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Contemporary Art in Georgia during Perestroika

Study of Georgian art from the period of perestroika belongs to very important and urgent issues of today, especially in the light of the history and work of artistic groups which have been established during these times and have never been investigated. The activities of the Groups: "Archivarius" (1984), „10th Floor“(1986) and "Marjanishvili Studio“(1987 are discussed in different scientific articles and monographs only in a general manner. Almost in all of them mention necessity to carry out a more in-depth research in the future. In parallel the studies, books and other materials about artistic processes that took place in the other post-soviet are widely available on local as well as international levels. Regrettably, a very important period of Georgian contemporary art is missing from this "common" image of the unofficial art of the Soviet.

The main objective of my research project is to investigate the history of establishment and artistic activities of those groups and to discuss it in the context of the other Soviet non official art movements as well as to determine the place and importance of this issue in the local and international level. My research is based on comparative analysis and interdisciplinary research, on the basis of archival materials, interviews with artists and their art works dispersed inside the country and abroad.

The generation of the end of the 80's Georgian artists can be defined as new wave of the Georgian Art. Perestroika, associated with Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of "openness", contributed to a shift in political and sociocultural discourse throughout the Soviet Union. The general interest of the West in this period showed itself most actively in the sphere of art.

"Archivarius"

The name of the group of young artists "Archivarius" was taken from the Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann's (1776 - 1822) novel "The Golden Pot" (1814). The first exhibition of the group was held in 1984 in one of the group member's private apartment. Young Artists Mamuka Tsetskhladze, Karlo Kacharava (artist, poet, art historian), Gia Loria and Goga Maglakelidze established the group. The group manifesto reflecting the common values and ideas of the "Archivarius", was compiled by Karlo Kacharava. Those artists can be defined as new romanticists – they have invented new characters of kings, priests, knights and imaginary phantoms.

"10th floor"

A group of artists mostly the members of the group "Archivarius", began to work together in March 1986 in the attic of the 10th Floor of the Tbilisi State Academy of Art. The group had no name or manifesto. Later on, they got the name the "10th floor",

regarding the place, where the group has been formed. The small room, which was officially a studio for the young student of the Academy Mamuka Tsetskhladze, was transformed as an open space, where artists with common interests and ideas started to work collectively. Namely: Karlo Kacharava, Mamuka Tsetskhladze, Gia Ioria, Giorgi Maglakelidze, Mamuka Japaridze, Oleg Timchenko, Niko Tsetskhladze. It's difficult to say how many artists reunited in this group exactly, because a lot of people were periodically involved in the process. Artists Maya Tsetskhladze, Lia Shvelidze, Gia Dolidze, Temur Iakobashvili and others also collaborated with them. The First exhibition of the group was opened at the private apartment/studio of the artist Mamuka Japaridze.

"Marjanishvili Studio"

In 1987, the group "10th floor" moved to work in the huge studio of the Marjanishvili Theater, where Mamuka Tsetskhladze worked as a decorator. Artists: Koka Ramishvili, Ketii Kapanadze, Guram Tsibakhashvili, Niko Lomashvili and others joined the studio. Since the establishment of the "Marjanishvili Studio" the group has been launching more active and large-scale projects. Era of the apartment exhibitions ended. They started exhibited in public spaces, galleries and Museums in Georgia and abroad.