

The Zoryan Institute would like to invite you to join a conversation with

## Atom Egoyan & Dr. Hayk Demoyan

Aurora Mardiganian and the film "Ravished Armenia"

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Commemoration Plans for the Armenian Genocide Centennial



Join us for a discussion between, Dr. Hayk Demoyan, Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum Institute visiting from Yerevan, and Atom Egoyan, internationally renowned filmmaker of Toronto. Both intellectuals are involved in different but related research and projects on Aurora Mardiganian in terms of installations and/or exhibitions.

Aurora Mardiganian's personal story was first published as *Ravished Armenia* in 1918 after she was approached in New York by, a young screenwriter, who helped her write and publish her narrative, a very popular eyewitness report on the Armenian Genocide. The narrative was used for writing a film script that was produced in 1919. Mardiganian played herself in the silent film, reliving her trauma. Mardiganian was referred to in the press as a Joan of Arc, describing her as the spokesperson for the victims of the horrors that were then taking place in Turkey and the catalyst for the humanist movement in America. At its peak, the book sold more than 360,000 copies, and the film helped Near East Relief raise more than \$100 million. The film was respected by critics and despite the sex and violence depicted, its subject matter made it above reproach.

One review stated, "Certainly there has never been a picture which brought more clearly to the minds of the spectators the horrible tortures which these people were made to suffer. The entire film is ... so engrossing and realistic in its portrayal that one almost forgets that he is not witnessing the actual crimes."

A clip from the original silent film will be shown as part of the program. The Zoryan Institute had the foresight to interview Aurora Mardiganian in the late 1980s, as part of its Oral History Program. A clip from that interview will also be shown.

On this occasion Dr. Demoyan, as Secretary of the National Commission on the Commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, will also give an update on the planned centennial activities.

**Location:** St. Gregory Armenian Catholic Church, 100 Northdale Rd., Toronto, ON

**Date:** Wednesday, November 6, 2013

**Time:** 7:30 PM