



Photo: Gagosh posing in front of his recent piece, Still Life.

## FOCUS

ON "THE GEORGIAN BANKSY"

An interview with Giorgi Gagoshidze, known as Gagosh, one of Georgia's first widely recognized street artists **PAGE 10**

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# Tbilisi Joins the Global Reuse Movement with CAMPA and Fabrika Pilots

BY KESARIA KATCHARAVA

As part of a global effort to promote sustainable urban living, Tbilisi Circular Labs (TCL) is launching its first two reuse system pilots in June 2024. The project, implemented by CENN with the support of GIZ and ICLEI, is one of four "Circular City Labs" globally under the GIZ Circular City Labs - Testing Reusable Packaging Systems in Cities initiative. The goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by scaling viable reusable packaging systems, while also strengthening the role of women and female entrepreneurs in local circular economies.

Following a business acceleration program held from July to September 2024, two businesses were selected to launch pilot reuse models: Fabrika, a multifunctional urban space, and CAMPA, a well-known Georgian beverage company. Both businesses worked with international and national experts to create reusable packaging systems tailored to their operations.

Continued on page 9

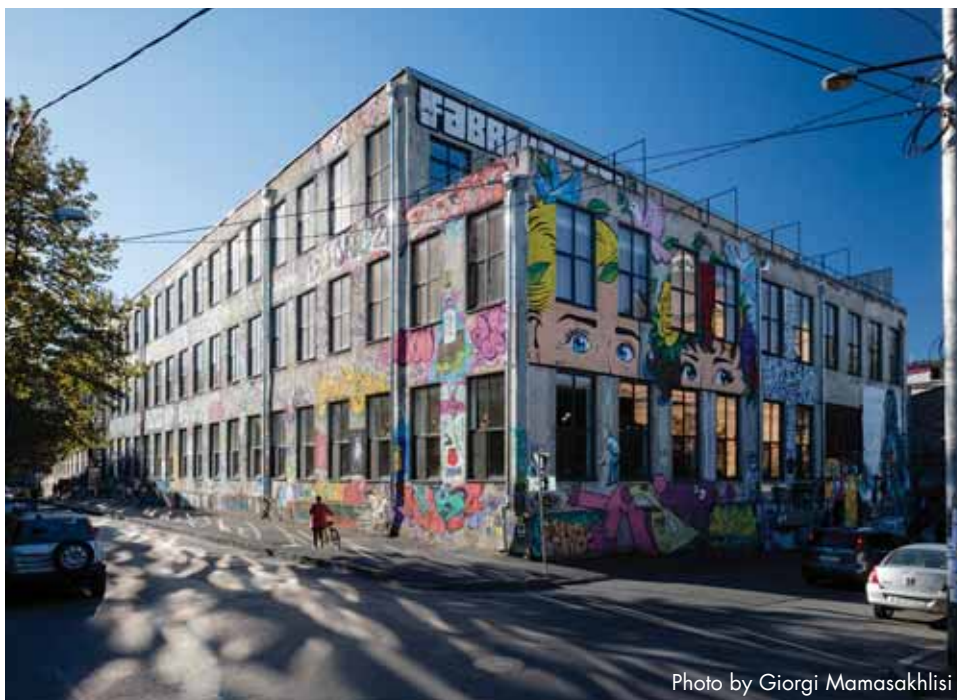


Photo by Giorgi Mamasakhlisi

GALT & TAGGART CREATING OPPORTUNITIES									
Markets									
As of 03-Jun-2025									
BONDS					STOCKS				
	Price	w/w	m/m			Price	w/w	m/m	
GEORG 04/26	96.83 (YTM 0.50%)	+0.3%	+0.8%		Lion Finance Group (BGEO LN)	GBP 67.40	+0.4%	+11.1%	
GRAIL 06/28	99.41 (YTM 0.00%)	+0.3%	+0.7%		Georgia Capital (GCGO LN)	GBP 18.54	-3.6%	+10.4%	
GERGG 9 1/2 PERP	98.95 (YTM 0.42%)	-0.1%	+0.4%		TBC Bank Group (TBCG LN)	GBP 44.30	-3.9%	-5.7%	
SILNET 01/27	101.21 (YTM 7.58%)	+0.1%	+0.4%						
TBC 8.894 PERP	97.51 (YTM 11.54%)	+0.1%	+1.0%		COMMODITIES				
TBC 10 1/4 PERP	99.29 (YTM 9.95%)	+0.2%	+1.0%			Price	w/w	m/m	
					Crude Oil, Brent (US\$/bbl)	65.63	+2.4%	+2.1%	
					Gold Spot (US\$/OZ)	3 353.43	+1.6%	+3.5%	
INDICES					CURRENCIES				
	Price	w/w	m/m			Price	w/w	m/m	
SP 500	5 970.37	+0.8%	+5.0%		USD / GEL	2,7310	-0.1%	-0.5%	
FTSE 250	21 017.78	+0.4%	+3.8%		EUR / GEL	3,1053	+0.3%	+0.1%	
DOW JONES 30	42 519.64	+0.4%	+2.9%		GBP / GEL	3,6906	-0.0%	+1.3%	
Russell 2000	2 102.98	+0.6%	+4.1%		EUR / USD	1,1372	+0.4%	+0.7%	
FTSE 100	8 787.02	+0.1%	+2.2%		GBP / USD	1,3517	+0.1%	+1.8%	



Photo: Sovia News.

