



1985

RUDOLPH KHATCHATRIAN

Drawings



St. JOHN'S RECREATION CENTER

22001, Northwestern Highway, Southfield, Michigan 48075

October 17 - 20, 1985

HERITAGE GALLERY

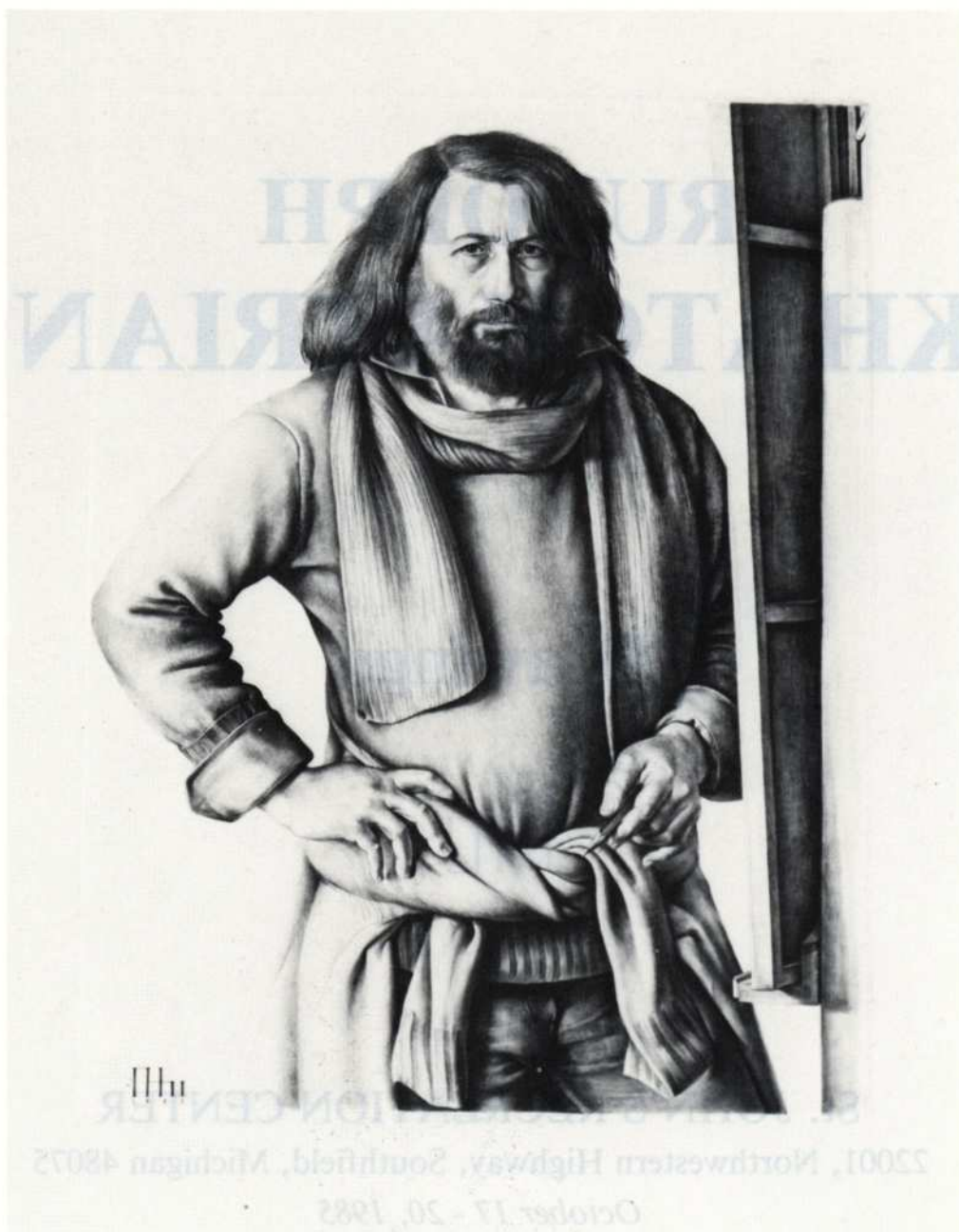
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EDITIONS
EREBOUNI

1985



"Self-portrait", 1981

Levkas Sepia

130x100 cm.

"There are good swimmers who cannot dive. There are others who brave the depths, yet fail to surface again. Finally, there is a third type, who goes deep down and then comes easily back, all the richer for the experience. Pushkin and Mozart were among those who had conquered the depths and yet retained the lightness of touch. Theirs is the kind of mastery I dream to attain one day."

