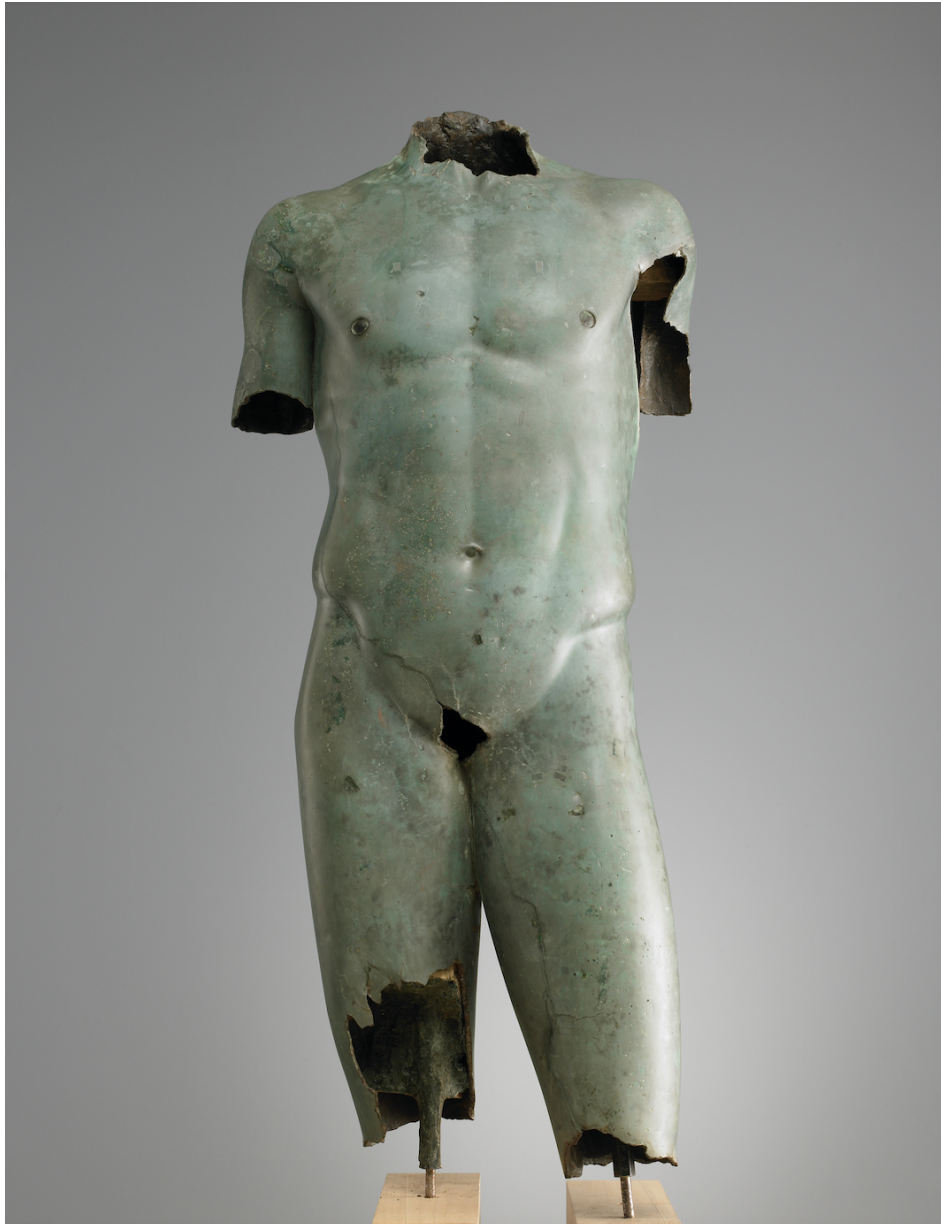


Press Kit

Europalia Georgia: A Story of Encounters

27.10.2023 – 18.02.2024



ART & HISTORY  MUSEUM

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1. PRESS RELEASE

Georgia: A Story of Encounters

27.10.2023 – 18.02.2024

Art & History Museum, Brussels

The Art & History Museum hosts a heritage exhibition focusing on the culture, history and art of Georgia since the Neolithic period.

At the crossroads of East and West, traversed by trade routes linked to the Silk Roads, and always the object of ambition of the great powers surrounding it, Georgia has been a place of encounters and exchanges from which it has drawn cultural nourishment, but also developed its own unique culture. The result is a heritage of unparalleled richness.

