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REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

YEREVAN STATE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS



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№ 290 28.12.2009

Ms. IRINA BOKOVA  
UNESCO Director General  
7, place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris 07 SP  
France

Dear Irina BOKOVA,

As an Educational Institution Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts (YSAFA) outlines the importance of including khachkar as a phenomenon of International value in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Our aim is to promote worldwide recognition of khachkar, to develop an attitude towards the stone as a work of art, as an expression of worship, religious-ritual traditions and that of Armenian identity. Having the problem of its transmission to the next generations we want the UNESCO cultural department to support and stimulate with its vital activities the International recognition of this unique historical as well as the nation's psychological and philosophical creation.

As a step to establish visibility and awareness about Armenians the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia with the support of UNESCO Paris headquarter recently organized a programme in Latvia entitled "Signs of Identity/Signs of Diversity" that was very effective for the participant countries and taking the idea of that programme YSAFA wants to actualize such a project in Armenia that can involve representatives (among them lecturers and students) in the field of fine arts from many countries.

YSAFA with the support of UNESCO can organize educational courses, the documentary films viewing, conferences, symposiums (in Noraduz, Sanahin, Goshavank, Noravank) to inform the International society about the idea of the symbol that bears the

national identity of the Armenian people. The undertaking of such an event will certainly facilitate the transition of khachkar from national platform to International one.

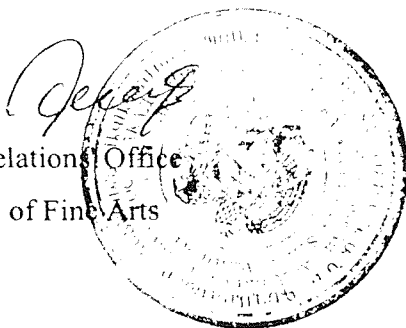
We turn to you with an expectation that the Armenian khachkar will soon find its real place in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Kind regards,

Mary Patvakanyan

Head of International Relations Office

Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts





ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԿՐԹՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԵՎ ԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՆԱԽԱՐԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ  
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N 290/28.12.2005

Ms. IRINA BOKOVA  
UNESCO Director General  
7, place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris 07 SP  
France

Հարգելի Տիկին Իրինա ԲՈՎՈՎԱ:

Երևանի Գեղարվեստի պետական ակադեմիան, հանդիսանալով կրթական հաստատություն, կարևորում է ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՕ-յի մարդկության ոչ նյութական մշակութային ժառանգության ցանկում խաչքարի՝ որպես համամարդկային արժեք ներկայացնող երևույթի ընգրկումը:

Մեր նպատակն է նպաստել խաչքարի համաշխարհային ճանաչմանը, ձևավորել վերաբերմունք քարի նկատմամբ որպես արվեստի ստեղծագործության, որպես պաշտամունքի, որպես կրոնական-ժիսական երևույթի, որպես հայկական ինքնության արտահայտության: Հաջորդ սերունդներին այն փոխանցելու խնդիրն ունենալով՝ մենք ցանկանում ենք, որ ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՕ-յի մշակութային բաժինը իր կենսական գործունեությամբ աջակցի և խթանի այդ եզակի պատմական, մասնագիտական հոգեբանական և փիլիսոփայական ստեղծագործության միջազգային ճանաչումը:

Հայաստանը աշխարհին ավելի ճանաչելի դարձնելու համար, Հայաստանի Արտաքին գործերի նախարարությունը վերջերս ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՕ-յի Փարիզի գրասենյակի հովանավորությամբ Լատվիայում կազմակերպեց "Ինքնության նշաններ/ Բազմազանության նշաններ" խորագրով մի ժրագիր, որը շատ արդյունավետ էր մասնակից երկրների համար և ելնելով այդ ժրագրի գաղափարից ԵԳՊԱ-ն ցանկանում է նման նախագիծ իրականացնել Հայաստանում, որին մասնակից կարող են լինել աշխարհի շատ երկրների գեղարվեստի ասպարեզում սովորող ուսանողներ, դասախոսներ:

