

Tbilisi 2007 Dror Maayan



Across Georgia

A Photographic Journey

The Florence Max-Planck-Institute and the George Chubinashvili National Centre for the Study of the History of Georgian Art and the Heritage Protection are cooperating on multiple levels, such as the exchange of academic experience and knowledge as well as the international academic research of the ancient Georgian culture within the European context.

This album is a product and evidence of such a process. It represents recent photographic material on Georgian art, which is due to be exhibited in various exhibition halls across the European continent. The aim of this publication to demonstrate to a wider public the diversity of Georgian art and culture as integral components of the European civilisation is a top priority of the cultural policies of the Georgian state.

Nikoloz Vacheishvili

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia

The exhibition “Across Georgia” celebrates the cooperation between the Georgian Ministry of Culture, the George Chubinashvili Center and the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence which belongs to the Max-Planck-Society. This cooperation was brought to life by a joint seminar of Georgian, German, Italian and Israelian scholars held in October 2006 in Tbilisi, followed by a research trip to major sites of artistic and cultural heritage of the country – by means of a generous invitation from the Georgian Ministry of Culture. But the exhibition is more than an anniversary record of this inspiring journey across the country – it is an important further step in the cooperation between the involved institutions. And it is also more than that, for it presents the work of the photographer Dror Maayan from Haifa. The artist’s eye combines a rare double perspective: on the one hand he engaged in a dialogue with the group of scholars in front of the monuments producing a rich corpus of documentary photography which will become an indispensable base for further study of the sites, on the other hand he engaged in a dialogue with Georgian people, landscapes, villages and urban spaces, creating a substantial number of merely artistic photographs. In the exhibition consisting of a selection of 86 prints, the two categories are deliberately fused. The distinction between them is certainly in many aspects artificial, but it proves to be useful and has juridical implications as well. In the case of the show “Across Georgia” the visitors are invited to enjoy and appreciate the double gaze at the artistic heritage, nature and contemporary life. It also offers an ideal frame to the scholars of the George Chubinashvili Center, the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence and Barbara Schellewald from the University of Basel to plan the next steps of this promising international cooperation for the study of Georgian monuments in their broad art-historical contexts and relations reaching up to Italy. My thanks are to Nikoloz Vacheishvili for his strong support of and participation in the project, to the Georgian colleagues who graciously shared their expertise with us, to Emma Maayan-Fanar and Ekaterina Gedevanishvili who labelled thousands of digital photographs and to Dror Maayan for his generosity in this creative dialogue between the art of photography and art history.

Gerhard Wolf

Director, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz