



information on *Arts Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory (AIRL)*

ARTS INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH LABORATORY (AIRL)

is a **non-profit, non-governmental organization**, registered by district court of Krtsanisi-Mtatsminda, Tbilisi

and functioning as an organisation from February 15, 2001, (registration certificate N 06/9-230)

Founders: scientists – art historians, historians, sociologists, conservators together with artists.

Organizational structure: Director and the board, responsible for strategic planning and defining priorities; staff. **Departments** closely interconnected: Visual Art (Modern, Contemporary); Medieval Art and Architecture; Folk Art and Architecture

Strategy of AIRL

To bring together science and art, theory and practice, heritage and contemporary, to start the intellectual and cultural cooperation and exchanges with outer world; out coming it aims –

- to begin the interdisciplinary research of Georgian art. The strategy is innovative and implies introduction of the new for Georgian science since soviet times research methods, reassessment of the existing fragmentary and narrow-disciplinary knowledge, hence initiating the process of Georgian art (re)identification and (re)interpretation. The urgent need for such approach was on the one hand triggered by time and on the other hand – by the necessity to overcome the ideological-and-theoretical barrier of the Soviet science, thanks to which any research particularly in the field of the modern and contemporary Georgian art came up with an entirely inadequate picture. And mainly important is to set out the problem of Georgian art and culture place in the multicultural space, to begin the process of its placing in the space of art history and visual culture;
- being in close collaboration with artists, to work as an institution that links scientific thinking to the promotion of establishing and developing of innovative artistic thinking and creative initiatives, to maintain the active exchange of information, to settle contacts with scientific and artistic institutions on regional and international level, thus, on the one hand to bring closer to each other the science and art, and on the other to overcome the existing strict borders isolating the Georgian art, culture and science from outer world.
- Laboratory attracts resources and contacts needed to promote contemporary artists to participate in the artists exchange international programs, international exhibitions and forums. *It is the most important task as Georgian Contemporary Art is still too much cut from international art scene.*

So it determines the practical activities of

- *creating the open to public and first of all to scientists, students and artists, the library of scientific literature on art and art periodical editions (books, video films).*

Besides:

- Laboratory coordinates the *Tbilisi–Basel artists' exchange project* within the Artists' International Exchange Program (IAAB) of Basel Christoph Merian Stiftung what is the only functioning exchange program in Georgia;
- Laboratory organized the International seminar in Contemporary Art *"DifferAnce 1"* (September, 2000) supported by Pro Helvetia KulturStiftung, Switzerland. (It was organized before founding AIRL).
- Laboratory organized International Seminar *"DifferAnce 2"* in Contemporary Art, supported by Pro Helvetia KulturStiftung, Switzerland and British council, what took place in October 3–14, 2001 in Tbilisi;
- Laboratory organized the participation of Georgian Contemporary artists Levan Chogoshvili, Guram Cibachashvili and Giorgi Sumbadze in European Contemporary Art Biennial *"Manifesta 4"*, Frankfurt/Main, 2002
- Laboratory promoted the participation of artist Gio Sumbadze in the International Exhibition *"Sonsbeek 9, Lokus–Focus in Arnhem (June 3 – September 23, 2001)"* it was the result of seminar *"DifferAnce 1"* and the interest of Mr. Bart De Baere in the works of the young artist;
- Laboratory promoted the participation of artist Levan Chogoshvili in *Florence Biennial (7 – 16 December, 2001)*.
- Laboratory promoted the participation of artist Levan Chogoshvili in **50th Venice Biennial 2003**;
- Photo exhibition of Canadian Photo artists Eve Tremblay, is planne in Spring 2005.