R. Khatchatrian

Watching Rudolph Khatchatrian work at one of his portraits is a memorable experience. In the middle of a clear white space, without any prior preparation, he starts drawing two eyes. Only when he has completed the eyes does he move on to another detail of the portrait and works on it with the same involvement. One wonders whether the artist will manage to make a comprehensive whole out of these different segments, and one is always surprised to find that not only is the composition complete, but that no alternatives, additions or improvements are needed. The resulting work is so pure and harmonious that it seems to have been created in one instance and with one magic stroke.

Khatchatrian's portraits do not represent frozen moments in time; that photographic quality does not interest him. He captures the whole essence of the person in eternity, or eternity in the person. To achieve that, the artist establishes a unique rapport with the model and demands from the latter the same kind of devotion to the work as he himself has. The result being that the model suddenly finds himself or herself in the midst of the unfolding miracle and, what's more, realizes that his/her participation was a vital part of the creative process.

Khatchatrian drew his first Self-Portrait at the age of thirteen and since then the genre has assumed a singular importance for the artist: "Whenever I have exhausted my energy and the creative block imposes itself, I turn to a new Self-Portrait. This unique process of self re-evaluation brings with it the desire to work and the urge to create. . ." It was during such a period that he started experimenting on a panel which was coated with gesso. The result was a Self-Portrait, one that was excruciatingly painful for the artist because of the gradual weakening of his eyesight. The viewer, however, never feels the sweat or the pain that went into the work.

The artist's strength lies in the fact that he does not argue with nature, his teacher, does not try to change or improve it, but blends with it, penetrates into its depth and then commits his understanding on paper. And whether he uses a lead pencil, sepia, or sanguine, it is not the one color that we see but a whole range of shades.

Rudolph Khatchatrian's work brings a breath of fresh air which arouses you and reminds you of human values. He has adopted the sincerity of classical painters but has never tried to copy them, because he believes that the truth, once created, lives its own life and cannot be re-created. Khatchatrian's work is endowed with that elusive quality which comes from a conviction where the artist has nothing to prove to anyone and has only one desire - to be true only to himself.

Henry Igitian

Rudolph Khatchatrian can rightfully be called the Knight of the Drawing Arts. He neither sculpts nor paints, but his drawings can be said to have absorbed the three dimensions of sculpture and the color of painting.

Rudolph never studied art formally. About 30 years ago, on seeing his drawings, a well-known Armenian artist, Yrrvant Kochar, went on record as saying "I see Leonardo's spirit resurrecting". A casual meeting grew into a friendship. Kochar introduced the young man to the geniuses of Leonardo daVinci, Rembrandt, and Goya, making Khatchatrian a life-long follower of the three.

When a standard question, "What are your aspirations in life and art?" is asked he would rather unexpectedly reply, "I wish I could learn to love life better". Perhaps, it is this love for life, and his desire to impress the world he loves so much rather than his own conception of it, that have prompted Khatchatrian to return to realism after more than a decade of wandering from one fashionable "ism" to another.

Having brought the art of drawing on a par with that of painting and sculpture, Khatchatrian's discovery gave rise to a series of unusually expressive portraits of our contemporaries.

Khatchatrian's characteristics are seldom straight-forward or conventional, but in some cases they depart from our usual norms of perception in all but a mesmerizing manner. Thus, for instance, a portrait entitled "Caravan-Bashi" reveals those lower depths of human psyche which the artist himself considers taboo.

Svetlana Galayeva

Rudolph Khatchatryan was driven by his maturity and mastery of art to explore new media, through which he would be able to express more powerfully his complex perception of the world.

He had realized that his perception and the scope of his artistic thinking were being restricted by the limitations of pencil drawing, thereby leading him to the inevitable collapse of the traditional concept of drawing.

Khatchatryan discovered his relief in the use of *levkas* (gesso on wood panel), a medium which opened unexpected possibilities in the realm of graphic arts.

This medium was well known for many centuries to the old iconographers. But Khatchatryan did not use *levkas* for oil painting, but for drawing.

As he drew on *levkas* he developed an unprecedented mastery of drawing in this medium. This mastery helped him to move forward in attaining new artistic values.

It is hard to believe that those complex, luminous and colorful pieces are created by monochromatic sepia.

It seems as though the artist, through each pencil stroke, releases the mysterious life retained in the depths of the wood.

In more recent years, the artist has amazed the viewer by the simplicity of his classical forms and unbelievably austere lines.

In art as in life, "simple" means the most difficult, the most exceptional. Especially in art "simple" means a new level attained by the artist in the traditional art forms, cultivated by the classical masters to the point of rendering it very ordinary, but breathed in a new life by the artist in a modern setting.

The reason this art form is considered "simple" is that it is commonly known to the art world, and the reason it is difficult is that it requires a new level of perfection over the form which was regarded as perfection by the old masters.

