

# MUSEUM

Georgian National Museum

N2 · 2015

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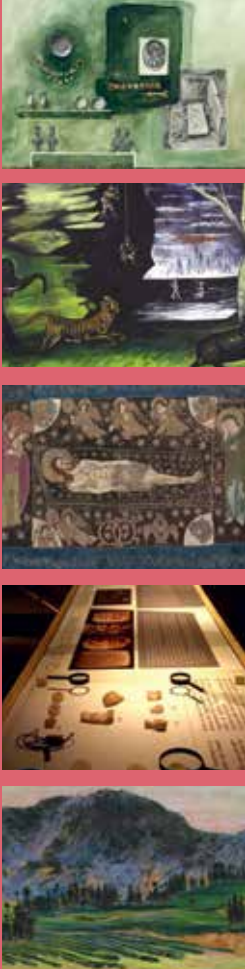




**When visiting the Svaneti Museum in Mestia (GNM), you can stop by the multimedia library – a modern, interactive space where visitors can access Georgian and international scientific and educational literature, as well as fiction, in the form of books, periodicals, CDs or DVDs.**

- ▶ **The multimedia library collection was filled with books donated by various organizations and individuals.**
- ▶ **The Svaneti Museum multimedia library offers free internet and a view of the landscapes of Mestia and its famous towers.**
- ▶ **The Svaneti Museum multimedia library is open every day except Monday, from 10.00 am to 6:00 pm.**
- ▶ **Membership in the multimedia library is free. You can use the books and visual material on site.**

# MUSEUM



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A new "revolution" in Georgian painting began in the 1950s, led by young artists who arrived on the scene during the post-Stalinist liberalization period. As a result, the uncontested dominance of the "artistic style" of Socialist realism of the 1930s and 1940s was relegated to the past.

### **14 / HISTORY**

Remembering the significant period of the late 1950s in the Museum's history is important, as it describes the process of creating an exhibition that was enjoyed by generations.

### **42 / RESTORATION**

The exceptional rendering of a very dramatic scene appears to be based on a certain realism – yet we can say with certainty – it was a reality Pirosmiani had never seen.

### **44 / PROJECT**

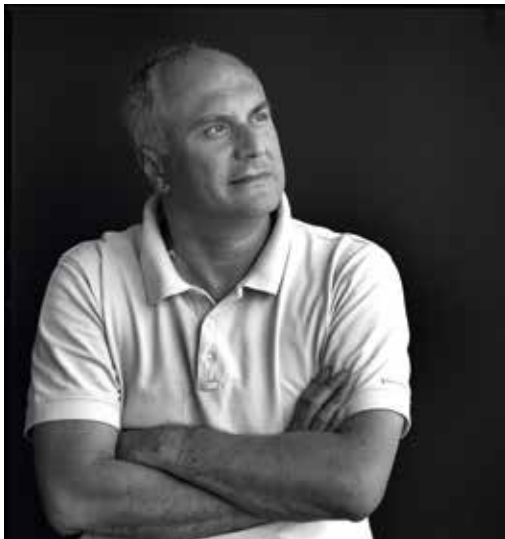
The artistic value of these objects of Georgian cultural heritage is so great that they have become part of the world's cultural heritage.

### **62 / INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

The exhibition, entitled *From the depths of time: the origins of communication and community*, illustrated the results of archaeological excavations underway at the Lower Paleolithic settlement remains in Dmanisi, southern Georgia and in the city-state of Urkesh in south-eastern Syria.

### **28 / EXHIBITION**

After seeing one of the first exhibitions held by artists in the 1950s, art historian René Schermerling said, "I am glad that browns have left these walls and that true colors shine on them now".



One of the first words crossing my mind when thinking about a collective term that could refer to the way the universe works is "connections". Occurrences that took place several centuries or even billion years ago defined our present and will continue to influence our future. This is a reason that we as humans should be curious about every detail that might bear information about our past. Connections are different and they are all around; they co-exist and form out everyday life.

Our Museum is a place where art meets science; it has an endless list of connections. The history of our country, our museum's own history, our founders, our collections, our scientists, viewers, friends and you – our readers – are part of this list.

With this issue we try to familiarize you with our connections. We tell you the story of how one of our most successful exhibits was created and how its legendary curator and visionary scientist Alexander Javakhishvili developed the exhibit that yelled in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century and set the standard we tried to meet during the development of the new archaeological exhibit.

We tell stories about our friends – Prof. Reid Ferring, archaeologist – who has worked with the museum for more than 20 years; Tim Severin – a "de-tribalized" academician – who repeated the Argonauts' ancient voyage 30 years ago; and Paul Salopek – who set out from Ethiopia on foot to repeat the journey of ancient humans with his project called "Out of Eden Walk".

We tell you an amazing story of Pirosmani's two paintings, Arsenal Hill at Night and Hunting in India; how the former was donated to the Georgian people this year and exhibited at the National Gallery after 96 years of traveling, and how the latter was repaired and renovated through the complex and scrupulous work of our restorers.

We tell how honored and proud we were to participate in the first International Science and Innovation Week and solemnly host its closing ceremony.

There is lot more inside this issue about our local and international exhibits and various projects. We welcome you to share the excitement, adrenaline and joy we experience at the end of every success.

With all this in mind we do hope to strengthen the connection we have with you – our readers and visitors.

**Editor in Chief:** David Lordkipanidze

**Editorial Board:** Ekaterina Gamkrelidze, Natia Khuluzauri, Mikheil Tsereteli, Merab Mikeladze

**Photographer:** Mirian Kiladze, Malkhaz Machavariani, Zaza Makharadze, Guram Bumbiashvili, Fred Ernst.

**English Language Editor:** Mary Ellen Chatwin

**Translator:** Maia Nikolaishvili

**Designer:** Tornike Lordkipanidze

**Front cover:** Donor Bishop Gerasime Chkheidze. 20ies of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. St. George church.

Tabakini, Imereti, Georgia. Copy made by G. Khmaladze. 1913. Oil on canvas. Photo by Zaza Makharadze

**Back cover:** The Tviberi Four Gospels, decorated with a braided floral cross. 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Paint on parchment. Photo by Mirian Kiladze

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# OUT OF EDEN WALK

A SOLO JOURNEY ON FOOT ACROSS THE WORLD REACHES GEORGIA

## MAIN STORY > Paul Salopek

In early 2013 writer Paul Salopek set out from the Great Rift Valley in Ethiopia to retrace, on foot, the Stone Age pathways of the first human diaspora across the Earth. His project, called "Out of Eden Walk," is a seven-year exercise in storytelling. As he walks across three continents at 5 kilometers an hour, Salopek engages with local communities and writes about the great stories of our time – cultural endurance, the impacts of technology, mass migration, human conflict, climate change and more. After two years and roughly 9 million footsteps, following the first human migration, he has reached Georgia. Born in California, Paul Salopek is a correspondent who has reported in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, the Balkans and Latin America. His stories have appeared in National Geographic Magazine, The New York Times, Chicago Tribune, The Best American Travel Writing and other publications. His work has earned two Pulitzer Prizes.

I am walking cross the world.

Since 2013, I have been retracing, on foot, the epic journey that our ancestors undertook out of Africa back in the Stone Age. I began my walk at a fabled human origins site called Herto Bouri, in the Rift Valley of Ethiopia, which holds some of the oldest Homo sapiens fossils known. My long trek will end – after eight years, some 29 countries and 33,000 kilometers – at the southern tip of South America, where our forebears ran out of new horizons to explore.

This project, called the "Out of Eden Walk," is not an athletic feat. It is a synthesis of science, culture, history, technology and the art of storytelling. Along the way I am writing about the major stories of our time – from climate change to technological innovation, from mass migration to cultural survival – by walking alongside the people who inhabit these headlines every day. My core partners in this pilgrimage include the National Geographic Society, the Knight Foundation

and Harvard University. My original route through Eurasia lay eastward across Anatolia, in Turkey, through northern Iraq, and onward into Central Asia. But when Iran refused my visa application, I was nudged northward into unexpected terrain – into the Caucasus, to Georgia.

"I want to thank you," Georgian National Museum director David Lordkipanidze joked, welcoming me to Tbilisi. "You just proved that Dmanisi Man could walk here from Africa."



As the extraordinary Dmanisi fossils indeed show, humans and pre-humans have been rambling into Georgia for at least 1.8 million years. In historical times, invaders and colonizers walked through from Persia, ancient Greece, Rome, Byzantium, Arabia, the Ottoman Empire, Russia and other regions. Georgia is a primordial crossroads. It is a vital bridge between Asia and Europe.

For this reason, I have been lucky in my obstacles.

There has been no better place than Georgia to pause my trek, to re-equip and to rest, on my way eastward to Asia. Similarly, I could have found no finer local host than the Georgian National Museum.

The Georgian National Museum is one of those rare public institutions that surprises by exceeding its mandate.

The National Museum is not merely a repository of Georgia's cultural and historical riches (Though it is that, too). It also functions as a world-class center for cross-cultural learning. It is a nexus for original research in the fields of archeology, paleontology and other studies. It serves as an innovative space for making connections between art and science. And crucially, it is an increasingly popular forum for Georgians to conduct a deeper conversation with itself about Georgia's – and humankind's – place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is a think tank and public roundtable. It is a civic treasure.

When I limped into Tbilisi on a grey day last November, my feet half-frozen by the snows smothering the mountains above Lake Paravani, I had no idea what lay in store. What I found in the city was a group of like-minded explorers at the museum: intellectually curious, willing to break down old barriers between academia and the public, and eager to make contacts across borders with all of Georgia's neighbors and beyond. In other words, I discovered a band of fellow voyagers who were rambling along in spirit with the "Out of Eden Walk."

Over the past six months, I have been privileged to lecture at the museum auditorium, collaborate on a "Out of Eden



Paul in Salopek Akhaltsikhe, Georgia

Walk" exhibit, observe and report on Kurgan burial mounds and ancient vinticulture sites excavated by museum staff, and concoct a global education program based on walking that integrates the museum's own student outreach initiatives.

When our Pleistocene ancestors roamed out of Mother Africa between 60,000 and 100,000 years ago, they conquered the Earth by problem solving and adapting to its many diverse environments. The "Out of Eden Walk" tries to continue this tradition by honoring the most basic human act there is: learning.

The National Museum of Georgia is now an important partner in this long walk – a shared journey if cognition. ■



Archeologists at Zoroastrian site, Tbilisi, Georgia



Walking out of Ethiopia



First walkers out of Africa, Dmanisi

## TIM SEVERIN

## A DE-TRIBALISED ACADEMICIAN

## INTERVIEW &gt; Natia Khuluzauri

Renowned explorer, historian and writer, called by his friend "a de-tribalized academician", Tim Severin revisited Georgia in the summer of 2014. His first and notable voyage to our country was in 1984 when he and his crew replicated Jason and the Argonauts' ancient voyage, attaining the Georgian coast with their ship, the Argo. Many events were organized for Mr. Severin's second visit to Georgia in 2014. One called "30 years later – celebrating Tim Severin's successful repeat of Jason's Voyage", was held at the Georgian National Museum.



Tim Severin

**Mr. Severin thank you very much for finding time to answer our questions. You have a very impressive biography, full of adventures, how does it feel to be a sailor of the Seven Seas?**

Thank you very much for your kind words. It's been my good fortune to explore the sea-going heritage of many diverse cultures, whether it's the skills of their shipwrights or the achievements of their sailors. On a number of voyages I have shared these experiences with the heirs to those traditions and it has been a hugely enjoyable privilege.

**Journeys that you have organized were mostly based on legend. How did you choose the story – did you just pick one you liked most, or did you research the voyage first so you had an idea in advance whether it could be successful?**

My choice of the story of Jason and the Argonauts, as the subject for a maritime expedition – an 'archaeological experiment' one might say – was a natural progression for me: I had already made voyages in replica vessels to retrace the route of St. Brendan, the Patron Saint of Mariners (with a

leather boat!) and then of Sinbad, the most famous sailor in history, in an 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century Arab ship. Then I turned to the earliest Western voyage story, Jason and his Argonauts who went in search of the Golden Fleece. My research showed that there would be many challenges, not least of which was to construct such an unusual vessel (a 20-oar galley) and to find a crew who could succeed demonstrating that such a vessel could complete what was – in its time – a very lengthy voyage.

**This expedition is especially interesting for scientists studying Georgian history and the Georgian people. What was the reason for your interest in the myth about Jason and the Argonauts?**

The story of Jason and his Argonauts had a special appeal for me because it is the oldest voyage story in Western classical literature. It is also the first time that we know of, that a vessel – the Argo – is given a name! Also, quite a number of armchair scholars had dismissed the tale as mere legend. By nature, I tend to question received wisdom.

**How long did you prepare for this particular expedition, and did you ex-**



Tim Severin, Ilia Peradze, David Lordkipanidze. Dmanisi, Georgia. 2014



**pect to find archaeological material, ancient traditions of gold mining or stories that would give a strong plausibility to the myth of the Argonauts in Georgia?**

Preparation for the Jason Voyage took about three years. At the outset I had to study the surviving classical texts and as many existing commentaries on it as I could find. These included the earlier theories about the reality of the Golden Fleece, any writings (as far as I was able to access them) about the archaeology of Georgia, and about coastal locations along the intended voyage to Georgia. Also there was the long process of researching the type of boat that would have been available in the late Bronze Age, preparing technical design plans, building a scale model of the boat, finding a

shipwright, obtaining the materials – the list goes on and on. Then, too, I visited the ‘choke’ point of the intended voyage: the straits of Bosphorus at Istanbul. Critics had said that it would be impossible to row against the current there, so I talked with fishermen on the Bosphorus about the currents and counter-currents and how they might be used to make the passage through the straits.

**Could you tell us about how you felt when you first arrived in the land of Colchis in 1984?**

The arrival of the Argo in Georgian waters and then rowing up the Rioni River with the Georgian volunteers added to my crew was, in a word, surrealistic. I had no way of knowing what would happen as I had not been to Georgia previously

so every moment produced a surprise. The enthusiasm of the Georgians was overwhelming. They threw themselves into helping and welcoming my modern Argonauts. For us – and I think also for the Georgians – it was an emotional experience, a whirlwind of energetic welcome. I know I speak for my crew when I say that we will always remember those remarkable days.

**Now, after 30 years, you are visiting Georgia again and have met members of your team and many of the scientists again. Much has changed over those years; could you give us your overall impression about today’s Georgia?**

The face of modern Georgia is different from the country I visited thirty



Tim Severin, Otar Lordkipanidze, Yuri Senkevich. Vani, Georgia. 1984



Ilia Peradze, Tim Severin, Nugzar Popkhadze, Otar Lordkipanidze. Vani, Georgia. 1984



Tim Severin, Otar Lordkipanidze, Alexander Javakhishvili. State Museum of Georgia, 1984



Tim Severin and "Modern Argonauts". Poti, Georgia. 1984

years ago, with so many new buildings, new roads, new enterprises, more traffic, and advertising along the roads. Looking more closely, I saw again the same character of the people, however – their lively friendliness, the eagerness to help, the pride in their history and identity, the open approach of a peo-

ple alert and eager to absorb change, yet comfortable with the foundation of their achievements.

**The Vani archaeological site and archaeological material linking the myth of Jason and the Argonauts to reality is part of the Georgian National**

**Museum. Our museum is undergoing a major transformation/reorganization from the old type of organization to a modern institution. What would you note as the major difference from the Museum you visited 30 years ago and how would you estimate changes that you saw during your current visit?**

The National Museum is a fine example of the progressive outlook that characterizes so much of what I saw in Georgia on this recent visit. Gone are the static displays that were once the norm. They were of their time: rather ponderous though instructive, mainly to those with a professional interest. In have come new methods of presentation: lighter and brighter, deploying modern materials and techniques to engage the visitor and to better show spectacular treasures. It was intriguing – and unexpected – also to see that the National Museum has not neglected Georgia's more recent history and there was boldness in interpretation and design. As guardian of such an exceptional store of material reaching back to the earliest times, the National Museum has a great responsibility to continue to attract, inform, and inspire.

**What would you advise us about the best way for a small country like Georgia, to communicate our culture, history and traditions to the rest of the world using modern trends but still not losing our own identity? Do you think we are moving in the right direction?**

I am a reluctant advisor but it seems to me that small countries like Georgia (and Ireland where I live) have the opportunity to use modern communications in all forms to project their culture to a global audience. The digital world is where creativity is more important than size. Georgia has the assets in museums, in music, in performance and visual arts that, when done imaginatively, can be brought together in original combinations to showcase what is unique and vibrant within the national heritage. ■



"Modern Argo" at the Georgian Shore, 1984



Tim Severin on "Argo", 1984



## REID FERRING

# MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS IN DMANISI

### MUSEUM FIREND > Natia Khuluzauri

Professor Reid Ferring, from the University of Texas (USA), has spent more than 20 years in Georgia at the Dmanisi archaeological site. He has participated in almost all significant and internationally recognized discoveries made at this site, and he still takes an active part in scientific research. He also gives talks at the Dmanisi Field School for students and to the interested public who gather regularly at the Scientific Café of the S. Janashia Museum of Georgian History.



Prof. Reid Ferring

**Prof. Ferring, first of all thank you for finding time to answer our questions. Your friendship with the Georgian National Museum started long ago. Could you please tell us what brought you here for the first time?**

In the spring of 1993 my friend, Prof. Ofer Bar-Yosef at Harvard, called me one day and said, "Reid, we have a grant from the Leakey Foundation to go to Georgia and we want you to come with us". He told me about the discovery of the mandible at Dmanisi, and that they wanted to explore possibilities for starting research with Georgians. So in August that year I spent three weeks in Georgia touring archaeological sites and surveying geological exposures with Ofer, other friends from Israel and the US and of course with Georgian archaeologists and geologists. I have come back to Georgia every year since.

**Could you please tell us about your first visit, your first impressions?**

I still have many vivid impressions from that first trip. Unfortunately we were immediately impressed by the hardships that Georgia was enduring near the end of the civil conflicts. Burned-out

buildings and hundreds of bullet holes along Rustaveli were evidence of the terrible fighting. And constant gunfire at night in the darkened city told us that it was not completely over. We were all shocked by the shortages of power, water, food and petrol and the fact that there were virtually no shops, stores or restaurants open anywhere. But in parallel with those unhappy impressions was my astonishment at the warm and cheerful hospitality of the Georgians that hosted us. Everywhere we went we were presented with tables of food and wine, and of course Georgians celebrating us at their supra. I knew immediately that Georgians were very special people, and I liked them from the start. Of course we actually did some work – and I could immediately see so many opportunities for exciting and important research. We made one short visit to Dmanisi, but I had no idea what an important place that would become for me in the following years.

**Was it only scientific interest that made you return?**

A wise gentleman from Sweden once advised me that doing business with friends could be risky but that making

friends through business could be a blessing. This is exactly what has characterized my work in Georgia. While the prospects of conducting geological or archaeological work in Georgia was very exciting to me at that stage of my career, I quickly became enamored with the landscapes, history and, most of all, people of Georgia. Fortunately by that time in my life I had made the decision not just to work at science but also, as we say, to take time to "smell the roses". So in the years that followed, every time I landed at the Tbilisi airport I had the double pleasure of looking forward to exciting research and to reunions with good friends.

