

# maf

media art farm

Newsletter 1, Tbilisi, January 2003

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We are happy to present the first maf Newsletter – and the last one from CCCD: The Caucasian Center for Cultural Development in Tbilisi has a new name: **maf\_media art farm**. Our goals remain the same: to produce fresh products in the field of contemporary culture.

მოხარული ვართ წარმოგიდგინოთ მაფ-ის პირველი და CCCD-ს უკანასკნელი ცნობის ფურცელი: კულტურის განვითარების კავკასიურ ცენტრს ახალი სახელი აქვს: მაფ-მედია არტ ფერმა. ჩვენი მიზნები არ შეცვლილა: ახალი პროდუქტების წარმოება თანამედროვე კულტურის სფეროში.



## 1 Swiss Ambassador Mr. Stefan Speck Inaugurates maf's New Premises

We would like to express our gratitude to all organisations and private persons for their great support which made the activities of the media art farm possible. The first two years maf's office was situated in the building of the Academy of Fine Arts. During that time the number of students at the maf\_Institute and the technical infrastructure did increase considerably. Our new premises at the Carvasla – a historical Caravanserai in the center of Tbilisi – correspond to the conceptual background of maf: a cultural place where people from different backgrounds meet and where goods and ideas are shared without ideological restraints. We are very pleased that maf



has the opportunity to be in touch with the past and at the same time invest its innovative energy in current cultural processes.

The new maf premises were officially

inaugurated by Mr. Stefan Speck, Ambassador of Switzerland to Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan on November 22, 2002. His speech in perfect Georgian followed an introduction in perfect Swiss German, performed by maf director Wato Tsereteli. The guests were welcomed by a «video-buffet» and the newly designed maf rooms, whereas Tusia Beridze provided the sound. Book lovers were also happy and found themselves getting acquainted with the maf\_Library.

## 2 History of CCCD/maf

CCCD – Caucasian Center for Cultural Development was established in April 2000 in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi as an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) in order to promote the development of photography, new media and contemporary art in the Caucasus. After the collapse of the Soviet Union some young Georgians were granted the opportunity to participate in international educational programmes. Most initiators of CCCD were among this group and left Georgia in the 1990s to study abroad but returned later filled with desire to use and implement their experience and knowledge in favor of their homeland and the Caucasus.

The initiators considered local needs in the field of photography and new media as well as current programmes of leading institutions in the West such as ZKM/Center for Art and Media (Karlsruhe, Germany), V2/Institute for Unstable Media (Rotterdam, Netherlands) and the Art Academies of Antwerp (Belgium), Zurich (Switzerland) and Düsseldorf (Germany) to elaborate a basic strategy for the newly founded NGO.



The strategy of CCCD/maf covers four main domains: information, education, network/communication and innovation. The appropriate infrastructure and the objectives set by maf can only be achieved by developing all four fields.



#### **Information:**

At present the maf\_Library containing more than 3500 volumes represents the first large collection of publications on contemporary art, photography, new media, architecture and design in the region of the Caucasus. The maf\_Library is open to all interested persons who want to become library member.

#### **Education:**

In September 2001, CCCD/maf launched the Caucasian Institute of Photography and New Media (the maf\_Institute) in order to promote the education in the field of contemporary arts in the Caucasus. At the moment 16 students are enrolled in the faculty of photography, a four-year educational programme licensed by the Ministry of Education of Georgia.

#### **Network/Communication:**

By organising interdisciplinary projects as well as by providing adequate infrastructure maf is establishing a platform for contemporary culture in the Caucasus. The platform will create



an environment where artists can meet and present their work within an international network. At the same time it will host outstanding Caucasian

and international artists and their exhibitions.

In October 2001, the first edition of the project «Appendix» with participation of South Caucasian artists took place in Tbilisi. In May 2003, the second edition of «Appendix» will present positions from 30 artists. This time participants will come from all over the world: Caucasasia, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Japan... The exhibition will be inspired by the theme «Diffusion and its Topology» and will provide material for the discussion on the issues of globalization processes.

In 2003, maf will be one of the partners of the Chair of Dutch and Flemish Studies in Georgia which plans to organise the second edition of the festival of Dutch, Flemish and Georgian culture «Olla Vogala».



#### **Innovation:**

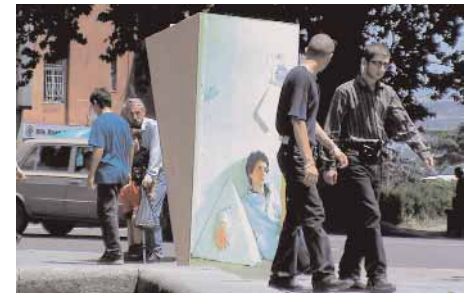
maf aims to promote contemporary art and new media forms as a possible way of communication, reflection and cooperation. Thus the maf\_Box, a new media lab, was established to provide conceptual and technical facilities to students, artists as well as NGOs dealing with current social, political and cultural issues. The maf\_Box shall create a new approach to the comprehension of these questions and encourage civil society awareness by applying new technologies (interactive exhibitions, CD-ROMs, internet projects etc.).

