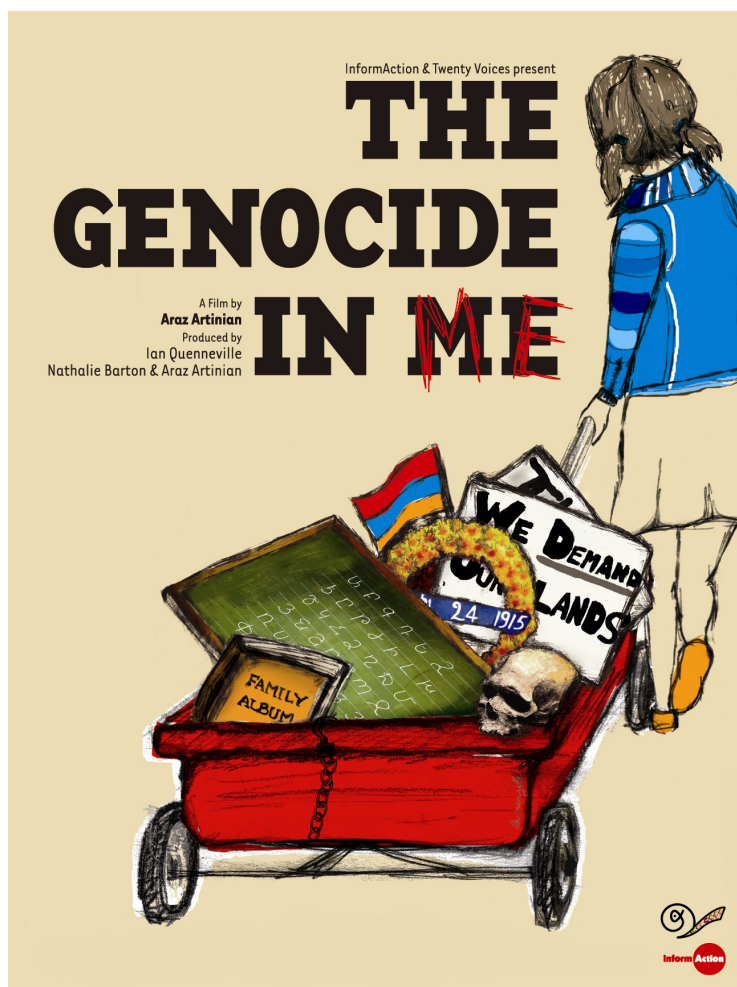




presents

A Film by Araz Artinian

Produced by Ian Quenneville, Nathalie Barton & Araz Artinian



*From the 1915 Armenian genocide to contemporary North America, via modern Turkey, **The Genocide in Me** is a moving personal journey in which Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Artinian confronts the reality of her life in the multicultural melting pot of cultures and asks herself the universal question “Where do I belong?”.*

***The Genocide in Me** – an angry, tender and funny film.*

PRESS KIT

THE GENOCIDE IN ME

A Film by Araz Artinian

Official Selection

Staten Island Film Festival 2006
Best International Feature

Yerevan International Film Festival – Golden Apricot 2006
Award for Emerging Filmmaker
(Armenian Panorama Competition)

Avanca – International Meeting of Cinema, TV, Video and Multimedia 2006
Special Mention

Les Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois 2006 (Montreal)
Finalist for the *Pierre and Yolande Perrault Prize* (Best emerging documentary director)
and for the *Ruth and Alex Dworkin Prize for Tolerance*

Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival 2006
Finalist for the *Golden Sheaf Award*
for *Best Point of View Documentary*

Armenian Music Awards 2006 (Hollywood)
The Genocide Recognition Award for Araz Artinian

Calgary International Film Festival 2006

REEL PEACE – World Peace Festival 2006
(Amnesty International – Vancouver)

Armenian Festival for the Occasion of the 90th Anniversary of
the Armenian Genocide (Moncton, 2005)

Festival des libertés 2006 (Brussels)

Escales documentaires de La Rochelle 2006

*

***“A stunning, truly beautiful and
deeply affecting film.”***
Atom Egoyan

***“Deeply touching (...)
So thorough and done with so much love.”***
Sarah Rowland – *Hour Montreal*

“A true cry from the heart.”
Jacques Bertrand – *Radio-Canada*

“A fascinating documentary.”
Odile Tremblay – *Le Devoir*

THE GENOCIDE IN ME

A Film by Araz Artinian

Summary

An angry, tender and funny film, **The Genocide in Me** deals with the impact of the 1915 Armenian Genocide on the life of young filmmaker Araz Artinian, who has had to carry this legacy since her childhood. In this personal journey, Artinian, torn between her father's passionate commitment to the Armenians of the Diaspora and her own personal needs, confronts the reality of living in a multicultural melting pot, and asks herself the universal question "Where do I belong?".

