

Paul Guiragossian Biography:

Born in 1926 in Jerusalem, to Armenian parents, survivors of the Armenian Genocide, Paul was raised in boarding schools and grew up away from his mother who had to work to make sure her two sons got an education.

Paul began drawing and painting at a very young age but later on he didn't have the means to study art and technique so he taught himself by working abundantly. When he was a teenager and moved back with his family, his mother worried that art wouldn't put food on the table, so she forbade him from drawing and at one point she even tore his drawings and destroyed his supplies so he gives up, but as the need for art was much stronger in him, he continued secretly.

In 1947, Paul and his family moved and settled in Lebanon, where his work was discovered by an art critic who introduced him to the art society. Group and solo exhibitions followed along with winning prizes which landed him a scholarship to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence in 1956. A few years later in 1961 he received another scholarship to Paris, France where he went to live and study for a couple of years and ended up doing a solo show at La Galerie Mouffe in 1962.

Guiragossian's prominence took him all over the world to exhibit his works and lecture about art and humanity. Not only he would be the distinguished guest of many governments who invited him to visit their country but they held him in such high esteem for his humanitarian efforts and his philosophy that some bestowed their country's prestigious knighthoods on him like Germany in 1974, France in 1984 with the "Chevalier de l'Ordre, des Arts et des Lettres", and in 1991 by The Vatican, His Holiness The Pope Jean-Paul II awarded him the "Chevalier de l'Ordre" of St. Silvestre".

Since the early 50's Paul became an art teacher and later on a professor at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Art (Alba) as well as the Lebanese University of Fine Arts. He kept on teaching until the end of his life.

Near the end of the Lebanese civil war, between 1989 and 1992, Paul lived in Paris once again where he had two major solo exhibitions: one at the UNESCO in the Salle des Pas Perdus and another one at the Institut du Monde Arab (IMA) which went on for 3 months.

He later returned to Beirut and continued to paint and exhibit for the remainder of his life. He passed away on November 20, 1993 and on that day after making his final painting, he expressed to his daughter that he felt like he finally reached what he always wanted in his art.