Scientific activities:

- Long–term interdisciplinary research project in Arts under the title *"Pathfindings (Along XX Century – Problem of Nowhereness; Art without History)"* This scientific project collaborates three art historians working over the Modern and Contemporary art, one psychologist, one historian, one sociologist and programmer;
- The long–term project on **Georgian Modernist Art of 1910–1920 and Non–Conformist Art of 1970–1980–ies** Multimedia editions under the motto – *"Contradicting the Process?"* **Laboratory aims to bring closer to the contemporary times the forgotten and profaned during soviet times cultural and art heritage:**
- in collaboration with **DOCOMOMO (France)** it works over the restoration project **"Tbilisi Modernist Artistic Cafes and Its Murals – the Space of International Communication"** It is the research and conservation planning (research, analysis, documentation) project of the murals of unique artistic cafes "Argonaut's Boat" (1918) and "Khimerioni" (1919), meeting places of modernists artists, poets, writers. Cafes significantly expose the multinational character of Georgian Modernism. Along the high artistic/aesthetic quality

of the paintings the conservation of these cafes is as much important as they are the only painted artistic spaces/cafes until survived from early international modernism. The first – research part of the project is supported by “Open Society Georgia” foundation.

- Laboratory in collaboration with **The Heritage without Bounders (Sweden)** works over the restoration project of urban monument – **the dwelling of the middle of XIX c.(19, Avlevi st.) in the historical part of Tbilisi;**
- Laboratory works over the conservation of unique architectural monument in East Georgia, the church Khanchaeti's (XIII c.) frescoes (the church was destroyed after the earthquake and endless ruins), June–August, 2002.

The project was implemented in two directions: a) project planning: research, documentation and analysis for the development of the comprehensive conservation plan and b) actual conservation.

Ought to be mentioned that the conservation of the monument was going on in collaboration and under support of Patriarchate of Georgian Orthodox Church.

- Laboratory works over the conservation of murals of Svetitskhoveli Church (XII century), main cathedral of Georgia;
- Laboratory established the “Tbilisi Urban Development and Heritage Protection Public Monitoring Council,” that unites four non–government organisations: ours – ***Arts Interdisciplinary Research and Development Laboratory, Urban Development Centre, Union “Old Tbilisi,” Georgian National Committee of ICOMOS and one governmental – Georgian Art History Research Institute of the Georgian Academy of Science; (the main goal is to monitor the process of urban development of the historical part of Tbilisi according the existing regulation rules of town planning as the process today is very spontaneous and unplanned; to stimulate the process of working over necessary legislative documents and prepare the recommendations on them in order to insist to start working over the till now not existing urban policy).***

Laboratory in the context of analyses of Cultural Policy in Georgia

- founded the free interdisciplinary critical newspaper "Iliazd" (60 pages). Each number will have its own concept and observe one special topic. It is directly connected with existing cultural policy as it aims to analyse critically the current situation in culture, art, art–scene in its different dimensions, discuss the cultural–social, cultural–political problems.

The first number interdisciplinary discussed the urban problems of Tbilisi from different points – urban policy, architectural (contemporary architecture and architectural/historical heritage), ecological, archeological, psychological, sociological. ***The topic of the first number was determined by the extremely critical urban/architectural situation in Tbilisi.***

- Laboratory in collaboration with artist Giorgi Sumbadze works over the second volume of the newspaper “Iliazd.” topics and concepts: 1. visual researches of urban condition, 2. matta–clarkism ***quite the reverse***

- Laboratory initiated the international exhibition and video show project **“Tuesday is Gone”** curated by **Daniel Bauman** (supported by **Prohelvetia kulturstiftung** and **Swiss Cooperation and Development Agency** in Tbilisi); 1–26 September, 2004
- in the frames of the international seminar **DifferAnce 3** the exhibition of **Alan Johnston** and the lecture of **Charles Easche**, November, 2004
- Exhibition–discussion–publication **“Tbilisi Architecture from the Outside,”** supported by **Heinrich Boell Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office** and **Open Society – Georgia Foundation**;

Activities in Education

- Laboratory established the ***Arts Interdisciplinary Studies Institute (AISI)*** for post-graduate students; starts functioning from January, 2005; will work in collaboration with **The Institute of Curatorship and Education (ICE)**, Edinburgh College of Art.