ԵԳՊ ակադեմիան ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՈ-յի հովանավորությամբ կարող է կազմակերպել ուսումնական դասընթացներ, փաստավավերագրական ֆիլմերի դիտումներ, կոնֆերանսներ, սիմպոզիումներ, Նորադուզում, Սանսիմոն, Գոշավանքում, Նորավանքում/ միջազգային հանրությամբ ավելի իրազեկ դարձնելու հայ ժողովրդի ազգային ինքնության խորհրդանիշի գաղափարի մասին: Անշուշտ, վերոհիշյալ միջոցառման կազմակերպումը կնպաստի խաչքարի անցմանը ազգայինից դեպի համամարդկայինը:

Դիմում ենք Ձեզ ակնկալելով, որ շուտով ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՈ-յի ցանկում իր ուրույն տեղը կգտնի հայկական խաչքարը:

Հարգանքներով՝

Երևանի Գեղարվեստի պետական ակադեմիայի ռեկտոր՝

Պրոֆ. Արամ ԻՍԱԲԵԿՅԱՆ,

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ  
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Խ. ԱՐՈՎՅԱՆԻ ԱՆՎԱՆ  
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РЕСПУБЛИКА АРМЕНИЯ  
МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ  
АРМЯНСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ  
ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЙ  
УНИВЕРСИТЕТ  
ИМ. Х. АБОВЯНА

Երևան-10, Տիգրան Մեծի 17

Հեռ. Տեղ.: 52-26-04

Երևան-10, Կոմիտասի 17

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Ms. IRINA BOKOVA  
UNESCO Director General,  
7 Place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris 07 SP  
France

Dear IRINA BOKOVA,

The Armenian cultural heritage, each element, each part, each symbol of which is a unique value, has its strength in protecting our nation, and implements functions of national self-awareness from generation to generation, functions of national identification as well as functions of ethno centered socialization. The most characteristic and cultural value of Armenian national identity is the khachkar which involves itself a whole system of national spiritual creation, the rebirth of which touches upon the deepest layers of national thought and self-awareness as well as its identification. The result of its realization states the fact that in 2009 the Republic of Armenia has included khachkar craftsmanship in the state inventory as one of the best preserved elements of national cultural heritage.

Our aim is to establish traditional goals for not only preserving and protecting this unique value of culture but also facilitating its safe transmission to the next generations. The realization process of our goals requires UNESCO support to give us an opportunity to teach the creation of khachkar through academic and practical skills. The process of organizing and implementing this teaching course will involve theorists scientists from different spheres who have studied the culture of khachkar as well as national masters of khachkar who are willing to promote technical and technological traditions of creating a khachkar among learners.

Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan presents its suggestion to organize educational courses of teaching khachkar creation. The course will be implemented as a lifelong education and included in the curriculum of Master's degree for two years.

We want to inform you that ASPU has a chair of design and decorative applied art, a chair of history and theory of art which pay great attention towards one of the Armenian medieval unique branches : creation of khachkar. In their educational courses they include teaching hours on the history of khachkar according to its periods and schools, its developing stages, and its stylistic peculiarities. Simultaneously, the chair of design and decorative applied art provides practical part of teaching. During these practical courses many complete khachkars or some replicas of its pieces are created. Students also write final works on the traditions of khachkar in different periods, the written works are completed with the creation of the samples of khachkar. The teaching course of khachkar is realized by well-known Armenian academic staff and by national masters of khachkar.

In the case of organizing a course in the curriculum of Master's degree we need to establish a separate specialty by completing and realizing the teaching standards , by confirming its curriculum of teaching subjects, educational curriculum on credit system, the list of teaching academic staff. We also need to establish long and short term quality improvement courses on khachkar creation. Through your financial support our University will be able to obtain material technical basis for providing the implementation process of this specialty. On the basis of all these a centre of khachkar science will be established at our University. The centre will provide all specialization activities: scientific research, scientific educational and implementation process.

