave an everlasting mark in the art world.