**You are one of those few scientists who have witnessed and participated in the whole process of how Dmanisi became an archaeological site of worldwide significance. Please tell us how it happened and what were the milestones on the way to this success?**

Participating for all these years in the work at Dmanisi has truly been an incredible experience: annual field seasons with a constantly changing cast of characters from all over the world, punctua-



Prof. Reid Ferring, field lecture during Dmanisi field School, Georgia

that there are artifacts and fossils over an area of almost 40,000 m<sup>2</sup>. This shows that in addition to its phenomenal record of human fossils, Dmanisi has also yielded a totally unique record of the occupation patterns, activities and adaptations of the first Eurasians.

**Along with archaeological research you usually participate in the Dmanisi summer school, giving lectures to young professionals and students. This means that you are participating in the formation of a new generation of researchers. What can you say about this – how important is it to organize summer schools on the archaeological sites where one can gain both academic knowledge and practical experience at the same time?**

The summer field schools have been a most important and rewarding addition to the Dmanisi project. By now scores of students from around the world have come there to participate in research, to learn how to excavate, to have a chance to interact with the professional members of the team, and to form new friendships that will undoubtedly become vital aspects of their future careers in paleoanthropology. In our disciplines there is absolutely no substitute for both training and experience in the field. Our students have not only learned field methods, but have also had the thrill of knowing that they are doing truly important research. That thrill will certainly be spread and shared for years to come through our students' stories of "my experience at Dmanisi".



Prof. Reid Ferring at the excavations in Dmanisi, Georgia

**As a friend of the museum you often volunteered and have contributed greatly to the creation of the Dmanisi website and participated in many activities that supported scientific and general promotion of the archaeological site. What inspired you to do all these things, as you have not received monetary rewards for this?**

There have been several motivations for me. Dmanisi is clearly of global signi-

ted by discoveries of spectacular human fossils. Each discovery was imbued with an atmosphere of complete excitement and the knowledge that each new fossil was likely to change a part of the human story. Several notable milestones in my experience come to mind. The first was in 1996 when Carl Swisher and I produced the first accurate estimate for the age of Dmanisi (that estimate by the way has been reinforced by all subsequent dating efforts). The second was

the discovery of the first two crania in 1999 and our subsequent publication on the fossils and age of Dmanisi in Science magazine in 2000. Another threshold in our work was the discovery of artifacts in the earliest levels of Dmanisi that we made in 2005. This discovery also provided the first evidence of how large and complex Dmanisi is as an archaeological site. That discovery led to a new grant and our expanded excavations over the Dmanisi promontory. Today we know



fificance to the scientific community and I feel a tremendous responsibility to do what I can to contribute to the rigorous standards for its investigation. Second, as a scientist and an educator, I believe that it is vitally important to translate the results of our scientific investigations for the general public. Last, volunteering my time at Dmanisi and here at the Museum is really a small way for me to repay all of the kindness and friendship, as well as the research opportunities, that have been given to me over these years in Georgia.

**I know that you are not the only friend of our country and the museum in your family. Wasn't your spouse teaching English in Georgia?**

In 2006 my wife Elizabeth was able to accompany me to Georgia during my extended stay here as a Fulbright Scholar. She took a leave of absence from her teaching position in Texas and turned her energy towards teaching English for both children and adults here at the Museum. I could see that all of her students enjoyed her "American style" of teaching and that she cared about each of them. Today the fact that all of her students speak English brings her great joy! And I know her students care for her, because every time I see one of them they run up to me and ask, "How is Elizabeth?!"

**How would you evaluate the changes that the Georgian National Museum is going through on its way to becoming a modern museum whose mission is not only preparing exhibitions but becoming a scientific-educational institution?**

I have watched the Museum grow from a near ruins to the exciting and vibrant place that it is today. These changes are the result of the efforts of many talented people, all working to bring the vision of a fully modern museum to reality. When I look at the museum today it's almost impossible to imagine the mu-

seum I first met in 1993. The architectural renovations, the growing number of new exhibitions and the scientific wing of the museum are really tremendous accomplishments that all of Georgia should be proud of. By the way, that "scientific wing" is not just space and collections; it is a growing body of young, energetic and very productive Georgian scientists. Its active role in the new PhD program assures strong links with the rest of the Georgian scientific community. The quality of this growth is no accident, but is the reflection of planning supported by visits and consultations with some of the best museum programs in the world.

**How can we ensure public engagement in the life of a museum?**

Exhibits and educational programs are the key to engaging the public

**Dmanisi is clearly of global significance to the scientific community and I feel a tremendous responsibility to do what I can to contribute to the rigorous standards for its investigation. As a scientist and an educator, I believe that it is vitally important to translate the results of our scientific investigations for the general public.**

with a museum. The extremely rich collections of the museum represent the core of their exhibit potentials as demonstrated by the spectacular treasury, but also by temporary exhibitions of carpets, photographs and natural history specimens. The museum has found other ways to reach the public including the Science Café lecture series and also through the publication of really stunning catalogs of specific collections. I see a good balance of programs aimed at both children and adults, not to mention the increasing numbers of foreign visitors. So, I believe the museum is doing all of the right things to increase public engagement, and the evidence that these efforts are bearing fruit can be seen in increased

visitorship and the growing number of individual and corporate friends of the museum.

**As a scientist do you think that scientific activity is the basis of museum life?**

To me, the scope of activities of this museum is indicated in its name: It is the museum of the Georgian nation. The scientific activities of the museum are extremely important but so are programs dedicated to history, ethnography and of course the arts of Georgia. In reality the GNM is very much like our Smithsonian, with a mission defined by a number of distinct and valuable programs. From a scientific perspective the GNM is clearly taking a lead in research as well as collections management in the areas of natural history and archae-

ology. Its active role in the new PhD program assures strong links with the rest of the Georgian scientific community and an increased status as an educational institution.

**Is there anything else you would like to say?**

I believe the only other thing I would like to say is thank you for the opportunity to comment on my experiences and activities in Georgia over these years. I am not only a "card carrying" friend of the museum but a person fortunate enough to be treated like a member of the Museum family. As my friend from Sweden predicted, this has indeed been a great blessing in my life. ■

# "THE SAFE" AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

## HISTORY > Mikheil Tsereteli

"The Safe" of the State Museum of Georgia is the brainchild of Mr. Alexander Javakhishvili – a truly brilliant and impressive exhibition of gold and silver items of high artistic value that fascinates numerous visitors so much...

Otar Lordkipanidze

One of the main assets of the Georgian National Museum is its personnel, the people who have worked at the Institution and who demonstrate the excellence of their unique and professional craftsmanship. Examples of this professionalism remain in the memory of the organization, enriching its history over time and becoming the basis of our continuing development. We asked two highly respected senior archaeologists of the Museum, Dr. Leila Pantskhava and Prof. Otar Japaridze, Member of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, to recall the process of preparing the exhibition of Georgian Archaeology and the Treasury called "The Safe" in the late 1950s.

Both of them personally took part in the entire process of preparing this major exhibition. Remembering this significant period in the Museum's history is important—the article in this issue, "The Safe", describes the creation of an exhibition that was a state-of-the-art display for the period and much loved by museum visitors of all generations. The creation of the exhibit is linked to the name of Prof. Alexander Javakhishvili, Member of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, who dedicated over fifty years of his life to the Museum. He was a person with multiple talents: a great scholar, an outstanding field archaeologist, a man of refined artistic taste, a highly skilled artist, and one of the best museum professionals of 20<sup>th</sup> century Georgia.

Looking back on Alexander Javakhishvili's exceptional work ethic and the amount of love and care he invested in the cre-







Sketch of the showcase made by Alexander Javakhishvili for the Treasury exhibition.  
Pencil, watercolor, cardboard. 1958



Archaeological exhibition. Sculptor Vasily Vatagin. 1938. Photo by Baglalishvili

ation of this exhibit, one is amazed. In addition to the scientific concept and the display's composition, he prepared the whole exhibit with an exceptional and comprehensive vision – including sketches of the brochure, the poster and invitation cards. His unique style was the result of his enormous and wide-ranging professionalism, and this key display presented Georgia's history for nearly 40 years.

#### **PROF. OTAR JAPARIDZE:**

In the early 1930s, Ivane Javakhishvili, ousted from the Tbilisi State University, was appointed Academic Consultant at the State Museum of Georgia. His priority task while working at the museum was the organization of the archaeological exhibition. He noted that exhibiting the rich collections kept at the museum and their presentation would greatly contribute to research on the ancient periods of Georgian history, because no exhibit about the pre-Christian era had been organized before at the former Caucasian Museum. The archaeological collections at the museum were almost never moved from their storage spaces. It was this rich material that formed the basis of

the first archaeological exhibition. Ivane Javakhishvili trusted Boris Kuftin, a well-known archaeologist who had just moved to live in Georgia, to develop the exhibition plan.

In 1934, the archaeological exhibition Pre-Class Society in the Transcaucasus was organized at the State Museum of Georgia. Setting up an exhibition covering the entire pre-Christian period from the first appearance of humans in the Caucasus to the Early Middle Ages in such a short time was only possible through hard work and dedication. The exhibition occupied two halls on the second floor of the museum's main building. The first, relatively small, hall was fully dedicated to the Stone Age. A model of the Devis Khvreli cave was set up against one side of the hall, with a sculpture of a child trying to catch a lizard placed at its entrance, and figures sitting by the fire deeper inside. The walls of the hall were decorated by remarkable drawings – a hunting scene, outstanding copies of Stone Age paintings, images of various animals. In the showcases along the walls there were stone and bone tools from the Old Stone Age – Paleolithic period, mainly the artifacts discovered in the Gvarjila

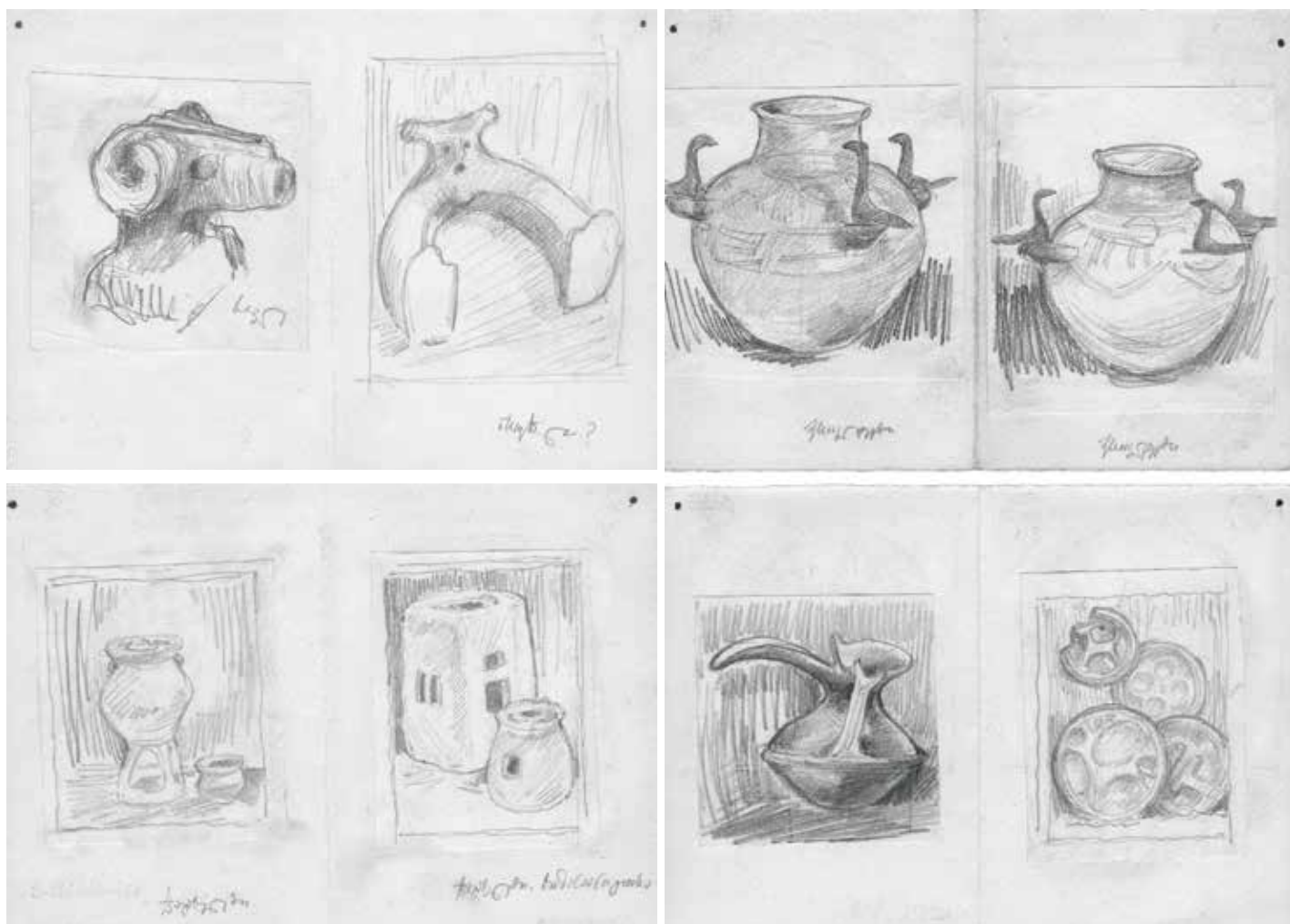
Klde cave in the Kvirila Gorge and the items newly discovered in the Devis Khvreli cave by the head of the Archaeological Department, Prof. G. Nioradze. This hall was very impressive – with the remains of the traces of the first humans in the Caucasus and, specifically, in Georgia, which were presented for the first time. In the larger hall, artifacts selected from the rich Bronze and Iron Age collections of the former Caucasian Museum were exhibited in chronological order in the showcases. A monolith from the newly discovered burial by Prof. Nioradze in Avchala, was placed in the middle of the hall. In one corner of the back wall of the hall, an Egyptian archaeological collection included a sarcophagus, a mummified skull and other artifacts. In the opposite corner Urartian period monuments were placed, including stones with cuneiform inscriptions and other objects of this epoch.

The pre-Christian period exhibition was very soon followed by one on the Middle Ages, dedicated to Shota Rustaveli's 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1937. Active preparations led up to the exhibition, and excavations of the remains of the feudal city in Dmanisi were under way under the supervision of Ivane Javakhishvili. It was mainly the artifacts discovered there that formed the basis for the exhibition Shota Rustaveli and the Culture of His Time, organized in one of the halls on the first floor.

In the second half of the 1930s large-scale archaeological research was under way around Mtskheta and the Tsalka Plateau in Trialeti's high-mountain area. Ivane Javakhishvili led the archaeological expedition to Mtskheta and, at his suggestion, Boris Kuftin was asked to lead the one to Trialeti. Outstanding discoveries showed important aspects of Georgia's ancient history – and of the Caucasus in general – in a completely new light. Based on the artifacts discovered in Trialeti, a completely new periodization of the pre-Christian era was developed.

The work of the Mtskheta Archaeological Expedition was crowned with the discovery of Pitiakhsh burials in Ar-





The model of the album of the Pre-Christian ceramic artifacts made by Alexander Javakhishvili. Pencil. 1950s



Watercolor paintings of ceramic objects from the Kvatskhelebi excavations. Watercolor, pencil. 1950s



Sketch of the showcase made by Alexander Javakhishvili for the Treasury exhibition. Pencil, watercolor, cardboard. 1958



Sketch of the showcase made by Alexander Javakhishvili for the Treasury exhibition. Pencil, watercolor, cardboard. 1958

maziskhevi. The interest towards these newly discovered items was so strong that the museum started preparations to exhibit them. Two halls on the second floor were allocated to the new exhibition. In a relatively short time in 1941, an interesting exhibition opened, where the ancient centers of Georgian culture – Trialeti and Mtskheta – were presented by the monuments found on the Tsalka Plateau from Stone Age to the Middle Ages. Artifacts typical for Early and Middle Bronze Age of the Kura-Araxes and Trialeti cultures, unknown until then, were exhibited for the first time. From the material found by the Mtskheta expedition, objects from the Pitiakhsh burial sites of Samtavro and Armaziskhevi



were exhibited. This archaeological exhibition was on display for over a quarter of a century, showcasing important aspects of Georgia's distant past.

In 1952, the chief of the Department of Georgian Archaeology at the S. Janashia State Museum of Georgia became Alexander Javakhishvili. At the same time, he began supervising the museum's main treasury – The Safe – and remained its irreplaceable guardian until the end of his life. The number of objects in the treasury gradually increased through the new Finds from archaeological excavations. An Exhibition of Precious objects was opened in the treasury, where the goldsmithery objects discovered during the Mtskheta and Trialeti expeditions were displayed alongside the old artifacts. This was a time when archaeological works were being conducted on a large scale in Georgia, and the archaeological expedition of the State Museum of Georgia began a comprehensive study of the remains of the Urnisi settlement and its surroundings. Alexander Javakhishvili led the excavations of the Kvatskhelebi settlement near Urnisi. His great potential as a field archaeologist was demonstrated here. Kvatskhelebi is a settlement of Kura-Araxes culture period dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. The interest in this culture, which was widespread in Western Asia in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, was notably growing at the time. For this reason, the issue of its ethnic origins and its initial location generated acute interest.

The archaeological collection of the Museum of Georgia expanded, replenished with artifacts from various periods. The Stone Age collection grew considerably, while the Bronze and Early Iron Age items became especially numerous. The collections were greatly enriched by artifacts from Antiquity. Gradually, it became clear that the existing exhibition no longer reflected the real picture of the development of the society that lived on the territory of Georgia in the pre-Christian period.

By the late 1950s, preparations began for a new archaeological exhibi-



Illustration by Alexander Javakhishvili for the archaeological exhibition. Part of a house with hearth from the Kvatskhelebi settlement. Pencil, watercolor, cardboard. 1958



Archaeological exhibition. 1961-2002. Part of a house with hearth from the Kvatskhelebi settlement

tion. The increase in the number of collections in the archaeological storage considerably complicated the process of selecting objects to be displayed. Alexander Javakhishvili, who led the creation of the new exhibition, de-

cidied to develop it in a completely new way.

The artifacts were displayed in darkened halls, in showcases lit from inside. A section of a dwelling house with its hearth, cut out and brought in from the



Sketch of the showcase made by Alexander Javakhishvili for the Treasury exhibition. Pencil, watercolor, cardboard. 1958

Kvatskhelebi settlement, was placed in the center of the hall. At the time, this innovation completely broke the mold in the museography. There were practically no photos, drawings or blueprints on display – the only blueprint on the wall was his reconstruction of the plan of the Kvatskhelebi settlement.

The visitor's attention was drawn completely to the objects. These artifacts, with colorful spots as background, made a great impression in their showcases lit from inside, in a darkened hall. He invited a well-known painter, Avto Varazi, as exhibition artist, and this cooperation produced remarkable results.

The archaeological exhibition Georgia's Material Culture from Ancient Times to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD occu-

piated the halls of the first floor. On one side, Stone Age and Early and Middle Bronze Age artifacts were displayed; the other side was taken up by items of Late Bronze and Early Iron Age until the end of Antiquity. This exhibition withstood the test of time and remained on display almost unchanged for half a century, making an indelible impression on generations of visitors.

