

"Tsitsernakaberd"

2010. 30" W X 40" H

David Feinberg and granddaughter of Armenian genocide survivors Ariel Strichartz and artists Bonnie Brabson, Chris Charbonneau, Joni Christenson, Sarah Hiatt, Peter Lommen, Tena Patterson, Rowan Pope, Michael Zittlow, and Tat'Yana Kenigsberg

As a child, Ariel Strichartz was fascinated by the rotating gallery of family photos on her grandmother's dresser and on the walls of her grandparent's house. The importance of remembering the Genocide was always communicated by her grandparents, whose parents were survivors of the Hamidian massacres. Yet despite the palpable insistence on passing on memories, Ariel feels that the details surrounding the figures in the photos, many of whom were victims of the subsequent Genocide, have slipped through her fingers.

At the end of a month long trip in Armenia in 1997, Ariel traveled with fellow volunteers to Tsisernakaberd*, the genocide's memorial in Yerevan. The contours of the memorial were difficult to make out in the dusk and the eternal flame at the memorial's center was extinguished due to fuel shortages. To Ariel's surprise, a member of the group called out her name and said someone was looking for her: her cousins from Yerevan, whom she had never met before. They brought her tulips, which she in turn left at the center of the memorial in remembrance of the lives lost in the Genocide. To her, the unexpected and poignant encounter with family at the Tsisernakaberd evokes the feelings communicated by her grandparents: a terrible sadness for what was lost, but a celebration of what managed to survive.

*Tsitsernakaberd, the memorial for victims of the Armenian Genocide, began construction in 1965 and was completed in 1968. It is located on a hill overlooking Yerevan, Armenia. Every year on April 24th, hundreds of thousands of Armenians travel to the site to honor those who lost their lives in the genocide of 1915.