



Dear friends of artasfoundation!

At a friend's house in Tbilisi there is something that always strikes me. For this newsletter I took a photo of it: In order to open the door to a shared space, the key that people use to enter does not necessarily have to be the same. There is no standardized norm, no universal access is needed for taking part in this space for the community, however all its members have to connect their individual access-key to that of another. And with respect to people from somewhere else: through this chain no individual member of the community can decide for the others on the exclusion of someone from outside. Even a majority will not suffice in doing so. All members of the house-community, each one as an individual, has to take responsibility and take part. But before such things lead me to ponder philosophy, to dream of Hannah Arendt, and to hope for a Europe that realizes that the basis to belonging together is through its differences, before I stand at this door in Tbilisi, contemplating models for a democracy beyond principles of majority or unanimous vote...

Because, actually this newsletter should inform you of our work from the last six months! Many of you supported us with donations, suggestions or direct action, and we want to give you a short overview and access point for further exchange. With the hope (so still in this mode!) that this exchange and the discussion in the circle of friends of our foundation could function a little like this Georgian door-access method: through art, artasfoundation wants to open doors and allow people with the most diverse backgrounds to join together and meet one another.

Warm regards,
Dagmar Reichert and the team of artasfoundation

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// THANK YOU FOR CONTINUING TO SUPPORT US!

// Further education course „CAS Arts and International Cooperation. Collaborating in Fragile Contexts and in Processes of Peacebuilding“



*For six years already some Syria refugees are living in the camps of the Bekaa-Valley
Photo: Dagmar Reichert*

From January 2019 onwards, we will offer the second edition of the Certificate of Advanced Studies course in the field of art and conflict transformation. As in the first edition, this one-year course is anchored in the further education program of the Zurich University of the Arts. It includes contributions from our own practical work as well as from experts in the fields of international cooperation, peacebuilding and contemporary artistic practice. The four, sequential, compact modules put a special focus on questions of cross-cultural collaboration, dealing with inequality, and conflict-sensitive work. A study-trip to Lebanon provides a common frame of reference for the discussions and group-work of the participants. The program is intended for people with professional experience, who intend to take part in art projects in conflict regions as artists, for people who organise such initiatives for various institutions, or finance them. The course is in English. Currently, 2-3 places are still available. Those who are quick in making up their mind can find further information on the CAS Arts and International Cooperation. For questions please send an e-mail to Dagmar Reichert.

Art Matters – Prospective art educators from Suchum/i and Zurich in exchange



Art Matters, Lesson at Kantonsschule Buelach. Photo: Judith Villiger

Art classes are not considered to be the most important subject in school. However, here good teachers can support children and young people to experience their own abilities to create something, take responsibility for it and advocate it. In countries of the former Soviet Union, such teaching can be viewed as new and quite political, and its political dimension can also be significant in highly regulated Western European societies.

In order to contribute to the training of prospective school teachers in the South Caucasus and in Switzerland, and to create a possibility for their exchange, we collaborated with the faculty of Art Education of the Art University in Zurich. Together, we invited eleven students and lecturers, from the Region of Abkhazia*, to come to Zurich and Buelach for two weeks in September. It was the return-visit of the stay of the students from Zurich in Sukhum/i in April. Under the professional direction of Judit Villiger, the group attended art-education classes at different schools, museum-education, and could itself, in mixed-language groups, teach art-classes in the Kantonsschule Zurcher Unterland. Now the task is to continue his mutual learning!

So many people engaged with us to make this large project a success (see here)!

We thank you all!

// Art Cham, Chambarak Armenia – Art students from Yerevan and Zurich work in a city on the border to Azerbaijan



Art Cham August-September 2018, Chambarak. Photo: Olivia Jaques

For two weeks in late summer 2018, a group of Swiss art students travelled to Armenia. There they met with a group of young artists from Yerevan. Together they went to Chambarak, a small town on the periphery of the country, that is strongly affected by the unresolved conflict with Azerbaijan. The twenty-eight participants stayed there, having been allocated to twelve host families, and used an art school for children, which was empty due to the summer holidays, as a temporary workshop. The young artists worked in different constellations, exploring various local practices (from gathering herbs to embroidery), whilst getting to know the town and its inhabitants. Curious children were invited to playful art workshops, the community shepherd was accompanied, an ephemeral monument was created in honor of the new female boxing champion of Armenia (a teenage girl from Chambarak), a joint wall painting was created, an exhibition with drawings, videos and a performative walking-tour was organized...The artistic projects in Chambarak followed mainly experimental and process based approaches, whereby the role of foreign artists in such a town was continuously reflected upon.