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**DR. LEILA PANTSKHAVA:**

In 1958, preparations for the archaeological exhibition were under way. The basis of preparing any exhibition is formed by a concept. The concept for the exhibition was developed by archaeologist Alexander Javakhishvili to convey an uninterrupted history of Georgia's mate-

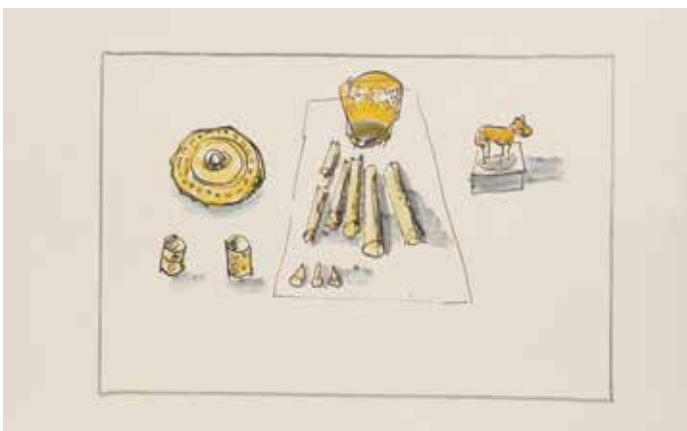
rial culture divided into periods – from the Paleolithic Period until and including Antiquity – with material monuments discovered on the territory of Georgia.

I remember my surprise when I saw how Mr Javakhishvili was drawing something on a thick piece of cardboard – it was sketches for the new archaeological exhibition. He also created the plan for new exhibition showcases which were made in Tbilisi. I did not know at the time that, apparently, in 1940 Mr Javakhishvili had been admitted to the St. Petersburg (Leningrad) Academy of Arts but the war with Finland started soon afterwards and he had to return to Tbilisi. Despite the fact that he was very good at painting with watercolors and had a very good sense of color, he invited a famous pain-





Sketch of the showcase made by Alexander Javakhishvili for the Treasury exhibition. Pencil, watercolor, cardboard. 1958



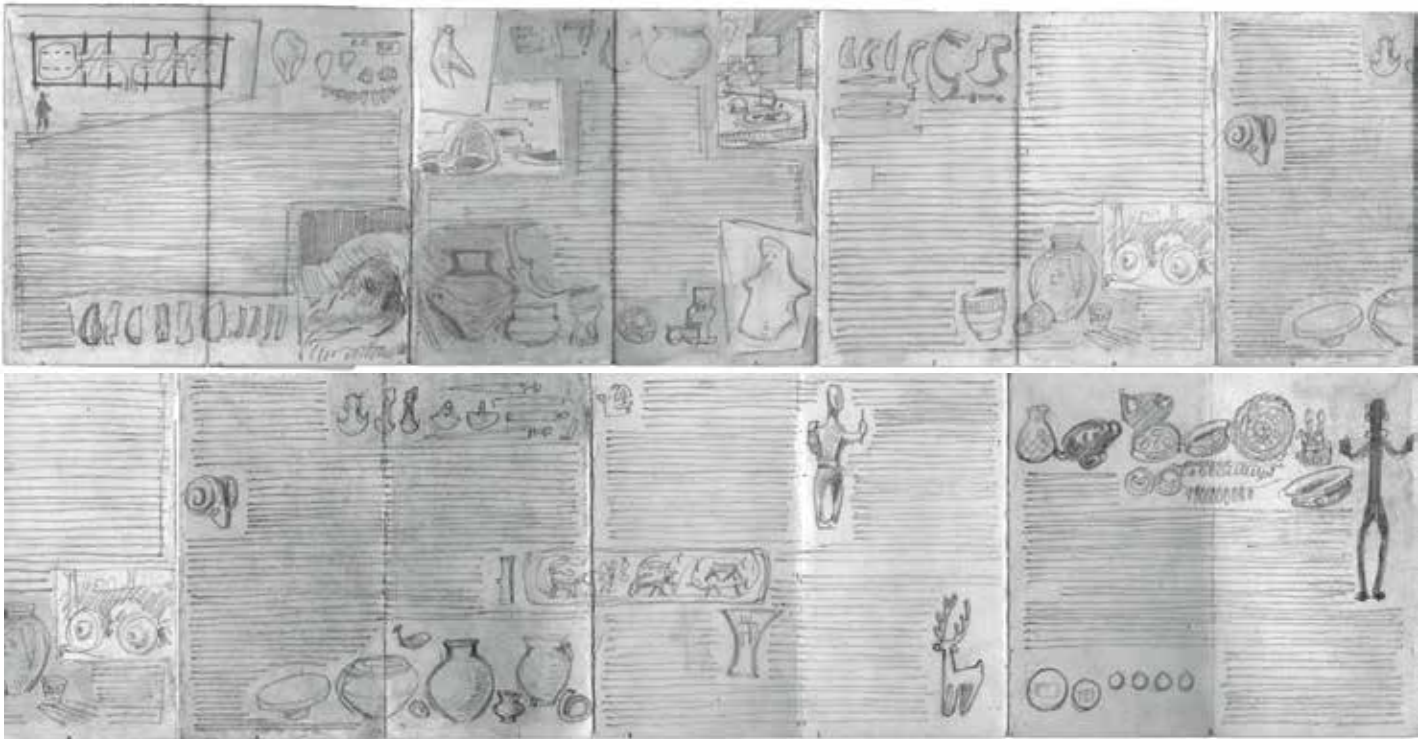
Sketch of the showcase made by Alexander Javakhishvili for the Treasury exhibition. Pencil, watercolor, cardboard. 1958

ter Avto Varazi to be the official artist of the exhibition.

Mr Javakhishvili was very worried about the showcases and the lighting of the pieces brought in from the Kvatskhe-

lebi and the Khovle settlements. He had determined the form but the technical implementation was impossible, given the technical capabilities of the time, more than half a century ago. Today

anything can be found but formerly this was not the case... I remember, he would come to work then soon leave to go to the Council of Ministers – luckily it was located close to the Museum – in an



Sketches of the exhibition itinerary and guide made by Alexander Javakhishvili for the archaeological exhibition. Pencil, gouache, paper. 1958

attempt to procure thick glass for the showcases. The 11 mm glass and electric cables were to be allocated from the Council of Ministers' quota. They had to be copper cables and these too were to be allocated from the quota. These were the conditions in which he had to work.

The selection of materials for the exhibition, the idea of using canvas

inside the showcases, arranging artifacts into a composition with relevant highlights, creating the exhibition guide and brochure, making the sketches of the exhibition poster, the showcases and the hall – all of this is linked to Mr. Javakhishvili's name. Sometimes it took him a week to make one showcase: he would spread a sheet of paper

on the floor arranging the items into a composition. It is hard to convey how much labor was put into the development of the exhibition concept, the selection of items, making the exhibition furniture, distributing the artifacts between the showcases, deciding on the artistic solution and finalizing the display. It was Mr Javakhishvili's ar-





Sketches of the banner and the invitation card made by Alexander Javakhishvili for the archaeological exhibition. Pencil, gouache, paper. 1958



work. Each new showcase amounted to the creation of a new painting. Avto Varazi's contribution was considerable too and the cooperation between these two people played a primordial role in the history of Georgian museography, although close to the end of his life, Mr Javakhishvili said he would do everything completely differen-

tly today. I regret not asking him how he would have gone about creating a new exhibition. Sometime later I learned that he had said the same thing to other people as well and, when asked how he would do it, he replied, "I will do it and you will see". Unfortunately, Mr Javakhishvili died several days after this conversation took place.

I remember Alfred Götze, a famous German archaeologist, who visited Tbilisi and liked the exhibition very much. Around the same time, Mstislav Keldysh, President of the USSR Academy of Sciences, visited Tbilisi and admired the exhibition so much that he asked Mr Javakhishvili to apply for the nomination for the Lenin Prize. Needless to say, he never did any such thing. ■



## RENEWED EXHIBITION OF GEORGIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

**EXHIBITION** > Darejan Kacharava, Nino Lordkipanidze

At the end of 2013, an exhibition entitled Georgian Archaeology from the 8<sup>th</sup> Millennium BC to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD opened at the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia, and has been seen by tens of thousands of visitors.

**T**he public awaited the renewed archaeological exhibition with special interest. Renovation works had been under way at the Georgian National Museum, which meant the exhibition of ancient Georgian culture – on display between 1961 and 2005 – was dismantled. This exhibition had let many discover Georgia's ancient cultures as a result of famous

archaeological excavations in the past century. In addition, the archaeological collection, which is the largest at the Georgian National Museum, has constantly been renewed by new discoveries. Now the old showcases have been upgraded to meet modern museum standards, and artifacts are presented in new scenographic settings created by Vakhtang Khoshtaria, sym-



Miniature sculpture showing the struggle of a gladiator and a lion. Bronze, Tbilisi, Georgia. First half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.





bolically expressing the connection between old and new. Archaeologists of all generations took part in the preparation of the exhibition. The exhibits, displayed in old showcases restored according to museum standards and presented in a new arrangement and décor, symbolize the link between the new, the old, and the contemporary, an idea which archaeology itself complies with.

This exhibit, where archaeological material discovered in Georgia in recent years is presented for the first time alongside old discoveries, shows the unified and uninterrupted line of development of Georgian culture, from the Neolithic Period until Late Antiquity. Numerous archaeological artifacts from the 8<sup>th</sup> millennium BC to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD are displayed both chronologically

and thematically according to the cultures discovered at a given point: 1) Early Farming culture (8<sup>th</sup> millennium BC – first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC); 2) Kura-Araxes Culture (second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC – first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC); 3) The Culture of Early Barrows (second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium); 4) “The Magnificent Culture of the Trialeti Great Barrows” (first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC); 5) Eastern Georgia in the Late Bronze-Early Iron age (second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC – first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC); 6) The Colchian Bronze Culture (2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC – first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC); 7) Colchis and Iberia in the Classical Period (second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC – 4<sup>th</sup> century AD); and 8) Ancient Tbilisi (5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennia BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century AD).



Male figurine. Bronze. Melaani, Georgia. 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.



Ceramic vessels of the Trialeti culture. 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C.



1)

2)

1) Colchian Axe with a figurine of a dog. Bronze. Ojora, Samachablo, Georgia. 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.

2) Colchian Axe with the figurine of a barking dog. Kulanurkhva, Abkhazeti, Georgia (today occupied by the Russian Federation). 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.

In each section, new discoveries are exhibited alongside well-known items, including stone, bone, horn and obsidian tools, embossed ceramics, cornelian pendants, fragments of copper beads, plaques, and a crucible discovered at the Arukhló site of the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> millennia BC. This proves that metal was used as early as the Neolithic Period; Finds of the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> millennia BC from the Berikldeebi settlement, distinguished by the temple complex – the unique one in Caucasus for this period; Various artifacts from the Tsikhiagora settlement – one of the most important archaeological sites of the Kura-Araxes Culture; Discoveries from Sakdrisi, considered as the oldest gold mine in the world, and from the Balichi-Dzedzvebi settlement, located in its neighborhood – namely ceramics, typical for the Kura-Araxes culture, as well as stone tools used to extract gold, discovered inside the mines. These finds proof that gold mining was part of the Kura-Araxes Culture; Special attention is paid to the golden personal ornaments, a unique necklace made of amber beads,

and other valuable objects from the burial mound dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC and discovered in 2012 near the village of Chabukiani (Kakheti). Material from the Berikldeebi settlement is typical of the Early Kurgan (specifically, Bedeni) culture, reflecting the everyday life of a society whose ruling elite was buried in the rich tumuli of the Bedeni culture, a significant discovery for a culture that was only known until that time for its burial mounds. To the culture of the Great Barrows, namely the “Magnificent Culture of the Trialeti Great Barrows” belong the painted ceramic and bronze items. The bronze standards and remarkable ceramic with zoomorphic decoration of the Late Bronze Age, discovered in Berikldeebi, reflect the latest stage of the Culture of the Great Barrows. Other interesting discoveries can be seen among the various archaeological material, dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> millennia BC, unearthed in Tsalka during the installation of an oil pipeline by BP (British Petroleum). Gold ornaments from the grave, dated to the 8<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC,





Column capital. Sandstone. Tsikhiagora, Georgia. 4<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries



The new finds from the Ananauri burial mound N3. Necklace – Amber, Carneol, Rock Crystal; ring – Chalcedon, golden jewellery, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C.

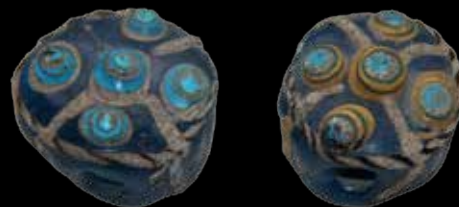
were discovered due to other new constructions, made in Marneuli, in the village of Ilmazlo. This brings yet more proof of the revival of goldsmithery in Georgia after the Trialeti Culture.

Among discoveries from the Classical Period, a special place is reserved for temple inventory, found as a hoard in 2007 in Vani – the religious center of Colchis. This hoard contains unique pieces of Hellenistic art, namely a bronze ritual vessel, bronze lamps and incense burners, decorated with the representations of Eros, Zeus and Ganymede, Dionysus, Ariadne and Heracles, as well as of elephants. These masterpieces of Hellenistic bronze, which must have been brought from key centers of the empire of Alexander the Great, attest that Colchis was actively involved in the cultural processes unfolding in the Hellenistic world. The exhibition also displays the “Bronze Torso of a Youth” discovered in Vani, recognized as one of the masterpieces of the so-called classicistic sculpture of the Hellenistic period. Along with the material demonstrating close cultural and economic contacts of the Kingdom

of Kartli (Iberia) with Rome and the Sasanian Iran, various objects showing the Roman everyday life are presented.

The exhibition comes to a logical end with the archaeological finds from the territory of the modern capital, which confirms that uninterrupted life existed in Tbilisi from the Eneolithic Period until Late Antiquity. Due to its geographic location, this area has been Eurasian crossroads of cultures for millennia and played an important role in the development of the unified Georgian culture. Noteworthy among new discoveries is a bronze Roman sculpture showing a fight between a gladiator and a lion.

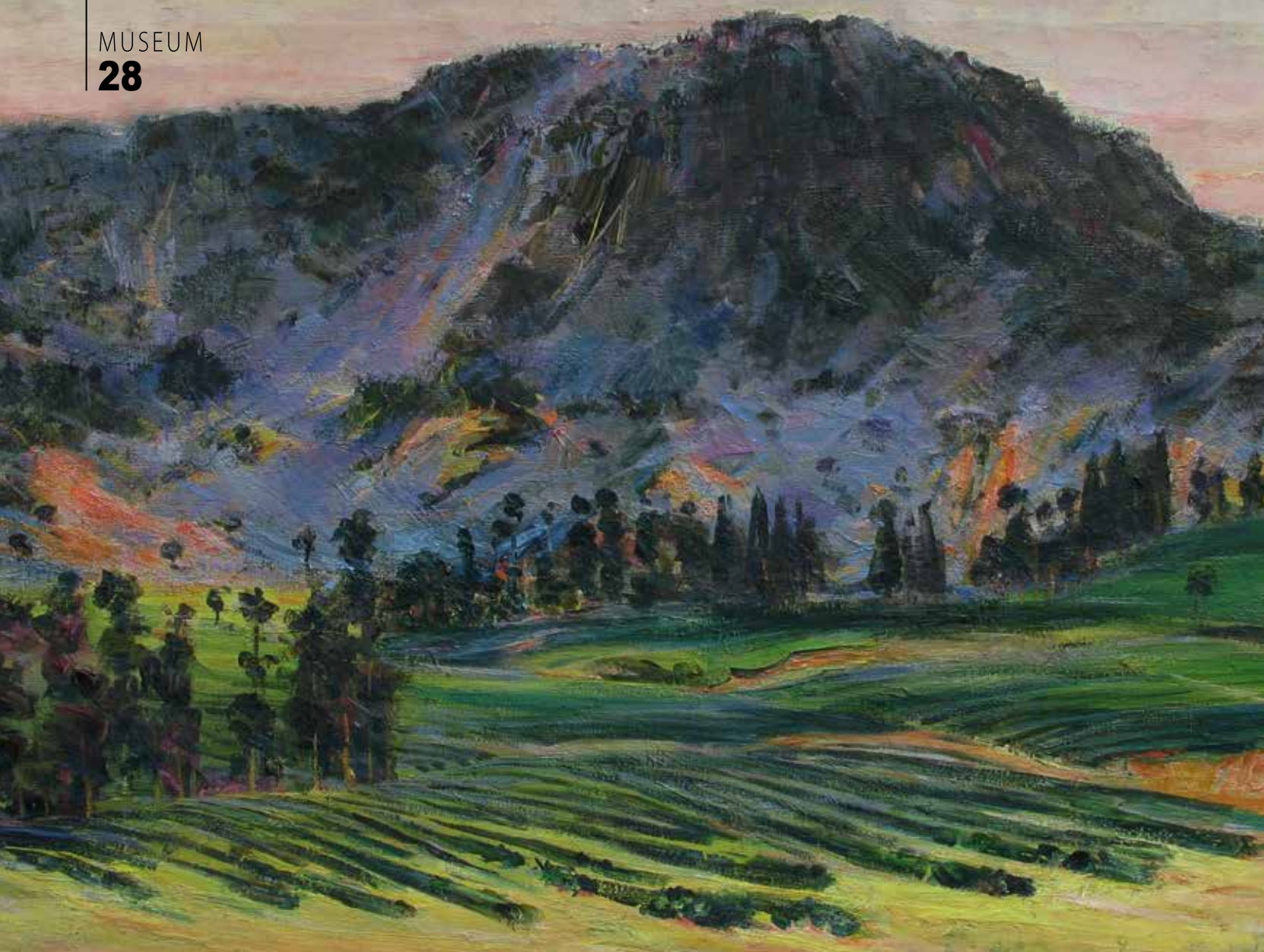
It is symbolic that the opening ceremony of the exhibition was held within the framework of events dedicated to the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ekvtime Takaishvili. Georgian archaeology, whose principal objective is to present the Georgian culture as an integral part of world civilization, follows in the tradition of Ekvtime Takaishvili, whose contribution to the development of archaeology as a leading branch of scholarship in Georgia is considerable. ■



Details of the horse harness. Glass. Pevresho, Georgia. 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.



Detail of a bed. Bronze. Dedoplist Gora, Georgia. 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.



## POST-STALINIST LIBERALIZATION IN GEORGIAN PAINTING

### **EXHIBITION** > Eka Kiknadze

By the 1950s modern Georgian easel painting had created its own history, which was short but rich in personalities, pursuits and discoveries. The first period of Georgian painting that started in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was known as the "Tbilisi Portrait School". It underwent multicultural influences due to the cosmopolitan and creative environment of Tbilisi. The first representatives of professional painting had already appeared, followed by Gigo Gabashvili's art with his interpretation of Russian painting; Niko Piroshvili with his brilliant synthesis of medieval Georgian frescoes and 20<sup>th</sup> century modernism; Mose Toidze's interest in European artists; the essential stages of dramatic art from Georgian modernists were over; and the uncontested dominance of a so-called "artistic style" of the Socialist realism of the 1930s and 1940s had been relegated to the past. In reaction to this, a new "revolution" in painting began in the 1950s, led by young artists who appeared on the scene in the post-Stalinist liberalization period.





Guram Kutateladze. Landscape



In the Soviet Union, as in Nazi Germany, total control over art began with literature and spread to the visual arts. On April 23, 1932, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued a "Decree on the Transformation of Literary-Artistic Organizations". This decree meant that small artist's associations were replaced by consolidated trade unions, and thus the Union of Artists of Georgia was established in 1933. The Union centralized the administration of human resources and ideology, turning visual art into a strong propaganda tool for the Government. "Socialist realism" became the only method for Soviet painting, and its principles became as absolute for artists as the Criminal Code was for citizens.