## Georgian Dream Sues TV Channels Over Critical Language

BY MARIAM RAZMADZE

**T**he ruling Georgian Dream party has filed formal complaints with the Communications Commission against two leading opposition-leaning broadcasters, Formula TV and TV Pirveli, accusing them of violating new broadcasting regulations.

Formula stated that Georgian Dream is demanding sanctions for alleged breaches of the revised Law on Broadcasting. The complaint includes selected quotes from news programs and social media posts where terms such as 'illegitimate parliament,' 'so-called chairman of parliament,' 'oligarch's deputy,' and 'regime's city court' were used.

"The party is suing us for referring to Bidzina Ivanishvili as an 'oligarch'," Formula said in an official statement. They added that the ruling party is urging the commission to impose temporary enforcement mechanisms while the case is being considered.

TV Pirveli also confirmed being targeted. "Georgian Dream has filed a complaint with the Communications Commission," said Nodar Meladze, head of the channel's information service. He added that the party tries to ban journalists and anchors from using phrases like 'illegitimate government,' 'oligarch regime,' and 'clan's servant judge' during live broadcasts.

The cases will now be reviewed by the National Communications Commission which will determine whether either broadcaster has violated the new legal norms.

## MFA Shuts Down NATO & EU Info Centre Amid Restructuring



Photo: NATO and EU Information Center.

BY MARIAM RAZMADZE

**T**he Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has denied claims circulating online about the abolition of the NATO and EU Information Centre, stating the agency is currently under structural reorganization, not closure.

"As part of the ongoing reorganization, the NATO and EU Information Centre will be integrated into the Central Office of the Ministry," the MFA announced in an official statement.

The ministry emphasized that recent social media rumors suggesting the center's termination are unfounded. Instead, the move is part of a bigger internal restructuring aimed at strengthening operations and efficiency.

## Prime Minister Congratulates Nawrocki on Polish Presidential Victory, Pledges Stronger Ties

BY TEAM GT

**G**eorgian Dream Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze congratulated Karol Nawrocki on his victory in the Polish presidential elections in a post on X.

He wished Nawrocki success and reaffirmed Georgia's commitment to strengthening ties with Poland.

"I extend my heartfelt congratulations to President-elect Karol Nawrocki on his victory in the Polish Presidential Election. I wish him every success in

leading Poland toward continued progress, prosperity, and fulfilment of the aspirations of the Polish people. Georgia reaffirms the importance of our bilateral ties and stands ready to further deepen cooperation across all areas of mutual interest," Kobakhidze wrote.

Conservative historian Karol Nawrocki narrowly won Poland's 2025 presidential election, defeating liberal Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski with 50.89% of the vote to Trzaskowski's 49.11%. This closely contested result underscores the deep political polarization in Poland and signals potential challenges ahead for the pro-European Union government led by Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

# Kobakhidze Hails China as a Model of Peace and Progress



Irakli Kobakhidze meets Head of Chinese Communist Party's International Department, Liu Jianchao in 2024. Source: Georgian Dream FB

BY TEAM GT

**A**t the Tbilisi Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze praised China as a global power that has stayed committed to peace and progress for nearly half a century.

"In a world full of conflict, it's important to recognize countries that choose a different path," he said. "China hasn't

been involved in a single war for the past 45 years. Instead, it's focused on development, modernization, and long-term growth—and the results are there for everyone to see."

Kobakhidze described China as the kind of superstate others should look to—not just for its economic success, but for its steady role in promoting peace.

"We should recognize the unique place China holds—not only in its region but globally—when it comes to supporting stability and peaceful progress," he added.

His remarks come as Georgia's relationship with China continues to deepen.

In August 2023, the two countries upgraded their ties to a strategic partnership. The agreement includes cooperation in areas like infrastructure, trade, education, and diplomacy, and reflects a shared interest in regional and global stability.

Kobakhidze has previously called the new partnership "one of the most important achievements" in Georgia's recent foreign policy, reiterating that closer cooperation with China enhances the country's geopolitical balance—especially as Georgia continues to build ties with both Eastern and Western partners.

## PM Criticizes European Parliament as 'Soviet-style Institution'



European Parliament. Source: frontnews

BY MARIAM RAZMADZE

**G**eorgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze heavily criticized the European Parliament on Wednesday, comparing it to the USSR's Supreme Soviet and calling its resolutions 'absolutely irrelevant.'

"If anything resembles a Soviet institution today, unfortunately, it's the European Parliament," Kobakhidze told reporters. "In its current state, it is no different from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. I remember the tone, the content of discussions, the level of injustice back in the 1980s, and today's European Parliament is no different

from that."

Describing the situation in the EU legislature as 'alarming and tragic,' he expressed hope that change would begin within the Parliament itself. "The process of recovery and change will, first and foremost, apply to the European Parliament," he said.

The Prime Minister also discussed bigger EU-Georgia relations, particularly the country's constitutional commitment to EU membership by 2030. "Our goal is clearly stated in Georgia's Constitution – our aim is for the country to become a member of the European Union by 2030," he said. "This is entirely achievable, provided a fair environment is ensured."

Kobakhidze criticized what he called a lack of substantive dialogue from the

EU side. "On every issue, we constantly call for consultations. We ask that we speak to each other based on facts," he noted. "Unfortunately, this European approach of ours is often met with a Soviet-style response."

He added, "We thought we had left Soviet methods behind 35 years ago, but we are now seeing that those approaches are still in force. What is most concerning is that such approaches are often coming from the West. Hopefully, this will change."