Khatchatryan does not destroy the old forms of drawing. He departs from the common form considered as complete by the Renaissance masters, and recreates it under new conditions and in a new quality.

Kira Mikhailovskaya

Rudolph Khatchatryan is a graphic artist par excellence. For him drawing is not just another means of artistic expression; it has its independent function and unique substance.

Viewing his portraits (his preferred genre) one is reminded of the work of the Renaissance Masters. Therein one finds the same perfection of classical drawings blended, of course, with contemporary form and perception. Khatchatryan is firmly rooted in artistic tradition and even his most recent technique is borrowed from the Renaissance Masters. His portraits are executed with graphite on a gesso background. The uneven surface of the gesso differs from the neutral background that paper offers; its soft and velvety surface lures the viewer to the depths of the picture.

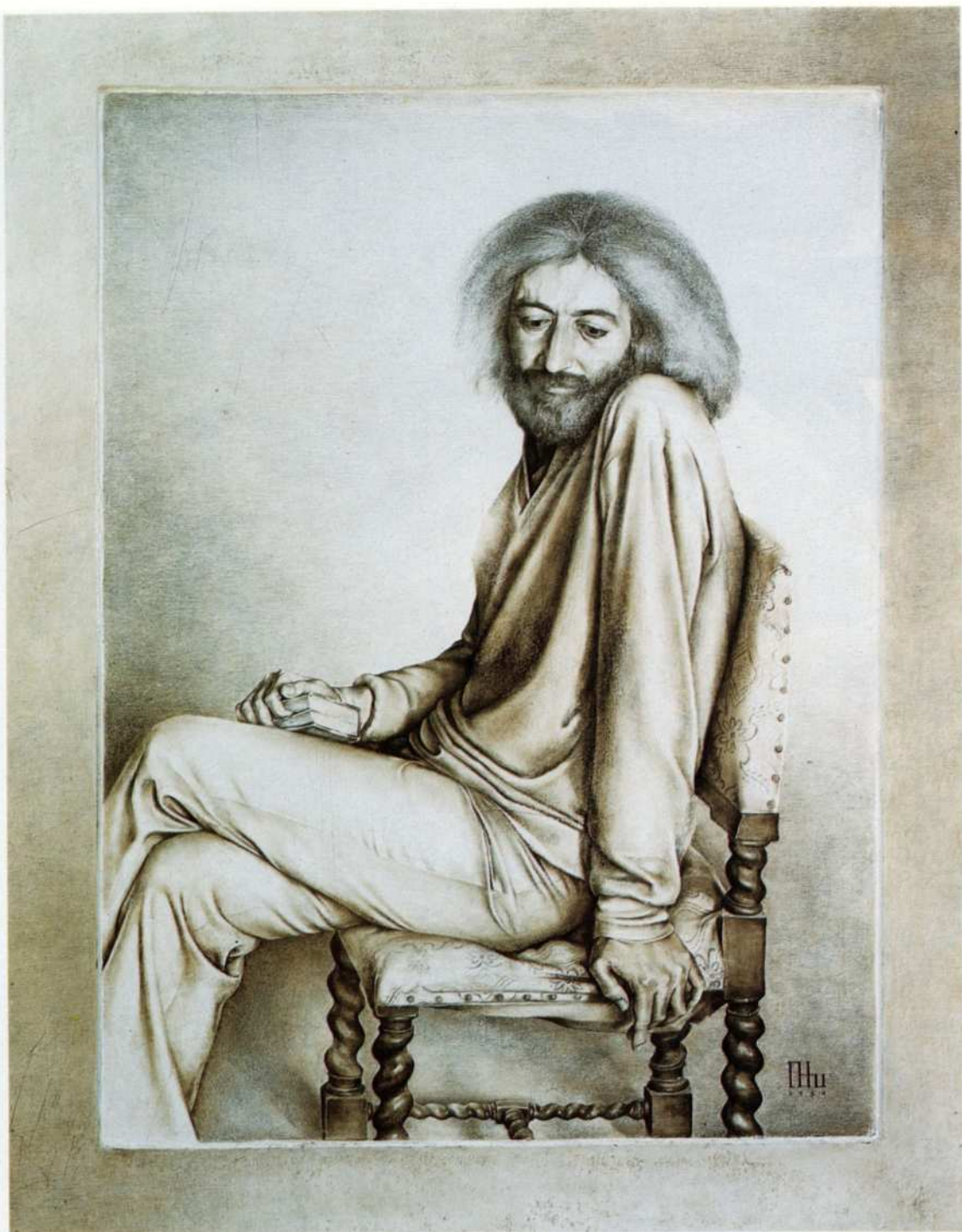
It is Rudolph Khatchatryan's genius as a portrait artist that makes his models appear timeless. Without prior knowledge of the models we find it impossible to decide on a place or time reference. The viewer starts making associations with people of different times and different places.

