

The National Trust of Georgia

newsletter October-December 2024

This seasonal review of activities is provided with thanks to all our supporters, volunteers and donors who help the NTG make an impact in preserving Georgia's historic landscapes and buildings.

Busy and interesting autumn

The National Trust of Georgia advanced cultural preservation through awards, research, exhibitions, and advocacy. It supported young writers, heritage projects, and efforts to protect endangered architecture. International collaborations strengthened its role in conservation and restoration.



Grand Prix

OCTOBER

The project “Rehabilitation of Tsiskarauli tower in village Akhieli” was implemented by the National Trust of Georgia and was awarded in Europa Nostra contest in the category of Citizens’ Engagement & Awareness-raising.

The awarding ceremony was part of the Heritage Summit, initiated by Europa Nostra and hosted by the president of Romania at the National art Museum of Romania in Bucharest.



Beside the award, the Grand Prix included a monetary award, which is essential for the sustainable development of the trust. Combining every financial resource gained from organizations and donations is the foundation for future success.

“Tuta” young writers fellowship

Young writers **Mariam Burduli** and **Mariam Mchedluri** were selected organized by the National Trust of Georgia, in collaboration with PEN Center Georgia and the Public Art Platform. As part of their fellowship, they conducted in-depth research into Georgia's Soviet past, contributing to a broader understanding of the era's complex legacy. Although their findings were scheduled to be presented at the Trust's office, political disturbances necessitated a postponement.

This initiative supported by the U.S. Embassy in Georgia and Ilia State University, is a part of “*The Memory Project: Fact-based Countering of Soviet Nostalgia and Russian Historical Revisionism*” and aims to strengthen Georgia's identity as an independent, democratic nation by fostering informed dialogue about its historical experiences.



Tuta residency for international writer

The "Tuta" Art Residency hosted **Asia Tsisar**, a Ukrainian researcher, curator, and writer, for a month-long program focused on the theme “*Soviet Memory: Fact-based Countering of Soviet Nostalgia and Russian Historical Revisionism*”. This initiative was organized by Ilia State University and funded by the U.S. Embassy in Georgia.

During her residency, Asia conducted extensive research, including interviews with veterans of the Abkhazian-Georgian war and their families, as well as discussions with Georgian culinary researchers. She also attended book presentations and film screenings that further enriched her understanding of the subject.

In the final days of her residency, Asia presented her latest work, “*The Role You Made Me Play: About Unobvious Difficulties of Studying Eastern European Art*” to the audience. The presentation sparked a thought-provoking discussion on themes ranging from the distinctions between Western and Eastern Europe to the legacy of post-Soviet states and current geopolitical challenges.

This residency provided a platform for deep exploration and dialogue, highlighting the intersection of art, history, and identity in a rapidly changing world.



Art auction for charity

The National Trust of Georgia generously opened its space to host a charity art auction in support of **Praqtika – working-class café**” raising essential funds to sustain its operations.

Located in Tbilisi, **Praqtika – Working Class Café** is a unique, non-commercial social space fostering community connections for the past four years. Known for its affordable prices, delicious food, and diverse cultural programming, the café serves as a hub for dialogue and creativity. It regularly hosts discussions on social issues, film screenings, live music performances, and more, making it a beloved gathering place, particularly among students in the capital.



Art exhibition

Our restored building served as the venue for the thought-provoking exhibition “*The Meeting Place is the Same*” by feminist and activist artist **Lia Ukleba**.

The exhibited artworks were focused on the struggles of solitary women, shedding light on the challenges imposed by a demanding society. This exhibition also had a fundraising purpose, aimed at supporting the artist in developing her future projects and creations.



Erasmus+ seminar

NOVEMBER

Salome Tabatadze, Manager of the National Trust of Georgia, participated in a four-day Erasmus+ seminar in Villandraut, France.

The seminar, organized by Adichats and Rampart, focused on connecting young leaders and sharing experiences to enhance voluntary restoration work camps. It served as a platform for exchanging insights on heritage preservation and fostering collaboration across European organizations.

[link](#)



Movie screening

The short documentary "*Khrami Valley Mystery*" which explores ancient megalithic structures in the Khrami Valley, was screened in the National Trust's hall.

