

# SCHOOL OF COMPLEX PAST: MIGRATION

# 20-22 / 09 / 2024



# ABOUT

**THE SCHOOL OF COMPLEX PAST IS THE ANNUAL PROJECT BY THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL NARRATIVES LABORATORY (CSN LAB). In 2024, this non-formal educational programme will centre around two main thematic directions—migration and refugeehood—with a specific focus on the contexts of forced displacement, wars, and conflicts.**

**This alternative school is a major platform, which the CSN Lab team developed to promote reflection and dialogue on the complex past of Armenia and the region. For years, we have been conducting various projects in memory studies, addressing critical topics such as memory and migration, memory and cultural heritage, memory and the urban environment, memory and nature, memory and gender equality, and more. Examining the past is our effort to achieve a transparent and democratic memory, decentralise memory studies, and create an inclusive and horizontal environment to reflect on the past in Armenia.**

**As an organisation dedicated to advancing the democratic ecosystem through cultural initiatives, research, and activism, the CSN Lab has been advocating for cultural rights and shaping the discourse around them for years. Migration and forced displacement are the key themes of the School of Complex Past 2024, driven by the current political situation in the region, cultural transformations, and societal challenges, as well as the background and extensive experience of the CSN Lab. Each year, we change the thematic focus of the School to address knowledge gaps among specialists often overlooked by formal academic education, for which we integrate various disciplines and methods.**

**Each year, numerous cultural practitioners, artists, activists, human rights defenders, social workers, researchers, and other civil society representatives participate in the School of Complex Past. As an interdisciplinary platform, the CSN Lab is always open to new collaborations and co-creations.**

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**SINCE THE SECOND KARABAKH WAR in 2020, over 100,000 forcibly displaced people have moved to Armenia as a result of subsequent military operations, and escalations. The situation becomes even more intense and alarming in the context of other conflicts and wars occurring in the region.**

**The School of Complex Past aims to explore and analyse how past instances of forced displacement are interconnected with the current migration crisis. Unfortunately, migration and forced displacement in our**

region are persistent and rarely come to an end. With no chance, time, or space to reflect on one wave of migration and its consequences, society is continually confronted with new instances, perpetuating this cycle for decades.

**THE CSN LAB HAS INVITED LEADING RESEARCHERS and theoreticians in the field, who, within the framework of the 3-day intensive school, will present key topics such as the:**

- **Refugeehood and memory politics;**
  - **Multiple displacements in the context of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and wars;**
  - **Preservation of Armenian cultural legacy in the shadow of forced migrations under the Ottoman Empire;**
  - **Ecomigration amidst the authoritarian regime of the Soviet Union;**
  - **Female perspectives and experiences of conflicts, wars, and forced migrations;**
  - **Reflections and artefacts of migration flows in urban environments;**
  - **The pivotal role of oral (hi)stories in memory studies;**
  - **The impact of migration on the development of photography in Armenian communities;**
  - **Diasporan Armenian literature as a consequence and testimony of traumatic shifts in the past;**
- Et cetera.**

**This year, the School of Complex Past stands out for its diverse thematic scopes and the variety of formats for its events. As part of the 3-day intensive programme, the participants will have an opportunity to be part of:**

- **Thematic lectures and discussions;**
- **Workshops;**
- **Presentations of books and multimedia projects;**
- **Memory tour in Yerevan;**
- **Events of the “Open Mic” format.**

# SPEAKERS

## TIGRAN AMIRYAN

Tigran Amiryan is the founder and president of the CSN Lab (Cultural and Social Narratives Laboratory NGO). He holds a doctorate in Contemporary World Literature and is a semiologist, literary critic, curator, and contemporary culture researcher. Dr. Amiryan has authored numerous articles and books on postmodern literature, the sociology of literature, and cultural and urban memory. His primary interests include the narrativisation of individual and collective memory in contemporary culture, artistic representation, urban space, and the environment. As a researcher and curator, Dr. Amiryan explores topics such as conspiracy theories and collective memory, vernacular architecture and everyday life practices, photography and memory, and migration and memory. He also curates projects related to cultural rights and decolonisation.

## LUSINE KHARATYAN

Lusine Kharatyan is a cultural anthropologist and writer. Since 2018, she has been a senior researcher at the Department of Cultural Anthropology at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. She also serves as the director of the Center for Continuing Education at Yerevan State University. In 2023, Lusine Kharatyan's novel Սիրիական (A Syrian Affair) was nominated for the European Union Prize for Literature. Her short fiction and essays have been translated into English, German, Georgian, and Russian.