Project manager: Olivia Jaques

// International Choir – At the end of October the project continues in Armenia



Music School of Noyemberyan, Photo: Fenja Läser

Round two for the International Choir project: from 28.10. – 3.11.2018 a continuation of the choir project that began in Abkhazia* last year, will start with a workshop in the Tavush region in Armenia. Young adults and teachers from several villages close to the border to Azerbaijan are invited to learn folk songs from all around the world and to train themselves in the techniques of body percussion. Franziska Welti and Jean-Daniel Girod are the artistic directors of the project. We are looking forward to hearing both new and familiar tunes!

Project manager: Fenja Läser

// Tskaltubo Art Festival – The sixth edition in the Georgian spa resort



*Simone Felber and Adrian Würsch at the opening performance, Tskaltubo Art Festival 2018
Photo: Dagmar Reichert*

This September the festival, which we initiated in 2013 with the aim of helping to integrate refugees from Abkhazia* into the community, was for the second time directed by our former partner-organisation, the IDP Women's Union of Tskaltubo (Director: Lali Grigolava). Before the actual festival, the organization conducted workshops for youths from Tskaltubo and was supported by the Tbilisi art curator Irine Jordjadze and the Oboist George Kobulashvili (Munich), who, together with his fellow musicians, is already a regular guest-artist in Tskaltubo. From Switzerland, the mezzo-soprano and yodeler Simone Felber and her colleague Adrian Würsch (Schwyzerörgeli) also took part. After giving a one-week workshop for young folk-musicians from Tskaltubo, they performed together with the young people at the festival and also as a duo.

This year, we were still able to contribute financially to the festival. Next year the Georgian director will negotiate with sponsors and patrons directly. We are happy to act as an intermediary for contacts!

// off/line – New dynamics in our relationship to Zemo Nikozi



Off/line Zemo Nikozi 2018. Photo: Nurith Wagner-Strauss

This year for the 4th time, we traveled for the exchange project off/line: what can art do in Zemo Nikozi? to the village on the demarcation line to South Ossetia. The residents of Zemo Nikozi seemed to be noticeably open and curious towards the 24 artists from Western Europe and Georgia who arrived with us. They organized Supras by the campfire, engaged in sometimes extraordinary cooperations and presented their skills at the final event, where the open stage again attracted visitors from the whole region.

This growing familiarity has also led to an increased visibility of existing tensions. The host families accommodate two artists each and earn money through this: this year for the first time, we did not simply select families and ask them to host. All interested families could apply and were selected by a lottery. This essentially very transparent and fair procedure caused quite a stir in the village: for the first time, personal interests and perceptions of fairness were clearly formulated. This in turn challenged our own ideas of conflict sensitivity. However, the discussions also lead to the villagers taking a more active role in the project. For the first time, the village community seemed to be interested in the project budget, the origin of the money and the objectives we follow. A friendly reticence was replaced by an active debate that brought our relationship to another level. During this debate, the meaningfulness of the stay of the artists in the village was never questioned. This is why we want to further engage in these new dynamics in our relationship next year.

Project manager for artasfoundation: Marcel Bleuler and Lali Pertenava

// Info-event at the Literaturhaus in Zurich – On Tuesday, 29th of January 2019 we invite you to a conversation about projects of artas-foundation

The program will begin with a reading from a work by an author from the South Caucasus. Afterwards, there will be conversations around various tables with artists and project coordinators about our ongoing projects.

Please save the date! We will inform you about the detailed program and time with a separate invitation in December.

// Jour Fixe – An invitation to the monthly discussion event in Zurich



*Since 2012 we hold monthly the discussion-events of the Jour Fixe: here an image from 2018
Photo: Maja Leo*

A little bit too far for our friends from abroad, but maybe still of interest to you: Every month artasfoundation hosts a Jour Fixe, a public event where we present current projects, discuss open questions related to our work and exchange knowledge on relevant political developments. If you happen to be in Zurich from time to time or are simply interested in learning more about our Jour Fixe, you are welcome to send an e-mail.

// THANK YOU FOR CONTINUING TO SUPPORT US!

The projects of artasfoundation can only be realized thanks to the great support of friends, donors and patrons of the foundation. Apart from the contributions of institutions and foundations, 60% of the budget comes from private hands. Thank you for your help and thank's to everybody who has supported us already in 2018. All contributions are welcome, both large and small donations are valuable and helpful!

- Bank details for individual donations:

Artas Foundation, Raiffeisen Bank, 8001 Zurich, IBAN: CH56 8148 7000 0412 5940 4

- Information on the possibility to participate as a friend or donor of the foundation, or to be a project sponsor, can be found on our website or in person by Dagmar Reichert

** artasfoundation would like to underline that its use of names and titles particularly with regard to the conflict regions should not be construed as implying any form of recognition or non-recognition by the foundation or as having any other political connotation whatsoever.*

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