There is a rich spiritual life to his faces. The superficial and the transitory have no place here. The artist goes beyond what the eye sees and brings out the beauty even in the most ordinary faces. And whether he works in sepia or sanguine, he manages to express the most subtle of emotions and essence by the use of that single color.

Khatchatryan's portraits do not have the hesitant uncertainty of sentimental romanticism. His line is pure, delicate and controlled, and the resulting portraits are complete and organic.

Besides portraits, Khatchatryan has done compositions and Still Lifes. He is a master of the pure line, of immaculate taste and perfection. The beauty which he creates is most arresting — again and again.

Marina Samsonian



"A Man in an Arm-chair", 1980

Levkas/Sepia

130 x 100 cm.





"Niche", 1981

Levkas/Sepia 130 x 100 cm.



"Liana From Rome", 1981

Levkas/Sepia

100 x 80 cm.





"Great Still Life", 1982

Levkas/Sepia 100 x 80 cm.



"Moko", 1982

Levkas/Sepia

130 x 100 cm.





"A Girl with Garland", 1985

Levkas/Sepia

60 x 80 cm.



"Monologue", 1984

Levkas/Sepia 100 x 80 cm.



"Muse", 1984

Levkas/Sepia

100 x 80 cm.





"Woman's Side-view", 1981

Levkas/Sepia

60 x 80 cm.



"Roses", 1985

Levkas/Sepia

65 x 55 cm.



"Flowers with Pears", 1985

Levkas/Sepia

65 x 55 cm.



"Still-life with Fish", 1985

Levkas/Sepia 65 x 55 cm.



"Dry Flowers"

Levkas/Sepia 100 x 80 cm.



"Still-life with Pears", 1985

Levkas/Sepia

80 x 60 cm.



“Armenian Still-Life”, 1984

Levkas/Sepia 80 x 60 cm.



"A Series. Old Yerevan - Gates", 1983

Levkas/Sepia 80 x 70 cm.



"A Series. Old Yerevan - Court", 1983

Levkas/Sepia 80 x 70 cm.



"A Girl in Spanish Dress", 1985

Levkas/Sepia 65 x 55 cm.



"Portrait of Painter Inna Olevskaia", 1983

Levkas/Sepia

115 x 95 cm.