Despite these harsh comments, Kobakhidze reinforced Georgia's readiness to advance toward EU integration. "We are ready for it," he said. "By 2030, Georgia will be more ready than ever to join the EU, and if there is a fair approach, it will certainly happen."

# Ukraine Latest: Zelensky Calls for Sanctions after 'Savage' Russian Attack on Sumy Kills Four

COMPILED BY ANA DUMBADZE

Violence and conflicting narratives continue to dominate the war between Russia and Ukraine, with new attacks, territorial claims, and accusations exchanged on both sides. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called the deadly Russian airstrike on Sumy a "savage" assault that deliberately targeted civilians on "ordinary streets." The Ukrainian leader said "many people have been wounded" and that at least four were killed, adding that the attack showed that Russia is not serious in pursuing peace.

Zelensky wrote on X: "It is obvious: without global pressure, without decisive actions from the United States, Europe, and everyone in the world who has the power - Putin will not agree even to a ceasefire. Not a single day goes by without Russia striking Ukrainian cities and villages. Every day, we lose our people to Russian terror. Every day, Russia gives new reasons for tougher sanctions and stronger support for our defense. I am grateful to everyone around the world who is promoting exactly this agenda: sanctions for aggression and the killing of people, and assistance in defending the lives of Ukrainians."

Sumy is about 30 kilometers from the Russian border, and was a vital logistics hub for Ukraine's months-long offensive into Russia's Kursk region.

The city has come under intense Russian bombardment after Vladimir Putin ordered his troops to create a "buffer zone" inside the Sumy region, which borders Russia.

Ukraine's SBU security service claimed responsibility for a significant strike on



Firefighters extinguish cars hit by a Russian military strike, in Sumy, Ukraine June 3. Source: State Emergency Service of Ukraine/REUTERS

the strategic Crimea Bridge, stating it detonated explosives targeting underwater supports, causing what it described as "severe damage" to the structure. The bridge serves as a key link between mainland Russia and the annexed Crimean Peninsula, and has been a repeated target throughout the conflict.

In response, the Russian Ministry of Transport stated that "standard operations" had resumed after "temporary closures" earlier in the day. Russia blamed Ukraine for the explosion on the Crimea Bridge, although the Kremlin insisted there was no damage. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova accused the West of being complicit in what she labeled "terrorist attacks"

against civilian infrastructure in Russia, alleging that NATO and Western nations not only supply weapons to Ukraine, but also provide coordinates for such strikes.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry reported that its forces had taken control of Kindrativka in Ukraine's northern Sumy region and the village of Ridkodub in the eastern part of the country, indicating continued pressure on Ukrainian defenses along multiple fronts.

Tragedy also struck in the Kharkiv region, where Ukraine's Interior Ministry confirmed that two civilians were killed when fires broke out following a Russian attack on homes in the village of Chistovodivka.

The attacks came as a second round

of peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv ended in Istanbul without a significant breakthrough - only a deal to swap more prisoners of war.

Negotiations between Ukrainian and Russian delegations in Istanbul ended without agreement on a ceasefire on Monday, but with both sides agreeing to exchange more prisoners.

Ukraine's president said the two sides had agreed to exchange 1,000 prisoners of war each, with the possibility of swapping an additional 200.

Zelensky did not take part in the talks but spoke out during a visit to Lithuania, calling for stronger sanctions on Russia if it did not agree to a ceasefire.

He said his negotiators had given their

Russian counterparts a list of nearly 400 abducted Ukrainian children that Kyiv wanted Moscow to return home, but that the Russian delegation agreed to work on returning only 10 of them.


An agreement had been made to return the remains of killed service personnel, but this would take careful preparation, said Ukrainian negotiators. Russia proposed a ceasefire of two or three days in some areas of the frontline to allow the Russian army to collect the many bodies it has left lying on the battlefield.

Ukrainian officials said the Russians rejected Kyiv's call for an unconditional ceasefire of at least a month, instead handing over a proposal that would need to be studied by Kyiv. The Ukrainians suggested the talks should reconvene towards the end of June.

As the war in Ukraine intensifies, key Western allies have announced increased military support, focusing on advanced weaponry and air defense systems to bolster Ukraine's resistance against Russian aggression.





UK Secretary of Defense John Healey announced that Britain will allocate £350 million (\$473.5 million) to supply Ukraine with 100,000 drones. This forms part of the United Kingdom's broader £4.5 billion (\$6 billion) military aid package for 2025. Healey emphasized that the drones would play a crucial role in surveillance, strike capability, and frontline support for Ukrainian forces.


In parallel, German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius revealed a new initiative aimed at enhancing Ukraine's air defenses. Speaking to reporters, Pistorius said Germany is lobbying the United States and other partners to contribute additional Patriot or equivalent air defense systems. The initiative is intended to shield Ukrainian infrastructure and cities from frequent Russian missile and drone attacks.



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# Kaladze Dismisses EU Report on Georgia, Accuses European Institutions of Corruption and Slander

BY TEAM GT

**T**bilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze has sharply criticized the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee's newly published draft report on Georgia, dismissing it as "worthless" and accusing EU institutions of being driven by "corruption" and "slander."

"We have seen many resolutions like this before. These resolutions are worthless," Kaladze said in response to the committee's decision, which saw 55 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) vote in favor of the document, 14 against, and 4 abstain.

