

International conference:
Contemporary Art Development in the Caucasus Region
Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum Auditorium
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Purtseladze Street 1

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BEYOND OR ABOVE CIVILIZATION

In the fast-moving world of globalization, the so-called “new cultural vision” is increasingly holds an attraction for the newly emerged democracies.

Two main artistic trends can be distinguished – total Europeanization or Americanization on the one hand and on the other hand, a blind pursuit of cultural traditionalism which perceives any outside influence as a step towards the destruction of unique traditional characters. Both sides, moreover, display open hostility towards each other, totally devoid of any dialog. Both use the international scene to argue their point. However, the end product is far from meeting their own criteria.

In parallel to these developments, certain foreign “pioneers” are out there roaming around the suburbs of civilization in search of exotic material to sell. Once the “interesting” story is scraped up and sold, they move on to another country, hunting down new sensations, and all the while, creating new cultural fashions. This suits both sides: artists thirsty for recognition, self-realization and obviously money are more than willing to satisfy the needs of the “civilized world” anyway they can.

Meanwhile, the foreign pioneers follow a well trodden path, where enlightenment historically entailed the destruction of the cultures they ostensibly sought to civilize. The remnants of those civilizations are invariably left selling souvenirs to “civilized” tourists. This discussion can of course continue endlessly, but one thing is clear: These countries are no longer what they once were. How then does one avoid this trap? How do we prevent ourselves from dissipating in the streams of globalization and yet, try to take on the best it has to offer?

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