

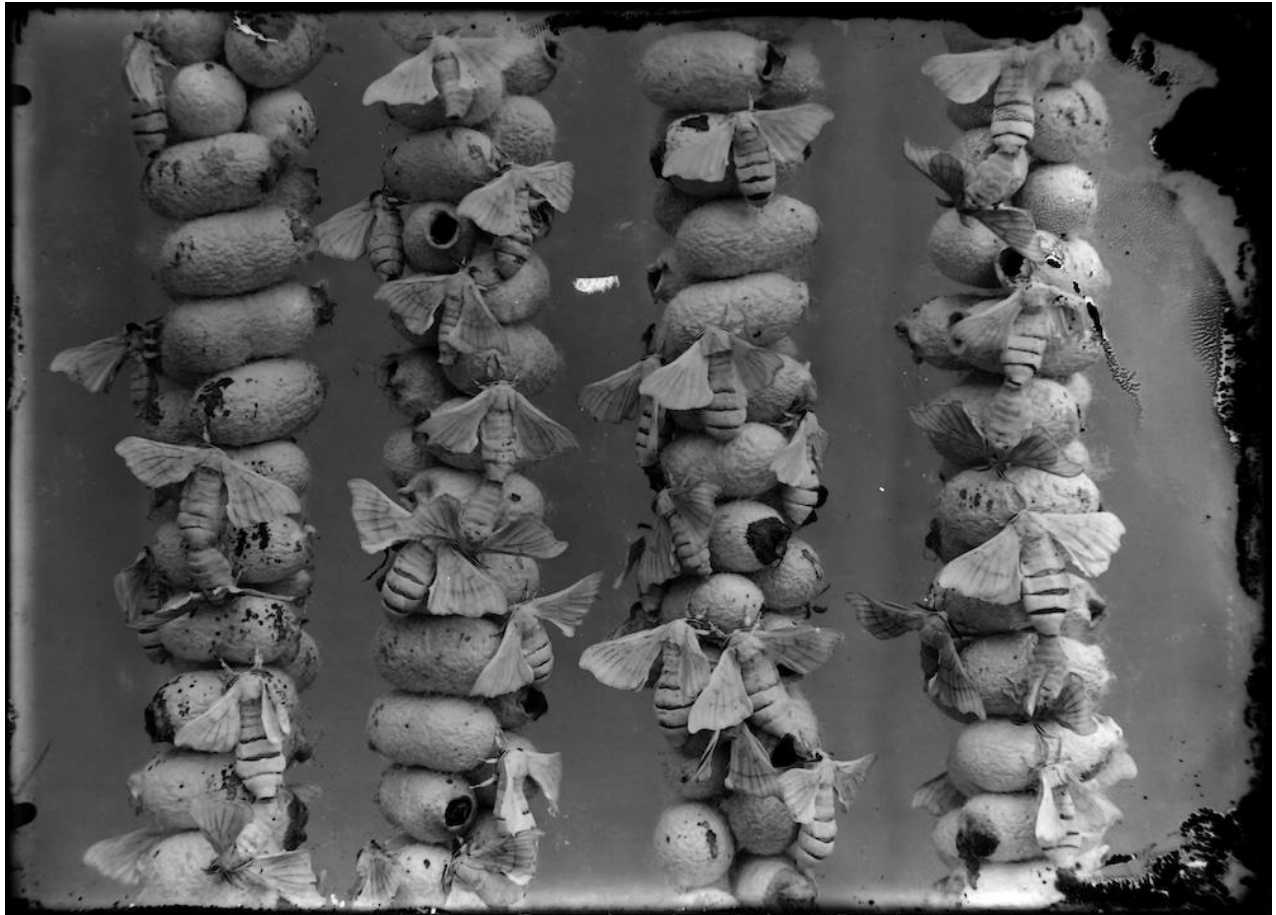
# MISHKIN GALLERY

## *Taxonomies of Power: Photographic Encounters at the State Silk Museum, Tbilisi*

March 22 – June 7, 2024

Mishkin Gallery, Baruch College (CUNY)

135 E 22nd St, New York, NY 10010



Silk moths leaving their stringed cocoons. Digitized scan of glass plate negative, attributed to Misha Mendelevich. Circa 1930s–1950s. Courtesy State Silk Museum, Tbilisi.