Kaladze alleged that the entire process behind the report is the result of hidden influence and lobbying. "We know very well how these resolutions are adopted, how much they pay. It's all wrapped in lobbying. In reality, it's ordinary corruption," he claimed.

He also personally attacked Lithuanian MEP Rasa Juknevičienė, the lead author of the report, calling her one of many "odious bureaucrats." Despite his harsh rhetoric, Kaladze maintained confidence in Georgia's future in Europe: "We will receive the kind of Europe we aspire to, not the one that exists today—built on lies, falsehoods, and slander."

The European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee adopted the draft report on Georgia with several amendments. The final version has yet to be published on the European Parliament's website, but the initial draft, presented by Juknevičienė, is publicly known.

The draft report expresses "deep regret" that Georgia's ruling Georgian Dream party has failed to seize the historic opportunity of EU candidacy. It claims Georgia has not only failed to progress, but has actually regressed on key reforms outlined in the European Commission's list of nine steps required for integration. The report states that Georgia's EU inte-



gration process is effectively suspended due to ongoing democratic backsliding and the adoption of anti-democratic legislation that violates core EU values.

Among its key recommendations and criticisms, the report:

- Calls for an immediate and comprehensive audit of the EU's policy toward Georgia in light of these developments.
- Urges the European Commission to review Georgia's compliance with the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, warning that continued breaches could result in the suspension of economic cooperation and privileges.
- Condemns the ruling party's top officials for spreading disinformation and conspiracy theories about the EU.
- Blames Bidzina Ivanishvili—the influential founder of Georgian Dream—for

democratic deterioration and calls for targeted personal sanctions against him, his family, and affiliated businesses, including asset freezes in the EU.

- Advocates for new parliamentary elections within months, under an improved electoral framework and international supervision.
- Rejects the legitimacy of the "self-proclaimed authorities" installed by Georgian Dream following what the report calls the "rigged" 26 October 2024 parliamentary elections, labeling Georgia's current parliament a one-party institution incompatible with democratic norms.
- Urges EU officials to refrain from recognizing or meeting with current Georgian authorities, including the president appointed by the ruling party, while continuing to recognize Salome

Zurabishvili as the legitimate President of Georgia.

- Condemns attacks on civil society and independent media, including threats, intimidation, and physical assaults. The report highlights the suspension of USAID activities and calls for increased EU support for civil society groups.
- Warns that current EU actions are insufficient, and calls for like-minded Member States to move forward with sanctions even without unanimous support.
- Calls for coordinated bilateral sanctions against key enablers in government, business, media, and law enforcement responsible for democratic decline, electoral fraud, and human rights abuses. The report welcomes sanctions already imposed by Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia,

Czechia, and Germany.

- Supports the Council's suspension of visa-free travel for Georgian diplomats and urges a broader review of visa liberalization for all Georgians if democratic standards are not met.

- Criticizes Georgia's lack of alignment with EU foreign and defense policy, including sanctions against Russia, Belarus, and Iran. Although the country has helped prevent sanctions circumvention, the report accuses Georgian Dream of undoing decades of Euro-Atlantic progress and alienating international allies.

- Deplores growing ties with Russia, amid its continued occupation of Georgian territory, and accuses Georgian Dream of promoting Russian disinformation.

- Notes the suspension of €30 million in EU support under the European Peace Facility in 2024, with no funding planned for 2025.

The resolution concludes with instructions to forward the document to relevant EU and international institutions, including the Council, Commission, OSCE, Council of Europe, and the "self-appointed" authorities in Georgia.

During the committee meeting, MEP Rasa Juknevičienė emphasized the severity of the situation:

"It is regrettable that the European Parliament's annual report portrays Georgia not as a country progressing toward democracy, but as one rapidly declining into a brutal autocracy. Georgia, once a leader among Eastern Partnership states, is now being overtaken from within by a pro-Russian government—without firing a single shot."

She said the report highlights rigged elections, government obstruction of the EU path, repression of journalists and opposition figures, and systemic attacks on the EU and its institutions.

"This report supports fair new elections, sanctions against the regime, the release of political prisoners, and a reassessment of EU assistance to Georgia," Juknevičienė stated.

## The Mutual Houses in Argentina and Sakartvelo

BLOG BY NUGZAR B. RUHADZE

**M**any of us probably don't have the faintest idea that something like the Argentina House, functioning in Georgia, and the House of Georgia, operating in Argentina, even exists. These institutions serve as some of the brightest bilateral symbols of international friendship and cultural cooperation between the two countries and beyond. They are headed respectively by Nikoloz Makharadze-Patarklishvili and Diego Roberto Manavella. The activity of this multifaceted bilateral project was personally blessed by the Patriarch of All Georgia, Ilia the Second.

Bright and early on May 20, the founders of the project arrived from Argentina in Tbilisi—among them, the President of the House, Diego Roberto Manavella, and its General Secretary, Leandro Muñoz, accompanied by their colleagues. The Argentinian delegation was met at the Tbilisi Airport by Georgian supporters and sponsors of the Argentina House with warm, friendly cheers—including musicians of the Georgian Marching Band, led by Giorgi Vartanov.

After a couple of days of well-deserved rest following their long journey from Argentina to Sakartvelo, the guests and their Georgian hosts participated in a congress organized by the Houses. The congress focused on a large-scale international project prepared and presented by Makharadze-Patarklishvili. This project envisions the development of key economic sectors such as energy and

agriculture, the creation of various industrial enterprises, and the founding of a major tourism compound.