Censors defined what a Soviet artist could paint and how unambiguously. The main protagonists of socialist realism paintings were party leaders: they appeared side-by-side with a smiling Soviet laborer working on a collective farm, in a factory, on a railway or electric power station "to build socialism". They praised the merits of collective labor and their leaders, with an important place allocated to depicting the daily lives of happy Soviet citizens in a "socialist paradise". From the 1940s other themes were added, such as World War II heroes, defeated enemies and the invincible Soviet army led by wise generals.

These themes, saturated with an exaggerated and false enthusiasm, had to be expressed in a naturalistically realist and narrative-realist manner. While the Iron

**Critics were not always so well-disposed towards the young artists, since in the 1950s the Soviet Union had not changed essentially. Political pressure on citizens continued; borders were still blocked and strict isolation from the outside world remained. Art was still centrally managed and remained a propaganda tool. Realism, with its proportionate system, remained a main requirement for Soviet artists.**

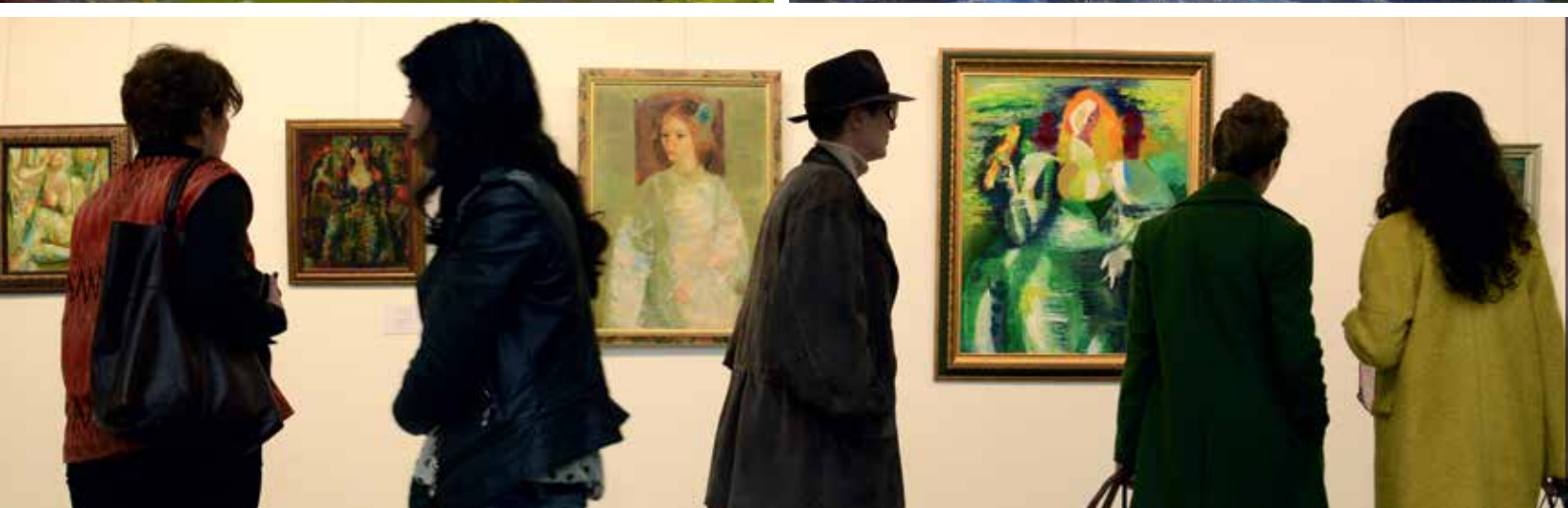




Edmond Kalandadze. Houses near the Tbilisi Sea



Jibson Khundadze. Blue Mountain



Curtain isolated Soviet artists from the early 1930s from processes under way in Western painting, modernism had meantime ended in the West and the foundations for post-modernism were being laid. This caused a reaction that established extremely strict forms of socialist realism on the other side of the Iron Curtain. At the time – both in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany – even the slightest deviation from realism was labeled "formalism" and "degenerate painting" by the officials, while "recalcitrant" artists fell victim to political persecution. Socialist realism reached its apogee in the 1930s-1940s and – while in each generation of Georgian artists there were those who created valua-

ble art – very few managed to retain artistic principles or fame during this period.

On March 5, 1953 Joseph Stalin died; three years later, at the 21<sup>st</sup> Congress in 1956, the General Secretary of the Communist Party Nikita Khrushchev publicly denounced personality cults in his historic speech. This marked the beginning of a decade known as the Thaw in the second half of the 1950s. In politics, the Thaw manifested itself as a relative liberalization of the regime and the rehabilitation of repressed artists, as well as a slightly milder censorship, which was immediately reflected in the work of a new generation of Georgian artists.

From the very first years of working in-

dependently, young artists in the second part of the 1950s paid attention to the specifics of artistic language in drawing and painting. They rejected the "polished" reality of photographic precision and narrative painting and embraced impressionism and post-impressionism, collage and abstraction. They essentially reformed artistic reality and laid the foundation for a new period of Georgian painting.

The main figures of the 1950s, with their individual (rather than censor-approved) artistic styles, drew public attention as soon as they appeared. Intensive, clear colors that were so unusual for Soviet painting dominated the palette.





Tengiz Mirzashvili. The Evening

After seeing one of the first exhibitions held by artists in the 1950s, art historian René Scherling said, "I am glad that browns have left these walls and that true colors shine on them now".

However, critics were not always so well-disposed towards the young artists, since in the 1950s the Soviet Union had not changed essentially. Political pressure on citizens continued; borders were still blocked and strict isolation from the outside world remained. Art was still centrally managed and remained a propaganda tool. Realism, with its proportionate system, remained a main requirement for Soviet artists. Many artists in the 1950s were accused of excessive

fondness for experimentation and expelled from the Academy of Arts; they were subjected to harsh criticism. However, in spite of this, the stagnation of Georgian art ended because of their appearance on the scene.

Works by artists of the older generation, such as Valentin Sherpilov, Aleksandre Tsimakuridze, David Kakabadze, Aleksandre Bazhbeuk-Melikov and David Gabashvili managed to maintain their levels of superb artistry, even under the domination of the socialist realism. An important impetus for artistic thinking within the new generation was Lado Gudiashvili's exhibition held on May 14, 1957. Its opening had been prohibited by the decision of

**Censors defined what a Soviet artist could paint and how unambiguously. The main protagonists of social realism paintings were party leaders: they appeared side-by-side with a smiling Soviet laborer working on a collective farm, in a factory, on a railway or electric power station "to build socialism".**





Zhango Medzmariashvili. Poster contractor



Alexander Bandzeladze. Abstraction



**Many artists in the 1950s were accused of excessive fondness for experimentation and expelled from the Academy of Arts; they were subjected to harsh criticism. However, in spite of this, the stagnation of Georgian art ended because of their appearance on the scene.**

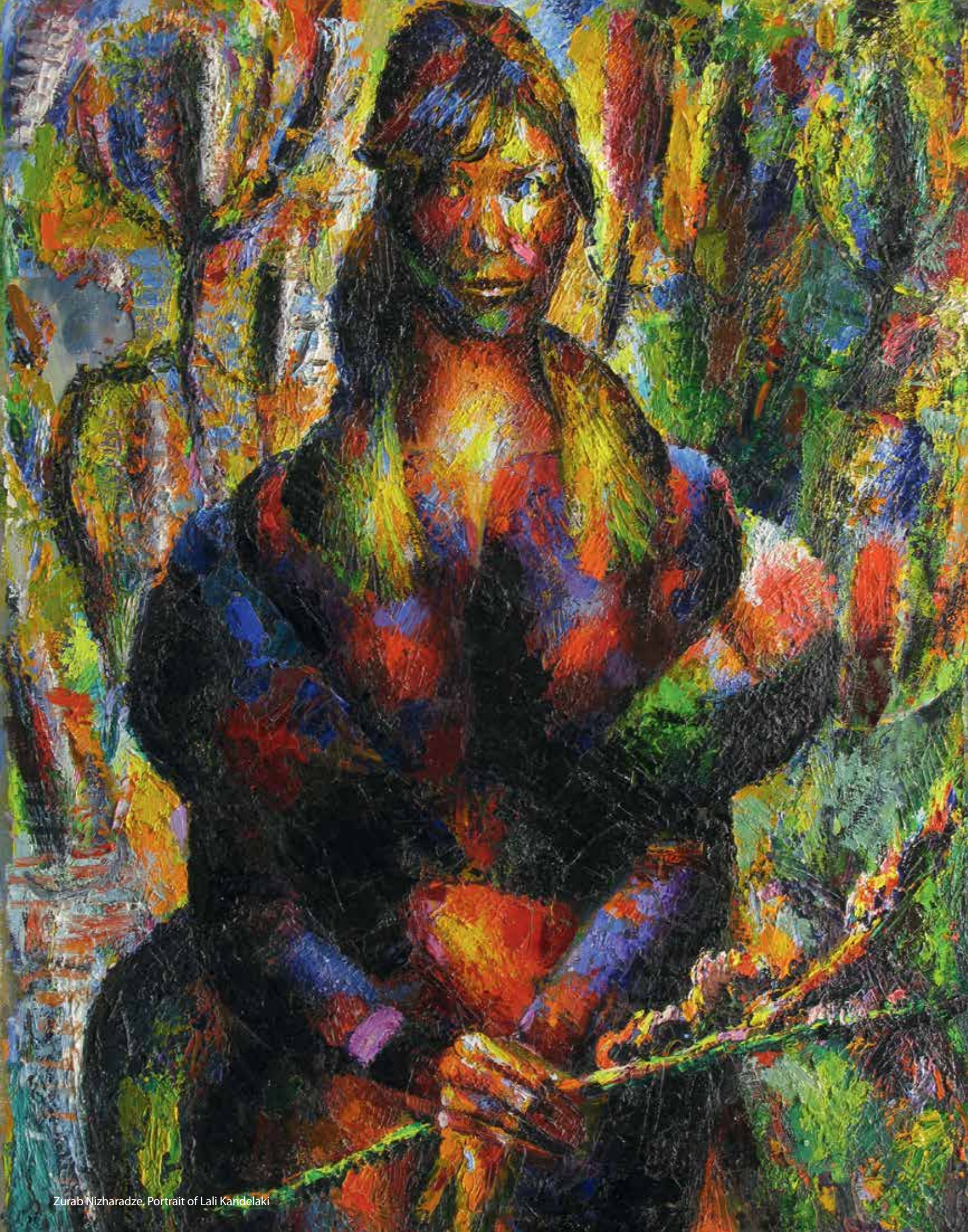
censors, but those who gathered outside the gallery forced open the doors of the hall. Such key factors produced great changes in Georgian art by the 1950s that created the foundation of painting for the generations that followed.

On November 24, 2014, an exhibition entitled "Post-Stalin Liberalization in Georgian Painting" opened at the Georgian National Museum's Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery showing works by artists of the 1950s and the changes they made. Paintings and drawings from the Georgian National Museum and private collections, as well as books illustrated by authors at various times are displayed in the exhibition. Visitors can see pro-

paganda materials from the Soviet Georgian Internal Affairs Ministry and the National Archives.

The works of well-known artists exhibited include those by Edmond Kalanadze, Jibson Khundadze, Zurab Nizharadze, Aleksandre Bandzeladze, Dimitri Eristavi, Tengiz Mirzashvili, Guram Kutateladze, Leopold Dzadzamidze, Revaz Tarkhan-Mouravi, Levan Tsutskiridze, Zhango Medzmariashvili, Mikheil Khvitia, Albert Dilbaryan, Lev Bayakhchev, Gogi Ochiauri, Avto Varazi, Valentin Sherpilov, Zurab Lezhava, Ucha Japaridze, Tamar Abakelia, Korneli Sanadze, Robert Sturua, David Kakabadze and Lado Gudishvili. ■





Zurab Nizharadze, Portrait of Lali Kandelaki





Donor Bishop Gerasime Chkhetidze. 1520s. St. George church.  
Tabakini, Imereti, Georgia. Copy made by G. Khmaladze. 1913. Oil on canvas

## MEDIEVAL GEORGIAN MONUMENTAL PAINTING AND ITS GUARDIANS



## EXHIBITION

### Nino Chikhladze

In 2013, the Georgian National Museum organized significant events to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ekvtime Takaishvili's birth. One of these was an exhibition organized at the Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts, entitled *Old Georgian Monumental Painting and Its Guardians*. The exhibition presented numerous examples of Georgian medieval mural paintings and mosaics, as well as the century-long history of studying and preserving them.



1916. Village of Alevi. Painters who made copies of the Nabakhtevi wall-paintings. Sitting: Giorgi Eristavi, Mikheil Chiaureli, Mose Toidze. Standing: Dimitri Shevardnadze, Ketevan Amirejibi (wife of the host), young Irakli Toidze and Lado Gudiashvili

This history began when the Society of History and Ethnography of Georgia, founded by Ekvtime Takaishvili, ordered the first collection of copies of Georgian frescoes. Over the years, copies were created by artists such as Christian Krohn, Henryk Hryniewski, The-

odore Kühne, Giorgi Khmaladze, Sergey Poltoratskiy, Akop Garibjanyan, Aleksey Eisner and young David Kakabadze. The first steps of this unique initiative are vividly described in only one page of the Society's 1913 report. Here we learn that "authorized by the Council, Chair-

man E. Takaishvili and artist-photographer Kühne, especially invited by the Council, traveled to various locations in Guria-Samegrelo and the Imereti eparchies, visited monasteries, and made photographic images of objects, frescoes and church blueprints. More than 450 photographic images were made during those travels and in addition, the Council's Secretary, S. Gorgadze, accompanied by young artist Giorgi Khmaladze, paid a second visit to the Tabakini Monastery in the Shorapani mazra [administrative unit]. From the walls the artist copied an image of the Kutaisi Metropolitan, Gerasime Chkhetidze (who renovated the church) for the Society's museum. Council Member Ir. Songhulashvili and the Norwegian artist Christ. Krohn visited the Betania Monastery near Tbilisi and, from its walls, the artist copied a well-known group: Queen Tamar, her father and her son Lasha Giorgi, as well as several other images. The young artist D. Kakabadze was also authorized by the Council to copy two large paintings from the walls of the Nakuraleshi Church in Lechkhumi, depicting the ancestors of the Chikovanis



Cradle from the scene of the Virgin's Birth. Beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Church dedicated to the Virgin. Akhtala, Historical Lore, Georgia (today Armenian Territory). Copy by T. Sheviakova. 1945. Paper, tempera. 12,5 x 16 cm.





Fragment from the scene of the "Crucifixion". 1172. Church dedicated to the Archangel Michael. Ikorta, Tskinali, Georgia (today occupied by the Russian Federation). Copy by T. Sheviakova. 1951. Paper, tempera. 17 x 12,8 cm.



Donor composition of Giorgi Lipartian Tchikvani family. 1780s. Church dedicated to the Virgin's Dormition. Martvili, Georgia. Copy by M. Mikeladze-Bagratiioni. 1937. Canvas, tempera. 214 x 189 cm.

(Dadianis). At the same time, artist Mose Toidze traveled to various parts of Georgia to prepare ethnographic images for the Society's museum."

Beginning in 1916, members of the Society of Georgian Artists, established at the initiative of the German-educated Georgian artist Dimitri Shevardnadze, took part in the project of the Society of History and Ethnography. These included Lado Gudishvili, Mose and Irakli Toidze, Giorgi Eristavi, Mikheil Chiaureli and Shalva Kikodze. The result of the joint efforts of these two Societies was an exhibition of copies of Georgian frescoes that opened on 8 January 1917 in the halls of what is today Georgia's National Gallery. Public figures like Ivane Javakhishvili, Geronti Kikodze and Irodion Songhulashvili immediately identified this as a "new stage of awakening of national energy" and a most significant event for Georgian culture. This evaluation was backed by an

unprecedented interest from the public, with over 9000 visitors.

In the late 1920s, Ketevan Maghalashvili, Valerian Sidamon-Eristavi, Severian Maisashvili, Shalva Abramishvili, and copyist artists who were invited from St. Petersburg – Lidia Durnovo, Boris Shevyakov, Tatyana Shevyakova, Natalia Tolmachevskaya and others – joined the work to copy monumental painting. They used a complex and labor-intensive technology of facsimile. However, the specialists from St. Petersburg did not only teach and share new techniques for making copies of frescoes; they cooperated with the Georgian team to prepare the first large-scale European exhibition of medieval Georgian culture. In the summer of 1930, a rich collection of copies of Georgian frescoes was exhibited in German cities along with Georgian goldsmithery, embroidery and icon painting.

Tatyana Shevyakova and Sopio Mirzashvili made a special contribution to

the creation of copies of the Georgian monumental painting. Their numerous works are notable for their refined mastery and their unerring and exact resemblance to the originals. Tatyana Shevyakova also made copy-reconstructions and beautiful sketches to scale of ornamental decor and other details. Also, a rich gallery of monumental portraits of historical figures was preserved, thanks to the copies made in the 1930s by Meri Mikeladze-Bagratiioni, a favorite student of Gigo Gabashvili, and educated in Lausanne and Paris.

The tradition of preserving the originals of mosaics and frescoes was also taken up by the National Museum, beginning in the early 1930s. Under the supervision of Dimitri Shevardnadze fragments of a 7<sup>th</sup> century mosaic from Tsromi Church and part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century frescoes from Nabakhtevi were moved to the museum. In the





Part of the interior. First decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Refectory niche. Bertubani, David Gareja, Georgia (Today territory of Azerbaijan). Sketch by E. Lanceray. 1921. Paper, watercolor. 51 x 34 cm.





King of United Georgia Bagrat III and late medieval donors: Duchess Marekh and the Chief bailiff Giorgi Dadiani. Second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Church dedicated to Virgin Mary. Bedia, Abkhazeti, Georgia (today occupied by the Russian Federation)

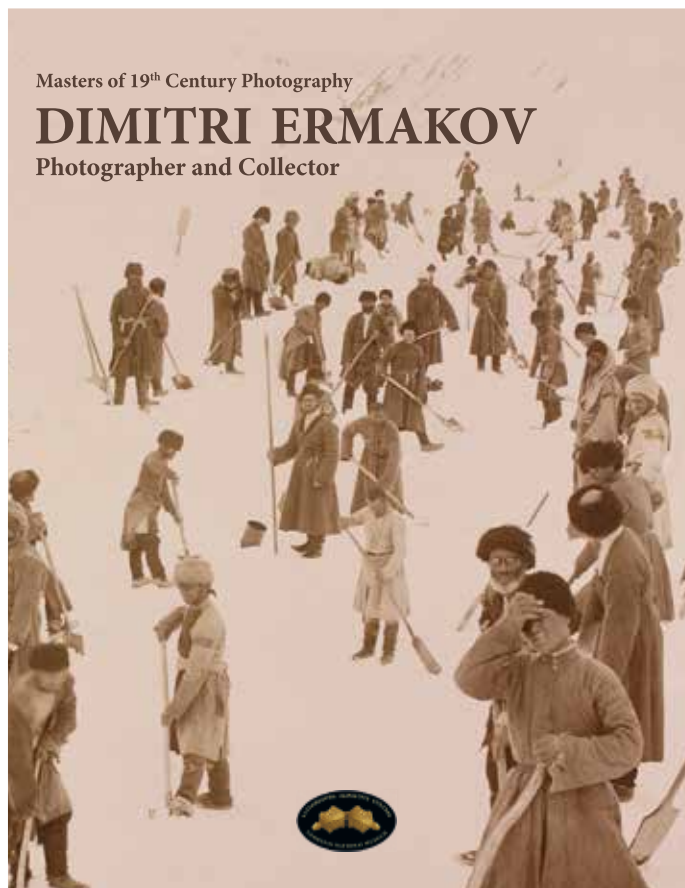




1960s-70s, thanks to efforts made by daring professionals and specialists like Nugzar Alkhazashvili, Otar Tortladze, Teimuraz and Shalva Abramishvili and Karlo Bakuradze, part of the early 13<sup>th</sup> century mural from Bertubani in David Gareji was saved. In the 1950s fragments of the mosaic floor of the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century complex discovered in Abkhazeti on the territory of Bichvinta was brought to the Museum as exposition objects, masterfully composed by the restorer Teimuraz Todua.

