

Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili  
'making food out of sunlight'  
11.04 - 16.06.2024  
LC QUEISSER

"I didn't want any flowers, I only wanted  
To lie with my hands turned up and be utterly empty.  
How free it is, you have no idea how free—  
The peacefulness is so big it dazes you,  
And it asks nothing..."

Sylvia Plath, "Tulips," 1962

The light of history irradiates, imprinting images on the panes of the mind: Exactly thirty-five years ago, on April 9th, a peaceful pro-independence protest by students in Tbilisi was met with the violence of the Soviet military resulting in multiple deaths and injuries. Commemorated across Aprils since, tulips are exchanged, memoria for resistance. In this exhibition consisting of new dye-sublimation prints, analogue photographs, and her second film *Interior*\*, Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili attenuates the differences between the public and private, crossing lives and spaces, to gesture toward sites of resistance as a throughline in images archiving both Georgian culture and her own relationship to time.

The exhibition is also an homage to Florence Henri, a Jewish photographer living in Berlin whose exploration of self-portraiture and experimental floral compositions was tragically cut short due to the start of second world-war. In our time of multiple world wide conflicts, the unwavering relevance of Henri's photographs, has served as a life line for Alexi-Meskhishvili.

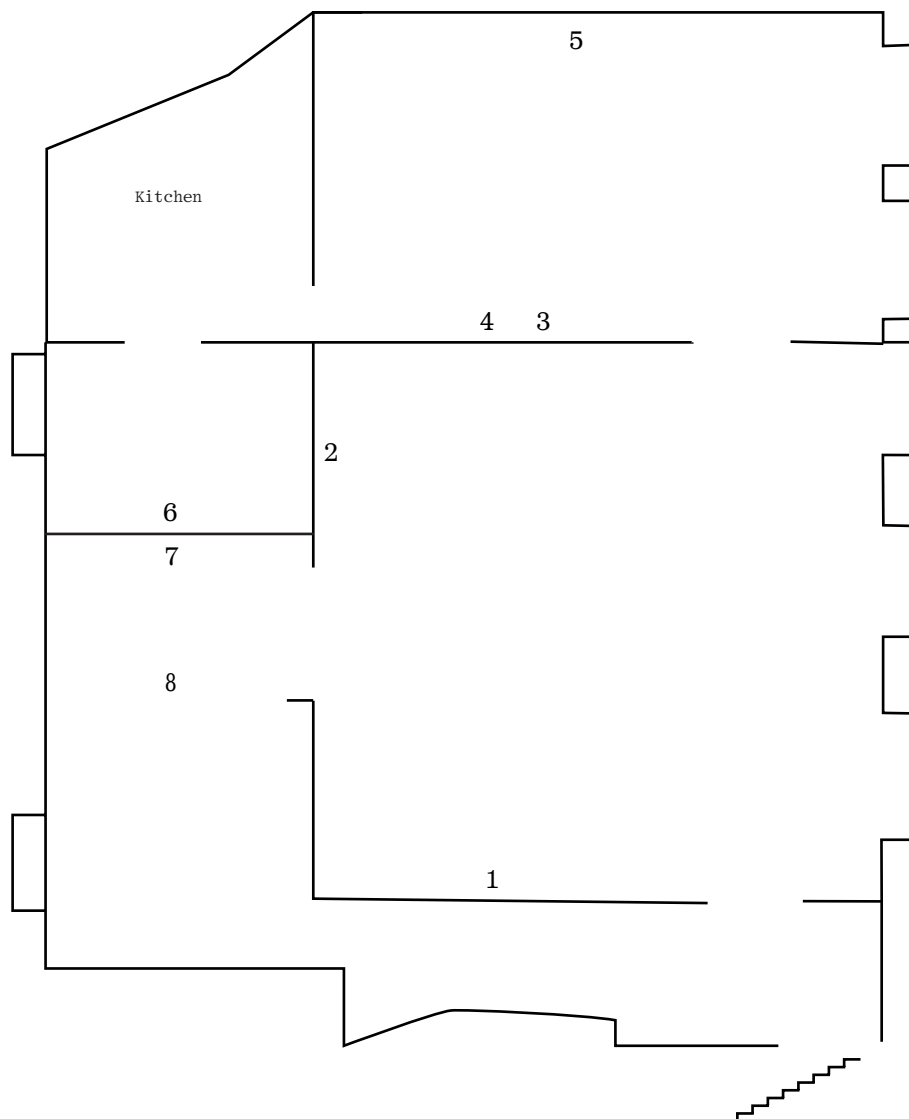
Long a crucial component of Alexi-Meskhishvili's visual vocabulary, flowers in this body of work are a fulcrum of self and history. Equally political and poetic, these photographs elaborate her specific syntax of representation and mythic vocabulary of symbol. She reframes the weight of tulips in contemporary Georgian culture, honoring them as they pass through various lyric cycles from sign to still life. She made a series of atomized compositions, she transforms objects into images by capturing them directly on the photographic medium. Rendered as light and color, ghost traces of the living linger. These works are met by a series of estranging self-portraits, textured in the mediated valences of analogue and digital media. Among mirrors and blossoms, the artist herself indexes the labor of being present in resistance to oppression when confronted by the fracturing of history. These self-portraits refract the gaze against itself, a broken mise en abyme, that conceives a vision of self not as some cosmos ignited, but, as the artist has written, like a witness to infinity.

In her new film *Interior*, Alexi-Meskhishvili explores the fraught status of art in Georgia as it persisted against Soviet censorship. Works that did not represent the aims of Socialist Realism were often circulated outside of commercial and institutional networks through acts of gifting and exchange. The film excavates the collections within two private houses, including that of Simon Virsaladze's House Museum. The work held within not only harbored formally critical practices under the nose of Soviet occupation, but also were the witnesses to a resistance kindled in private before taking decades later to the streets. Here, art captures beauty and sparks dialogue, while also holding a space of resistance and memorializing the persistence to imagine new possibilities.

Alexi-Meskhishvili grounds her work in the sincere gesture, a move away from a regime of cynicism and irony. Within such liminal imagistic prosceniums, these scattered and ornamental compositions recall histories large and small and detail relations familial and global. Through her intimate framing, these sacred interiors become reliquaries to the nameless saints lost to tyranny. Just as passing the flower from one to another marks strength and solidarity against an historical condition of oppression and limits on expression, so do the individual blossoms, friable and tremulous in ontological translucencies, signal the necessary attendance to the fragility of peace.

-Miciah Hussey

\**Interior*, 4:50 min, Cinematography by Tato Kotetishvili.  
Thank you to Elene Abashidze & Solomon Virsaladze house museum



1. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili  
*Tulip Season for Henri*  
Analog C-print  
32 × 41.4 cm

2. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili  
*making food out of sunlight*  
*(twilight)*, 2024  
Dye sublimation on aluminum  
125 × 100 cm

3. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili  
*Tulip Season Tutu*  
Analog C-print  
41.4 × 32 cm

4. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili  
*Tulip Season Wave*  
Analog C-print  
41.4 × 32 cm

5. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili  
*making food out of sunlight*  
*(sunrise)*, 2024  
Dye sublimation on aluminum  
125 × 100 cm

6. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili  
*Interior*, 2024  
16 mm, digitalized  
4:15 min.

7. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili  
*A Life's Work*  
Analog C-print  
41.4 × 32 cm

8. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili  
*making food out of sunlight*  
*(dawn)*, 2024  
Dye sublimation on aluminum  
125 × 100 cm