



Grigor Apoyan  
(1926–1981)

## WEDDING IN GYUMRI

Artik, Shirak Region,  
Armenian SSR

1963

*Canvas, sand, gluing*

About the project

<https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/events/special/p/lyudi-i-fondy-eng/>





SELECTED BY

**Vera Dormasheva,**

*Leading Artist of the Museum*



Hello, dear visitors!

My name is Vera Dormasheva, and I am the Leading Artist of the Museum.

As part of the 'People and Collections' project, let me introduce you to the painting 'Wedding in Gyumri'.

Its creator is a self-taught artist Grigor Apoyan (1926–1991), who invented a unique technique that has no analogues in the world, it is called drawing with coloured sand. He was born in the Armenian city of Artik, famous for its tuff quarries. The artist uses canvas, glue and different shades of tuff sand, which give the painting the unique colour. The characteristic prominence of the work makes it in a way similar to a bas-relief.

The artist's unique creative technique combined with a variety of themes ensured his great success in the 'naive' style, cherished by the painter. His works are part of the permanent exhibition of the Museum of Folk Art in Yerevan and of private collections.

My work has taken me to many Russian cities, and these were trips specifically involving exhibitions of naive art. It attracts me first of all with its unconventional style and unorthodox materials, that is why this painting immediately captured my attention. Besides, I have a personal story with the city mentioned in the title: the father of my close friend was born in Gyumri (formerly Leninakan), so I know a little about this ancient city (according to archaeologists, the first settlements on the territory of modern Gyumri date back to the Bronze Age); the city is also notorious for the catastrophic Spitak (Leninakan) earthquake of 1988.

The painting 'Wedding in Gyumri' was created in 1963. It depicts a wedding cortege arriving at one of Gyumri courtyards. Compositionally, the painting resembles a stage in the theater and the atmosphere of the event carries a distinctive theatrical tone.

The national features of the Armenian urban architecture are well suited to their role as a setting for the celebration.

The overall dramatic effect is enhanced by colourful carpets hanging from the wooden balconies. The artist's portrayal of the festive bustle is incredibly vibrant: it can be seen in the way women set the festive table, and in the enthusiastic approach to grilling shish kebab by men, and in the sincere joy shown by the welcoming party. Some characters wear traditional costumes of late 19th century, evidencing the painter's desire to build a symbolic bridge between different generations. Above the scene, Apoyan has placed the conical domes of Armenian churches, symbolizing the blessing of the young couple's marriage.

The painting brings a feeling of holiday and a sense of family warmth, reminds us of simple human joys, which, unfortunately, we sometimes forget about in the everyday hustle and bustle of the big city.

I hope that Grigor Apoyan's work will evoke positive emotions in you too.