A commendable example of saving frescoes that had been doomed to be destroyed was carried out by restoration artists Merab Buchukuri and Amiran Goglidze under the supervision of art historian Zaza Skhirtladze in 1996-2007, when the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century painting from Tetri Udabno (White Desert) Monastery was moved and installed at the Museum. This example is especially notable today since the ravages of time and indecisive action and delays have already made us lose important 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century paintings in Kanchaeti Kaben, St. George's Church of Dirbi and many other places. The unique collection of Georgian frescoes now at the National Museum was created as a result of the immense contributions made by several generations of copyist artists. Many copies have acquired the significance of originals after the latter had perished, undergone major change or become inaccessible – located in occupied territories. Most important, however, is the fact that as a whole, this collection conveys the rich culture of medieval Georgia and a diverse picture of artistic styles and schools. All of these works assembled together can now be seen in the Museum.

In 2014, based on the artifacts presented at the exhibition, a catalogue was compiled and prepared for publishing. It will familiarize the public at large with around 300 highly outstanding examples of Georgian monumental painting that are preserved in the collections of the National Museum. Only by understanding these unique works can we fully picture medieval Georgian culture and thus Georgian culture as a whole. ■



# DIMITRI ERMAKOV

## PHOTOGRAPHER AND COLLECTOR

**PUBLICATION** > **Natia Likokeli**

**T**he Georgian National Museum marked the year 2014 with yet another important publication. The catalogue "Dimitri Ermakov – Photographer and Collector" was published in English, thus crowning an international Georgian-Dutch project that started in 2000. Within the framework of the project – implemented in cooperation with the Horizon Foundation

(Holland) and the Photo Museum in Rotterdam – the photography archives of the Georgian National Museum were reorganized, collections were classified, works were restored and many exhibitions of Dimitri Ermakov's work were organized.

The catalogue includes unique photographic materials from the Georgian National Museum archives and is the first

attempt to present a complete history of the development of photography in Georgia. The introduction contains photos from the collections of the National Archives and the Library of Congress (US), as well as from the collections of Dimitri Ermakov's granddaughter, Militrisa Davydova, Emanuel Sevryugin, Giorgi Gersamia and Archil Darchia. ■





# SVANETI MUSEUM CATALOGUE

## PUBLICATION > Salome Guruli

In 2014 the Georgian National Museum published a catalogue in Georgian and English describing the renovated exhibitions of the Svaneti Museum.

The history and ethnography of Svaneti have been studied and documented since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, often through records illustrating works of art kept in its churches. Many works by Georgian scholars

have been dedicated to Svanetian monuments, and are presented in this unique volume. Some material in the catalogue has been published for the first time, and give readers an opportunity to learn about the diversity of the many unique artifacts that have been preserved in Svaneti for centuries, and that now belong to World Heritage kept in the Svaneti Museum. The

best artifacts from the Museum's archaeological, numismatic, ethnographic, medieval art and manuscripts collections are presented in chronological order.

The goal of the newly published catalogue is to encourage further research and studies by making our country's cultural heritage accessible to both specialists and the public. ■





## NIKO PIROSMANASHVILI'S HUNTING IN INDIA A NEW LIFE

### RESTORATION > Eka Kiknadze

First and foremost, Pirosmanashvili was an artist of greatest truthfulness. The people around whom he lived and the scenes he frequently witnessed and experienced were all depicted in his best paintings – Feast in Ortachala Gardens, St. George's Day Celebration, Dancing Margarita, Fisherman with Fish Freshly Caught in the Mtkvari River... Most of the paintings based on his imagination are considered his relatively lesser works, because Pirosmanashvili was, essentially, an artist of the greatest honesty.



The painting *Hunting in India*, however, is an exception. This exceptional rendering of a very dramatic scene appears to be based on a certain realism – yet we can say with certainty – it is a reality he had never seen. The painting was exhibited at the Georgian National Museum for the first time from January 15<sup>th</sup> through March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 after a decade-long process of restoration. Pirosmashvili depicted a wounded bear climbing a tree, a wild boar with threatening tusks waiting in ambush below, a tiger leaping at an elephant – only soon to be killed by armed hunters waiting on the elephant's back, and another enraged tiger fleeing the danger with a loud roar. All of this is just the foreground – in the background, men in turbans in a boat are sailing on the ocean; a large bird with open wings is flying to the rescue of its nestlings while people are hunting for its nest – with one person already stealing the nestlings and another warding off the bird with a stick, all under a cloudy sky over craggy rocks. Pirosmashvili, for whom Georgia was the whole world, painted what he saw as ancient, traditional pastimes of an exotic distant country – India – with the same kind of unhurried credibility he used when creating an advertising sign for one of the dukhans [taverns] on Railroad Station Street.

Today we cannot know how this subject occurred to him. Perhaps – at a stall within the noisy confusion of the multi-ethnic market of Tbilisi, or in a merchant street – he found a print left by a European traveler to India, with all the scenes of predation and hunting. This is only theory, however. What we know with certainty is that in 1913 he had already painted *Hunting in India*, and Ilia Zdanevich saw it in the tavern Kardanakhi. It is in Zdanevich's diary that we encounter the description of the painting for the first time.

Ilia Zdanevich's diary is a simple, black notebook in which he prepared for a meeting with Pirosmashvili. He entitled it *Niko Pirosmashvili's Notebook* and, before the meeting, wrote down all the questions he was going to ask the artist. In the same notebook, along with other pri-

celess pieces of information, Zdanevich also listed the paintings by Pirosmashvili that he found in various taverns of Tbilisi. On the list of paintings found in Sandro Kochlashvili's tavern "Kardanakhi", located at 23, Molokan [Street], he noted the title *Elephant, Peers, Boar and Bear* next to No 9. The word "peer" (ریپ) is Persian, meaning "old person", "a saint" or "sacred place". Apparently, this is how Ilia Zdanevich described the identity of the turban-clad men in the painting. Since we are not aware of any other works by Pirosmashvili depicting an elephant, a boar and a bear together, we can surmise that this was indeed the first description of the painting *Hunting in India*.

The Georgian National Gallery purchased *Hunting in India* in 1930. An annotation in the logbook says that the painting was received by the museum in severely damaged condition, with a segment cut out of the canvas. Sergo Kldiashvili was identified as the owner of the painting. Kldiashvili was the son of a great Georgian writer, Davit Kldiashvili, and a writer himself. He was an inseparable member of the circle of young artists and poets of Tbilisi who were so captivated by Pirosmashvili's work and who very actively participated in the project by the Georgian National Gallery's Director to preserve Pirosmashvili's legacy. Dimitri Shevardnadze and this group spared no efforts to collect his works for the museum, and a 1922 note by Giorgi Leonidze describes a meeting with Pirosmashvili's neighbor, shoemaker Archil Maisuradze. Sergo Kldiashvili was also present at the time, along with Tisian Tabidze. It appears that, in addition to participating in the search for information about Pirosmashvili's life, Sergo Kldiashvili was looking for the artist's works for his personal collection as well. Pirosmashvili's catalogue published by the State Publishing House in 1926 mentions a painting entitled *Hunting for Tiger and Eagle, Ice Ocean and Eskimos*, and Sergo Kldiashvili is identified as its owner. It is not surprising that *Hunting in India* was part of his collection and eventually ended up in the museum. The fragment

that had been cut from the top part of the canvas, depicted the man with a stick warding off a bird flying over the nest. The museum purchased the cut-out fragment as well, however there is no date of purchase indicated in the registration book.

The year 1930, when *Hunting in India* was acquired by the National Gallery, proved a unique year for its Pirosmashvili collection. Of the 150 works by Pirosmashvili housed by the museum today, 74 were added to the collection that year. Acquisitions included masterpieces such as *St. George's Day in Bolnisi*, *Donkey Bridge and Krtsanisi*. During the same year, Shevardnadze acquired 39 paintings from Kirill Zdanevich in Moscow and brought them to Tbilisi – *Bear in Moonlight*, *Actress Margarita*, *Sitting Lion* and others became part of the museum's collection. These great efforts by Dimitri Shevardnadze, motivated by his enormous appreciation of Pirosmashvili's art, were related to his wish to organize a Pirosmashvili exhibition in Germany. Unfortunately, this exhibition never took place as the Soviet government did not allow such projects to be implemented abroad. Instead, in 1930 Pirosmashvili exhibitions were held in six cities of the Soviet Union.

The main part of the painting *Hunting in India* was not exhibited then, due to its damaged condition. The cut-out fragment, however – with the man holding a stick – was shown in the 1930 exhibitions. This fragment of the painting was last displayed at an exhibition organized at the Metekhi Museum in Tbilisi in 1938. For decades, the main part of the painting was kept folded in the museum reserves. Then, in 2004, an extremely delicate and complex restoration process began, initiated by the National Museum's restoration artists, Nana Managadze and Evelina Karseli. They spent almost 10 years working on this project, using techniques in compliance with modern restoration methodologies. Finally, in January 2015, visitors to the National Museum were the first to witness the birth and new life of Pirosmashvili's *Hunting in India*, in its entirety. ■



Epitaphion. Lamentation. Sachkhere, West Georgia. Central scene 14<sup>th</sup> century, inscription 1510-1565

## GEORGIAN EMBROIDERY AND TEXTILES COLLECTION

### PROJECT > Mariam Gvelesiani

Decorative and applied arts have played an important role in the development of Georgian art. Georgian embroidery is an important yet understudied area of traditional arts and largely unknown to the general public. Most Georgian embroidery collections are kept at the Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts, part of the Georgian National Museum.



Epigonation. Composition Descent of the Holy Spirit.  
East Georgia. Second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

The museum's collection was initiated in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, linked to the activities of two former organizations, the Society for Spreading Literacy and the Georgian Historical and Ethnographic Society. Later the collection received items from the Church Museum, donations by private individuals and items purchased by the Museum. Some of these were acquired by Ekvtime Takaishvili and Giorgi Bochoridze during their expeditions to various parts of Georgia. Today the embroidery items in the collection

number more than 5,000 and are typologically divided into two groups: 1) church-related items and clothing for clergy, and 2) secular items.

Georgian embroidery masters, most of whom were noblewomen, used their creative imagination, religious imagery and exquisite artistic skills and fine taste to create world class works of art infused with national specificities. The artistic value of these objects of Georgian cultural heritage is so high that they have become part of the world's cultural heritage.





Mitre. East Georgia. 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries



Epitaphion. Lamentation. Tsilkani, East Georgia. 1686

After the Embroidery and Textiles Collection was separated from the Treasury Department of the Museum of Fine Arts in 1979, a separate storage space was allocated for the collection. However, the insufficient number of wooden cabinets in the facility did not ensure adequate storage, and hundreds of pieces of embroidery, most adorned with gemstones, were stored tightly packed on top of each other and folded, causing damage to the fragile gold and silver threads often used in embroidery.



\*

In 2006, the Georgian National Museum submitted a project for a grant announced by the US Embassy Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation that envisaged the preservation and conservation of the Embroidery and Textiles Collection of the Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts. This project was funded and implemented in 2006-2008. It meant that artifacts

were placed in new iron cabinet facilities that comply with modern norms of textile storage. The database of artifacts was digitized and restoration and conservation activities saved hundreds of unique embroidery items. In June 2008, an exhibition of embroidery and textiles, *Embroidered This Glory*, was held at the Museum of Fine Arts. In addition to the items themselves, photos of the reconstruction and restoration works in progress were on display. The exhibition showing Georgian embroidery was the first presented on such a large scale, and generated great public interest. The exhibition was followed by the publication of a catalogue and two illustrated monographs, an educational booklet and cards. These activities demonstrated the great significance of this discipline of Georgian art, which is important for both its aesthetic and historical value. ■



Sakkos. Composition "The Twelve Great Church Festivals". Asomtavruli explanatory inscription. Imereti, Georgia. First half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century

\* Apparel. Christ the Saviour. Georgia. 18<sup>th</sup> century



# GEORGIAN NATIONAL DRESS

**PROJECT** > Izolda Melikishvili

**T**he Georgian National Museum and the Samoseli Pirveli Company have a long-standing friendship and close cooperation. A new volume has resulted from this cooperation, entitled *Georgian National Dress*, introducing 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century secular clothing, accessories, and brilliant pieces of embroidery from all areas of Georgia that have been safeguarded in collections of the Georgian National Museum, in Georgia's regional museums and in family and collec-

tors' archives. These last include 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs of various social groups or traditional attire from various areas of the country. The book describes the beginnings of Georgian dress, and provides an understanding of Georgian clothing that originated from ancient Georgian traditions.

This high-quality volume, with a sophisticated color palette, allows costume specialists (designers, embroiderers, art historians) to compare clothing created by the many







workshops and individual craftsmen working today with the older models, to make parallels between the old and the new, and to develop an interest in reviving national traditions in modern Georgian designer clothing.

Within the framework of the same project, the Georgian National Museum plans to organize an exhibition of unique men's and women's garments and accessories from certain parts of Georgia – Kartli-Kakheti-Hereti, Pshavi-Khevsureti-Tusheti, Mtiuleti and Khevi, Guria-Samegrelo-Ajaria, Racha-Lechkhumi-Svaneti – that are kept in the ethnographic collection of the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia and the embroidery and textiles collection of the Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts. The presentation will allow visitors

to see how Georgians created functionally diverse clothing adapted to climatic-geographic and social factors, while integrating artistic and technically sophisticated attributes.

Other educational and entertaining events will take place parallel to the exhibition, including lectures and talks about the items on display, and a special educational program where project participants make presentations on various topics at the National Museum's Auditorium with a show of modern Georgian national clothing created by Samoseli Pirveli staged in the exhibition hall.

The publication in Georgian and English of the initial volume on secular clothing with Samoseli Pirveli was made possible thanks to support from the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation. ■











# JEWISH CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

## PROJECT > Lela Tsitsuashvili

The Jewish Diaspora is one of the oldest populations that migrated to Georgia, and began with the settlement of Jews in Mtskheta in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. According to Georgian written sources from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Jews migrated to Georgia after the destruction of the First Temple of Solomon by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. They were expelled from Jerusalem and settled in Kartli, although no material artifacts from this period have survived.

**T**he academic study of the history and culture of the Jewish Diaspora in Georgia started in 1933 at the Museum of History and Ethnography of Jews of Georgia, established by a group of researchers from Tbilisi and Leningrad and the Georgian Jewish community. Initially, it was an academic institution with no collections. The museum management invited well-known scholars such as N. Berdzenishvili, G. Chitaia, S. Chkhetia, S. Amiranashvili, S. Iordanashvili, L. Melikset-Begi and others to collaborate, and with their help a group of young researchers was trained at the museum.

The museum collections were created as a result of regional academic-ethnographic expeditions in 1933-1936. Georgian artists were selected to participate in expeditions, and made sketches of the Jews and their culture. They created paintings and drawings of everyday life and of religious and ceremonial events, including artifacts brought to the museum. The first exhibition, *Old and New: Everyday Life of the Jews of Georgia* was organized in 1937.

Currently, the museum's visual arts collection includes up to 170 paintings and drawings. The greatest part of the collection consists of works by the self-taught Jewish artist Shalom Koboshvili (1876-1941) and the Georgian painter Davit Gvelesiani (1890-1949). These works

are highly interesting for their depictions of life of the Jews of Georgia. In 1951, under Soviet rule, the museum closed after being accused to be a "center of Zionism". In 1953, when the Synagogue was confiscated, collections were divided between the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia and the Ioseb Grishashvili Tbilisi History Museum (Karvasla), which are now part of the Georgian National Museum, where the collections are still found today.

For decades the Jewish collections in Georgia remained unknown to the public and even to specialists. After the establishment of the Georgian National Museum, several academic research projects were carried out on the Jewish collections, and a significant part of the objects were restored and prepared for exhibition. Six exhibitions of the Jewish collections have been organized and four catalogues published. Among recent projects was a large exhibition to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia, organized in 2013. Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia and the Embassy of Israel to Georgia, a complete catalogue of the Jewish collections – *The Cultural Heritage of Georgian Jews* – was published, and an important anniversary exhibition organized at the Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery. Two hundred artifacts from the museum collections



Golden Robe (The bride's wedding dress). 19<sup>th</sup> century



The crowns of Torah scroll. 19<sup>th</sup> century



Woman's wedding shoes.  
Second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century



Amulet (shaday).  
Second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century



Synagogue Lamp.  
Second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

were on display, some of which had never been exhibited. Many of the Jewish collections were restored within this project, yet much work still remains.

In 2014 the Georgian National Museum and the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe began collaborating on a one-year project supported by the Rothschild Foundation that will continue organizing the Jewish collections and will create an educational program. This material will be available to the public as a series of lectures recorded on DVD.

The reconstruction of the David Baazov Museum of the History of Jews of Georgia was completed in October 2014. The exhibition was jointly prepared by the Georgian National Museum and the Museum of the History of Jews of Georgia. The artifacts in the exhibition are only a part of the Jewish collections kept in the Georgian National Museum, however. The Georgian National Museum and the David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia plan to collaborate on more projects in the future. ■





David Gvelesiani (1890-1949). Circumcision in the Synagogue



David Gvelesiani (1890-1949). Jew



David Gvelesiani (1890-1849). Khupa – ritual of wedding ceremony



# COOPERATION WITH GEORGIA'S REGIONAL MUSEUMS





## COOPERATION > Nino Sulava

There is a regional museum in almost every municipal city in Georgia. Created during the Soviet period, these museums were usually established by people who were passionate about the region and loved old things and who collected museum objects with great enthusiasm, with the understanding that they were doing something necessary for the country and for future generations. Objects were acquired through private donations from antique lovers, sometimes by transfer of collections or replicas from the State Museum of Georgia, paintings or drawings from a Georgian painting collection – or sometimes archaeological expeditions working in a given region would give objects to local museums. Thanks to all of this, regional museums have collected interesting artifacts of exceptional importance to our country's history.

**M**ost regional museums of the Soviet period were located in buildings that were not suitable for the purpose. Today, however, regional museums with contemporary exhibitions and correctly developed programs can become cultural and educational centers for those regions. Through the involvement of the local population for renovating the buildings, making souvenirs, producing local goods and so on, these establishments can contribute to the revival of cultural life and tourist activities in the regions, and to employment for local inhabitants.

In 2012, the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection and the Tsageri Municipality funded a joint project for the Tsageri V. Makharoblidze State Museum of History and the Georgian National Museum, entitled Tsageri Museum of History: Lechkhumi Center of Culture and Education (Collections, Preparation of Exhibition and Album, Educational Program).

Despite a limited amount of time, work on collections was carried out – museum logbooks were digitized according to collections, all metal artifacts were restored and conserved, pieces were selected for exhibition and catalogue and relevant documents were prepared. By re-zoning the building it was possible to arrange a space for educational activities and a library. Many books were given to the renewed Tsageri Museum of History by the Georgian National Museum. The project concluded with a public presentation of the new exhibition, a

new album, the cultural-educational space and the library.