To ensure the further development maf is planning to establish an own, characteristic building that will host all the activities under one roof. A sponsoring project has been launched to purchase 600 sqm of real estate in the Old Town of Tbilisi. Please contact us if you would like to become a supporter (contact see 6 Editorial).

### **3 The maf Branches**

#### ***maf\_Institute (Caucasian Institute of Photography and New Media)***

Education can truly be mentioned among the most important activities of maf. We believe it is one of the key terms for the successful achievement of our objective to implement and develop contemporary art forms in the field of photography and new media in



Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Nowadays the maf\_Institute is the only educational institution in the region that offers higher education in the field of photography and new media. The main goal is to promote professionals with strong skills and theoretical background. A four-year educational curriculum has been established that is licensed by the Ministry of Education of Georgia and was elaborated in cooperation with leading photo schools in Europe (Antwerp, Zurich, Rotterdam). The teaching methods are based on an interdisciplinary, interactive approach and intend to make the students acquainted with both analogue and digital technologies. The programme also contains important subjects as new media, graphic design, printing, art management and sociology. Workshops, master classes, interdisciplinary seminars and exchange programmes are organised for the students of the institute.

In the institute's first academic year three «Lectures on Photography» were held by Ian Jeffrey, a well-known British photo historian, in October 2001. In the same year an exhibition of works by first year students has been organised, and two of them were invited to show their works in Dresden (Germany). Magnum photographer Martin Parr held a workshop in October 2002. German photographer Matthias Wähner presented his work at the



maf\_Institute in December 2002.

The other maf branches – the photo laboratory and studio, the maf\_Box and the maf\_Library – create a strong technical background of the institute which enables a high quality education.

The maf\_Institute is open for all interested persons (within and beyond the region) who desire to get a higher education in the field of photography and new media. At present day our institute has 16 students on board. In 2001 there were only four applicants, but their number increased to twelve last year.



We believe that the appearance of high professional photographers and new media artists who will graduate from the maf\_Institute will influence the demand for professionalism and qualitative work and lead to the promotion and development of photography and contemporary art forms in the Caucasus.

### **Photo Lab**

At the establishment of the institute both digital and analogue aspects of photography have been considered. Despite the fact that the analogue/traditional process will be replaced by the digital one it is of great importance for a professional education in photography to be well acquainted with traditional methods.

One of the initiators of the photolab is Hans de Herder, director of the National Photographic Conservation Studios in Rotterdam. Through an announcement in Dutch photo magazines he organised a fully equipped analogue photo laboratory with 14 working stations. We would like to express our gratitude to all organisations or private persons who responded to the announcement of Mr. De Herder.

### **maf\_Box – Production and Experimental Space for Electronic and Interactive Media**

After almost two years of strategic planning with several visits to important Media Centers like ZKM/Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe (Germany), V2\_Institute for Unstable Media, Rotterdam (Netherlands) and plug in, Basel (Switzerland) the maf\_Box was opened on November 22, 2002 as the first new media lab in the Caucasus. It intends to become a new knot in the international network of innovative media centers.

The establishment of the maf\_Box was possible through grants from the Prince Bernhard Foundation in the Netherlands and Pro Helvetia – Arts Council of Switzerland as well as private donors. It is coordinated by maf member of board Daniel Brefin. The maf\_Box offers a strong infrastructure with several video

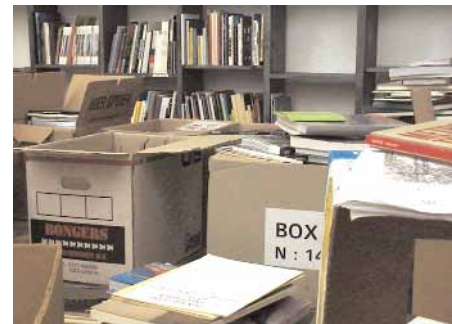


and audio editing stations which will be available for Caucasian as well as international artists and students. The maf\_Box will organise workshops with internationally known media artists and encourage the exchange between art, society and technology – a platform for production and presentation of artistic projects in the field of new media: video, digital photography, internet, CD-ROM, performance and multimedia. The students of the maf\_Institute will have free access to the equipment of the maf\_Box.



### **maf\_Library**

The maf\_Library with over 3500 books as well as CD-ROMs, DVDs, videotapes and music CDs is the largest collection of publications on contemporary culture and art in the Caucasus. The member-based library also offers internet stations.