Wine has been produced in Georgia for at least 8000 years. It accompanies a ritualised art of dining with refined cuisine, an integral part of the country's heritage. As the oldest cultural asset in Georgia, wine is the starting point for the exhibition. Metalwork – gold and bronze – also plays a central role. From the Bronze Age onwards, Georgian metalworkers produced pieces of unprecedented delicacy and sumptuousness. The myth of the Golden Fleece has its roots in Georgia: the region was known to the Greeks for its wealth in gold.

After the Greeks, who established trading posts in the region, numerous other powers would meet and confront each other on this small, coveted territory of the Caucasus: Romans, Persians, Arabs, Byzantines, Mongols and Ottomans contributed to a unique intermingling of cultures, but also sowed destruction in their wake. A Christian country since the 4th century, Georgia struggled to assert itself in the midst of the great powers around it. It succeeded brilliantly between the 11th and 13th centuries – the golden age of Georgian unification – which shone economically and culturally throughout the Middle East under the reign of its emblematic sovereign, Queen Tamar.

Curators: Prof. Bernard Coulie, Prof. Nino Simonishvili and Marie-ève Tesch, in collaboration with europalia.

Andro Wekua - Stranger in Paradise

27 10 2023 – 18 02 2024

Art & History Museum

Andro Wekua, born in Sukhumi in 1977, lives and works in Berlin and New York. He is regarded as one of the most influential contemporary artists, and also a prominent member of the international cultural Georgian diaspora. His work investigates many media: paintings, sculptures, mixed-media installations, collages, drawings, films, architectural models and books. The main characteristics are an evocative, sketchy narrative that builds on fragments of memory and family photos or coastal views of Sukhumi, an abandoned former Soviet beach resort where advertising didn't exist, and the shock of emigrating and growing up in a global Pop culture.

Wekua's images are situated somewhere in an in-between space between memory, dreams, fantasy, yearning, and a science fiction-like shiver. Here, on a large bare stage, he evokes a horizon of melancholic dimensions: the Black Sea coast in an architectural detail with nostalgic neon lighting; next to it, a fairylike, androgynous figure flanked by a dolphin and marine vegetation in manga anime style, and a seabed relief evocative of sunlight on lapping waves.

With these recognisable details, he simultaneously suggests the inaccessibility of his birthplace, situated in the territory of Abkhazia partitioned from Georgia, as well as the loss of the father, asylum, and the diaspora as a looming horizon of permanent and unsatisfied longing. Here the past is elusive, with memory as the only link to reminiscences that influence and distort dreams, and thus also shape the notion of history, which cannot be posited as a source of a static identity, but as an undefined, changing and fluid category.

Andro Wekua (b. in 1977, in Sokhumi, Georgia) studied at the Visual Art School of Basel (1999), Philippine Institute Gogebashvili in Tbilisi (1994) and at the National Art School Sokhumi in Georgia (1991).

He has had significant solo exhibitions in prestigious institutions, including at TANK, Shanghai; Kunsthalle Zürich; Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow; Kölnischer Kunstverein; Kunsthalle Wien; Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Wiels, Brussels; Neue Kunst Halle, St. Gallen; Kunstmuseum Winterthur; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Camden Arts Center, London; De Haalen Haarlem; Le Magasin, Grenoble; and the Benaki Museum, Athens.

His work has been shown in group exhibitions at the National Museum of Art, Osaka; Foundation Beyeler, Basel; The Warehouse, Dallas; Taipei Fine Arts Museum; Pinakothek der Moderne, München; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, among others. Andro Wekua has participated in “ILLUMInations” at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011); “10,000 Lives” at 8th Gwangju Biennale (2010); and the 4th Berlin Biennial (2006).

Prestigious public and private collections hold works of Andro Wekua, such as Centre Pompidou Paris, Hammer Museum Los Angeles, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen Rotterdam, the Museum of Modern Art New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum New York and Walker Art Center Minneapolis. Andro Wekua is represented by Gladstone Gallery.