The Tsageri Museum of History: Lechkhumi Center of Culture and Education was the first project implemented as a result of cooperation between the Georgian National Museum and a regional museum. It was important because of the results achieved as well as the fact that it created a precedent for cooperation between the country's leading museum and a regional museum. A series of lectures by the scientists from the Georgian National Museum is planned at the Tsageri Museum in the nearest future, and the publication of the first volume of the collected works of the Tsageri Museum of History with funding from the Tsageri Municipality can be considered a logical continuation of this project. All of this will contribute to the improvement of scholarly and intellectual development of youth interested in the region's past. Plans have been made to create a competition to include the works of students from high schools and higher educational institutions in subsequent volumes of the collected works.

As a result of this cooperation, close relations were established which form the basis for new projects. An open-air museum of archaeology and ethnography was created in the village of Dekhviri under the Tsageri Museum of History, complete with the medieval fortresses of Dekhviri, where the remains of a Colchian settlement date to the 8<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, and



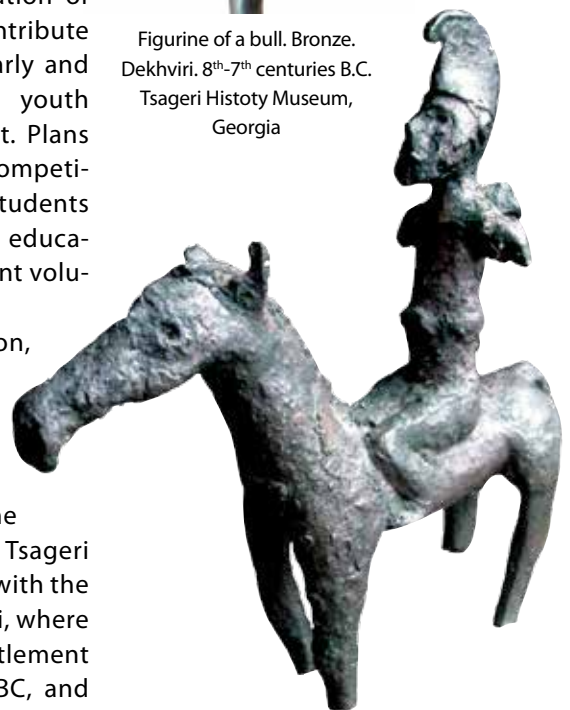
Earring. Gold. End of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.- 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. Tsageri Histoty Museum, Georgia



Pithos child's grave discovered near the Muri Fortress. End of the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. Tsageri History Museum, Georgia



Figurine of a bull. Bronze. Dekhviri. 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. Tsageri Histoty Museum, Georgia



Sculpture of a rider. Tsageri Hoard. 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. Tsageri Histoty Museum, Georgia



Ethnographic exhibition. Martvili Museum of Local Lore, Georgia



Stater. Gold. Alexander of Macedonia (336-323 B.C.). Tsageri History Museum, Georgia



Crosses. Silver, willow. 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Tsageri History Museum, Georgia

with a cemetery from the period of Antiquity. The archaeological artifacts discovered at the settlement and from the cemetery are kept at the Tsageri Museum of History. The Georgian National Museum is also involved in the creation of the Dekhviri Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography infrastructure.

In May 2013, the Georgian National Museum became involved in another, similar project, entitled The Martvili Museum of Local History: Martvili Center of Culture and Education. The project in Martvili took place over one year, when the zoning of the museum was changed; the library was filled with books collected by the Georgian National Museum, placed in the newly created Giorgi Chkondideli Center of Education. A local wine tasting room was created. The same kind of work on collections was carried out as with the Tsageri Museum of Local History. Six exhibition halls were set up – geology-paleontology, archaeology, a numismatics room, frescoes and

church books. A month-long project for their restoration and conservation was funded by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection. The remaining three halls are dedicated to ethnographic objects and an album, The Martvili Museum of Local History, was published.

The most important result of the projects carried out is not just the increase in the number of visitors, but the fact that both museums have become institutions where exhibits are presented according to the modern standards, equipped educational centers, and the possibility of organizing open lessons, conferences or other educational and cultural events. Many objects in the museum collections are now organized to allow new exhibitions and participation in exhibition exchanges. The cooperation between the Georgian National Museum and regional museums is important for the revival of regional museums and to maintain close and regular interaction between the capital and the regions. ■





Palm Sunday (The Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem).  
80-ies of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Martvili, Georgia





The Georgian National Museum's G. Chitaia Open Air Museum of Ethnography. Tbilisi, Georgia

# A STORY HEARD IN ONTOPO

## **COOPERATION** > Merab Mikeladze

The story of one noble family can bring an entire period to life... The adventures of an old family from Ontopo village, the Nadareishvilis, in the Abasha district of the Samegrelo region, seem to have followed the pretty dwelling built of chestnut timber to Tbilisi when the little house acquired a new location at the Giorgi Chitaia Open-Air Museum of Ethnography. It was convenient timing for the family saga of the Nadareishvilis, along with the rich ethnography of Samegrelo, to come to life as an image... And the time had come. In September 2011, with support from a Swedish Institute, the joint project of the Georgian National Museum and the Skansen Open-Air Museum began, aiming to restore the Ontopo farmstead according to the Skansen model.



**W**hat is the Skansen model, and why is this exceptionally beautiful museum in the center of Stockholm so special? The attractiveness of the Skansen model lies in the fact that it offers visitors unforgettable moments of "time travel". The museum brings concrete "time" to life and creates a relevant historical and cultural environment for it: an uninterrupted line of about three centuries of people's everyday life leads us to modern days – an historical path showing the development of crafts, agricul-

and Stockholm, an expedition was sent to the Ontopo village and many consultations were held with the descendants of the Nadareishvili family in Tbilisi. This all created the future concept of the dwelling house. A noble gesture by the Nadareishvilis is noteworthy: along with the narrative, they generously offered the museum several pieces of the family memorabilia.

Thus, *A Story Heard in Ontopo* appeared. It brings to life interesting biographies of brothers Nestor and Grigol Na-

lived under the roof of that very house. It is noteworthy that the interior of the dwelling house was arranged and enriched in accordance with the "time" in the context of the project. The yard was livened up too. Thanks to the effort by the National Museum, a unique kitchen shed located behind the dwelling house brought from the village of Akhali Khibula in Samegrelo was revived and ethnographically renewed.

The renewed farmstead from Ontopo attracted visitors not only thanks to its



ture and domestic culture, workmanship, social and cultural everyday life are all laid out for us to see.

The Skansen Museum has a long history as a strong educational institution. Each of the museum's houses "brought to life in its own time" falls within the strict framework of the museum concept, implying the creation of authentic historical and cultural environments, an adapted story that is invented to bring the life of a given environment within a specific historical context.

Within the framework of the project funded by the Swedish Institute, the exchange of seminars were held in Tbilisi

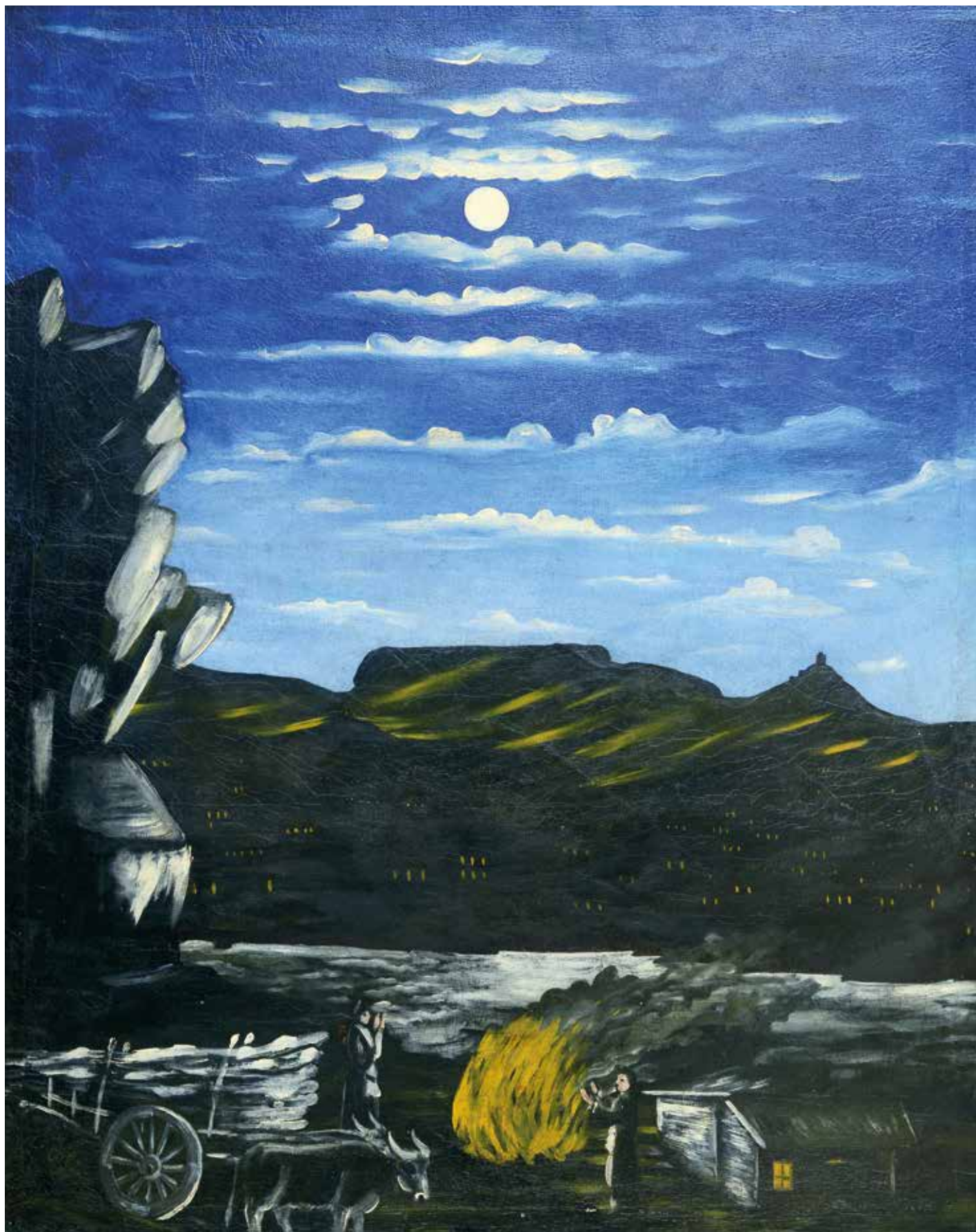
dareishvilis against the background of tumultuous events unfolding in Georgia in the 1920s... Nestor, twice Companion of St George's Cross, former officer of the Tsarist Russia's army, fought against the Bolshevik occupation in the ranks of the Georgian army, while Grigol Nadareishvili was a monk, spiritual son of Holy Father Aleksi Shushania, serving in the Teklati Monastery...

The participation of the brothers in the political and social life of independent Georgia was so active that we decided to base the story of the dwelling house selected for the project on the events of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, choosing the adventure of the family who

ethnographic but also to its educational aspects: starting from October, twice a week, on Thursdays and Saturdays, a semi-theatrical performance is staged at the dwelling house for the visitors, portraying the period of the 1920s in Georgia based on the narrative provided by the family.

The formal presentation of the project together with the colleagues from Skansen was held on 28 September. One of the main hosts of the opening ceremony was Nestor Nadareishvili's son, Mr. Revaz Nadareishvili, who came especially from Ontopo and whose tearful smile heralded the successful completion of the joint Georgian-Swedish project. ■







# PIROSMANASHVILI'S ARSENAL HILL AT NIGHT

## A NEW ACQUISITION > Eka Kiknadze

In 2015, after almost a century of traveling between various countries and auctions, Niko Pirozmanashvili's famous masterpiece Arsenal Hill at Night was added to the Georgian National Museum's collection of his works. The painting, which was sold at Christie's on 1 June 2015, was presented to the country at the owner's decision, and became the 151st Pirozmanashvili object in the Museum's collection.

**P**irozmanashvili painted Arsenal Mountain at Night in the 1900s. According to sources, the painting belonged to a Tbilisi tavern owner, Niko Baiadze, and hung in his tavern on Railway Station Street. During World War I, when most of Tbilisi's taverns closed, including Baiadze's, the painting was lost for several years. Years later, Kolau Chernyavsky found Arsenal Hill at Night in a new wine cellar in Saburtalo among other paintings that had belonged to Baiadze. The painting thus became the property of Kiril Zdanevich, the first collector of Pirozmanashvili's works.

Arsenal Hill at Night was first put on public display in 1919 at the Second Autumn Exhibition organized by the Georgian Artists' Society at the National Gallery. Under the leadership of Dimitri Shevardnadze, Pirozmanashvili was exhibited alongside artists of various generations working in Georgia. According to the catalogue, the artist's 12 paintings from the collections of the Zdanevich brothers and engineer Lukiashvili were displayed in the "Left Room" (where Pirozmanashvili's permanent exhibition is located today): Family Feast, Childless Millionaire and The Poor with Children, Shamil with a Bodyguard, Firewood Seller, Deer, Giraffe, Beauties of Ortachala, Shete Shows Baratinsky Way to Catch Shamil, Dancing Margarita, Fisherman, Arsenal Hill at Night, Autumn, Giorgi Saakadze's Unification with Khevsurs Defeat of the Persians. The catalogue text says: "The first 11 paintings were created during 1905-1908, the golden age of Pirozmanashvili's art. These are the paintin-

gs which Pirozmanashvili himself considered to be the best, painted with oils on wax cloth. Property of the Zdanevich Brothers." After the 1919 exhibition catalogue, the painting appears in the first catalogue of Pirozmanashvili's works published in Tbilisi in 1926. The title is slightly altered to become Arsenal Hill at Night. Niko Baiadze is identified as its owner again. It is likely that the painting was no longer in Tbilisi at the time since, according to Erast Kuznetsov's catalogue, in 1927 Arsenal Hill at Night was displayed in an exhibition Art of the Soviet Peoples in Moscow, dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution (in the building of Higher Artistic-Technical Workshops on 21, Kirov Street).

In 1957, French poet Louis Aragon turned 60. He was a member of the French Communist Party, so his anniversary was celebrated widely in Moscow. Pirozmanashvili's Arsenal Hill at Night was presented to the poet along with the International Lenin Prize For Strengthening Friendship among Peoples. The Soviet Government purchased the painting from Kiril Zdanevich's collection at the recommendation of Lilya Brik, Aragon's sister-in-law. The famous femme fatale of Russian literary circles, the muse of Mayakovsky, Lilya Brik was a great admirer of Pirozmanashvili and had several of his works in her own collection, so her choice is not surprising. After the painting was presented to the poet, it was restored and sent to Louis Aragon's home in France.

Decades later, Rezo Tabukashvili made a video recording of the painting when visiting Aragon's home. The footage be-

came part of his documentary Pages from the French Diary (1983). After the death of Louis Aragon and his wife Elsa Triolet, Arsenal Hill at Night was inherited by Jean Ristat. In 2003, a Moscow-based collector bought the painting and then, in 2007, sold it for \$1,832,000 at Sotheby's. Afterwards, in 2010, the painting showed up at MacDougall's and finally, in 2015 at Christie's, where it was bought by former Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili who donated it to the Georgian people.

Today, after 96 years of traveling, Arsenal Hill at Night is on display in the permanent exhibition of the Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery, precisely where it was first shown to the public in 1919. ■





What is this lack a lack of, o heart,  
of which all of a sudden you are full?

Thursday 20th - Wednesday 26th August 2015  
#meeting15



DISCOVER THE NEXT EDITION

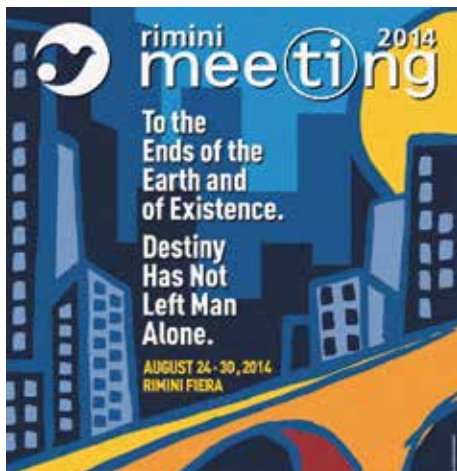
LAST EDITION

TOURING EXHIBITION

## MEETING WITH THE ORIGINS OF HUMANKIND

### INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION > Ekaterina Gamkrelidze

In the late 1970s, several friends from the Italian city of Rimini got together, having a desire to meet people from various religions and cultures and present the best works of art, culture and scientific achievements in Rimini. This is how the idea of the "Rimini Meetings" – the meetings for the friendship amongst peoples – was born in 1980.



For 30 years, during the last week of August, Rimini has become an international center of culture under the aegis of the Catholic movement, Comunione e liberazione, where well-known scientists, Nobel Prize laureates, people of various religions and cultures, famous political figures, artists, writers, musicians and sportsmen from all over the world gather at the largest inter-

national cultural forum. The event is supported by more than 200 partners and sponsors. One topic each year unites people's stories, presented in exhibitions, meetings, shows and sports events. The meeting is attended by up to 800,000 people and at least 20 nationalities. Events include around 130 meetings, 8 exhibitions, 35 shows and 10 sports events over a territory of 170,000 m<sup>2</sup>. At least 1000 accredited journalists cover the Rimini Meeting, which has become the starting point for similar annual events like the annual New York Encounter and the Cairo Meeting.

Seven people work to organize the Rimini Meeting with 4000 additional volunteers from Italy and other countries during the Meeting week to assist with setting up and dismantling exhibitions. Volunteers use their vacation time to work in Rimini; they submit an application one year earlier, without knowing what kind of work they will have to do. Only students of relevant specializations can work as excursion guides at the exhibitions, and they are pre-

pared by attending seminars on the relevant exhibition topics over the year preceding the Meeting. Despite the financial support received from sponsors, organizing such an enormous forum would be impossible without these volunteers. They work until midnight each day and despite this schedule, all of them are ready to use a week of their vacation time the following year.

The theme of the 2014 Rimini Meeting was To the Ends of the Earth and of Existence. Destiny Has Not Left Man Alone. At the initiative and under the curatorial supervision of archaeologists Prof. Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati and Prof. Giorgio Buccellati in cooperation with the Georgian National Museum, an exhibition was organized to show why humans unite into groups and how human society is formed.

The exhibition, entitled From the depths of time: the origins of communication and community, illustrated the results of archaeological excavations underway at the Lower Paleolithic settlement in Dmanisi, southern Georgia





and in the city-state of Urkesh in south-eastern Syria. The exhibition consisted of three parts: Lower Paleolithic Period Dmanisi, Urban Revolution in the Urkesh Civilization and, Modern Syria.

The presentation event of the exhibition, led by Prof. Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, Director of the Mozan/Urkesh archaeological project, held to a 3000-strong audience, was dedicated to the discussion of the exhibition topics. The General Director of the Georgian National Museum, Prof. David Lordkipanidze, delivered his presentation From the depths of time: the origins of communication and community; the President of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, Prof. Thomas Gamkrelidze spoke about the Previous Homeland and Migrations of Indo-European Tribes; Prof. Giorgio Buccellati (UCLA, US) presented the results of the excavations in Syria supervised by him and Prof. Kelly-Buccellati; and Prof. Paolo Matthiae (University of Rome, La Sapienza), Head of the archaeological excavations at Ebla City (northwestern Syria), gave a talk about the origins of the first cities in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium BC. The exhibition was very successful and was visited by 21,500 people during the week. 700 exhibition catalogues were sold.