The documentary deftly weaves together 8mm film footage shot by the filmmaker's grandfather from the 1940's to the 1980's in Egypt and in Canada, with riveting photographic archives of the Genocide, the filmmaker's present-day video journals, and a deeply honest narration. Through moving interviews with the last survivors of this Genocide in the USA and through a risky trip to Turkey, Artinian goes back to the origin of her father's obsession, an obsession born of the Turkish denial and the fear of losing the Armenian culture.



THE GENOCIDE IN ME

A Film by Araz Artinian

Canada, 2005, Digital Video, Color, 53'

Written, Filmed and Directed by	Araz Artinian
Additional Photography	Alex Margineanu Vahagn Ter-Hakobyan
Additional Sound	Dominique Chartrand Alexandre Gravel
Edited by	Andrea Henriquez
Sound Editing	Benoît Dame
Sound Mix	Jean-Pierre Bissonnette
Script Consultant	Dorothy Hénaut
Rights Clearance	Catherine Drolet
Assistant Director	Ian Oliveri
Produced by	Ian Quenneville Nathalie Barton Araz Artinian

Produced by
InformAction
&
Twenty Voices

With
the financial participation of

SODEC
Société de développement des entreprises culturelles – Québec
Programme d'aide aux jeunes créateurs

Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec – Arts médiatiques

Canada Council for the Arts – Media Arts

THE GENOCIDE IN ME

A Film by Araz Artinian

Director's Statement

"What is your name?" people ask me.

"Araz," I reply, anticipating the next question.

"What nationality is that?"

"Armenian" I answer, anticipating once again the too familiar reaction, a sympathetic smile, or sometimes a confused face.

"So when did you move to Canada?"

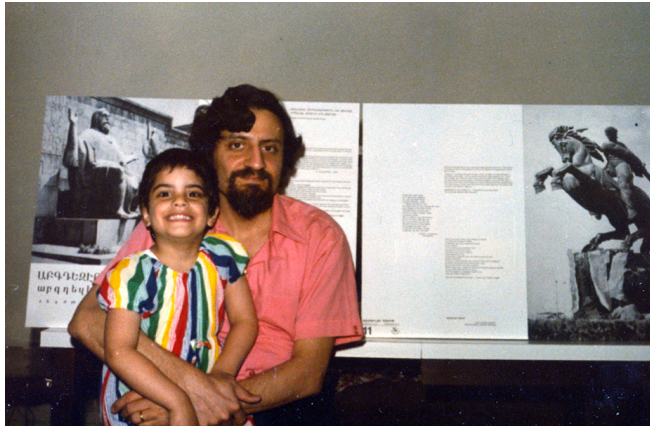
At this point, I usually take a deep breath and get ready to tell again the story I have told 5,000 times.

"I was born here. My parents were born in Egypt. My paternal grandparents were from Egypt. My maternal grandparents were born in Turkey. But all of us are Armenian. You see, in 1915, there was a Genocide committed by the Turks against the Armenians. There was an Armenian population of 2-3 million living in Ottoman Turkey. 1.5 million were massacred during the Genocide and the forced marches to the Syrian Desert, and the rest were deported to different countries. Turkey denies it ever happened. Today, there are less than 8 million Armenians left around the world. 3 million live in present-day Armenia. The other 5 million live in the Diaspora and I'm one of them."

With **The Genocide in Me** I feel compelled to tell the Armenian story, which is also my story.

When a self-introduction like the one above becomes part of your daily life, you know that the Genocide is not only something that happened in 1915. You know that you are a remnant of a very ancient civilization which today is struggling to keep its national identity alive on foreign lands. You feel your people's struggle on your skin every day. The elements of that struggle become an enormous responsibility on the shoulders of the ones who have survived and the ones who will pass the history and culture on to the next generation. The pressure of keeping our ancestors' language could become, as in my case, enormous and even intolerable.