## HOURIG ATTARIAN

Hourig Attarian is an Associate Professor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the American University of Armenia (AUA). She holds a PhD in Education from McGill University. She is also a Core Member of the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University. Anchored in the blurred genre of life history and autobiographical inquiry, her work focuses on storying memory and identity through visual and narrative explorations. Her research-creation projects merge creative writing, photo collages, installations and performance, drawing together difficult memories and marginalised histories of violence within a framework of public pedagogy. Hourig Attarian teaches education, oral history, and gender studies courses at AUA.

## **GOHAR STEPANYAN**

**Gohar Stepanyan, PhD, is a cultural anthropologist serving as a senior researcher at the Department of Cultural Anthropology at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. Her research interests include the anthropology of festivals and rituals, folk Christianity, Soviet political violence, Soviet and post-Soviet everyday life practices, and, more recently, forced displacement and refugee studies.**

## **MISAK KHOSTIKYAN**

**Misak Khostikyan is an architect, theoretician, and lecturer at the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia. In parallel with his professional activities, he explores the philosophy of architecture. Misak Khostikyan has given numerous lectures and speeches on the history and philosophy of architecture and has authored many philosophical essays and short stories.**

## **SIRANUSH DVOYAN**

**Siranush Dvovyan is a docent with a Ph.D. in philology. Her research interests include the study of discursive practices in the transformations of public life and personal experience, articulations of public modernisation processes, and related practices. In recent years, Dr Dvovyan has focused on the study of state violence—particularly in the context of Soviet Gulags—and its artistic reflections and representations.**

## **EVIYA HOVHANNISYAN**

**Eviya Hovhannisyán is a graduate student of the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. She works as a program coordinator at the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung South Caucasus. Her research interests include ethnopolitical conflicts, nationalism, identity issues, migration and refugeehood. Eviya Hovhanisyan has authored several academic articles and research studies on migration.**

## **VIGEN GALSYTAN**

**Vigen Galstyan is an art historian and curator with a PhD in art history from the University of Sydney. Since 2005 Vigen Galstyan has been realising various large-scale research and scholarly projects dedicated to the history of Armenian photography, cinema, design and modern art. Since 2006 he has authored over 50 exhibitions, film programs, essays and catalogues on the history of photography and modern Armenian art. Between 2020 and 2023 Vigen Galstyan served as the Head of the Heritage Department at the National Cinema Centre of Armenia and is currently the director of the ManBan Visual Culture Archive, as well as the founding curator of photography at the National Gallery of Armenia.**

# EVENTS

## MEMORY TOUR

### FROM SEBASTIA TO SEBASTIA: TRACING GENOCIDE MEMORIES

#### BANALIK

The oral history walk/memory tour From Sebastia to Sebastia: Tracing genocide memories is part of a larger collaborative project created by BANALIK- Armenian Critical Memory Studies Initiative, titled Localizing genocide memory in the land/scape(s) of Armenia: A pilot study of the Malatia-Sebastia neighbourhood Soviet and post-Soviet topography. The main goal of the project is raising critical understanding of local public history by examining grassroots memorialization practices in Soviet and post-Soviet urban landscapes. The tour focuses on both official and unofficial memorialization practices of the genocide in the Soviet and post-Soviet period, unearthing traces through survivor narratives, oral history interviews, visits to local monuments, as well as ephemeral “footprints” of places that have long disappeared but remain in the collective memories of local inhabitants.

## WORKSHOP

### WOMEN DECLARE TRUCE: STORIES OF DISPLACED WOMEN

#### MARIAM YEGHIAZARYAN

The CSN Lab team member, cultural researcher, and manager Mariam Yeghiazaryan will speak on how oral (hi) stories, autobiographies, research materials, and various genres of audiovisual art can be combined to create accessible and engaging works about refugeehood, forced displacement, and migration.

## BOOK PRESENTATION

### KECHUT: MEMORY UNDER THE WATER

#### ARSEN ABRAHAMYAN

Architect, urban researcher, and member of the CSN Lab Arsen Abrahamyan will present the recently published Kechut: Memory Under the Water book, which explores matters of forced displacement and ecomigration. Apart from the book, a thematic multimedia platform has been created by the CSN Lab, representing the first digitisation of hydronarratives in Armenia.

