

# NEWS-PRESS

WEEKEND, SEPTEMBER 25-26, 2004

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## Taking snapshots of Armenian life

Glendale man's photography exhibit explores Armenian American identity in Los Angeles.

By Josh Kleinbaum  
News-Press

**L**OS ANGELES — Through a party in Burbank, a wedding in Glendale, a genocide commemoration rally in East Hollywood and a card game in Maple Park, photographer Ara Oshagan attempts to capture the essence of being Armenian in his new exhibit, "Traces of Identity: An Insider's View of the L.A. Armenian Community."

The exhibit, which features 39 black-and-white photos taken throughout Southern California from 2000 to 2003, debuts at the Barnsdall Art Park in Los Feliz on Sunday.

"To me, every picture is looking at myself as reflected in the community that I live," said Oshagan, a 40-year-old Glendale resident. "The attempt is that other people will see it that way and say, 'This is my life in which I live.' And not only with Armenians, but people in general."

Four themes emerge in Oshagan's photographs — family, church, politics and community. Many of the pictures were taken in Glendale, including a photograph of men playing cards in Maple Park and people voting in Armenian elections and the Armenian Society of Los Angeles headquarters.

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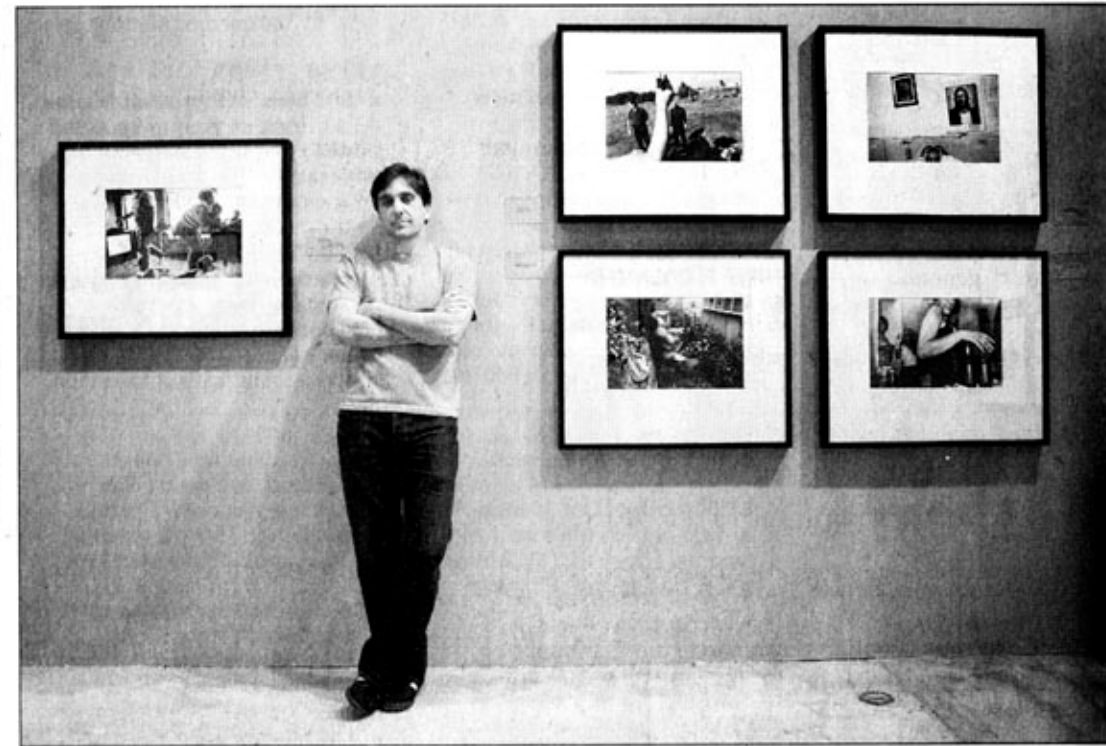
Ara Oshagan

immerse himself in various aspects of the community. He spent time with a family, in a convalescent home, in a drug rehabilitation center, an adult day-care center and a jail.

The trick, he said, was to spend enough time with his subjects so they would be

comfortable enough to ignore him and his camera, allowing him to capture everyday life.

"There's a picture where there's a TV going and a couple kids screaming, the one in Big Bear," said Charlie Hachadourian, the exhibit's curator. "That's very much



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Photographer Ara Oshagan, above, will have a gallery showing of his work Sunday at the Barnsdall Art Park in Los Feliz. The show is titled "Traces of Identity: An Insider's View of the L.A. Armenian Community." At left is one of Oshagan's photographs, "Family Gathering."

having a family with its guard down. Ara has the insider's privileges being the fly on the wall. You get to document the beautiful as well as the awful.

While we might not enjoy celebrating the awful, we can all recognize it."

The exhibit opens with a public reception Sunday from

2 to 5 p.m. at Barnsdall Art Park, 4800 Hollywood Blvd., and runs through the end of the year. Admission is normally \$5, but the reception is free.