A need as natural as finding the man of your dreams and falling in love becomes very complicated. "Your non-Armenian husband will not speak your language with you and your children will lose their Armenian identity" is what my parents and the parents of almost all my friends believe. It's actually the breakdown of the relationships between Armenian parents and children who have chosen to marry non-Armenians that drove me to make this film. They put us in a situation where we have to choose between love and our national identity. It's a feeling that prevents us from living life fully. And it becomes harder as you grow older.



This film, **The Genocide in Me**, is about my need to free myself from the pressures, the burden imposed by history. I need to understand. I want to discover where my father's national obsession comes from. That kind of obsession can only be born from loss and denial.

I need to publicly ask the questions about my identity, about our identity, about the importance of language, and

the impact of the denial of injustice. In working on this film, in undertaking my journeys to talk to Armenian Genocide survivors, in daring to make a journey to Eastern Turkey to see the land for myself, to see the way the Turks present our story, I have started the process of understanding.

As I write these words, I ask myself "How many more generations will suffer under the impact of the Genocide?". Sometimes the responsibility of telling the history of that event and seeking justice for the 1.5 million victims surpasses the loneliness I feel at night. Being alone becomes nothing compared to the immensity of what I need to do to get this cause recognized. I am torn between worlds and that has led me to a journey that I've named **The Genocide in Me**.

The film also answers my deep need to share this story with others, to help the Armenian community discuss issues that haunt it, and to reach out to my Canadian fellow-citizens – and citizens of all nations – to help them understand their Armenian neighbours from the Diaspora.

Do I need to stop thinking about my national identity, our lands and the history of the Armenian Genocide or do I go towards it, to give meaning to my childhood and find justice? I hope this film will record a personal journey that might reconcile my worlds.

Araz Artinian
Director

THE GENOCIDE IN ME

A Film by Araz Artinian

Araz Artinian

Bio-filmography



Born in Canada, independent filmmaker Araz Artinian completed a B.A. in Communication Studies at Concordia University. She specialized in filmmaking. In 1995, her first short film *Sur les Traces du Survenant* was nominated for Best Student Documentary at the 26th Canadian Film Festival in Montreal. During her last year at Concordia, she directed her first documentary entitled *Surviving on the Richter Scale* about twelve survivors of an earthquake that hit Armenia in 1988. The film was aired on Les Grands Reportages of RDI and on Planète Cable in France, Italy and Poland, and won six awards, including a Best Documentary Award at the 29th Canadian Student Film Festival (part of the Montreal World Film Festival), a Silver Hugo at the 35th Chicago International Film Festival and a Bronze Plaque at the 47th Columbus International Film & Video Festival.

In 1999, Artinian started working with Atom Egoyan as Head Researcher for his feature film *Ararat* which was premiered at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival. En 2003, with Lisa Djevahirdjian, she co-directed *The Story of Arsinee Khanjian*, a video biography of the Gemini-award winner Canadian actress. In April of 2005, Artinian launched the website www.twentyvoices.com, the story of 20 survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. The website which has had 50,000 hits so far, will be featured in the January 2006 issue of *Applied Arts*, Canada's preeminent visual communications publication. It's been selected for North America's Best Design and Advertising in the category of *Educational Projects*.

The Genocide in Me is Artinian's latest documentary. She wrote, filmed, and directed the film. She also co-produced it with Ian Quenneville and Nathalie Barton of InformAction Films.

THE GENOCIDE IN ME

A Film by Araz Artinian

Historical context

Almost 20 years before the genocide, the Turkish government of the Ottoman Empire began committing atrocities against the Armenians, whom they considered “subversive”. In these years alone, it is estimated that 300,000 Armenians were massacred or perished as a result of the destruction of their villages. Consequently, between 1896 and the beginning of WW1, about 100,000 more Armenian citizens of the Ottoman Empire fled abroad, emigrating to France, Egypt and the Balkans (in particular Bulgaria). Eventually, many of them made their way to the United States, with a majority settling in Massachusetts and Detroit. Those who remained put their trust in a reform project of local administrative autonomy, as provided by the Berlin Treaty of 1878. Under joint European pressure, the Ottoman government signed the project in 1913, but cancelled it a year later because of WW1.