The bilateral business relations between Sakartvelo and Argentina were also examined by the congress in the fields of education, culture, and sports, including frequent interactions and exchanges. The congress took place on May 22 at the Vakhtang Saralidze Concert Hall in Digomi.

Among the congress speakers were: Professor Givi Abdushelishvili, Chairman of the Academic Foundation of Science and Technology of the National Academy of Sciences; Professor Paata Surguladze, Doctor of Historical Sciences; Professor Giuli Gogoli, Doctor of Agricultural Sciences; Dr. Gubaz Megreladze, Doctor of Arts; Tengiz Gachechiladze, Merited Journalist of Georgia and one of the founders of the Georgian Olympic Committee; Guram Kupatadze and Morison Kublia, Vice Presidents of the Phasis International Academy; and others.

At the conclusion of the congress, a trilateral agreement was signed between the two Houses and the Hotel Irmeni of Tbilisi, with the goal of promoting tourism development.

Between May 23 and 30, members of the Argentine delegation, accompanied by their Georgian colleagues and friends, visited the regions of Kakheti, Guria, and Achara. They met with representatives of local municipalities and heads of local departments of tourism and culture. A meeting was also organized with the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Davit Songulashvili, and the Minister of Regional Development, Kakha Gulevani.



Argentina House, functioning in Georgia, and the House of Georgia, operating in Argentina, headed respectively by Nikoloz Makharadze-Patarklishvili and Diego Roberto Manavella. Source: FB

The next friendly gathering, within the framework of the mutually "built" Houses in Argentina and Sakartvelo, is planned to take place shortly after July 20, 2025, with the participation of business circles from both nations.

The Georgian Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other relevant governmental departments have been informed about the ongoing and upcoming business initiatives between

Georgia and Argentina under the agreements achieved by the two Houses. This information has also been communicated to the respective embassies, regional leaders, and municipal authorities, who have already expressed their readiness and desire to actively participate in future developments between Argentina and Sakartvelo.

It is universally acknowledged that this project holds tremendous potential for

benefitting the peoples of both nations—whether one calls it governmental engagement or people's diplomacy. The names and titles matter less than the essence of the initiative: a fruitful, peaceful, and mutually beneficial cooperation between Georgia and Argentina, for the benefit of both peoples. Thank God, there are forces and individuals who not only desire this good work—but are capable of turning it into reality.

# “One of the most audacious drone attacks we’ve ever seen” - Major General on Ukraine’s Bold Drone Assault and the Future of Warfare

INTERVIEW BY VAZHA TAVBERIDZE

**T**his was certainly one of the most audacious drone attacks we’ve ever seen. It shows that surprise is still very much possible in war, contrary to what some people claim... It’s an exclamation mark on three and a half years of innovation, creativity, and evolution in how war is fought, - retired Australian Major General Mick Ryan tells RFE/RL’s Georgian Service, weighing in on ‘Operation Spider Web’—Ukraine’s largest and most audacious drone attack yet—and what it signals not just for the war in Ukraine, but for the very future of warfare itself.

A leading military strategist, author, and one of the most respected Western voices on the conflict, Ryan argues that while the Ukrainian strike may not be a turning point, it certainly underscores how drones, long-range strikes, and asymmetric innovation are reshaping the battlefield. He discusses the operation’s strategic, psychological, and geopolitical implications—from the toll on Russia’s air capabilities to the ripple effects in Europe, Washington, and beyond.

## OPERATION SPIDER WEB - WHAT’S THE MAGNITUDE WE’RE TALKING ABOUT HERE? WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE AND LONGER-TERM MILITARY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COURSE OF THE WAR?

I think one has to consider both its impact on this war and its implications for warfare more broadly.

In this particular conflict, Operation Spider Web clearly has a military impact by reducing—by what percentage, I’m not sure yet—the number of bombers available to Russia. We don’t know exactly how many were destroyed, but it will diminish the number of aircraft that can carry those long-range, precise missiles—the ones that are harder to intercept and carry larger warheads. So there’s military utility in what Ukrainians have done.

But perhaps even more important is the psychological impact—whether on the Russian Air Force or the Russian public. I don’t think it will change Putin’s mind. Very little can. If he were to lose the war, he’d be facing hundreds of thousands of angry soldiers coming home and people asking, “What was it all for?” So I don’t know that this will shift the trajectory of the war—because that would require changing Putin’s calculus, and I don’t think this has done that.

The other point I’d make is that the Ukrainians have a real art for identifying where the Russians have failed to learn and adapt quickly enough. The Russian Air Force has seen multiple bases attacked, yet still hasn’t caught up. That created a gap, and the Ukrainians exploited it. In modern war, if you’re not adapting fast enough, your enemy is going to make



Ukrainians have a real art for identifying where the Russians have failed to learn and adapt quickly enough



Retired Australian Major General Mick Ryan. Source: Daily Telegraph

you pay for it.

I think its greatest significance lies in other areas—particularly in how other military organizations might view their own ability to reach out and strike adversaries. During the Cold War, only superpowers could conduct these kinds of long-range attacks. Now, anyone can. The bar has been lowered—not just for state militaries, but also for non-state actors. Drug cartels could do it, for example. That means that we all need to up our game when it comes to defending military bases and critical infrastructure. Democracies, I’d argue, are even more vulnerable than Russia in this regard.