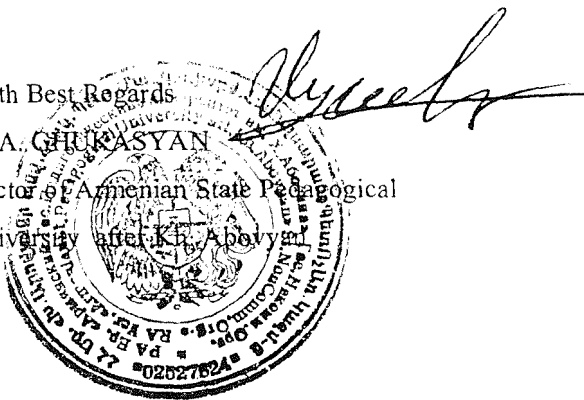
Scientific conferences, scientific practical seminars as well as specialized quality improvement courses are to be organized in order to provide a specialized lifelong improvement, to establish awareness among the wide sphere of learners about the peculiarities of specializing in khachkar creation.

Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan has a great experience and rich traditions in including new specializations into its educational process. Therefore, the process of the Master's degree program on khachkar creation proves to have successful results.

With Best Regards

A. A. GHUKASYAN

Rector of Armenian State Pedagogical  
University after Kh. Abovyan



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ  
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NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA  
INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND  
ETHNOGRAPHY SONP



РЕСПУБЛИКА АРМЕНИЯ  
НАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ АКАДЕМИЯ НАУК  
ИНСТИТУТ АРХЕОЛОГИИ И  
ЭТНОГРАФИИ ГНКО

«10» 12. 2009 թ.

N 2470 - 130

Director of UNESCO  
Mrs. IRINA BOKOVA

Dear Mrs. Bokova,

The Ministry of Culture of RA applied to UNESCO commission for the "Intangible Cultural Heritage" with the request to include Armenian kachkar art in the Representative List of the corresponding values.

It is hard to exaggerate the significance of khachkar in the life of the Armenians. Over centuries khachkar was and remained a national symbol, substance of Christian faith, object of worship, dense expression of cultural identity. Khachkar has been used as tombstone with its main function of soul protection, and as monument connoting significant events and dates of the national history. Khachkar making as craft and art not only survives but even develops in Armenia getting modern expressive forms. Being an important component of the intangible cultural heritage of Armenians and getting expression on material carriers (stone, wood) khachkar is a sustainable value and is a specific part of the cultural heritage of mankind.

Considering that khachkar art is area of investigation for the Institute for Archaeology and Ethnography of NAN RA are engaged in the investigation of Armenian kachkar art as an historical, living and viable spiritual heritage, we join the initiative of the Ministry of Culture to present khachkar art as an intangible cultural value.

Inclusion of khachkar in the humanity intangible cultural heritage list will essentially promote international adoption of the value and, consequently, its preservation in Armenia.

Assistant director  
Doctor of History  
G. SARGSYAN

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РЕСПУБЛИКА АРМЕНИЯ  
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ИНСТИТУТ АРХЕОЛОГИИ И  
ЭТНОГРАФИИ ГНКО

«10» 12. 2009 թ.

N 2470 - 131

ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՕ-ի տնօրեն  
տկն ԻՐԻՆԱ ԲՈԿՈՎԱՅԻՆ

Հարգելի տիկին Բոկովա,

ՀՀ մշակույթի նախարարությունը դիմել է ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՕ-ի «Ոչ նյութական մշակութային ժառանգության» գծով հանձնաժողովին՝ Հայաստանի խաչքարագործությունը համապատասխան արժեքների ներկայացուցչական ցուցակների մեջ ընդգրկելու խնդրանքով:

Դժվար է գերազնահատել խաչքարի նշանակությունը հայ ժողովրդի կյանքում: Դարերի ընթացքում խաչքարը եղել և մնացել է ազգային խորհրդանիշ, քրիստոնյա հավատքի առեւտրային, պաշտամունքի առարկա, մշակութային ինքնության խտացած դրսևորում: Խաչքարը կիրառվել և մինչև այսօր էլ կիրառվում է որպես գերեզմանաքար՝ հոգու պաշտպանության իր գլխավոր գործառնություն, և որպես կոթող-հուշարձան՝ նշանավորելով ազգի պատմության կարևոր իրադարձություններ և ամսաթվեր: Խաչքարագործությունը որպես արհեստ և արվեստ Հայաստանում շարունակում է ոչ միայն գոյատևել, այլև զարգանալ, ստանալով նորանոր արտահայտչաձևեր: Լինելով հայ ժողովրդի ոչ նյութական մշակութային ժառանգության կարևոր տարր, արտահայտվելով նաև նյութական կրիչի (քար, փայտ) ձևով, խաչքարը մնայուն արժեք է և կազմում է մարդկության մշակութային ժառանգության մի ուրույն մասը:

