Los Angeles—For centuries, Armenian janyak (Ժանյակ) or needle lace has been a precious link for Armenians across the world. A portable and enduring art form passed from mother to daughter, it has connected generations both in their homeland and in the diaspora, transmitting cultural heritage and values.

The 14 janyak doilies on view at the Fowler were created by Marie Pilibossian (1898–1986), an Armenian genocide survivor who emigrated to America. She gifted them to the Fowler Museum in 1980, at the encouragement of Armenian Studies professor Avedis Sanjian, who believed in the importance of documenting this crucial tradition at UCLA. This collection is especially resonant in Los Angeles, host to the largest Armenian community in diaspora. Displaced Armenian women like Pilibossian carried this tactile tradition with them into exile and their new homes, knotting memories of survival and endurance into their lacework, bridging time and space, and demonstrating their political unity and resolve.
*Janyak* may seem a relatively simple craft that uses only needle and thread (contrary to embroidery, which adds stitching to a base fabric). But the intricacy of this lacework, the technical precision and refined imagination it requires, make it a vibrant form of artistry in its own right. Serving primarily as important decorative objects in Armenian homes, *janyak* formed an important aesthetic component of family life; and demonstrated the skill, taste, and industriousness of Armenian women.

Each piece of lace incorporates an array of symbols and patterns, many of which appear regularly in *janyak* produced in Armenia and its diaspora. The exhibition highlights specific patterns that reference people, places, and concepts like eternity. Contextual photographs trace the emigration and life of Marie Pilibossian, as well as sculptural manifestations of *janyak* in bronze and stone, some dating to the 8th century BCE.

**Credits**

*Janyak: Armenian Art of Knots and Loops* is organized by the Fowler Museum at UCLA and curated by Gassia Armenian, Fowler curatorial and research associate.

**About the Fowler**

The Fowler Museum at UCLA explores global arts and cultures with an emphasis on Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Indigenous Americas—past and present. The Fowler enhances understanding of world cultures through dynamic exhibitions, publications, and public programs, informed by interdisciplinary approaches and the perspectives of the cultures represented. The work of international contemporary artists is presented within complex frameworks of politics, culture, and social action.

**Museum Information**

308 Charles E Young Dr N | Los Angeles, CA 90095 | [fowler.ucla.edu/visit](http://fowler.ucla.edu/visit)
Parking in UCLA Lot 4: 198 Westwood Plaza at Sunset Blvd, $3/hr
Rideshare drop-off: 305 Royce Drive

**Hours:** Wednesday–Sunday, 12–5 pm
Admission to the Fowler is free