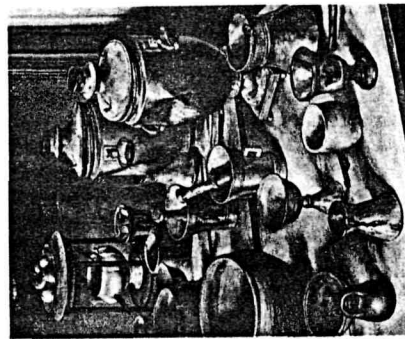


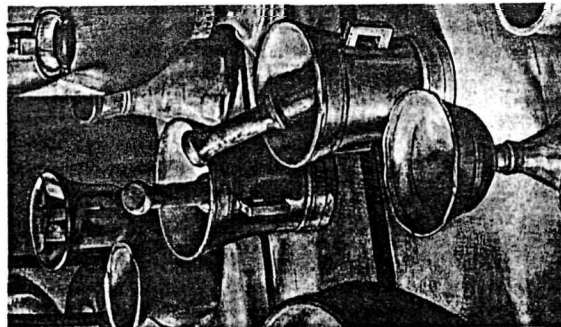
RUDOLF KHACHATRYAN. DRAWINGS

Compiled by Mikhail Lazarev
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THE ART BOOK IS HERE INTRODUCED BY TAIR SALAKHOV,
PEOPLE'S ARTIST OF THE USSR AND THE USSR STATE PRIZE WINNER



Rudolf Khachatryan:
Still life with mirror. Gesso, sepia
Still life with mirror. Detail
Caravan-Bashi. Gesso, sepia



The work of Rudolf Khachatryan is an important phenomenon in Soviet multinational art. The traditional and the contemporary are fused in his art in an extremely original and very convincing manner. He combined his love of Renaissance drawing, Armenian frescoes and architecture, and stone engravings with an interest in today's documentary accuracy and modern principles of drawing.

During his creative life Khachatryan changed styles more than once, but his art shows no sudden twists or sharp turns because each new phase was always predetermined by the preceding period. The final purpose of his art always played the decisive role. Technique and form in themselves never interested him, they are to him only a means of expressing a specific idea. However, Khachatryan is not only interested in the actual content of an idea or the object to be depicted, whether a still-life or a portrait (he has a particular liking for the latter), but is also interested in its links with many phenomena of the world in which we live. And it is this that gives his best works true philosophical meaning.

Khachatryan's mastery of the art of drawing is well known. In this should be mentioned that he manages to make his portraits strikingly individualised and expressive, using pencil or sepia, the simplest of classical methods. Of great interest is a new graphic technique discovered by Khachatryan, the technique of drawing on a gesso background,



Khachatryan's works can be defined as "panel" frescoes, however, he builds them along compositional principles and on an attitude towards the object depicted which differ greatly from the principles characteristic of frescoes. This technique of drawing on a gesso background has enabled Khachatryan to combine the austere expressiveness and laconicism of classical drawing with the greater possibilities of painting. His drawings on a gesso background could be called "monochromatic paintings", but only metaphorically, because their nature is completely different.

Khachatryan's portraits executed on a gesso background have a festive quality. He creates images of contemporaries of ours; usually cultured people of great intellectual power and outstanding abilities. The physical properties of a gesso ground enable him to execute exceptionally fine "filigree" drawings, and to pack each square inch of the texture full of content. But, of course, Khachatryan does not regard this technical finesse as an end in itself, but as an indispensable part of the artist's craft, which gives life to a work filled with a whole gamut of complex human emotions. Khachatryan's drawings never reveal themselves to the viewer at once, their message comes across gradually, only after intent and careful study.

I myself know Khachatryan as an artist who has an intimate knowledge of people. He loves them and has great faith in their future.