Curator: Dirk Snauwaert

A Thousand Times They Say (2023)

27.10.2023 – 18.02.2024

Art & History Museum

A Thousand Times They Say (2023)

HD video, stereo sound, colour and B&W, 29'

A Thousand Times They Say is an experimental observational documentary film commissioned by Europalia for the exhibition *Georgia: A Story of Encounters* at Art and History Museum in Brussels. The film takes the viewer from the streets of Tbilisi to Shuamta nunnery, from the rock-cut mountain complex in Vardzia to the Alaverdi monastery and from the Svaneti towers to the remote Ushguli village, allowing the viewer to enter major cathedrals as well as intimate churches, both ancient and more contemporary. The film looks at the people in their religious rituals and more intimate daily actions in order to give the architectural sites its sense of space via its communities.

Through its multiple encounters, the film focuses on the abstract gestures and the repetition of sound to convey a notion of timelessness in the bigger story of religion. *A Thousand Times They Say* weaves together landscapes, villages and its architectural sites with chants of orthodox tradition in order to propose a film as a contemporary visual polyphony of Georgia today.

Ingel Vaikla (1992, Tallinn) is visual artist and filmmaker based in Brussels. She studied photography BA at Estonian Academy of Arts and obtained her MA degree in Audiovisual Arts in Royal Academy of Arts Gent. She is a former resident of Wiels Contemporary Art Centre and postgraduate programme HISK. Vaikla's artistic practice focuses on the relationship between architecture and its communities. She is in a constant search for a visual language that would not simply observe architecture as an aesthetic sculptural form but would translate the existential, conceptual and ideological qualities spaces convey. Her films have been shown at film festivals and art institutions in Belgium and abroad.

Sakis Brönnimann (1992, Zomergem) is a filmmaker based in Brussels. He obtained a BA degree in art history at UGent and Università di Bologna and a MA in Audiovisual Studies in the Royal Academy of Arts in Gent and Kanazawa Art College in Japan.

In his practice he carefully constructs arenas where documentary characters can play, perform and reinvent themselves. With a background in classical music and language he tends to focus his docu-fictional work on the communication between



friends or lovers - and the rhythm of their relationship. Brönnimann has worked as a DOP on documentary films shot in Lebanon, Greece, Poland and Spain.

***A Thousand Times They Say* is a first collaboration between Ingel Vaikla and Sakis Brönnimann.**

2. VISUALS

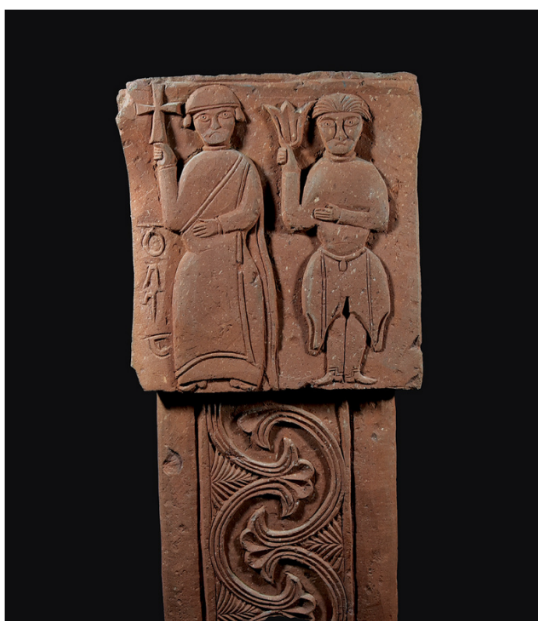


Gold disc, Gonio,
1st - 2nd century.
© Batumi archeological
museum



Fragment of a stele, 6th
century, © Bryan
Whitney Georgian
National Museum

© Dmanisi Museum



Mirian Kiladze
- Georgian National Museum





Shota Rustaveli, "The Man in the Panther's Skin", 1646 ; Copyist and illustrator Mamuka Tavakarashvili © National Center of Manuscripts