Membership fee: 10 GEL/year  
Opening hours: Thursday to Sunday, 13.00-17.00  
Address and Tel.: see 6 Editorial

## **4 News**

### **maf gets Support from Swiss Artist**

Daniel Brefin is media artist from Basel, Switzerland and since August 2002 an active member of the maf board. He got to know the Caucasus in 2001 during a 4-month artistic exchange. Daniel is responsible for the activities at the maf\_Box and co-curates the exhibition project «Appendix 2».

### **Talk of Magnum Photographer Martin Parr**

In October 2002 the famous British photographer Martin Parr travelled to Tbilisi to hold a talk for the students of the maf\_Institute. During the discussion Mr. Parr showed his works to the students and talked about his most important themes - globalisation, consumer society, middle class, supermarket, food and holiday resorts – and about common and immediate aspects of our life.

The students were especially interested in the work of the MAGNUM agency and his personal technical and esthetical approach. According to critics Martin Parr is a complex artist as it is hard to interpret

the work he produces. Sometimes described as one of the most controversial members of MAGNUM, he is also represented by well-known art galleries around the world. His images can be perceived as a particular position an individual can have towards the common culture.



About his impressions of Tbilisi: Martin Parr was amazed by the big amount of free parking spaces...

You can see his report on the internet: [www.magnumphotos.com](http://www.magnumphotos.com)

## 5 Special Thanks for Support

maf could not have realized its projects without the great help of many individuals and institutions. We would like to say a big thank you to everybody who believed in the importance of our work and supported us in many different ways. The following persons, institutions and companies have supported maf in the past:

### Private Donors

- Annette Bauer, Zurich, Switzerland
- Ruth Grunt-Baschong, Allschwil, Switzerland
- Marcel Hatt, Zurich, Switzerland
- Ruth Speiser-Baer, Arlesheim, Switzerland
- Marylou Selo, Zug, Switzerland

### Infrastructure

- National Photographic Conservation Studios, Rotterdam: complete professional analog laboratory for 14 students and other equipment; publications about our project in different Dutch magazines
- Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, Amsterdam: support for the establishment of the media lab
- V2\_Institute of Instable Media, Rotterdam: partnership and consultancy for the maf\_Box
- Tbilisi State Academy of Arts: former space for CCCD/maf
- Tbilisi History Museum/Carvasla: new space for maf
- Pro Helvetia, Arts Council of Switzerland, Zurich: digital video camera
- Barco, Belgium: video projector (Barcodata 3100 Large Screen Projection System)

- CanArgo Energy Corporation, Tbilisi: renovation of the former space
- Stephen & Lydia Bond, Wädenswil: Volkswagen Golf
- Rolf Hämmerlin, Fotohaus, Basel: photo cameras
- Walter Kummli, Inhouse Productions, Basel: video monitors
- Henri Leuzinger, Rheinfelden: photo camera
- point de vue, Basel: video equipment
- Counterpart International, Chat Program Georgia: Furniture
- Marica Gojevic, Basel: TV monitor
- Schweizer AG, Hölstein: video monitor and video equipment
- Geonet, Tbilisi: free 24h internet connection
- Greenet, Tbilisi: free web hosting

### Projects and Workshops

- Pro Helvetia, Arts Council of Switzerland: «Appendix» 2001 (Exhibition and Publication)
- Council of Europe/Information Office, Tbilisi: «Appendix» 2001 (Exhibition and Publication)
- British Council Georgia: workshop by photo historian Ian Jeffrey; exhibition and workshop by Magnum photographer Martin Parr
- German Embassy, Tbilisi: books about German photography and the opening of the former space of CCCD/maf
- Dutch Embassy, Tbilisi: support for several projects
- Swiss Embassy, Tbilisi: opening of the new space of maf
- MitOst Stiftung: Student Exchange Programme

### Book Gifts

- German Embassy to Georgia, Tbilisi
- Pro Helvetia, Arts Council of Switzerland, Zurich
- Scalo Publishers, Zurich
- The British Council Georgia, Tbilisi
- Ifa, Berlin
- V2\_Institute of Instable Media, Rotterdam
- ZKM, Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe
- S.M.A.K. Museum of Contemporary Art, Gent
- Museum of Photography, Antwerp
- MUHKA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp
- Christoph Merian Verlag, Basel
- Groninger Museum, Groningen
- Prestel Verlag, Munich
- Nederlands Foto Instituut, Rotterdam
- Stichting De Pont, Tilburg
- Spengler Museum, Hannover
- Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich
- Fotografie Forum International, Frankfurt
- Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin
- MitOst Foundation, Germany
- Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg
- Nederlands Architectuur Instituut, Rotterdam
- FRAME, Helsinki

- Nifca, Helsinki
- Voetnoot Publishers, Amsterdam
- Kunstraum, Düsseldorf
- National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, Bradford
- Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe
- Kunsthalle, Basel
- Tate Modern, London
- Secession, Wien
- Kulturkontakt, Wien
- Marica Gojevic, Basel
- Andreas Hagenbach, Basel
- Ruth Speiser-Baer, Arlesheim
- Marc Zumstein, Basel

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