

## The Rites of Passage<sup>[1]</sup>

A disconnection from a real space-time continuum and its various structures is followed by a transition to an intermediate, ambivalent state. The exhibition is a reflection on the phase of liminality, which implies the existence between two alternative (physical/virtual) worlds. It does not only serve as a demonstration of confrontation and resistance, but also the manifestation of a “fluid” boundary between binary realities.

The process of the transformation of bodies, objects, events, and experiences into images and vice versa, their embodiment, and the process of them being turned into artifacts, is expressed precisely on the background of the transition between conditions and models, functioning as a kind of “rite of passage,” evoking an intersection of a different dimensions and giving birth to a new unknown.

The hybrid “body” of the exhibition will connect different artists, mediums, realities, and spaces (a former power station building, galleries, and theaters), as well as time. It will be a collection not only of the art pieces created during the last year while in a “suspended” state, but also of the lost bodies and artifacts, vanished voices, and missing people that have been preserved through digital documents.

In the end, what has been embodied in reality, in the past, or in the present, will be transformed into a photo or a moving image under the various artists’ gaze. Passing via their body, mind, or camera, the exhibition will become an artifact in and of itself – literally or metaphorically remaining as a memory on a screen.

– Ketevan (Keti) Shavgulidze, Art historian, PhD, 2021

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[1] Fr. Les Rites de Passage (1909; The Rites of Passage). A cultural anthropology term coined by Arnold van Gennep (Charles-Arnold Kurr van Gennep).

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Oxygen 2021 is a biennale featuring artists from Georgia and abroad whose work sets its own stage within the latitudes of performance and the remnants of production, setting and functional design.

The artists are invited to work in dialogue with the venue, a Soviet era electrical plant, and create their own incursive architectures within the wholly impressive greater edifice. The curators believe this dialogue is inherent to the exhibition, in that it may free the resulting works from constraints inherent to white box venues.

The structure of the factory is impressive, its forms, those necessary for its function, include dozens of sealed off rooms, walkways, cavernous floor plans and off purpose hallways reminiscent of catwalks, creating a veritable smorgasbord of possibility for performance and installation, as well as uncanny potential juxtapositions for sculpture and painting. Archival

works and documentations will live alongside activations of performances, event scores and happenings, video works will be displayed as curtains, divisions in the space, both ephemeral and physical.

The show will function as a living archive, one fully attuned to the postponed times we are living in as cultural workers and educators, as well as serving as a beacon to what an exhibition can be when attuned to the specific needs of life lived via screens, and memories of mass art events.

Ser Serpas, 2021