



PRESS RELEASE

Նորարար Փորձառական Արվեստի Կենտրոն The Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art

Հայաստանում եւ ԱՄՆ-ում գրանցված տրազերծ կազմակերպություն / A Non-Profit Corporation Registered in the USA and Armenia

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SONIA BALASSANIAN Guest Artist at 3 Biennales in 2015:

Pavilion of Iran at 56th Biennale of Venice,
Invited Artist at 14th Istanbul Biennial,
Invited Artist at Pavilion of Italy
at 4th Biennale of Valparaíso, Chile,

Yerevan, April 7, 2015—Sonia Balassanian, Founder and Senior Artistic Director of the Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art (“NPAK” in Armenian acronym) this year takes part at 3 major international art biennials.

January 31 through March 15, 2015, Chile

“Contrasts And Utopia” IV Edition of the Bienal del Fin del Mundo, section of Valparaíso – Chile.

Sonia Balassanian has been selected by Lu.C.C.A. Museum of Italy, to take part at “**Identity Is Diversity**”, a special group video art project presented by Italy, as **Honorary Guest Country** of Biennale of Chile.

The Italian project included 12 artists all of whom, except Sonia Balassanian, were from Italy.

Sonia Balassanian’s video was “*Untitled*”, 1999, 04:40 min. (loop). Artist’s statement about this work follows:

“Untitled”

Video Art
04:40 min. (loop)
1999



A number of women make exclamations, utter words and seemingly unrelated sentences about “the other”...

The other is always another territory. What do we talk about when we talk about the other? An association, a relation, a dependence is often the sum of so many squandered sentences, conversations that cannot find their compass, that go nowhere because long ago the other ceased to hear.

What, then, do these women say when they mention the other? Orphaned exclamations looking for a landing somewhere, where the other has still not ceased to listen.

May 9 through November 1, 2015, Venice, Italy
Pavilion of Iran at 56th International Art Biennale of Venice.

Sonia Balassanian is not a stranger to Venice Biennale. She has initiated and led first ever official participation of Armenia at Venice Biennale in 1995, and has continued the effort until 2009, for 16 years, 8 consecutive Biennales.

This year, Sonia Balassanian, being also an Iranian-Armenian, has been invited to participate at the Pavilion of Iran in Venice Biennale, as part of a major and unprecedented group exhibition of contemporary Iranian art by 30 most prominent Iranian contemporary artists.

Sonia Balassanian is participating by a video art, where three individuals recite a short Armenian poem in Persian, English and Armenian.

Following is the artist's statement about this work.

“1555”

Video Art
04:47 min. (loop)
2009



A short poem by Zorayr Mirzaian is recited in three languages: Farsi, English and original Armenian. The work is an experiment in dynamics between sounds of words in poetry and moving images. The same text is read continuously in three languages. Eventually words mix with each other and turn into a harmony, perhaps a ruckus.

It is an endlessly stretched “chain” of sounds (words), which leaves the impression of a continuing state of tragedy, in a time without apparent significance, of people who are not known... A seemingly unending global condition of suffering and endurance in the face of death, destruction and hardship... A political statement? May be. A social commentary? A state of mind...?

September 5 – November 1, 2015, Istanbul, Turkey
14th Edition of Istanbul Biennial

Sonia Balassanian has been invited to take part at the 14th Biennial Art Exhibition of Istanbul, drafted by renowned writer and art curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. In 2012 Ms. Christov-Bakargiev was the Artistic Director of “dOcumenta-13”. In October 2012 ArtReview magazine named her number one in their annual Power 100 list of the most influential figures in contemporary art.

Sonia Balassanian participates at this year's Istanbul Biennial by a major installation entitled “*Silenced Stones*”. The installation is composed of 12, roughly sculpted heads carved of Tufa stone from quarries of Ani. The work has been specially commissioned for the Biennial of Istanbul. It is being produced in Yerevan and will weigh about 5 tons.

Following is the artist's statement and two images of the work:

“Silenced Stones”

An installation by Sonia Balassanian



Twelve monolithic heads of Tufa stone sit in silent vigil in Istanbul, severed and nameless.

Long ago I wrote in one of my poems “The entire universe has turned into a haphazard pile”.
I now strive to give this ‘pile’ a measure of redress and a final resting place.

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