

Document Citation

Title	Paradjanov's Armenian epic: the color of pomegranates
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Source	<i>Pacific Film Archive Calendar</i>
Date	1984 Oct 03
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Sayat Nova (The color of pomegranates), Paradhanov, Sergei, 1972

Paradjanov's Armenian Epic: The Color of Pomegranates (Sayat Nova) 7:30

10/3/84

Sergei Paradjanov's first feature after *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors* (1964) traces the life of a great 18th-century Armenian poet and monk, Sayat Nova, through his writings. The history and heritage of the Armenian nation and people—a history of Turkish genocide, Persian invasions, and a vast migration to the Russian section in the early 20th century; a heritage of ceremony, iconography, and architectural styles drawn from the Bible—are represented in daringly symbolic imagery. (Jean Vidal notes, "There are as many symbols as there are takes. One example: three piles of wool—red, blue and orange—fall onto the scale of the dyer, father of Sayat Nova. These are the colors of the Armenian flag...") *The Color of Pomegranates* was shown in Soviet theaters for two weeks and then banned when its symbolism was "decoded." The director was sentenced to five years imprisonment on various unrelated charges. A partial restoration of the Soviet-censored print made the rounds of the Paris film clubs and created a reaction which led to the eventual release of Paradjanov from the prison camps, although he is still forbidden to work. The film was shown at Cannes in 1978 and at the New York Film Festival in 1980.

- Directed and Written by Sergei Paradjanov, based on the writings of Sayat Nova. Produced by Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijan Studios in the Soviet Union. (1970, 90 mins, In Armenian with English titles, 35mm, Color, Print from International Film Exchange)