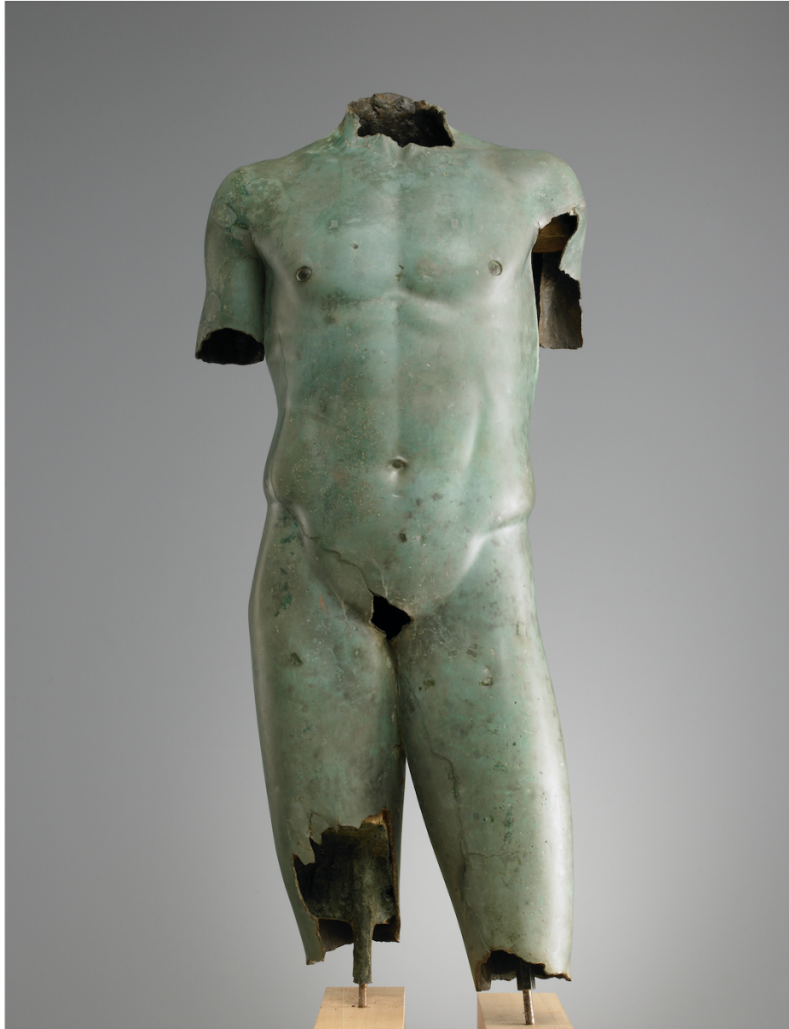
Polychrome Pectoral with Griffins and Birds Achaemenid and Colchian, First half of 4th century BC coll.



Diadem,
5th c.BC,
Sairkhe Fine Arts
Musuem



© Miriam Kiladze -
Georgian National Museum



Georgian National Museum © Robb Harrel, Arthur M.
Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution



Andro Wekua, Us, 2019 © Andro Wekua

3. ACTIVITIES AROUND THE EXHIBIT

Europalia Georgia: A Story of Encounters

27.10.23 - 18.02.24

EVENTS

hu 16.11.2023 Dagcursus ism Amarant - Georgië: een verhaal van ontmoetingen Louis Hulstaert / in het NL Inschrijven via www.amarant.be

RONDLEIDINGEN / VISITES GUIDÉES / GUIDED TOURS

Sunday tours at 13:30 FR 14:30 NL 15:00 EN

On Sundays 29.10.23 5 & 19.11.23 3 & 17.12.23 14 & 28.01.24 11.02.24 € 20 / € 8 (19 years & Museumpass)

GROUPVISITS

Practical information

Price € 105 + tickets / adults € 90 + tickets / schools (€ 0 -19y) Duration 90min Max. 15 pers / group

Reserve through this form or call +32 (0)2 741 73 02 (at least three weeks in advance).

*The program and prices are subject to change.

4. PARTNERS

europalia georgia



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
Federal Public Service
Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation



RÉGION DE BRUXELLES-CAPITALE
BRUSSELS HOOFDSTEDELIJK GEWEST
BRUSSELS CAPITAL REGION



De Standaard

BRUZZ

La Libre BELGIQUE

ART & HISTORY  MUSEUM

5. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Europalia Georgia: A Story of Encounters

27.10.2023 – 18.02.2024

Address

Art & History Musuem
Parc du Cinquenaire 10
1000 Bruxelles
+ 32 (0)2 741 73 31

info@mrah.be

<http://www.artandhistory.museum>

Opening Hours

mon-fri : 9.30 – 17.00

sat-sun : 10.00 – 17.00

Closed on Mondays and, 1.11, 11.11, 25.12 et le 1.1

Price

€ 18 / 12 / 6

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