## WOULD IT BE FAIR TO SAY THIS WAS THE MOST IMPACTFUL DRONE ASSAULT IN HISTORY TO DATE? SOME EVEN ARGUE THAT THIS COULD MARK A BREAKING POINT IN FAVOR OF UNMANNED WARFARE OVER CONVENTIONAL TACTICS.

I’d say it’s certainly one of the most audacious drone attacks we’ve ever seen. It shows that surprise is still very much possible in war—contrary to what some people claim. But I wouldn’t call it a turning point. It’s more of an exclamation mark—on three and a half years of innovation, creativity, and evolution in how war is fought.

Drones are transforming warfare, no doubt. But I think most people who have been paying attention already came to that conclusion. What happened over the weekend just underscored it—loudly.

## SO FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION, IT’S THE CONTINUATION OF AN ESTABLISHED TREND. BUT FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN’T, OR REMAINED SKEPTICAL, HAS THIS ATTACK OPENED A WINDOW INTO THE FUTURE OF WAR?

I think so. For those who’ve either ignored the lessons or have just been busy living their lives, this kind of attack is, as you said, a window—a wake-up call that things have changed, are changing, and will continue to change.

## YOU MENTIONED THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT. WHAT KIND OF TOLL HAS THIS OPERATION TAKEN ON RUSSIA? FINANCIAL LOSSES ARE BEING ESTIMATED ANYWHERE BETWEEN \$2 BILLION AND \$7 BILLION.

## THEN THERE’S THE STRATEGIC TIME UKRAINE HAS BOUGHT, THE LIVES SAVED—MILITARY AND CIVILIAN. IS THERE ALSO A SYMBOLIC ASPECT TO IT?

Absolutely. As I said, there’s a very significant psychological impact on the Russians—but it’s just as important for the Ukrainians.

We shouldn’t forget: as Ukraine was pulling off this audacious strike, Russia was conducting the biggest drone attack of the war against Ukraine. For Ukrainian civilians who endure these brutal, needless attacks night after night, to see their military strike back is encouraging. They want to know they can punch back.

It’s psychologically important in Europe, too. People there continue to see that Ukraine is worth defending—and more than capable of defending itself with a modicum of support.

And you’d like to think it has a psychological impact in Washington, D.C.—on those who, rather surprisingly, appear to be siding with Russia. They need to see that a Russian victory, which Putin keeps promising, is far from inevitable. The Ukrainians have agency, and they are worth defending.

## AND THAT ZELENSKY DOES, IN FACT, HAVE SOME CARDS UP HIS SLEEVE.

Zelesky has a lot of cards. One of the most important is the creativity and innovation of the Ukrainian people—military and civilian alike.

## PRESIDENT ZELENSKY EMPHASIZED THAT THE OPERATION WAS PLANNED “SOLELY BY UKRAINE”. DOES THAT MEAN THERE WAS NO WESTERN INVOLVEMENT AT ALL? OR IS THAT SIMPLY KYIV’S OFFICIAL LINE? WHAT SHOULD WE READ INTO IT?

When I was last in Ukraine, it was around the time the U.S. intelligence cutoff happened—and that had a profound impact, particularly in places like Kursk. But, more importantly, it had a broader psychological effect. The Ukrainians finally internalized just how vulnerable they were without US targeting data for long-range strikes.

So they’ve been working hard to develop alternative sources—because they don’t want people to be able to veto their strikes. And as bad as things were under the Biden administration, which took years to provide ATACMS, they believe

things could get even worse under the current administration. They have good reason to think that.

So this was a critical step: developing greater independence in targeting and strike capabilities. But it also sets a precedent—other countries might begin developing independent long-range strike systems, especially if they share similar concerns about future US intelligence sharing under Trump.

## BIT OF A PANDORA’S BOX, ISN’T IT?

It absolutely is. It’s forced a lot of countries to ask tough questions—many of which we don’t yet have answers to. But a lot of countries are now de-risking their alliances with America by seeking alternative sources. European defense industries will become increasingly important, both for weapons and for intelligence.

## LET’S TALK ABOUT THE US RESPONSE TO SPIDER WEB. IN PRESIDENT TRUMP’S RECENT CONVERSATION WITH PUTIN, WE DIDN’T SEE HIM PUSHING BACK ON PUTIN’S STANCE THAT THERE WILL BE A “HARD RESPONSE” TO THE ATTACK. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT?

Well, past US presidents, whom we used to call leaders of the free world, would have condemned a dictator invading a democracy. They would have defended that democracy strongly. That’s not happening now. Trump basically said, “Of course Putin’s going to attack Ukraine again,” without even a token condemnation. That’s got to be a first for an American president—and it sets a new low for how the US deals with fellow democracies.

## AND WHAT ABOUT PUTIN’S PLEDGED “RECKONING”? HE SAID THERE ARE NO MORE RED LINES. WHAT SORT OF RESPONSE SHOULD WE EXPECT?

Well, you know Putin’s lying when his lips are moving. What’s the difference between his promised “reckoning” and a normal night in Ukraine, when 300 to 400 drones are hitting cities? Between 2,000 and 4,000 drones strike Ukraine every month.

I don’t see a real difference in what Russia might do in response. He’ll just use this as further justification for his continued attacks on civilians and infrastructure.



Other countries might begin developing independent long-range strike systems, especially if they share similar concerns about future US intelligence sharing under Trump

## SO YOU DON’T THINK HE’LL UP HIS GAME—GO TO ANOTHER LEVEL? SOME HAVE EVEN COMPARED THIS EVENT TO PEARL HARBOR. IS THAT A VALID ANALOGY?