On the Rimini Meetings 2016 our cooperation will continue with an exhibition about the Pre-Christian and Christian Georgia. ■





## PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF UKRAINE

### COOPERATION > Nino Kalandadze

In September 2012 the Georgian National Museum, in cooperation with the Goethe Institute and Berlin State Museums, organized an international conference entitled *Why Museums Now? Keeping the Past – Facing the Future*. One of the goals of the conference was to develop a program that would create a model to turn post-Soviet museums into modern, research-oriented, innovative and creative institutions that are interesting for visitors and actively integrated into urban and social life.

An initiative entitled *Center for the Formation of Museum Professionals* was a sort of a continuation of the conference. It envisaged the creation of a network of museums of post-Soviet countries and laying the foundation for a platform where the exchange of experience would take place. Within the framework of this initiative, several conferences, working meetings and seminars were organized in Berlin, Tbilisi and Mestia.

These events contributed to closer partner relations, and to a Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation signed by the National Art

Museum of Ukraine and the Georgian National Museum. The National Art Museum of Ukraine is one of the largest in the country located near Kiev's Freedom Square (Maidan), and during the events that unfolded, the museum found itself at the center of the social tensions. The management and staff spent 24 hours a day guarding the invaluable heritage of the museum.

In 2014 within the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation, staff members of the National Art Museum of Ukraine visited the Georgian National Museum three times, to learn about the reforms carried out in various sectors and to share experience.

The Ukrainian colleagues familiarized themselves with the processes of moving, restoring and conserving collections and placing them in new spaces for the project *New Life for Eastern Collections*. The Georgian staff of the Department of Restoration and Conservation shared their research methodologies as well as information on activities and ongoing projects at the Georgian National Museum Department of Education. The Ukrainian staff members were also introduced to the completed project of the *Artwork Storage and Restoration Center*. They also visited other museums that are part of the Georgian National Museum system where rehabilitation works have been completed, as well as Tbilisi's G. Chitaia Open-Air Museum of Ethnography to observe the process of restoration being gradually carried out.

The partnership that was formed between the Ukrainian and Georgian state museums will strengthen the tradition of cultural relations that exist between the two countries. It will also contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and to close and long-term cooperation between specialists in the field of museology. ■





# THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM EXPANDS NETWORK OF PARTNERS

## COOPERATION > Mikheil Tsereteli

Cooperation Agreement Signed With Egypt's Museums



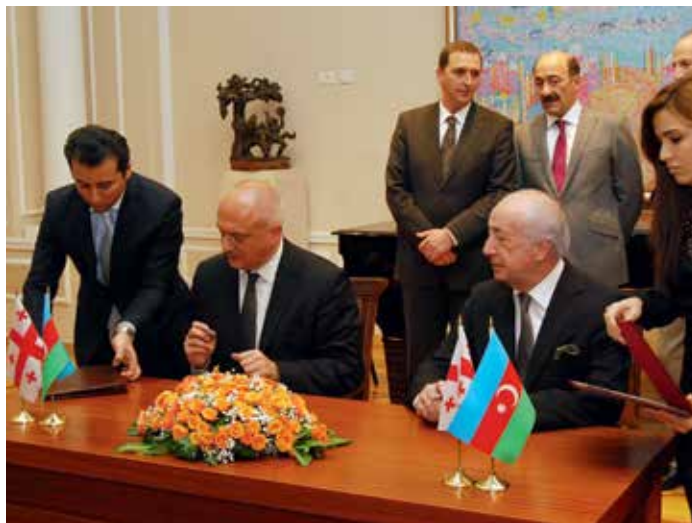
**O**n 7<sup>th</sup> December 2014, an Agreement on Cooperation was signed between the Georgian National Museum and the Arab Republic of Egypt Museums at the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities in Cairo. An official signatory ceremony was opened by Mamdouh Eldamaty, Egyptian Minister of Antiquities and Professor of Egyptology. The Honorable Archil Dzuliashvili, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to Egypt participated in the event along with representatives from the Georgian National Museum and the Egyptian Museums.

The memorandum envisages exchange programs in conservation-restoration, education, archaeology, exhibitions and other areas, and is scheduled to begin in Spring 2015. It was signed by the Heads of three leading Egyptian museums – General Directors of the Egyptian Museum, the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization and the Grand Egyptian Museum. The Georgian National Museum was represented by the General Director, David Lordkipanidze.

After signing the Agreement, the Georgian delegation was invited by the General Director of the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, Khaled El-Enany, to visit large-scale renovation works being carried out by the museum in view of creating new exhibitions as well as a restoration and conservation center and museum storage. ■

## COOPERATION > Natia Likokeli

Memorandum Signed With the National Art Museum of Azerbaijan



**T**he Georgian National Museum and Azerbaijan's cultural institutions share a long tradition of cooperation and friendship, demonstrated by many joint projects. Special mention should be made of a recently-signed long-term Memorandum. On November 18, 2014, in Baku, the Georgian National Museum and the National Art Museum of Azerbaijan signed a Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation at an official ceremony attended by the Georgian Minister of Culture and Monument Protection, Mikheil Giorgadze, and Azerbaijani Minister of Culture and Tourism, Abulfaz Garayev and other officials.

The Memorandum envisages the exchange of exhibitions, conferences, seminars, symposiums, trainings in museology, cooperation in restoration and conservation and other scientific areas. Signatories include the Georgian National Museum's General Director, David Lordkipanidze and Chingiz Farzaliyev, Director of the National Art Museum of Azerbaijan. After the ceremony, an exhibition by Georgian artists entitled From Georgia with Love opened at the National Art Museum of Azerbaijan.

A presentation of a new catalogue, Azerbaijani Carpets at the Georgian National Museum, was held at the Azerbaijan Carpet Museum, prepared and published in the framework of a joint project of the Georgian National Museum and the Mirza Fatali Akhundov Azerbaijani Culture Museum in Tbilisi. ■



Netherlands Photo Museum. Rotterdam, The Kingdom of Netherlands

# PHOTOSTUDIO ERMAKOV

## PHOTOGRAPHER, COLLECTOR, ENTREPRENEUR

### INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS > Natia Likokeli

“Fotostudio Ermakov” was the title of the exhibition held from 14 June until 31 August 2014 at the Netherlands Photo Museum. Over 100 works by Dimitri Ermakov (1846-1916) from the Georgian National Museum’s photo archives were shown.

This exhibition allowed the Georgian National Museum to introduce one of the greatest photographers in the Caucasus region of his time, Dimitri Ermakov, to foreign visitors and to present the Caucasus region at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed many photos reflect current reality so well that – for many Western

Europeans – the exhibition was a way of becoming better acquainted with our region.

In addition to photos, a model of Ermakov’s photo studio was set up at the exhibition with original items used by the photographer. A restoration studio in the Netherlands Photo Museum allowed visi-





tors to witness the processes of conservation and restoration of old photos. Presenting these studios was important so visitors gain insights on technologies used in photography in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It also served as a tool for the organizers of the exhibition to demonstrate how the photo archives of the Georgian National Museum had been restored and conserved within the framework of a 10-year project implemented in cooperation with the Netherlands Photo Museum and supported by the Dutch Horizon Foundation.

The presentation of the catalogue Dimitri Ermakov – Photographer and Collector took place during this exhibition. Later the exhibition was moved to the Dahlem Museum (Berlin, Germany) and to the Georgian National Museum's Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery. In 2016, the exhibition will open in the Ghent Historic Houses (Ghent, Belgium).

The exhibition was prepared through mutual cooperation between the Georgian National Museum, the Netherlands Photo Museum and the Horizon Foundation. It was also supported by Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds (Prince Bernhard Culture Fund), the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Rotterdam Municipality, Bank Giro Loterij, the Wertheimer Fund, the Port of Rotterdam, Ghent Historic Houses and the OVG Company. ■



European Culture Museum. Berlin, Germany

# WINE CULTURE

## INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS > Natia Likokeli

It is well-known that the history of wine in Georgia goes back thousands of years, and Georgian wine has become a trademark for our country. This is why, when Georgian cultural days are held anywhere, wine is given an important place.

**B**etween August 1 and October 5, 2014, the Days of Georgian Culture were held in Germany. The Georgian National Museum participated by presenting an exhibition entitled Wine Culture at the European Culture Museum, Berlin, Germany.

The ethnographic artifacts on display included objects for making wine and illustrations of the process of winemaking in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, documented in photos by the photographer Dimitri Ermakov (1846-1916). This allowed visitors to learn about Ge-

orgian wine traditions and culture that go back approximately 8000 years. During the Days of Georgian Culture, events were dedicated to the celebration of Georgian religious and folk holidays, traditional music and dance shows, and Georgian literary evenings.

All of this was made possible through support from the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the Embassy of Georgia in Germany, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation and other partners. ■



Torso of a Youth, 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Bronze. Excavation view. The Georgian National Museum

## TORSO OF A YOUTH FROM VANI

### INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION > Nino Kalandadze

In 2015, the Georgian National Museum became part of an important international cultural event: the Bronze Torso of a Youth discovered in Vani, the religious centre of Colchis was presented at one of the largest-scale recent exhibitions alongside world masterpieces.

**T**he exhibition, entitled *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World*, opened in the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence on 14 March 2015. From 28 July until 1 November, the exhibition is being hosted by the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles and, from 6 December 2015 until 13 March 2016, it will move to the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

For the first time, visitors can see "works recognized as masterpieces of the Ancient World" from the world's

leading museums, shown together in one place. The bronze Torso of a Youth (dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> -1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC) discovered in Vani occupies a position of honor. This torso was immediately recognized as one of the masterpieces of the so-called classicistic sculpture of the Hellenistic period.

From the day it was discovered in 1988, the Torso of a Youth became one of the most important artifacts at the Vani Museum of Archaeology. It is notable that the Torso and the legs were molded as a single whole, distin-

guishing this technique from other famous Greek statues.

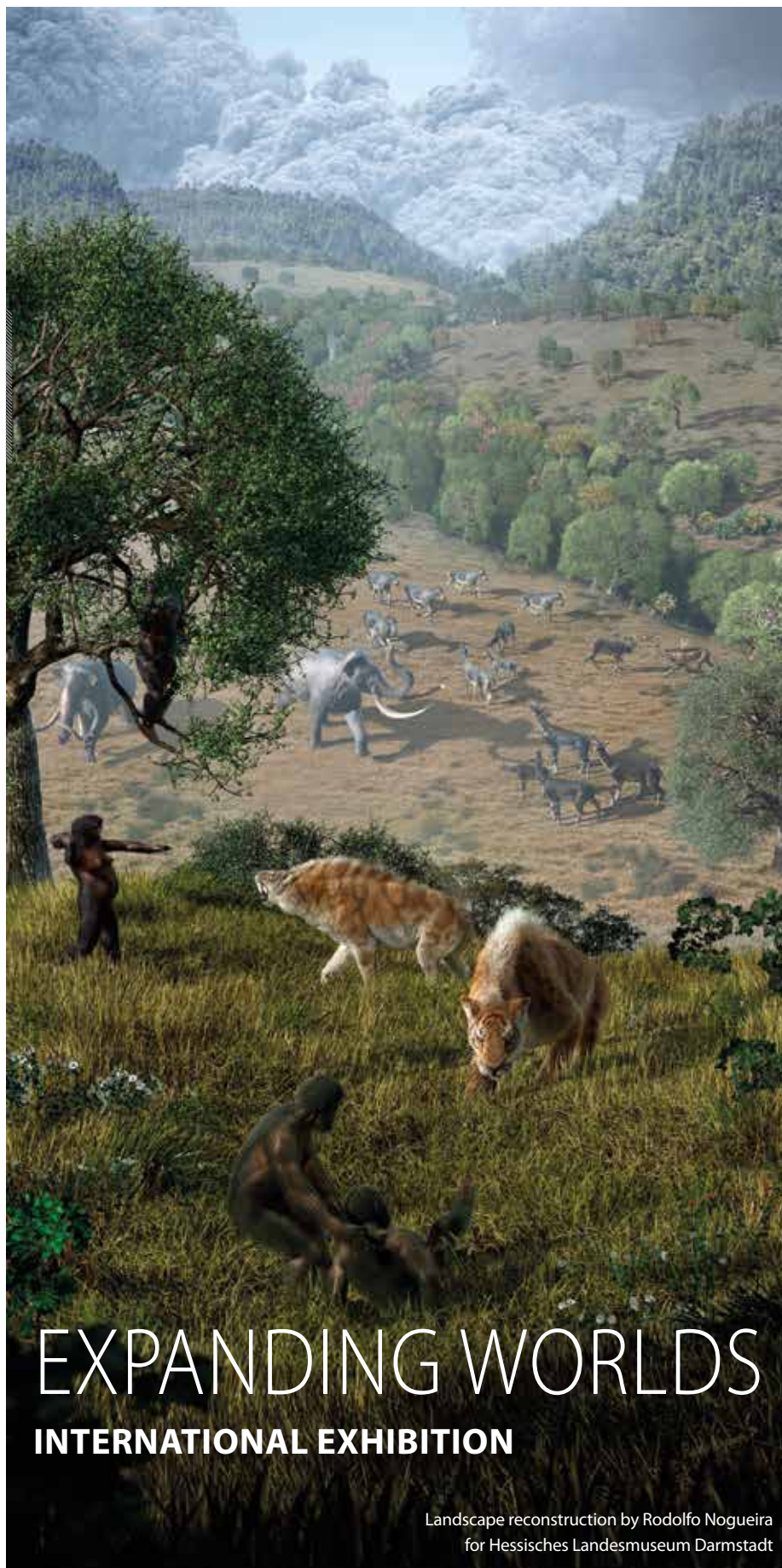
Today, the Torso of a Youth is displayed at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles alongside such masterpieces as the Terme Boxer, Dionysus, Athlete, Man's Head from Delos and others.

In 2007, the Youth left the Vani Museum for the first time to be presented to the international public in the halls of the leading museums of the world. ■





Torso of a Youth, 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Bronze.  
The Georgian National Museum



# EXPANDING WORLDS

## INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

Landscape reconstruction by Rodolfo Nogueira  
for Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt



**T**he Hessisches Landesmuseum in Darmstadt, Germany is hosting an International Exhibition entitled Expanding Worlds that showcases original early human fossils from five global regions. The Caucasus is represented by fossils unearthed in Dmanisi, Georgia, and shown along with fossils from Southeast Africa (Malawi), Southeast Asia (Indonesia), the Levant (Israel) and Central & Southwest Europe (Germany, Gibraltar).

The exhibition opened on October 9, 2015 and for more than a month (closes on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015) it will offer a exceptional opportunity to see world-famous hominid fossils alongside each other. These unique objects are usually hidden away in museum security and research facilities, inaccessible to the general public. Even specialists have never been able to see them together in one place.

The information fossils bear enables paleoanthropologists to better comprehend human evolution, especially when seen together. The exhibition aims to show the regional diversity of early humans in the prehistoric world the history of humanity was shaped by numerous expansions – from Africa as well as between Europe and Asia.

Curators have presented the exhibition to give an idea of the world-wide complexity of early man's history. Accordingly, the focus is not Eurocentric or Afrocentric, but instead sheds light on regional linkages in the biological and historical development of early man. ■





## A GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM PROJECT: RAISING AWARENESS FOR ECOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY

### PROJECT > Rusudan Chagelishvili

**O**n July 31, 2015 the Javakheti Protected Areas Visitor Center (in the Javakheti region, opened with a successful exhibition informing visitors about Georgia's biodiversity, and particularly that of the Javakheti region.

Exhibits from the Georgian National Museum collections, including insects, fish, reptiles, birds, mammals, and herbariums as well as multimedia technologies allow visitors to understand the uniqueness of Georgia's nature, helping them more aware of our ecological responsibility.

A main priority for the Georgian National Museum is to provide educational programs by organizing educational activities for visitors in different age groups. The first pro-

gram offers the possibility to conduct an "imitation" of archaeological excavations at specially organized excavation grounds.

This project was implemented in the framework of the collaboration between the Georgian National Museum, the Agency of Protected Areas under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resource Protection of Georgia and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The establishment of the Javakheti National Park project was carried out with financial support from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Development Bank (KfW). ■

# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AT THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

## CONFERENCES > Natia Likokeli

The Georgian National Museum is an academic research institution working in many areas, some of which are reflected by conferences to inform academia and other interested persons on research results and to establish new contacts within the country and abroad.

In 2014, the Georgian National Museum hosted four international conferences. One was dedicated to the British archaeologist, Michael Vickers. Others were entitled On Top of History – Site Museums; World Heritage and Sustainable Development; and Problems of Early Metal Age Archaeology of the Caucasus and Anatolia.



The conference season opened at the Georgian National Museum Auditorium on September 5, 2014 honoring British archaeologist Michael Vickers, who has a long-standing connection with Georgia and the Georgian National Museum. Early Antiquity was highlighted by the conference, through the participation of Georgian and foreign scholars. In 2005-2010, Professor Vickers chaired a group entitled Friends of Academic Research in Georgia, and in 2013 he donated his personal library, containing over 3500 books, to the Georgian National Museum.

The scholar's research interests are broad, including Greek, Roman and Byzantine archaeology, history and literatu-

re. He is Professor Emeritus at the University of Oxford. For many years, he was Curator of Greek and Roman Antiquities at Ashmolean Museum (Oxford). He has lectured at the universities of Dublin, Benghazi, Austin, Boulder and Princeton. For several years he has supervised archaeological works in Pichvnari with his Georgian colleague, Amiran Kakhidze. Professor Vickers participated regularly in the Vani Symposia dedicated to the ancient history of the Black Sea Coast. He is a Corresponding Member of the German Archaeological Institute (1978), Member of the Antiquarian Society (1978) and the Royal Society of Arts (1993), Honorary Member of the Vani Archaeological Expedition of the Archaeological Research Center (1995), Honorary Doctor of Shota Rustaveli Batumi State University, and Member of the Archaeological Institute of America (2009). Since 2009, he has been the permanent Chairman of the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University's annual Pitt Rivers Symposium.







**The Georgian National Museum's renovated Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography** opened in 2013 with a new exhibition. Events, temporary exhibitions and conferences dedicated to museum affairs and academic-educational issues are now held regularly. On 24-25 September, 2014, an international conference entitled World Heritage and Sustainable Development was held. The aim of this conference was to support the World Heritage Convention in the region and to harmonize protection strategies and plans for developing Georgia's natural and cultural heritage. It was organized by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia in cooperation with the Georgian National Commission for UNESCO, the Georgian National Museum and the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection.

Participants from the World Heritage Center, ICOMOS (International Council of Monument and Sites), ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and their colleagues from the South Caucasus region addressed the challenges faced by world heritage. They discussed the role and experience of international organizations in managing and developing cultural and natural heritage, using examples from successful projects carried out. ICAMT (the International Committee for Architecture and Museum Techniques) is an international committee within the International Council of Museums. It unites architects and museum professionals in the technical fields. On 22-26 September 2014, the Georgian National Museum Auditorium hosted ICAMT's annual conference entitled On Top of History – Site Museums.

The special role of site museums for the protection of cultural heritage includes aspects of their renovation, for example the suitability of contemporary architecture and infrastructure and how it can be integrated into these local museums. Other subjects included how services for visitors can be improved, as well as the development and the economic sustainability of these museums.

Around 50 foreign and Georgian specialists took part in the conference. They visited the Georgian National Museum's Ivane Javakishvili Samtskhe-Javakheti Museum and the Dmanisi Archaeological Site Museum, where they attended a presentation on the archaeological site given by Georgian National Museum General Director, David Lordkipanidze.