Նկատառնելով, որ խաչքարագործությունը ներառված է ՀՀ ԳԱԱ Հնագիտության և ազգագրության ինստիտուտի գիտական հետաքրքրությունների շրջանակում, և մեր մի շարք մասնագետներ ի թիվս այլ մշակութային արժեքների զբաղվում են հայկական խաչքարի արվեստով որպես պատմական և կենդանի ու կենսունակ հոգևոր ժառանգությամբ, միանում ենք մշակույթի նախարարության նախաձեռնությանը՝ ներկայացնել խաչքարի արվեստը որպես ոչ նյութական մշակութային արժեք:

Խաչքարի ընդգրկումը համամարդկային ոչ նյութական մշակութային ժառանգության ցանկերում մեծապես կնպաստի այդ արժեքի միջազգային ճանաչմանը և, որպես հետևանք, դրա պահպանմանը Հայաստանի տարածքում:

Տնօրենի տեղակալ՝

Պատմ. գիտ. դոկտոր  
Գ. ՍԱՐԳՍՅԱՆ



*veim électronique*

Recu CLT / CIH / ITH  
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When I look upon the stone, I want to scare it. If you stand in front of something that you are afraid of, you can create nothing. There is spirit in the stone which awakens once you start cutting it. The stone itself dictates what you should do. It comes from the ancient times that when you take away the useless parts of the stone, all that remains left is yours.

Khachkar is a national symbol for us. Our grandparents, while building a church, a bridge, a village, a town, even marrying their children, used to erect Khachkars.

The cross is common for all the Christians, but Khachkar is uniquely Armenian. Adopting Christianity, Armenians began to worship the Cross on which the Savior Jesus Christ was crucified. And a faithful Armenian Master would express his deep faith and love for the Son of God by transferring them through his figures to the stone, thus breathing life into it and making it speak. And the stones of Armenia have become beautiful and miraculous Crosses, that have come since the dawn of time, and are as old as mighty.

I continue my grandparents' work to give spirit to the Armenian tuf stone by carving Cross on it, as a symbol of unbreakable faith, for all Armenians and the whole Christian world. I wanted to say a new word in the khachkar craftsmanship and created cross-stone letters of the Armenian alphabet. I have worked on the stone throughout my life and will continue fill the end of my days.

Foreigners often get acquainted with the Armenian art through our architecture, miniatures and Khachkars. I would even say with confidence that Khachkars have been and will remain to be permanent representatives of the Armenian people in the countries where they have been erected. And once erected, a Khachkar becomes a sacred place and a venue for pilgrimage regardless by or for whom it has been created. And I call on the UNESCO to help the Armenians to share this eternal value with the whole world.

*Rubén Nalbandyan*  
Ruben Nalbandyan

Un

official translation

I am Armenian national expert Paruyr Arsen Paruyryan, I have been making wood and stone carving for about twenty-five years. I inherited this art from my father, Arsen Panosyan. I am a historian by education. I graduated from the Yerevan Pedagogical University. During the years of my studentship, when studying Armenian and world cultures, I realized the uniqueness of the Armenian Art of Khachkars. Khachkars may be compared with the Ancient Greek sculpture, roman architecture, and Egyptian pyramids. Khachkars are telling us about the historical way passed by the Armenian people, about our life, character, and temperament. Having realized all this, I left my historian's career and fully dedicated myself to the fairy and mysterious world of khachkars. Through the years of my artistic career, I have created about 120 khachkars and trained 12 apprentices. I must notice that in the last years the youth demonstrates indifference toward the art of khachkars. This can be explained by the fact that the khachkar-carving is a time-consuming and laborious profession. If previously apprentices did not have to pay for the courses, currently they have to reimburse at least the cost of instruments and technical means. Witnessing this the young people of nowadays keep themselves away from the khachkar-carving art. There is a need to undertake serious measures to promote the khachkar-carving among the youth. Besides, today the people worldwide are not well familiar with the Armenian culture. Khachkar-carving art would become an important incentive to demonstrate our traditional culture to the mankind. Following this, I consider important supporting khachkar-carvers. And I strongly support the inclusion of khachkar craftsmanship and symbolism in the UNESCO Representative List of Humanity, just as the music of our duduk. I hope it would also help many craftsmen like me to maintain our craft.

