

## SERJ TANKIAN & ALINA MNATSAKANIAN

### *AN EXHIBITION IN C MINOR*

MARCH 18 – APRIL 14, 2017

#### OPENING RECEPTION:

**SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2017, 6 – 8 PM**

Garboushian Gallery is proud to present a unique and expansive visual and auditory experience with *An Exhibition in C Minor*, featuring the site-specific collaborative work of artists, **Serj Tankian** and **Alina Mnatsakanian**.

Through an experimental collaboration, transmedia artist Alina Mnatsakanian and Serj Tankian, singer, songwriter, artist and composer from the award-winning band **System of A Down** paired up to give in to an instinctual collaborative art process where their mutual creative energy could seamlessly blend into a multi-sensory experience of both auditory and visual expression. Within this exploration, Mnatsakanian and Tankian utilized new technology in various ways to further enhance the experience of exhibition-goers, and truly explore the power of contemporary art and music.

The artistic collaboration came from the similar sensitivities of combining art with music. Inspired by Tankian's music, Mnatsakanian created animated and hybrid abstract paintings, while Tankian simultaneously composed original music, based on Mnatsakanian's art. Hybrid paintings mix conventional methods of painting and drawing with computer-generated art, while in the animated paintings the image evolves gradually over the duration of the music, and the viewer sees many mutations of the work.

Although Tankian is based in Los Angeles and Mnatsakanian in Switzerland, the international artists contribute to the global discourse on art with much of their time spent in New Zealand and Los Angeles, respectively. This international artistic conversation has been going on for over a year, both working toward the single goal of this one exhibit to debut their rich and complex multi-sensory collaborative art experience to the world. The collaborative works on view have an eternal and relative abstraction that transcends time and space, both in sound and in imagery.

Mnatsakanian is an artist who thrives in a collaborative environment; she has worked with a number of musicians previously to create similar fascinating multi-sensory artistic experiences. In *An Exhibition in C Minor*, Mnatsakanian's paintings are paired with original music by Tankian. As a multitalented artist, Tankian also creates visual artwork. Having mastered the art of composing music and creating auditory artworks, Tankian was drawn to the creative process of making traditional visual art, which was born through the development and composition of his music. The process is exploratory, instinctual and expressive, leaving Tankian with a satisfaction that is separate but equal to that of music-making. Mnatsakanian's meditative artworks move with the music, gradually changing like a score, giving the viewer the opportunity to experience instinctual creative expression visually as well as musically.

The added component of technology in the interaction of this exhibit brings the content and process to this contemporary moment in time, and shows how effortlessly some new technology can be used to enhance art and music.

Three types of technological interaction may be experienced in *An Exhibition in C Minor*. By pointing to a hybrid painting with a smartphone or tablet camera, the viewer may hear Tankian's original music that has been paired with the painting directly from their device. The embedded music along with additional content is unlocked and accessed through Aurasma, a free app that utilizes optical recognition technology and is available for both iOS and Android devices. It is encouraged to download the app and follow the Exhibition in C Minor channel in advance of the opening using the following link:

<http://auras.ma/s/el2a4> (please make sure to scroll down the page and click the "follow" icon in addition to downloading the app) Tankian's vision to utilize optical recognition technology as the conduit to unlock the intertwined relationship of music and art was the first of its kind.

In the second version the signal of the smartphone is transferred via Bluetooth to a special sound transfer system, hidden in the back of the painting, which turns the rigid surface behind the painting into a high quality speaker, making the artwork play its music.

Other new technological components are the special mirrored screens used to show the animated paintings. The medium is a framed mirror, which becomes a video screen when turned on.

Artistic visions of Serj Tankian and Alina Mnatsakanian combined with the new technologies place the viewer in a multimedia experience where the visual art is immersed with the musical score.

*An Exhibition in C Minor* opens Saturday, March 18, 2017, and will remain on view until April 14, 2017.

#### **ABOUT SERJ TANKIAN:**

A singer, poet, songwriter, visual artist, activist, and composer; Serj Tankian has always created music as an outlet to express his thoughts and feelings with a level of passion and consciousness that few in today's world of music can rival.

Early in his musical career, Serj found an outlet as the rabble-rousing lead singer and songwriter of the largely successful rock band System of a Down, a band that has reached into the hearts and minds of millions of people relaying multiple messages of love, awareness and activism. System of a Down has 5 studio album releases, three of which debuted at number one on the *Billboard 200*, and has also been nominated for four Grammy Awards and snagged one in 2006 for 'Best Hard Rock Performance' for their song "B.Y.O.B."

In recent years, Tankian has split his time between holding a mic and paintbrush, having feverishly created over 40 pieces of art since 2013. His journey into the world of fine art began with his Disarming Time Musical and since then, he has had multiple exhibitions at galleries in both the United States as well as New Zealand. Highlights include works exhibited at the grand opening of New Museum Los Gatos in Northern California as part

of a group exhibit that ran through September of 2015, and inclusion in the 2015 Auckland Arts Festival: "White Night" in New Zealand.

#### **ABOUT ALINA MNATSAKANIAN:**

Alina Mnatsakanian is a transmedia artist based in Switzerland, with an artistic background that spans from painting to new media conceptual works, using mediums as varied as robots, software, technological and scientific elements, everyday objects, painting, drawing, video and audio. She holds a BA in Visual Arts from the University of Paris 8, and a Master of Visual Arts from California State University, Los Angeles. She has exhibited her work in the United States, Canada, Europe, Switzerland and Armenia; She has received awards from, among others, the Swiss Federal Office of Culture, Swiss Artists in Labs and California Council for the Humanities. She has held residencies at the Institute of Artificial Intelligence in Lugano, Switzerland; Grand Central Art Center in California; and Art and Cultural Studies Laboratory (ACSL) in Yerevan, Armenia.

#### Selected exhibitions

- 2017 MACT/CACT contemporary art museum, Bellinzona, Switzerland
- 2016 Musée des Beaux-Arts, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland
- 2015 MultipleSpacings gallery, Bern, Switzerland (solo)  
Moncton University, Moncton, Canada  
EPFL Rolex learning center, Lausanne, Switzerland
- 2014 Galerie C, Neuchâtel, Switzerland (robotic performance)  
Modern art museum, Yerevan, Armenia
- 2013 Gallerie Nelly L'Eplattenier, Lausanne, Switzerland
- 2012 Università la Sapienza, Museo Laboratorio di Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy  
The Leonardo museum, Salt Lake City, Utah
- 2011 MACT/CACT contemporary art museum, Bellinzona, Switzerland  
San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, California  
Musée d'art et d'histoire, Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- 2010 National Gallery, Yerevan, Armenia  
MACT/CACT contemporary art museum, Bellinzona, Switzerland  
Gallerie Nelly L'Eplattenier, Lausanne, Switzerland (solo)
- 2009 Grand Central Art Center, Santa Ana, California  
Musée d'histoire, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland (solo)  
Center for contemporary experimental art, Yerevan, Armenia (solo)
- 2008 Musée d'art et d'histoire de Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- 2007 Musée des Beaux-Arts, La Chaux-de-Fonds
- 2005 Sam Francis Gallery, Santa Monica, California
- 2004 University of California, Los Angeles, California
- 2000 California State University, Los Angeles, California (solo)
- 1999 L.A. Artcore Brewery Annex, Los Angeles, California