How can he escalate further? Nothing he’s done has improved his chances of winning. The only weapon he hasn’t used is nuclear. And if you talk to Ukrainians, they’ll tell you: even if he does use a nuke, it just means more of them die before they eventually win.

I don’t see how he can escalate in a meaningful way, unless he chooses to target other countries in Europe. He’s already throwing everything he has at Ukraine.

There was a good metaphor I heard recently: imagine if, four years after the US invaded Iraq, it only controlled 15% of the country and had lost a million soldiers. Would we say the US was winning? No. And that’s the situation Russia’s in. Putin’s confident, but he is not winning. It’s hard to see what more he can do to improve his chances.

## SO YOU DON’T THINK HE’LL STAGE SOME BOMBASTIC, HOLLYWOOD-STYLE SHOW OF FORCE—SOME KIND OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR STRIKE TO HAMMER A POINT HOME?

He could try. But I find it hard to imagine he’ll go nuclear. Any NATO red lines that exist now would vanish overnight. Trump would be forced to act, and I think the American people and Congress would demand a much greater response to support Ukraine.

He might try larger bomber raids or air assaults, but that would just make him more vulnerable to Ukrainian air defenses. His “reckoning” could backfire and turn into a major embarrassment. So he’ll have to calibrate it very carefully.

I don’t expect a game-changing response, but I do expect something, and it will likely be brutal for Ukrainian civilians, unfortunately.

## AND FINALLY, HAS OPERATION SPIDER WEB STRENGTHENED UKRAINE’S POSITION IN THE PEACE TALK NEGOTIATIONS, OR MADE PEACE AN EVEN MORE DISTANT PROSPECT?

Peace was already a remote prospect long before this. Putin hasn’t changed his objectives—they’ve always been maximalist: subjugate Ukraine, erase its sovereignty. Spider Web simply reinforced Ukraine’s message: “We are free, and we intend to stay that way. We’re not surrendering.”

# Spheres of Influence, Boundaries, Territories: 'Remembering the Well Forgotten.' Part 2

BY VICTOR KIPIANI,  
CHAIRPERSON OF GEOCASE

**T**he process of forming new spheres of influence is a multifaceted process. In addition to the general 'framework' handwriting, I will focus on several issues of the same process that - to varying degrees - will have their own and different impact:

## THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Despite the tragedy inherent in any war, not all wars produce the same political and military results. Against this background, system-building wars take on even greater significance.

The ongoing war in Ukraine, triggered by renewed Russian aggression, is precisely a system-building war. The formalisation of any of its outcomes will have a significant impact on the new global geopolitics as well as on the 'unprincipled' principles of the new, 'disorderly' order.

This war has already determined the following:

(a) The post-Cold War order is a thing of the past, and the war in Ukraine precludes even the theoretical possibility of a return to it;

(b) The use of force has become the norm, at least in the immediate and foreseeable future;

(c) The eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance will not happen like the so-called 'Big Bang' and in an instant, as in the late 1990s and early 2000s; and this, in turn,

(d) Makes it relevant for security-vulnerable countries to work on other additional and complementary security compensation models in parallel with their Alliance membership. I have talked about compensation models many times in the past and will not dwell on the issue again now.

Despite the magnitude of the above circumstances, the war in Ukraine raises an equally important, and perhaps much larger, question: is the exchange or cession of territories an acceptable way to end hostilities and achieve a political settlement? Will the territorial deal be recognised as a novel legitimate means of modern diplomacy and political process?

## THE US AND TRUMPISM

It is no accident that I have conflated these two, because United States policy, both domestic and foreign, is at this stage highly personalised and 'free-floating', not subject to the usual influence of institutions. I have recently devoted several extensive publications to characterising the current president and his administration, and virtually all of the views and observations expressed there are still valid.

The fact is that Trump's departure from the traditional American policy framework has made the open declaration of benefits and their receipt in transactional form a cornerstone in the official US approach. It is also worth noting that the transformation of the national interests naturally characteristic of a superpower into egoistic ambitions has confused not only the American establishment, but also the entire world, and confronted it with a completely new dilemma. We have already talked a lot about it and will not repeat ourselves.

In practice, the political culture of Trumpism, in addition to other characteristics typical of the concept of "strong-



Image source: trellis

man", radically changes the previously dominant understanding of the United States as a country of "leadership by example" and puts the main emphasis on the practical implementation of the principle of "might makes right".

In addition, the above approach also interprets "conflict resolution" in a very peculiar way. In particular, according to the administration's understanding, the resolution of a conflict (war) does not necessarily mean the restoration of a just status quo. Moreover, if realities require it, it is necessary to leave claims behind and "move forward". Such "moving forward" may involve, among other things, operationalizing the territorial factor (including ceding or exchanging territory) to achieve a practical result - the resolution of a conflict or war.

In short, when it comes to the formation of a new order, the final contours of that order (or disorder) depend largely on the Trump administration, as does the answer to the following question: will the United States serve as a stabilizer or destabilizer of the new global relationship? The real content of both the new way of setting out spheres of influence and the Western "curatorial" sphere is also relevant to the same question. In turn, in terms of content, the key question is: will democracy continue to regress further or will it reverse?