This event was organized by ICOM/ICAMT and the ICOM National Committee in Georgia with support from the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, the Georgian National Museum, and the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

**The international conference entitled Problems of Early Metal Age Archaeology of the Caucasus and Anatolia**

was held on 19-23 November at the Georgian National Museum Auditorium, organized by the Otar Lordkipanidze Archaeological Research Center and the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation. This regional conference on recent archaeological research in the South Caucasus and Anatolia was the first of its kind held in Georgia, and was attended by academics from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, Italy, Germany, France and Israel.

Problems related to the intersection of the South Caucasus and Anatolian archaeological cultures and the early stages of metal production (4<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> millennia BC) were discussed, and new data from the most recent archaeological field studies presented. The conference participants visited the Mtskheta and Dzalisa site museums and the Sergi Makalatia Museum of History and Ethnography in Gori. ■





## INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION AND SCIENCE WEEK IN GEORGIA

### EVENTS > Natia Likokeli

Edinburgh became the city of science when it hosted the first Edinburgh International Science Festival in April 1989. Initially the project had many opponents who doubted whether science could be packaged in an arts format. The festival became a success, however, and since then such events have been held in many countries, and are often the most prestigious events of the year.

In 2016 Georgian cultural and scientific life was marked by its own International Innovation and Science Week, initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. It was a significant event that involved most state and private scientific institutions all over the country, including the Georgian National Museum.

A presentation of a hominin created according to a complete skull from the Dmanisi archaeological site was held at the S. Janashia Museum. The famous paleo-artist, John Anthony Gurche reproduced the likeness, funded by the Georgian communications company, Silknet.

The Scientific Cafés of the S. Janashia Museum of Georgia and the I. Grishasvhili Tbilisi History Museum hosted public lectures by internationally known Georgian scientists Zaal Kokaia, David Lordkipanidze, Darejan Kacharava, Ermile Magradze, Zurab Makharadze and Nino Kalandadze as well as John Anthony

Gurche who presented the process of reconstruction and modeling of ancient humans.

The Week opened on the International Day of Science – November 10 – and closed on November 17 on the International Day of Students with a presentation at the Georgian National Museum of a new exhibit, Alexander Kartveli – Georgian Genius of American Aviation. The exhibit was dedicated to a pioneer of American aviation, Alexander Kartvelishvili, who was sent to France by the democratic government of Georgia (1918-1921) to study aviation. He never returned to his country, due to the Bolshevik Revolution. However, he has remained a great example for later generations, showing the key role that learning and dedication play in achieving life's dreams.

Georgia's first International Innovation and Science Week became the foundation for future science festivals. ■





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1,6 Presentation of the Hominin created according to the complete skull from Dmanisi archaeological site, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015

3,4 Solemn closing of the International Innovation and Science Week at the opening of the exhibit Alexander Kartveli – Georgian Genius of American Aviation, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

2,5 Public lecture at the Scientific Café of the S. Janashia Museum of Georgia within the frames of the International Innovation and Science Week

7 Public lecture at the Scientific Café of the I. Grishashvili Tbilisi History Museum within the frames of the International Innovation and Science Week





## PROJECT ZERO, HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

### INTERNATIONAL PROJECT > Liz Dawes Duraisingh

Forging a connection between the Georgian National Museum and the Harvard Graduate School of Education

In February 2015 I had the pleasure of visiting Tbilisi with two of my colleagues from Project Zero, a research unit based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the United States. We were there to meet up with renowned journalist Paul Salopek, who is currently engaged in a walk around the world to retrace the pathways of our ancient human ancestors and to experiment with 'slow journalism'. We are working with Paul Salopek to develop an educational component to his Out of Eden walk: a free, online learning community that connects young people from around the world in intercultural exchange while inviting them to slow down to observe the world carefully and listen attentively to others. To find out more about our project please visit our website <http://learn.outofedenwalk.com/>.

Because the museum has generously hosted Paul Salopek during his time in Tbilisi, we were able to spend some time at the museum during our visit. We particularly enjoyed meeting with the director David Lordkipanidze and members of the museum's education department: Mikheil Tsereteli and Darejan Dzotsenidze. We were also excited to run a workshop at the museum, which was attended by local educators and students. In this workshop we introduced our project, Out

of Eden Learn, and invited participants to engage in one of our 'slow looking' activities by spreading out into the museum galleries in small groups to look carefully at an object together. We also ran a similar workshop at nearby High School N: 1. After our visit, the education department collaborated with Paul Salopek to produce a video of local Georgian children going on a walk with him around Tbilisi while modeling some of our learning activities as a professional development tool for teachers. Many people from around the world have watched an English version of this video.

Also accompanying us on our visit to Tbilisi were Stephen Kahn and Emi Kane from the Abundance Foundation, the organization that supports our work. They were so impressed by the museum's interest in Project Zero ideas about active learning that they offered to sponsor two museum education staff to visit a Project Zero conference. It is for this reason that Mikheil Tsereteli and Darejan Dzotsenidze travelled to Amsterdam in early October to learn more about Project Zero practices and to exchange ideas with educators from around the world. Looking ahead, we hope to strengthen the connection between the Georgian National Museum and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. ■









A DISTINGUISHED WARRIOR'S BURIAL FROM DMANISI



## ARCHAEOLOGY > Kakha Kakhiani

The region of Dmanisi is famous for its multitude and diversity of historical monuments. Dozens of archaeological sites from various periods have been discovered and studied in the area, many of which were uncovered in the process of new constructions.



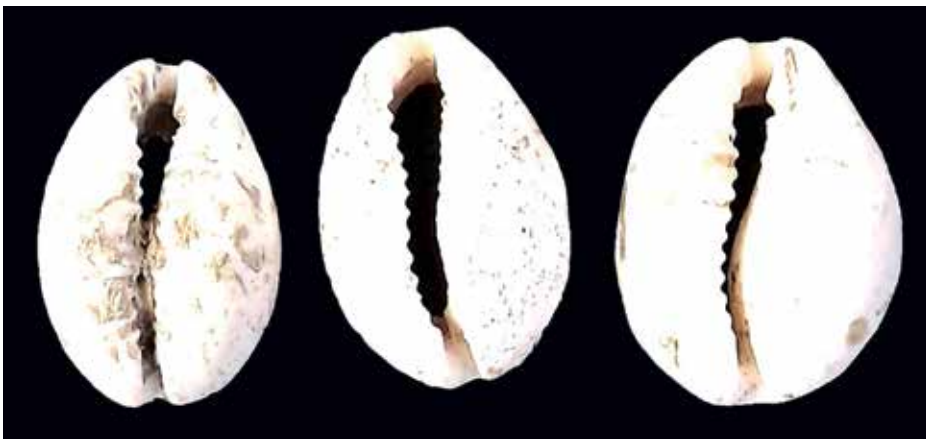
In October 2014, when the Silknet Company was digging a trench for laying a fiber-optic cable at the Ortsklebi locality near the village of Gantiadi in the Bolnisi Municipality, the workers came across boulders and fragments of clay pottery. Digging was temporarily suspended and the Georgian National Museum's Dmanisi museum-reserve team began archaeological excavations.



As a result the archaeologists established that the boulders covered a burial site. An iron spearhead, clay pottery and the remains of cattle indicated that

a burial ceremony had been carried out in this site, then found a burial pit 2.5 meters long, wider at the western end and narrower at the eastern end.

The grave was that of a distinguished warrior from the 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> c BC. He was buried in the western part of the pit, apparently on a bed, with his upper and lower extremities folded, lying on the right side, the head facing the east. On the floor behind the head there were four pieces of clay pottery – two jugs, a pot with a mesh filter on one side, and a small pot. In front of his face was a mug with handles. There was also a bronze item made of two small ornate pipes and two rings and round bronze shin guard holders, a large iron knife, a small iron dagger, agate and cornelian beads of various shapes, three cowry shells and a bell-shaped shell. Such shells are not typical for the Caucasus and would have been brought to the region.



Clayware discovered in the burial was made on a potter's wheel and fired, resulting in shades of black or grey. All were decorated with designs in relief or incised lines. Of special note was a wide-mouthed pot with two handles, a kettle-like spout and a mesh-like filter in it. This type of ceramic object is rarely found in burial sites from this period in Georgia.

Among the metal items were iron combat weapons, bronze shin guard holders and an item made of two small pipes and two rings. Shin guard holders kept the shin guards on a warrior's legs. Similar rings have been discovered in other cemeteries, usually near the lower extremities of the deceased or on their ankles. The item made of two small pipes and two rings is interesting, as the pipes are decorated and the bronze rings, with a rhombic section, are open-ended. Almost identical items have been discovered in the Mashavera Gorge cemetery of the same period and, as a rule, in the graves of distinguished warriors, riders and wealthy women. ■



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN ARMAZTSIKHE

### ARCHAEOLOGY > Vakhtang Nikolaishvili

The Kartli (Iberia) royal residence of Armaztsikhe (4<sup>th</sup> century BC – 4<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) is described in Georgian and foreign written sources, but most information has come from artifacts found in archaeological excavations.

**T**he first archaeological excavations in Armaztsikhe were conducted in 1889, led by Iliia Chavchavadze with the participation of Ekvtime Takaishvili. Along with other items, a piece of polychrome painting was discovered – a fragment of a 1<sup>st</sup> century fresco. In the 1940s discoveries included a royal palace, a fortification system, a bath dating to the first centuries AD, a tomb and a sarcophagus containing an exceptional number of objects.

In 1993-1998, archaeologist unearthed a 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century temple with a wine cellar containing 20 tons of wine, two Roman baths and epigraphic inscriptions in Ancient Greek describing the building activities of Kartli's (Iberia) kings during the period.

Archaeological digs in Armaztsikhe resumed in 2011 when the monument was declared a reserve. In 2012-2014, four storage areas were discovered west of the temple's wine cellar. All of them were linked by passages to the temple. Fifty-five stone treatment tools included pickaxes, picks, hammers, pegs, crushers, crow-bars, etc that were commonly used. Bronze items included the leg of an armchair and a fragment of an arm-rest, the leg of a marble bed with images of lions, discovered earlier. These objects would have been imported by Romans.

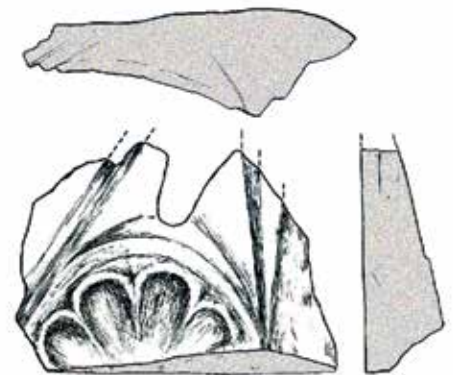
To the west of the royal palace on the second terrace, houses from two building periods were identified. Two buildings on the upper layer were constructed with rubble masonry and cut stones, then covered with flat incised roof tiles. Objects found there mainly included ceramics and materials from the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> cc. Mud houses made up the second layer.







Bricks laid on top of a stone foundation and covered with roof tiles painted with red pigment. They are set up at the same level, built using the same technology, and are approximately the same size (35-40 sq.m.). They are connected by passages and, naturally, were once functional. Ceramic items dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, as well as glass and bone items – including a bone stylus used to write on waxed tablets – were discovered inside the houses. This indicates that penmanship was developed at the royal court. North of the royal palace an original drainage was unearthed, built beneath the settlement remains, and apparently installed to drain rainwater flow away from the main buildings (possibly the royal palace). In one of the buildings on top of the drainage, architectural details were discovered (a calf protoma, images of bull heads, part of a column cap, and a fragment of a frieze). These details may be parts of the decoration of a same building and date to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.



Most objects recently discovered in Armaztsikhe seem to have been produced locally while some were clearly imported. This once again indicates that the Kartli (Iberia) Kingdom had contacts with other countries of the ancient world and, especially, with the strong Roman state. ■





#MUSEUM  
IN  
FOCUS

CULTURE

SCIENCE

ART

# MUSEUM IN A VIRTUAL SPACE

## STORIES OF STARTING FROM ZERO

### COMMUNICATION >

**Ana Verulashvili, Natalia Davlianidze**

Every time we start connecting to you, we start from zero!

0 Followers, 0 Likes, 0 Comments.

What we do is building an audience by providing the best experience for the Georgian National Museum's virtual friends.

Each day, social media gains in popularity and combines more functions, engages more people compared to classic media and uses more flexible and effective methods. These practices are transforming the functions of the internet, making it the main source of information exchange. Advanced technology opens new perspectives, and challenges 21<sup>st</sup> century museums to new experiences. At the Public Relations Department of the Georgian National Museum (GNM) we try to keep pace with modern trends and now are present in most popular social media platforms, which enables us reach wider audiences and to raise awareness and interest in our museums in Georgia and abroad.

In 2009 we launched GNM's Facebook and Twitter pages, and since 2012 we have a rebranded website. In 2013 we registered our own channel on Youtube, Pinterest and Scribd. Upgrading these pages with information and the latest

news is one of our priorities when positioning museums in social media. We regularly update information, pictures and video materials both in Georgian and English to deliver the best information to our website users.

The Museum website is the main information platform for sharing news and information for visitors, the history of our museums and as a means to browse through some of our unique collections online.

On GNM's Facebook page we post news on upcoming events, exhibitions, educational programs and research projects. Periodically we offer online contests. In order to interact with the Museum's virtual friends in a real space we organize events like the 2014 celebration for 50,000 Facebook friends who received an invitation to visit our exhibitions for free.

The success of our Facebook page lies in its diversity, where we combine infor-





mation from all other social media platforms. As a result, GNM's Facebook page has the largest number of virtual friends of any other cultural or educational institution in Georgia. By October 2015, the number had reached to 80,000 – and we continue growing.

As the biggest video sharing platform in the world, Youtube has greatly contributed to our work, allowing us to offer museum documentaries and video materials.

Considering the growing popularity of “pinning” the decision to register GNM's official page on Pinterest was made so that we offer a “catalog of ideas” that inspires us for new projects and inspires our followers and network users to collect ideas, projects and inspiration.

Through Scribed we created a digital library of numerous publications, articles and catalogues created by GNM scientists and researchers. We aim to support the younger generation, scientists and those interested in fields related to our work by connecting them and making science available to everyone.

Our latest social media project involves Instagram. Some of the world's most prominent museums are already present on Instagram, so launching our page was only a matter of time. Today, through this platform, we can show unexpected moments from the life of the museum by

showing our followers behind-the-scene images and videos of our staff's work, filtered by using various Instagram effects and presenting it in an artistic way. We are trying to make our museums better known, especially by young people, who are the most active users of Instagram.

To celebrate the launch of our Instagram page, we came up with the concept #museuminfocus. For our presentation project we asked popular young Georgian photographers and active Instagram users to collaborate with us. The task was to take Instagram photos inspired by museums and exhibit them on the presentation day. Five young, talented and daring photographers – Nata Abashidze-Romanovskaya, Louisa Chalatashvili, Dina Oganova, Levan Maisuradze and David Tchalidze agreed to start their professional journey inside our museums. To create the best atmosphere for our audience we started another collaboration project, with another talented Georgian – DJ Sandro Tediashvili (TedArt) who performed at the GNM – the very first DJ performance in Georgian museums. By combining classical and electronic music, he created a beautiful evening for up to 300 guests present at the opening event.

The overall creative vibes of the presentation exceeded all our expectations and once again proved that the best projects involve teamwork.

We express our gratitude to those who supported us in planning and implementation of the #museuminfocus project. Special thanks go to the project photographers and the DJ who contributed their time, energy and creativity to the museum. We also want to acknowledge the contribution of Windfor's Communication who supported us technically, and Wine Tamada for the beautiful evening.

We continue using and following our special hashtag #museuminfocus and encourage all our visitors to share best pictures of their visit. Next year we plan to publish our first “InstaBook” which will describe a year in life of the Georgian National Museum through pictures.

Every time our department starts a new project, we start it from zero and continue with the support of the innovative and visionary mindset of the GNM staff and administration. At the Georgian National Museum we believe that by combining modern technology and our heritage we can build a better future for the development of culture. Inspired by this, our team continues creating... ■

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**Find the Georgian National Museum on:**





# THE MUSEUM

## A PERFECT PLACE FOR TEACHING

**EDUCATION** > Mikheil Tsereteli, Nino Bakanidze





**MUSEUM AND EDUCATION**

The history of the museum as an institution begins in the late 17<sup>th</sup> c. From the beginning, education and disseminating knowledge were important functions and by the 21<sup>st</sup> c the great potential of museums was re-evaluated, and they play a special role in formal, informal and civic education. Modern museums also have an

important role in inclusive education and the integration of marginalized groups.

**THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN THE MUSEUM**

The process of learning new information, acquiring skills and experience would be futile if the new information is not integrated into previous knowledge.

Most people feel more at ease when they start with something they already know and then acquire new information gradually. Without unnecessary stress, by identifying contrasts and analogies then comparing and analyzing them, students move from familiar to unfamiliar issues then gradually and more easily acquire knowledge. People learn by reading,

listening and observing, discussing and doing, and the process is more productive when participation and involvement are sufficiently high.

### THE MUSEUM – A PERFECT PLACE FOR LEARNING

Learning is fruitful when the process is interactive, and thus Museums can provide unlimited possibilities for active teaching and learning. Modern teaching methods are unimaginable without the observation, visibility and tools that ensure student participation in the learning process.

An educational program based on an active learning method, Let's Learn German at the Museum, was jointly elaborated by the Goethe Institute in Tbilisi and the Georgian National Museum, and prepared for German language teachers. The method includes field lessons at the museum, with a detailed plan of lessons, instructions and worksheets elaborated for German teachers. They can use the exhibits, and conduct lessons in the exhibition halls. This helps recall, and reinforces learning, contributing to the development of critical thinking, observation and analytical skills.

The program is based on a project successfully implemented at the Basel Museum of Art. The Goethe Institute in Tbilisi invited the Swiss specialist in museum education, Erika Jäggi to conduct several working meetings for local German language teachers and museum staff to introduce them to these methods and approaches. After the working meetings, a plan was made to create similar programs that would be developed by language teachers and museum staff in Tbilisi.

The programs developed within the framework of the project Let's Learn German at the Museum were created for beginner and intermediate levels. Relevant topics were selected, for example the program How We Celebrate is linked to works by Pirosmiani and the lesson is conducted at the Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery. Another theme, Symbols of Status in the Past and Present, is based on the Simon Janashia Museum's Archaeological Treasure and Eastern Collection.

In April 2014, a model lesson for beginners (A1) was presented at the National Gallery and in November a model lesson for higher-level learners was demonstra-

ted at a conference at the Goethe Institute, entitled Time Machine – The Museum in the 21<sup>st</sup> c. Materials required for conducting lessons are available to teachers at the National Gallery and the National Museum of Georgia as well as on the website of the Georgian National Museum.

### THE MUSEUM – A MEETING PLACE

In October, in many countries, events are organized during Down's Syndrome Awareness Month, with the aim of integrating people with Down's syndrome into society. In 2014, the Georgian National Museum joined this initiative and, within the framework of the project Meet Me, hosted teenagers, artists and well-known personalities at the Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery. It was a truly artistic evening where invited guests joined their efforts in creating remarkable works, which were later exhibited at the Office of the Georgian Minister of State for Diaspora Issues. The evening was organized by the organization, Our Children Union, the Office of the Georgian Minister of State for Diaspora Issues and the National Center for Children and Youth. ■











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