

## MARIE KHATCHIKIAN: FAITH, HOPE, LOVE AND DETERMINATION

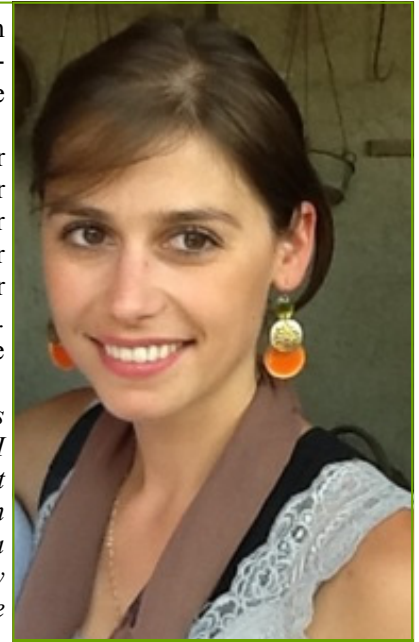
Marie Khatchikian is a curious student and community activist from Valence, a city in southern France, which has the largest proportional Armenian population in the country. Marie, who works in an insurance company by day, is an Armenian Virtual College (AVC) student by night, and a community activist on weekends.

She was born to an Armenian father and a French mother. Growing up, she and her two brothers Guillaume and Mathieu, were not able to attend an Armenian school, nor were they able to regularly attend Armenian church services. Her knowledge about her origins was limited to the photographs, books and films about Armenia which her mother would buy for her. The inquisitive child learned the Armenian alphabet on her own at a very young age. Marie always wanted to speak Armenian and visit Armenia. Though always proud of her origins, she never had an opportunity to learn about the Armenian culture.

*"When I was older, I decided to go to an Armenian church and get baptized. That was a turning point in my life. That choice was a symbol, which marked the start of what I call 'my Armenian life'. Another interesting turning point for me was learning about DA Connexion (Diaspora-Armenia Connection), an organization I discovered through an Armenian friend. I quickly became involved in their activities and visited Armenia for the first time in 2008. I returned a few more times, before I finally convinced my parents for a family trip to Armenia and Artsakh in May 2011. I began to dedicate more and more time to the organization, working on conferences, photo exhibitions, and sending humanitarian groups to Armenia.*

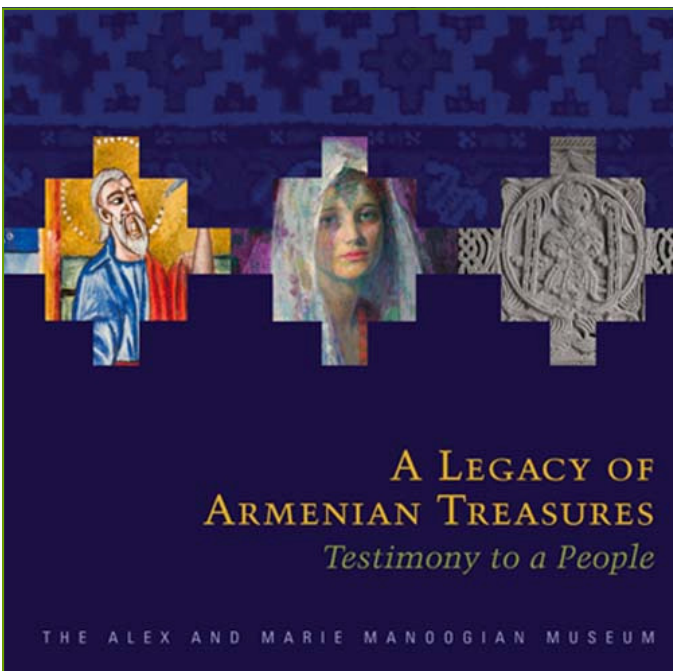
*After a long search for an Armenian teacher, a friend from Paris told me about the Armenian Virtual College. I visited the AVC website ([www.avc-agbu.org](http://www.avc-agbu.org)) and immediately registered for the Western Armenian language course. My biggest dream - to study Armenian - was about to come true. It was very important for me to learn Armenian because it is an essential symbol of the Armenian identity. Finally, after a very long and interesting quest for identity, I found a way to learn the language! I started taking AVC courses in September 2010 and have been learning quickly and enthusiastically ever since. In a short period I learned more than 500 words and began forming essential phrases and sentences. My professors praised my will and determination to learn the language. I haven't been brought up in an Armenian culture and I don't even look Armenian, but learning the language will be my way of connecting with my origins,"* said Marie.

Marie's faith in her principles, her hope to always find a way to achieve her goals and her love for her culture and origins, gave her the determination to overcome the barriers and hardships. Armenian Virtual College provided her the means through which she could connect with her Armenian culture and learn the Armenian language.



AVC Student Marie Khatchikian

## LEGACY OF ARMENIAN TREASURES PRESENTED AT NATIONAL ART GALLERY



Through the initiative of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Detroit, Michigan, and with the support of the RA Ministry of Culture, *Legacy of Armenian Treasures: Testimony to a People*, a new coffee-table picture book presenting the museum's exhibits was unveiled on September 19 at the Fresco Hall of the Armenian National Gallery.

Member of the Board of Trustees of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, Yervant Azadian, Museum Director Lucy Ardash, Publishing Consultant Alice Nigoghosian, and others attended the presentation. RA Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosyan, Armenian National Gallery Director Paravon Mirzoyan and Mr. Azadian spoke about this monumental publication. Art specialist Levon Chukaszyan presented the book to the audience.

The Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, founded in 1992, showcases over 1,500 rich and unique Armenian art exhibits. Named for National Hero of Armenia, renowned benefactor and AGBU Honorary Life President Alex Manoogian and his wife, the museum is the greatest center of Armenian art outside of Armenia's borders.