

ARTASHES SAAKOVICH ABRAAMYAN

(Armenian 1921 - 2003)

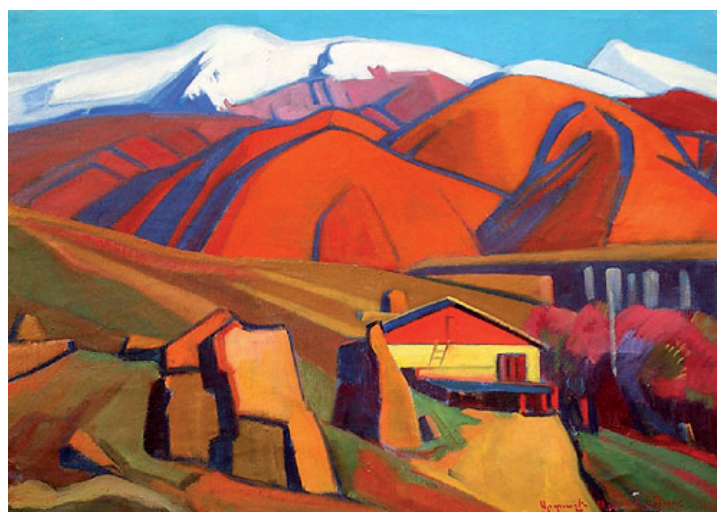
Golden Harvest

signed in Cyrillic and dated '79' (lower right)
inscribed in Cyrillic (on the reverse)
oil on canvas
57.2 x 53.7 cm (22½ x 21½ in)

IN THIS VIVID AND STRUCTURED COMPOSITION, Artashes Saakovich Abraamyan captures an idyllic landscape with sweeping fields, scattered haystacks and a striking mountain range enveloping the horizon. By choosing a simple colour palette of yellow, brown and blue, Abraamyan has enhanced the visual effect of the canvas on the viewer. The rolling fields radiate a deep warmth from the gold hue in the rich yellow paint, whilst the mountains, in contrast, rise dramatically and darkly above with a more muted palette of brown paint. However, Abraamyan connects the two registers of the lower and upper landscape by introducing colour details common to both. The geomorphic undulations of the mountains are outlined using blue paint, which Abraamyan also uses to distinguish the individual fields in the agricultural land below. Furthermore, he uses touches of blue and brown paint on areas of shadow surrounding the haystacks.

There is a deeper national symbolism to this work and it was most probably painted in the mountainous terrain found throughout Armenia. The climate here is highland continental, thus ensuring hot summers and cold winters. The searing heat of the summer sun is clearly suggested in the radiant yellow paint. Armenian agriculture is primarily carried out in the valleys and mountainsides of the country's uneven topography, whilst the fertile volcanic soil allows for cultivation of wheat and barley, as seen in *Golden Harvest*. From 1922 until 1991 Armenia was a constituent republic of the Soviet Union, though a strong nationalist sentiment remained amongst Armenians. Painted twelve years before the country gained sovereignty, *Golden Harvest* represents the countryside as a rustic idyll unaffected by the limitations of Soviet rule.

Abraamyan graduated from the Yerevan Art Academy in 1952, where his important shows include the 'All Union Art Exhibition'



Artashes Saakovich Abraamyan, *Orange House by the Mountains*, 1971
Private Collection (Figure 1)

in Moscow, 1954. He became a member of the Union of Artists in 1956 and an Honoured Artist in 1980. Specialising in landscapes, his paintings won a major award at the 'Armenia Art' exhibition in 1998 and have been exhibited widely in Armenia. *Golden Harvest* is a typical example of Abraamyan's work in the 1970's comparable to paintings such as *Orange House by the Mountains* (fig. 1). In both works he paints panoramic mountain landscape views, rendered in thick swathes of vibrant colour. The bold palette is typical of his work and gives his vast empty landscapes a sense of real pulsating vitality.

