

Mirroring

Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili

Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvili

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I grew up going to my father’s studio in Tbilisi, where, among his paintings, he would have a theater maquette or two on display, testing his designs for upcoming productions. I remember him with a flashlight, tracing light over hanging transparent paper, a reference for a curtain, or moving shapes around the stage model. As I go around my Berlin studio, setting up objects to photograph or using finger lights to trace things on film, I get a sensation, like a wind at my back, that I am mirroring him.

There is a fantastical nature to Gogi’s work; it manages to walk a nuanced line between kitsch and beauty, pop and earnestness, pain and decoration. There is also a relationship to materials and an idea of a frame that I share.

As I was texting my new photographs to my friend SGR across the ocean, he replied:

“...Looking at shit through a frame... and things that die inside of it... Flowers being just barely in a frame... Things that look like boobs that aren’t boobs, but are inside of an arbitrary frame... arbitrary in my world, art view is philosophical, Beckett and shit... Having a frame, having a body, having to look at something... Abstraction only exists ’cause we have a body.”

Brecht’s Caucasian Chalk Circle was my father’s most famous theater production. It was radical in that it was not minimal. Brechtian self-referentiality and the display of one’s means of production are themes that my father and I share across our work.

A set of Gogi’s collages exhibited here was made at the invitation of Sergei Paradjanov to art-direct his last film, Ashik Kerib (1988), for which Gogi won a Felix Award (European Film Award) for Best Artistic Design.

“Gloves,” 1994–1995, a second series of collages, use tarnished plastic gloves, which were used to make larger paintings.

Gogi Alexi-Meskhishvili is a painter who, like many artists of his generation, went into theater and cinema in order to slip by Soviet watchdogs. It is therefore organic that his illustrations for sets and costumes are unusual in that they function as artworks in themselves, through their total non-commitment to realism.

In the new photographs, I tried to mirror his non-commitment while also attempting to meet our maddeningly ocular moment.

Works

1.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib I, 1986-1987
paper, spray paint,
fragments of printed illustrations,
fabric, beads, feather, plastic
29.2 × 73.3 cm

2.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib II, 1986-1987
paper, spray paint,
fragments of printed illustrations
33 × 45.8 cm

3.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib III, 1986-1987
paper, plastic, fabric, beads,
fragments of printed illustrations
33 × 45.8 cm

4.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib IV, 1986-1987
paper, acrylic, fabric,
fragments of printed illustration,
beads
33 × 45.8 cm

5.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib V, 1986-1987
paper, fragments of
printed illustrations,
beads, spray paint, photo collage
33.8 × 27.5 cm

6.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib VI, 1986-1987
paper, photo collage,
spray paint, beads,
fragments of printed illustrations
33.8 × 27.5 cm

7.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib VII, 1986-1987
paper, fragments of
printed illustrations,
photo collage
33.8 × 27.5 cm

8.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib VIII, 1986-1987
paper, fragments of printed
illustrations, photo collage
33.8 × 27.5 cm

9.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib IX, 1986-1987
papers, photo collage, fragments of
printed illustrations, pencil
33.8 × 27.5 cm

10.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib X, 1986-1987
paper, acrylic, beads, fragments
of printed illustrations, fabric
33.8 × 27.5 cm

11.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib XI, 1986-1987
paper;acrylic, fabric fragments,
fragments of printed illustration, beads
33 × 45.8 cm

12.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib XII, 1986-1987
paper, fragments of printed
illustrations, spray paint
33 × 45.8 cm

13.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib XIII, 1986-1987
paper, fragments of printed illustrations
33 × 45.8 cm

14.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib XIV, 1986-1987
paper, spray paint, fabric,
fragments of paper illustrations, feather
33.6 × 45.8 cm

15.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib XV, 1986-1987
paper, spray paint, feathers,
beads, fabric, fragments of
printed illustrations
33 × 45.8 cm

16.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib XVI, 1986-1987
paper, spray paint,
fragments of printed illustrations
33 × 45.8 cm

17.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Ashik Kerib XVII, 1986-1987
paper, spray paint, fabric,
fragments of paper illustrations,
feather
33.6 × 45.8 cm

18.Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
Okeefe’s Shells My Son, 2022
Two archival pigment prints
on screenfilm in a box frame
30.6 × 22.7 cm

19.Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
Pink Anthurium Pharynx
ვარდისფერი ანთურუმის ხახა, 2020
Two archival pigment prints
on screen film in a box frame
30.6 × 22.7 cm

20.Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
Toma Qajar Eyes, 2022
Two archival pigment prints
on screen film in a box frame
30.6 × 22.7 cm

21.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Gloves I, 1994-1995
paper; medical glove, canvas
fabric, acrylic, fragments of paper
42 × 30 cm

22.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Gloves II, 1994-1995
paper; mixed media –
medical glove, canvas fabric,
spray, and paper fragment
42 × 30 cm

23.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Gloves III, 1994-1995
paper; polyethylene glove,
illustrations, vintage book cover,
and photographs
42 × 30 cm

24.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Gloves IV, 1994-1995
paper; polyethylene glove,
photo collage, and paper fragment.
42 × 30 cm

25.Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvhili
Gloves V, 1994-1995
paper; polyethylene glove,
canvas fabric, acrylic,
writing, and paper fragment
42 × 30 cm

26.Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
The Price of Eggs, 2025
Handmade analog c-print
16.5 × 13.5 cm (framed)

27.Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
*A rose is a rose is a rose is
a rose is a rose*, 2025
Handmade analog c-print
13.5 × 16.5 cm (framed)

28.Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
The Price of Eggs (Green), 2025
Handmade analog c-print
13.5 × 16.5 cm (framed)

29. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
A rose is a rose is a rose, 2025
Handmade analog c-print
13.5 × 16.5 cm (framed)

30.Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
The Price of Eggs (Pink), 2025
Handmade analog c-print
13.5 × 16.5 cm (framed)

31.Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
Ghost Roses, 2025
Handmade analog c-print
16.5 × 13.5 cm (framed)

32.Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
Mirroring, 2025
16mm transferred to digital
Sound: “Virtual Sunset I” and
“Virtual Sunset II” by COSMIC SPLINTER
4:59 min

33. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
Serving Looks, 2025
Handmade analog c-print
13.5 × 16.5 cm (framed)