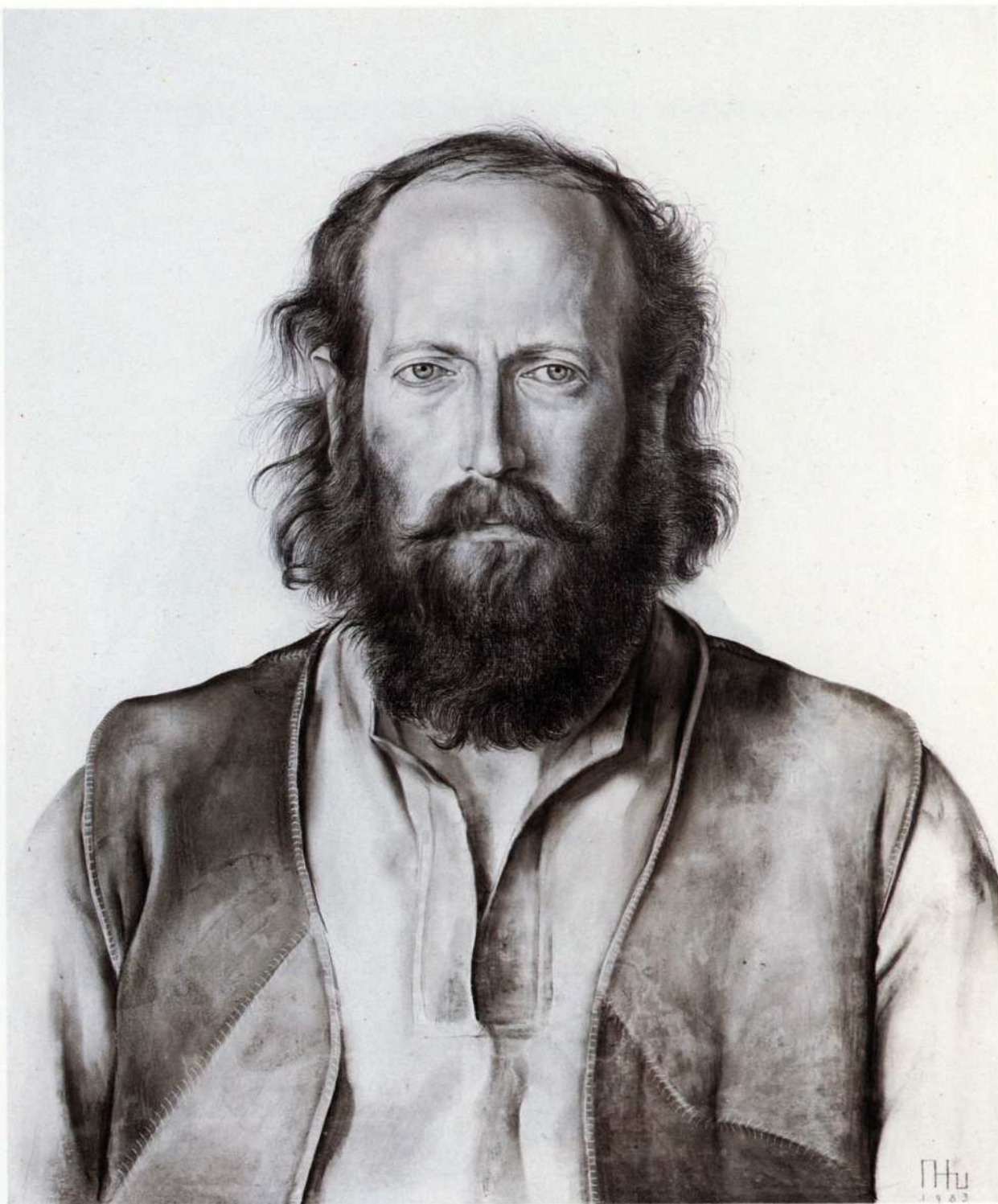
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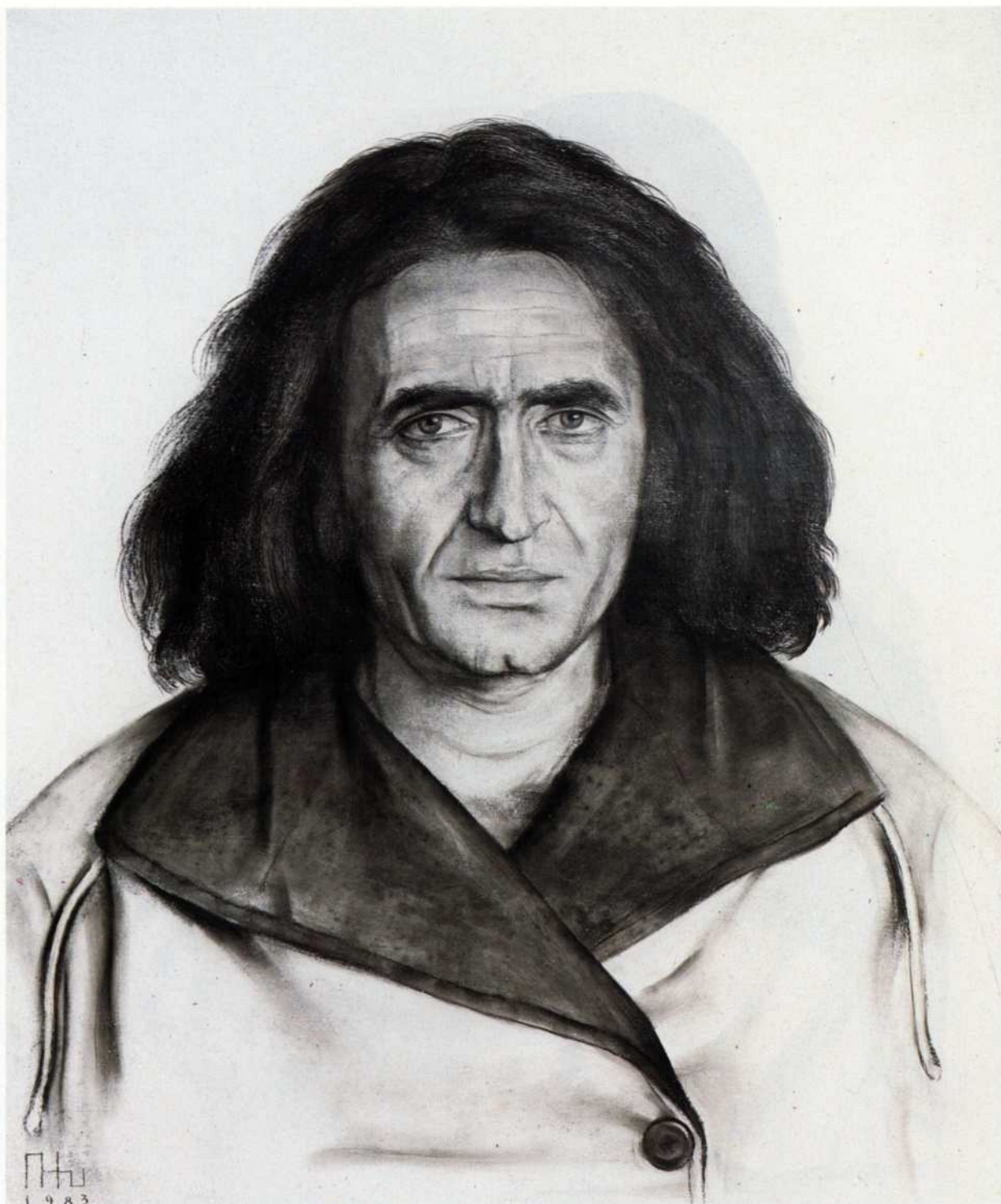
"Portrait of Henry Igitian", 1982