Following a military coup d'état in 1908, Ottoman Turkey was governed by nationalists, who gradually came to the conclusion that further territorial losses and the collapse of the Empire could be avoided only by ethnic homogenization or turkification of this multiethnic and multi-religious feudal state. In particular, the two largest Christian nations, the Armenians and the Greeks, were considered to be “internal enemies” or “traitors”. The First World War, which Turkey entered as an ally of Imperial Germany, offered ample opportunities to “free” Turkey from the suspect Christians. The declaration of the Holy War - Jihad - on the 14 of November, 1914, delivered a legal and religious permission to include Christian co-citizens on the list of the Ottoman Empire's official enemies.

In 1915, behind the screen of war, the Young Turks, officially known as the Committee of Union and Progress, implemented a plan to exterminate the Armenian population of Ottoman Turkey and “free” Turkey for ever from any reform obligations.

The genocide was carried out through the “Special Organization”, a previous intelligence service and later a tool in the hands of the War and the Home Ministries. The number of members in the “Special Organization” increased to 15,000 in the year 1915. They were the actual henchmen of this genocide, among them convicts and many members of Muslim ethnic groups uprooted by the Balkan wars and Russia's conquest of the Caucasus. The atrocities were veiled under the guise of deportations, as the Young Turk government ordered the Armenians to leave their ancestral homes. Slave labour and massacres reduced the adult male population, in particular of the Armenians, whereas women, children and old people were marched to death in the Syrian Desert.

According to an estimation of October 4, 1916 by the Imperial German Embassy of Constantinople, 1.5 million of the Armenian pre-war population of 2.5 million perished in the short period of 18 months.

For more information, you may visit:

www.twentyvoices.com : Araz Artinian's documentary web site on 20 survivors of the genocide.

THE GENOCIDE IN ME

A Film by Araz Artinian

ANNEX : PRESS ARTICLE 1

MPs recognize Armenian massacre as genocide



Canadian Press

Updated: Wed. Apr. 21 2004 8:50 PM ET

OTTAWA — Canada became one of few countries to formally recognize the genocide of Armenian Turks during the First World War in a strongly worded motion adopted 153-68 in the House of Commons on Wednesday.

Government members were discouraged from voting for the motion, which is sure to anger a Turkish government that has never recognized the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians starting in 1915.

Following a charged debate at their weekly closed-door caucus meeting, Liberal backbenchers voted massively in favour while the party's cabinet contingent rejected the Bloc Quebecois motion.

Prime Minister Paul Martin was absent during the politically sensitive vote but Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham defended the government's opposition.

The Turkish government has warned that recognizing the genocide could have economic consequences and Graham said he wanted to maintain good relations with Turkey.

"Turkey is an important NATO ally in a region where it is a Muslim country with a moderate government," he said.

"What we seek to do in our foreign policy is to encourage the forward dimension, we're forward-looking. We'd like our Armenian friends and our Turkish friends to work together to put these issues in the past."

The motion read: "That this House acknowledges the Armenian genocide of 1915 and condemns this act as a crime against humanity."

The Turkish government rejects the charge of genocide as unfounded and says that while 600,000 Armenians died, 2.5 million Muslims perished in a period of civil unrest.

Unlike the Liberal government most opposition MPs — including Conservative Leader Stephen Harper — voted in favour of the motion, which places Canada in a category of only about two dozen countries to have recognized the Armenian genocide.

The United Nations has also recognized the massacre, and Armenians have been fighting for decades throughout the world for that sort of acknowledgement.

One opposition critic labelled the prime minister "hypocritical" for promising more free votes and then forcing ministers to toe the line on such a matter of deep personal conscience.

"It's a terrible double standard for Paul Martin to force his ministers to vote against it and not even show up himself," said Tory foreign affairs critic Stockwell Day.

"That is a hypocritical double standard."

Liberal Hedy Fry supported the motion but said it's important to note the atrocities were carried out under the Ottoman empire, which has faded into history and was long ago replaced by a modern Turkish state.

"I think we need to recognize the past," she said.

"I think it doesn't mean we've broken ties with the current regime in Turkey. They are our colleagues, they are our NATO allies. They are a moderate, Muslim government and I think we need to work with them.

Recognizing what happened in the Ottoman empire shouldn't affect Canada's diplomatic relations with Turkey, she said.

Fry and many other former Liberal cabinet ministers who are now backbenchers also voted in favour, including Martin Cauchon, Stephane Dion, Maurizio Bevilacqua, Lyle Vanclief, Lawrence MacAulay, Herb Dhaliwal and David Kilgour.

© **Copyright 2002-2006 Bell Globemedia Inc.**