

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Krissy Bailey, ITVS

415-356-8383, ext. 254

Krissy_Bailey@itvs.org

For downloadable images visit www.itvs.org/films/last-tightrope-dancer-in-armenia/photos-and-press-kit,
For more information about the program, visit the companion website www.pbs.org/globalvoices/.

Masters in Their Day, Two Armenian Men Now Struggle to Keep the Ancient Art of Tight Rope Dancing Alive

***The Last Tightrope Dancer in Armenia* to premiere on the
Global Voices series, Sunday, October 17 at 10 PM
on the PBS WORLD channel**

(San Francisco, CA) –78-year-old Zhora and 77-year-old Knyaz were once the most celebrated tightrope dancers in Armenia. Today, they are the only masters left, trying to keep this art alive against the currents of contemporary society. Envious rivals throughout their lives, they now share the same hope: that the only remaining tightrope-student, Hovsep, a 17-year-old orphan adopted by Zhora, will continue their art. Hovsep has to decide whether to become the last tightrope dancer in a society that has abandoned both him and the art of tightrope dancing. *The Last Tightrope Dancer* will premiere nationally on PBS WORLD's *Global Voices*, an international themed documentary series, on Sunday, October 17 at 10 PM (check local listings). The program will be available for online streaming beginning Monday, October 18, on PBS Video (<http://video.pbs.org/program/1478905970/>).

About the Filmmaker

Vardan Hovhannisyanyan was a freelance cameraman from 1988 to 1991, covering the hot regions and ethnic conflicts related to the post-Soviet transition for the international news. He was twice captured as a prisoner of war during the Kharabagh war. In 1993, he established Bars Media Documentary Film Studio — one of the first independent film companies in Armenia — which specializes in making documentaries about human stories, culture, history, and other social issues. Hovhannisyanyan has also been the executive producer of documentaries for organizations such as the United Nations, USAID, OSCE, the British Council, and OXFAM. Recently, he directed and produced *A Story of People in War and Peace*, which won over 20 awards including the *FIPRESCI* prize, the *Best New Documentary Filmmaker Award* at Tribeca Film Festival (New York, 2007), the *Audience Award* at *Trieste Film Festival* (Italy 2007), the *Special Mention Award* at the *ZagrebDox Film Festival* (Croatia 2007), and

--More--



Docaviv Film Festival (Israel 2007). The film was nominated for the *Joris Ivens* award at *IDFA* (2006) in the Netherlands and has been shown on the BBC in the UK, ARTE WDR in Germany, and soon on YLE in Finland.

About *Global Voices*

Global Voices is produced by ITVS International and began airing on the PBS WORLD digital channel on Sunday, April 26, 2009. This 26-week series brings internationally themed documentaries, made by both U.S.-based and international filmmakers, to a national audience. This season, the series will feature the U.S. premieres of six documentaries funded by ITVS International, as well as encore broadcasts of other acclaimed ITVS programs. In addition to the PBS WORLD broadcast, select episodes will be available online, post broadcast—via iTunes, Amazon, Netflix, and on PBS's Video player through <http://video.pbs.org>. For the complete lineup and schedule, visit www.pbs.org/globalvoices/.

For more information about PBS WORLD visit <http://www.pbs.org/pbsworld/>.

More information about ITVS International is available online at <http://www.itvs.org/international>.

###