Levkas/Sepia

100 x 80 cm.



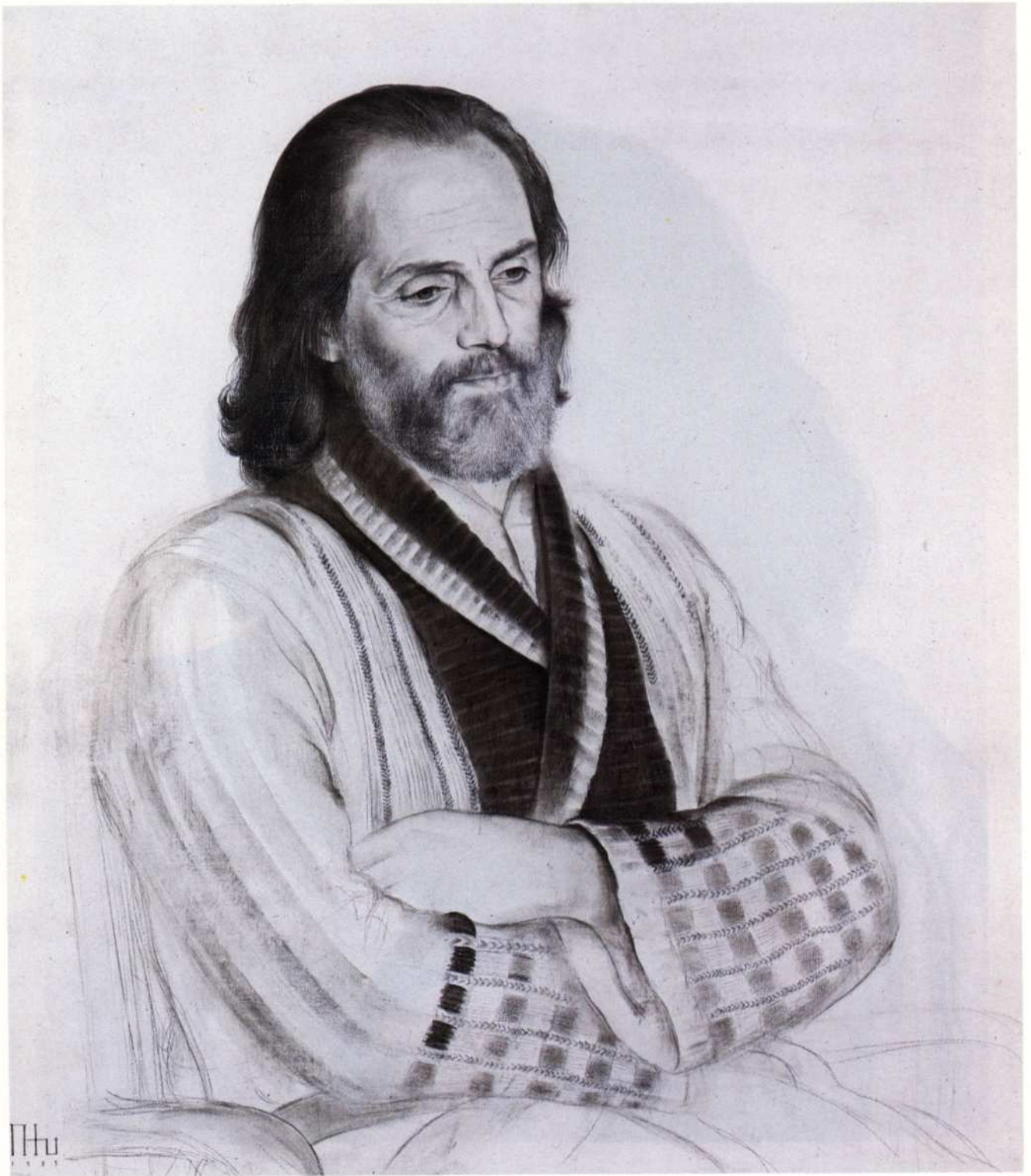
"Portrait of the Ethnographer Levon Abrahamian", 1983 Levkas/Sepia 60 x 50 cm.