The exhibition *Taxonomies of Power: Photographic Encounters at the State Silk Museum, Tbilisi* will debut at Mishkin Gallery this spring and be on view from March 22 through June 7, 2024. The exhibition has been co-curated by Alaina Claire Feldman (Director and Curator, Mishkin Gallery) and Mariam Shergelashvili (Exhibition Curator, State Silk Museum) and features a selection of black and white historic photographs from the State Silk Museum in Tbilisi, Georgia, alongside the film *Raised in the Dust* (2022) by Georgian artist Andro Eradze.

Scientific inquiry has long relied on artists to draw evidence or produce empirical knowledge. When an early 20th century collection of microscopic glass plate negatives from the State Silk Museum (formerly known as the Caucasian Sericulture Station) was digitized in 2022, the images exposed the many ways that the Soviet Empire employed artists to extend itself into the molecular. A photography studio was set up in the attic of the science center so that artists could document the smallest living specimen that enabled the silk industry to thrive.

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Baruch College, CUNY  
135 E. 22nd st. at Lexington  
New York, NY

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Forty-seven of these photographs, which detail the lifecycle of the *Bombyx mori* (commonly known as the silk moth), are presented and re-contextualized alongside Andro Eradze's film *Raised in the Dust*. The film takes the forest and its nocturnal non-human inhabitants as its central subject matter, and is heavily influenced by the Georgian writer Vazha-Pshavela's *The Snake-Eater* (1901), an epic poem whose protagonist has supernatural powers allowing him to understand the language of nature. *Raised in the Dust*, which premiered at the 2022 Biennale di Venezia and now makes its New York debut, offers an alternative scenario to modernity's orderly and institutionalized taxonomies. Seen here alongside the photographs, distinctions between wild vs. domestic, native vs. foreign, art vs. science, and past vs. present begin to fall apart.

Coinciding with the exhibition is a publication edited by the curators and designed by Geoff Kaplan/General Working Group that includes full-page image plates and writing on this collection of photographs and the history of the State Silk Museum.

*Taxonomies of Power: Photographic Encounters at the State Silk Museum, Tbilisi* is made possible by Friends of the Mishkin Gallery and the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences at Baruch College (CUNY). Travel research and initial introduction between the two museums was supported by CEC ArtsLink's Art Prospect Network Residencies with funding from the Kettering Family Philanthropies and Trust for Mutual Understanding. Additional support provided by Dr. Konstantin Frank Winery.

## About the State Silk Museum

The Caucasian Sericulture Station was a research institute and educational center of the Caucasus region established in Tbilisi, Georgia in 1887. Its founder, biologist Nikolay Shavrov, created the institution to control the silkworm population, and to promote and develop sericulture and apiculture throughout the region. The Caucasian Sericulture Station's various collections of specimens and books played an important role in the educational activities of the institution and contributed to the public's awareness of the field. The Caucasian Sericulture Station changed its mission and status several times, and since 2006 it has functioned as the "State Silk Museum

For more information, please visit: [www.silkmuseum.ge](http://www.silkmuseum.ge)

## About Mishkin Gallery

Mishkin Gallery at Baruch College, City University of New York (CUNY) presents exhibitions and public programs dedicated to education and advancing the understanding of modern and contemporary art, interdisciplinary cultural activity, and innovative artistic practice from around the world. Extending Baruch beyond its campus, the Mishkin Gallery promotes projects by artists and scholars who demonstrate how and why creative practice is a crucial force in nurturing diversity, tolerance and shaping culture.

Follow Mishkin Gallery on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Tiktok](#), and visit their [website here](#).

## Press Contacts

Mishkin Gallery

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