Archaeologists utilized modern technologies and geoinformation system (GIS) analyses to study villages near Tetrtskaro. Their research aimed to identify former settlement areas and reinterpret historical processes in the region.



Tuta residency for Georgian writers



On November 29, the National Trust of Georgia organized a presentation of works by contemporary Georgian writers **Tamta Melashvili** and **Zura Jishkariani**, winners of the 2024 "Tuta" Scholarship.

The writers were slated to present the pieces they created as part of the project "*Soviet Memory: Understanding Nostalgia and Russian History Through Facts*," supported by the U.S. Embassy and Iliya State University.


The presentation was postponed due to increased political tensions following the parliamentary election results.

The National Trust of Georgia is proud to announce the 2024 recipients of the Tuta writers fellowship

Memory, Heritage and Tomorrow

TAMTA MELASHVILI	ZURA JISHKARIANI
 <small>Photo Credit: Tamta Melashvili</small>	 <small>Photo Credit: Sergi Sarisashvili</small>

This fellowship was made possible through the generous support of the United States Embassy, Iliya State University, and the Pen Center of Georgia



International seminar

DECEMBER

From December 2 to 6 this year, **Giorgi Burjanadze**, co-chairperson of NTG, undertook an official visit to Amman, Jordan, to participate in the **INTO** (International National Trusts Organization) conference “Facing Change: Jordan 2024”

The conference was hosted by the **Petra National Trust**, **INTO**, and the **British Council – Cultural Protection Fund**. In the evening, the British Ambassador’s residence hosted a reception where speeches were delivered by His Majesty’s **Philip Hall OBE** (British Ambassador to Jordan), HRH **Princess Dana Firas of Jordan**, **Catherine Leonard** (INTO Secretary-General), and others.

A major focus of the conference was on the safeguarding, preservation, and conservation of cultural heritage in areas at risk of conflict and in post-conflict scenarios. On the conference’s second day, addressing the mentioned topic, co-chairperson **Giorgi Burjanadze**, together with **Mari Zhorzh Pagel-Bruse**, President of UNION REMPART had a presentation “*The Role of Heritage Projects in the Post-Conflict Period: The Volunteer-led Rehabilitation of the Tsiskarauli Tower in Georgia*”.

Approximately 150 representatives from 40 countries participated in the event. During the conference, the delegates engaged in lively discussions, generating ideas and mapping out possible avenues for future cooperation.



Launch of a Multi-Faceted Heritage Advocacy Campaign

With the support of Europa Nostra and the EU's pilot program European Heritage Hub, the National Trust of Georgia has launched a campaign comprising three key components. The first component is an advocacy campaign for two heritage monuments; the second involves organizing six informational meetings with members of the Heritage Platform; and the third consists of producing a series of podcasts addressing cultural heritage issues in Georgia. Meetings with heritage platform members within the framework of the advocacy campaign

Despite the challenging political circumstances in the country, the NTG organized three hybrid-format informational meetings with members of the Heritage Platform on December 18, 27, and January 9. These sessions represent one component of the project executed with support from Europa Nostra and the European Heritage Care program.

During the first meeting, discussions focused on planning the advocacy campaign, and two significant heritage monuments were identified: the long-forgotten megalithic structures in the Khrami River valley and Georgia's first television building — which is at risk of demolition. The second and third meetings predominantly concentrated on exploring strategies to keep the television building. All participants agreed that the building must be preserved, as it stands as a prominent example of Georgian modernist architecture and is an inseparable part of the city's history.

At these sessions, the campaign's slogan was coined: "Streaming belongs to People, the Building - to the City!" Notably, the original architect of the building was present, expressing her eagerness to contribute to the campaign.



Members of the Heritage Platform who participated included:

ICOMOS Georgia;
Blue Shield of Georgia
Lomeki;
Ubani Center;
The Georgian Traditional Folk Crafts Association;
ICOM Georgia;
Georgian House;
Sustainable Caucasus;
"Batomi" Society;
Tbilisi Industrial Heritage Group;
Tbilisi Architectural Biennial
Individual heritage experts and architect-restorers;