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Irina Kurtishvili / Peter Cachola Schmal

## **Hybrid Tbilisi**

### **Reflections on Architecture in Georgia**

The Caucasian metropolis of Tbilisi is in a permanent state of transformation. Spectacular new buildings contrast with late-Soviet formal experiments such as the Ministry of Highway Construction, an icon of Soviet brutalism. Meanwhile, palaces, administration buildings, and museums by European architects from the early-twentieth century are fading into oblivion, while entire streets around them are being reconstructed. Georgia's capital appears like something of a paradox: on the one hand, it is an enormous demolition site in which the old is being torn away, but on the other, it is a factory of the new – a burgeoning, chaotic, and fascinating city in search of itself.

*Hybrid Tbilisi* offers a wealth of images and insightful essays, taking the reader on a journey through the many layers of this contradictory metropolis that oscillates, geographically and spiritually, between Europe, Russia, Turkey, and the Arab states – between the Orient and Occident. Peter Cachola Schmal and Irina Kurtishvili, along with a number of other authors, illuminate the historical and international influences that led to the creation of this hybrid city. At the same time, they explore the various formal experiments, sometimes even failures, that directly followed political changes and the new hopes that those changes inspired. They bring to light how Georgia established itself as a successful link between the East and the West, Islam and Christianity, following the many conquests from neighbouring countries. The book describes the city's European-style nineteenth-century buildings and works of Stalinist neo-classicism as well as the 'kamikaze loggias' with which the city's residents boldly extended their prefabricated panel buildings during the chaos of the 1990s. These turbulent times were followed by a period of reconstruction and re-historicisation. Recent experiences of German architects in Georgia, in turn, are reflected in interviews with the architecture firm Graft and with the architect Jürgen Mayer H. Finally, the book is rounded off with an account of the history of housing in Tbilisi from the nineteenth century to the present day along with an introduction to the next generation of Georgian architects. The striking photographs by Berlin-based photographer Erik-Jan Ouwerkerk, among others, not only illustrate the architecture of the city, they capture the atmosphere that radiates from Tbilisi with its urbanistic overgrowth and wild night-life.

Georgia is Guest of Honour at the 2018 Frankfurter Buchmesse (Frankfurt Book Fair). To mark the occasion, the Deutsches Architekturmuseum (DAM) will hold the *Hybrid Tbilisi* exhibition on the city's architecture – from 29 September 2018 to 13 January 2019 – which this title accompanies. In this context, DOM publishers is also presenting two additional architectural guides: one takes the reader on a journey through Tbilisi, while the other presents artworks created specifically for architecture in Georgia.



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