



Artist: MKRTICH TONOYAN  
Work title: LIFE UNDER TARGET

Exclusive producer: Mkrtych Tonoyan  
Director: Arman Yereitsyan  
Working title: A little War a little Peace



*CONCEPT: The idea of “home” has different philosophical interpretations but the function and meaning of home as house is the same for everybody in the world. A functional home is where one lives and it is his/her dream, firstly safe then comfortable and so on. No one really thinks about home in philosophical way when it is like that. But when it is not safe? When it is not safe anymore the uncertainty comes; either keep living there because it is my “sweet home” and contains the energy of all my lifetime efforts, or leave it and migrate, become a refugee? The prospect of becoming homeless brings profound anxiety. Especially when your house it not inherited, but built with your own hands during all life, it is built with the belief that your house is your fortress and your “kingdom”.*

*The border zones of Armenia where I did shoot this film is full of such “kingdoms” where it is no longer safe but no one wants to accept their kingdom has collapsed and the first time during their life they think about human rights as a subject of their right to live in their own home. There are 22 villages along the North-Eastern border of Armenia with Azerbaijan and many others in Nagorno-Karabakh, where civilians remain, living in conflict zones where the word “home” is philosophy but not safety or comfort. This film is an attempt to get their voices out and enable them to tell their story about their very simple and basic right – the right of life – under threat everyday because of the aggressive*

*policies of the Azerbaijani government.*

*Location: North-Eastern border of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh*

*PROPOSAL: The film is a single-channel video, filmed in the borderlands between Armenia and Azerbaijan to document the ongoing violence and human rights violations in this region. There were use amateur video documentation chapters from inhabitants, who always enthusiastically show them to very rare visitors telling their stories of exploded houses, survival from bombing, comparing bullets they found after great fires, or even sadder stories.*

*I have visited several settlements in this region as part of my research and residents have shared their stories with me. When one old man showed me his collection of “artifacts” and filmed our meeting with his phone, he asked me; “Do you want me to give you this file? It seems you travel a lot, show this to people and tell our story”. So this gave me the idea of using the “personal archives” of residents as part of my film.*

*I visit all 22 villages and my camera tried to capture any detail that describes the situation and shows the absurd and surrealism of life in this part of the world.*

*We had also short interviews with survivors and witnesses, background narratives of everyday life in these villages such as schools, kindergartens and farming activities which is their way to struggle for life, rights, home and concept of home.*

MKRTICH TONOYAN, is an Armenian artist and cultural manager, member of the Artists’ Union of Armenia (since 2005), co-founder of “Akos” Cultural NGO (2002) and current president of the AKOS Cultural NGO, founder of the «Armenian Art Centre of Social Studies» (ACOSS) international artists-in-residence program (2006), co-founder of Microresidence network (2012).

From 1991-1994 Tonoyan participated in the Karabakh War, experiencing all the horrors and suffering of death, destruction, injury and despair, events that continue to have profound impact on the direction of his creative and social practice. Tonoyan turned to contemporary art as a space of possibility to address crisis and change in all its dimensions: personal, political, ideological and social. He works in a new direction of conceptual art, called «Military Art», founded by Alexander Melkonyan.

Active in the professional realm of contemporary art since graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts in Yerevan in 2002, Tonoyan has regularly presented his work, projects and lectures on Armenian contemporary art and had talks at numerous national and international art events, galleries and universities (The University of Regina (Canada), The 1st Nations University of Regina, the University of Leeds (UK), The State University of Yerevan (Armenia), The Goethe-Institut, Tbilisi (Georgia), Art Academy of Gyumri (Armenia), Joshebi University of Arts and Design of Tokyo (Japan), Cleveland State University, OH, Denison University, OH (USA) particularly:

the Gyumri Biennale in Armenia, the Artistirium and Transrelation symposium in Tbilisi and “Batumi Backyard Stories II” in Batumi (Georgia), FormVerk in Sweden, the HweiLan International Artists Workshop in Taiwan, the Thessaloniki Biennale in Greece, the Stuttgarter Kunstverein in Germany, the Water Tower festival in Bulgaria, Cló artists workshop in Ireland, Galerie La Vielle Poste, Larroque, France, Juan Miro Foundation in Palma de Mallorca and Can Gelabert in Binissalem (Spain), 18th Street Arts Center in Los Angeles (USA), CEC ArtsLink in NYC (USA), The Sculpture Center, Cleveland, OH (USA), Neutral Ground Contemporary Art Forum in Regina (Canada), Youkobo Art Space in Tokyo, pre-event of Saitama Triennale 2016 (Japan), Studio Kura in Fukuoka (Japan) and Artcore Gallery in Paris and Ottawa University (Canada), Kit Gallery, Trondheim (Norway), The UNAIDS building in Geneva (Switzerland).

As a cultural manager Tonoyan collaborates with many local and international organizations, noticeably linking with his own art practice, always having involved ACOSS residency program and visiting artists as well, to develop cultural exchange opportunities, and locally to develop socially engaged projects aiming social changes in the peripheries and border zones of Armenia. Since 2006 ACOSS AIR has hosted 200 international artists in residence and guests from 40 countries.

He is married with four daughters.