"Portrait of the Artist V. Msrian", 1983

Levkas/Sepia

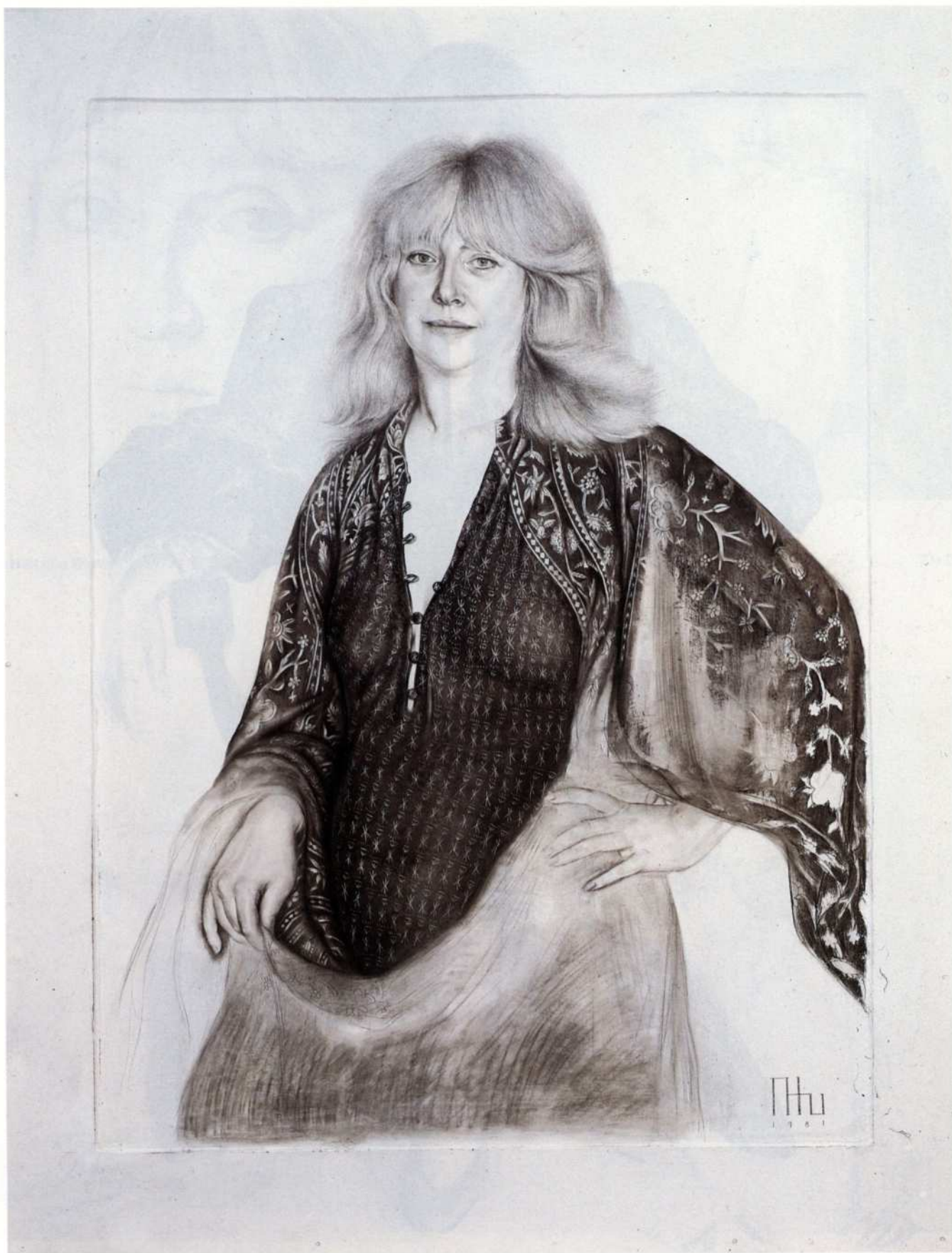
60 x 50 cm.



"Portrait of the Balletmaster Maxim Martirosian", 1983

Levkas/Sepia

80 x 70 cm.



"Portrait of Wife", 1981

Levkas/Sepia 130 x 100 cm.