I have a studio that I bought for my own means. However, it is utilizable only when the weather is warm and dry. Besides, I have no technical means to move and replace stone blocks, no electrical instruments to process stones to get them prepared for carving. Ordering the processed stone blocks costs too much as values of transportation and stone-processing are added. If I could purchase the necessary technical means and cover the studio with a roof (this will cost not more than \$10,000), I would significantly improve the working conditions and be able to involve more children to learn this magnificent art.

Khachkar-carver Paruir Paruiryan



YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY

UNESCO CHAIR OF ARMENIAN ART HISTORY

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<http://www.itgateway.com/unescochair.htm>

To: Ms. Irina BOKOVA  
UNESCO Director General  
7, place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris 07 SP  
France

13 February, 2010, Yerevan

Dear Ms. Irina BOKOVA,

As a Director of UNESCO Chair of Armenian Art History and professor of art history at Yerevan State University I outline the importance of the inclusion of khach'k'ars in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The khach'k'ar was the most original Armenian medium for sculpture, from the word for cross (khach') and stone (k'ar). These free standing, rectangular shaped cross-stones are thousands in Armenia and in Armenian Diaspora. They are typical monuments of Armenian art. Wherever Armenians were settled they have erected the khach'k'ars. The main decoration consists of a large cross. The setting-up of stone crosses was a key element in the conversion of Armenia. Through wind and weather, wars and devastation of many kinds, those stone crosses have survived, a sign of Christ's victory.

A great number of examples spread over the period from ninth to eleventh centuries are to be seen in Armenia. Inscriptions generally indicate the date and the name of the person in whose memory the funerary stone was erected. Others, occasionally carved on the back of the stelae, recall historic or other events: military victories, or more often, the founding of a church or monastery, or a reminder of donations. The funerary stelae of abbots and of members of feudal families are sometimes placed on high pedestals or above their mausolea. Quite often too, these stelae are embedded in the walls of the churches or carved on the rocks around the monasteries.

In some other examples often is shown the foliage- representing new life - growing from under and out from the Cross. The cross with two big leaves rising from the base is the main ornamentation of ninth and tenth century khach'k'ars. This decoration gradually became more elaborate. In some cases an arch crowns the cross and the ornamental motifs tend to cover the entire surface of the stone. On large stelae the rectangular framework is covered with geometric patterns, each differing from the other. The stone of this frame, like that of the cross itself, is hollowed out so that the pattern as a whole stands out against a dark background. Figural scenes are carved on the entablature and sometimes next to the cross. In certain khach'k'ars the cross is on the stepped base which is a significant detail, showing thus Golgotha.

In the history of Armenian art the khach'k'ars hold a special place. The Armenian stone carvers throughout the centuries created works which by their variety, their intrinsic value, and by their originality hold an important place in the art of the Christian East.

As a professor of art history and responsible for the education at Art History Department at Yerevan State University I am trying to educate the art of khach'k'ars to our students and some of them are writing their diplomas on subjects related to khach'k'ars.

During Soviet period the exploration of Armenian medieval art was not encouraged and especially that of khach'k'ars was strictly forbidden by Central Committee of Communist Party of Armenia as it was considered as religious propaganda and not corresponding to main

ideological atheistic doctrine of that party. As a result of such harsh line the articles, books, TV programs on khach'k'ars were always forbidden and Armenia lost its chance to have the explorers of this art and that part of Armenian art history was not studied. First books on khach'k'ars started to appear only with Gorbachev era and after the collapse of Soviet Union and Independence of Armenia.

Taking into consideration all the facts represented above and as an expert of Armenian art I support the inclusion of khach'k'ars in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The inclusion of khach'k'ars in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity will help to expand our knowledge about the Armenian art history, also East and West cultural relations and strengthen the bridges between past, present and future and develop the Armenian cultural identity.

Sincerely yours,

  
Prof., Dr. Levon Chookaszian

Director