# PROGRAMME

## DAY 1 / 20.09.2024

Address: Goethe-Zentrum Jerewan, Mher Mkrtchyan str 1

Moderator: Mariam Yeghiazaryan

- 11:00–11:15**      **Registration of participants**
- 11:15–11:30**      **Tigran Amiryan / Welcome speech**
- 11:30–12:30**      **Introduction**
- 12:30–13:45**      **Lusine Kharatyan / The complex past of Armenia across different historical phases**
- 13:45–14:30**      **Lunch break**
- 14:30–15:45**      **Hourig Attarian / Learning to listen: Issues of methodology, ethics, consent in oral history**
- 15:45–17:00**      **Gohar Stepanyan / The experience of refugee women in the context of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict**
- 17:00–17:15**      **Coffee break**
- 17:15–18:30**      **Vigen Galstyan / Photography: A medium for communication and collective memory**
- 18:30–19:00**      **Summary of the day**

## DAY 2 / 21.09.2024

Address: Goethe-Zentrum Jerewan, Mher Mkrtchyan str 1

Moderator: Arsen Abrahamyan

- 11:00–11:15**      **Registration of participants**
- 11:15–12:30**      **Siransuh Dvoyan / Zareh Vorbuni: Diaspora-Armenian literature in the context of genocide and forced migration**
- 12:30–13:45**      **Lusine Kharatyan / Reflection of migration crises on the memory landscape**
- 13:45–14:30**      **Lunch break**
- 14:30–15:45**      **Eviya Hovhannisyan / Multiple displacements: A matter of choice or compulsion?**
- 15:45–16:15**      **Coffee break**
- 16:15–17:30**      **Misak Khostikyan / Migrating architecture**
- 17:30–18:00**      **Summary of the day**



## **DAY 3 / 22.09.2024**

Address: The CSN Lab's office, Mashtots Ave 29, apt 7

Moderators: Arsen Abrahamyan, Mariam Yeghiazaryan

- 10:30–11:00**    **Departure to the Malatia-Sebastia district**
- 11:00–11:15**    **Registration of participants**
- 11:15–13:30**    **Banalik / From Sebastia to Sebastia:  
Tracing genocide memories | Memory tour**
- 13:30–14:00**    **Departure to the CSN Lab's office**
- 14:00–14:45**    **Lunch break**
- 14:45–15:45**    **Mariam Yeghiazaryan / Women declare truce |  
Workshop**
- 15:45–16:45**    **Tigran Amiryan / Balat: How to live together?**
- 16:45–17:00**    **Coffee break**
- 17:00–18:00**    **Arsen Abrahamyan / Kechut:  
Memory Under the Water | Book presentation**
- 18:00–19:00**    **Open mic**



# INFO

**On September 20th and 21st, the School of Complex Past will take place at the Goethe-Zentrum Jerewan, Mher Mkrtchyan str 1. You can walk from the Republic Square to Zoravar Andranik Metro Station in 5-7 minutes.**

**On September 22nd, the project will take place at the CSN Lab's office, Mesrop Mashtots Ave 29, 1st entrance, (code: #7788), 3rd floor, apt. 7.**

**For any questions or assistance, please feel free to contact CSN Lab team members Mariam Yeghiazaryan (095 260371, mariam@csnlab.net) and/or Arsen Abrahamyan (098 424757, arsen@csnlab.net).**

**The CSN Lab is a cultural organisation committed to promoting cultural dialogue, democracy, and peace in Armenia. We do not accept any form of sexism, racism, homophobia, hatred, or intolerance.**

**The School of Complex Past is an annual project that fosters the public discourse around the undisclosed past through alternative education. This year, it will take place on the 20th, 21st, and 22nd of September. The School of Complex Past: Migration program is implemented by CSN Lab with the support of the Dansk Kulturinstitut / Danish Cultural Institute (DCI) within the New Democracy Fund (NDF) program and the Women's Fund Armenia (WFA).**



**The CSN Lab team extends its sincere gratitude to all participants, speakers, and mentors of the School of Complex Past: Migration for their essential contributions to the project. We are particularly thankful to our partners at the Danish Cultural Institute (DCI) (New Democracy Fund (NDF) project) and the Women's Fund Armenia (WFA), without whom this project would not have been possible. We also extend our gratitude to the Goethe-Zentrum Eriwan for supporting the implementation of the School of Complex Past 2024. We wish to once again emphasise the crucial support of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) to our organisation, which is vital to advancing democracy and cultural dialogue in Armenia.**