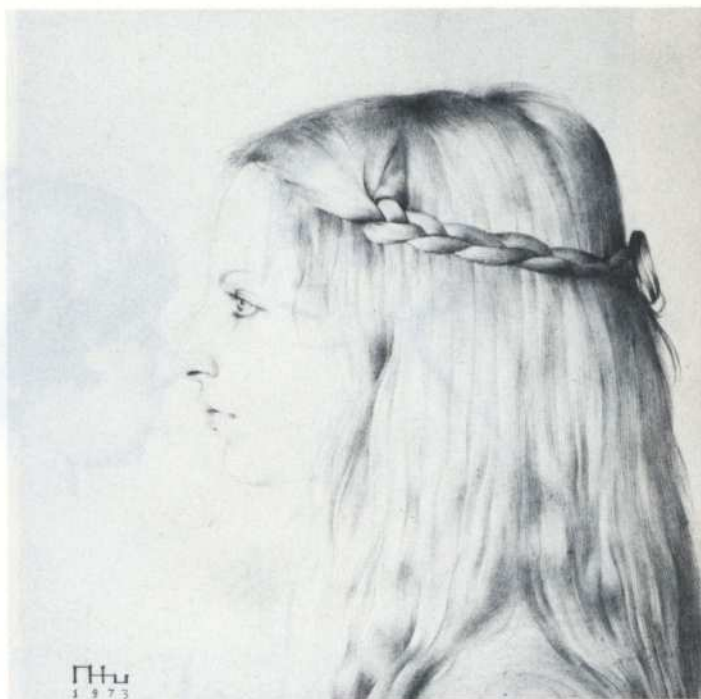
"A Woman in an Arm-chair", 1984

Levkas/Sepia

65 x 55 cm.



"Portrait of a Woman" - 1973 paper/indian ink 15x14 cm.



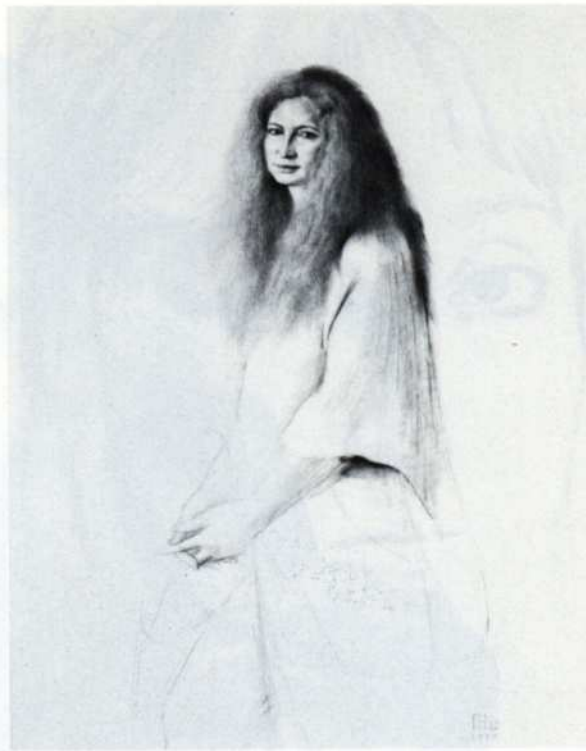
"Side View" - 1973 paper/pencil 23x23 cm.



"Youth" - 1974 paper/pencil 34x29 cm.



"Portrait of a Scientist" - 1976 paper/pencil 40x34 cm.



"Anna" - 1977

paper/pencil

13x15 cm.

"Red-haired Woman" - 1980

cardboard/sanguine 68x90 cm.



"A Girl in a Beret" - 1978

cardboard/sanguine

55x45 cm.

"Lusine" - 1980

cardboard/sepia

89x54 cm.





Rudolph Khatchatrian was born in 1937 in Yerevan, Armenia. He started drawing when he was a child and since he was 18 years old, he has participated in many art exhibits in Armenia.

His life took a complete change at the age of 15 when he made the acquaintance of the famous sculptor and painter, Yervant Kochar. Kochar left lasting influence on the artist's development and philosophy. Kochar introduced the young artist to the world of Leonardo daVinci and Albrecht Durer.

Khatchatrian's works have been exhibited in many countries and have won several international awards. He has exhibited his works in Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Italy, France and England.

He was elected a member of the Artists Union of the U.S.S.R. in 1960.

In 1969 he won first prize for his Gomidas painting on the centennial commemoration of the great composer.

Since 1971 he has made Moscow his home, where he works and exhibits.

In 1978 he had his first one-man show in Moscow.

In 1979 he had one-man show in Leningrad and Odessa.

In 1980 and 1983, he had a one-man show in Yerevan, Armenia.

In 1984 he had his second one-man show in Moscow.

In 1984 he was awarded the title of Peoples Artists of the Armenia S.S.R.