There is no doubt that Trumpism has awakened us to a whole new world. However, I still believe that the battle between the two major schools of thought in the United States - restraint and engagement - is not yet definitively over. It is also a fact that if US global engagement is not equal in all places in the world and everywhere, it will occur differently depending on regions (so-called "geographies of primary and secondary interests") and specific conjunctural interests. This would, of course, make Washington's definition of spheres of influence more "utilitarian," that is, more practical and applied. In turn, the "new reading" of the world by the United States through the prism of its own "national interests" makes Georgia also practically approach the projection of Georgian national interests, bringing them to the goal and achieving the desired and more tangible results.

## THE NEW EUROPEAN UNION

In the context of Trump's attitude towards Europe and the Russian military aggression in Ukraine, the European Union has been faced with a dilemma: finding itself in a way that does not damage its strategic

alliance with the United States, while at the same time establishing itself as such a geopolitical player on the global map that is a force to be reckoned with against the backdrop of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

This task is not easy to accomplish, given the US willingness to give up the role of the EU's "geopolitical babysitter" and the possible redistribution of spheres of influence in the US-Russia-China triangle. I doubt that in this case the EU will be able to realize a successful balancing (hedging) policy. As a result, it is deprived of a half-way choice, while the real choice is between a geopolitical actor with effective influence and a geographical agglomeration that means little.

This year is likely to be very telling in terms of how the European Union will manage to fully maintain its security umbrella from the United States on the one hand, and develop much-needed economic ties with China on the other. In addition, the European Union of new energy and attraction has another very delicate task to fulfill - not to be left out of the US-China relationship. To paraphrase a famous statement about Ukraine, the fundamental appeal of official Brussels would become the following: "Nothing about Europe without Europe".

## STILL RELEVANT RUSSIA

In an order characterized as a "disorderly order," Russia will continue to maintain its place. Obviously, unlike during the Cold War, Moscow, despite its stated desires, will find it difficult in practice to position itself as a global player. However, the "length and breadth" of such opportunities will again depend primarily on the strength and viability of the geopolitical and geo-economic unity between the United States and the West.

Among many other circumstances, the following reasons for the impossibility of "globalizing" Russia should be noted, namely: (a) Russia's limited access to control over global supply routes, where such control is largely exercised by the US and China, and (b) Russia's limited naval capabilities, which also hinder its global presence.

While assuming such a conventional attitude to globalism, I think we can speak much more convincingly about Russia's strong regional influence. In this regard, the resilience and soundness of the Georgian political and defence system, based on the pooling and proper organisation of internal and external

resources, do not bode well for our state's complacency. We must adapt to this reality, tune in to it and adjust to its rhythm: as do the few countries that, by virtue of their history and geography, are forced to exist in a dangerous environment.

It is also worth remembering that in the 1960s of the previous century, the Soviet Union was called 'Upper Volta with missiles' in the Western media, and today the Russian Federation can be called by the same name. However, this name, in addition to its detrimental content, also carries real dangers.

## THE MIDDLE POWERS

I think it would be more correct to give this name to the countries of the so-called Middle Power category, which are acquiring their unique role through a process of 'disorderly order' in the newly formed system of relations.

To a large extent, they are still characterised by hedging policies. An example would be Kazakhstan, a country that is important for our country and Central Asia. Through its specific 'open door' policy, official Astana tries to maintain balanced relations with all actors with significant influence in the region. I think this is a really unique example, because in most cases countries with medium influence have to project their role by manoeuvring between the US (the 'supplier' of security) and China (the 'supplier' of material resources). It is clear that such manoeuvring is not an easy task against the background of the ongoing processes and requires filigree diplomatic and political techniques.

Among the countries in this category we can also distinguish countries with 'medium plus' influence. In fact, they can be called regional superpowers, since the formation of order in a particular region depends on their words and actions. In this regard, as an example, I will name Turkey for the Greater Black Sea region and Israel for the Middle East region. Both countries are system-forming actors of the respective regional order.

## THE GLOBAL SOUTH

In recent times, this designation has come into frequent use. Much has been said about the impact of the Global South, but in order to assess this impact, a few aspects should be briefly noted:

(a) There is a need to define a coherent and appropriate concept of the 'Global South'. Today, there are many variants

of its definition, and there is often a marked divergence between them;

(b) One very important issue must be defined: should the 'Global South' be understood with or without India and China? Obviously, the answer to this question provides two very different datums. In my opinion, it is logical to identify the Global South without China, as China has its own, unique and independent role in the international system. As for India, I think more thought is needed;

(c) Speaking of the Global South, I would also refer to the Greater Middle East region as a separate 'centre'. Such proposal is due to both historical, political and military factors characterising it, which make it inappropriate to consider this region in conjunction with other countries or constituent regions of the Global South.

## TOWARDS THE END WITH A GEORGIAN POINT

Georgia's attempts to strengthen its positioning in the current 'disorderly order' clearly have their limits. This is a limit that we cannot cross, because we will not be able to objectively influence the processes that create the system of the new order.

But this does not mean that we should stand aside and be content with a passive role. It is impossible to achieve the maximum in advocating national interests in the conditions of a dysfunctional state devoid of its own healthy geopolitical ego. The potential outcome is more deplorable when a country refuses to become a state and develop as a result of the known processes we see in its internal and external 'business' and, to say the least, ignorant policies.

In previous articles I have repeatedly touched upon the topic of Georgia's security. The main line, to summarize, ran through the integral or broadly defined security system. This, along with the military component, equally includes economic self-sufficiency, proactive diplomacy, preventive special services, and using our country's cultural wealth as a practical asset. National security modeling is a continuous and ongoing process, and its continuity lies precisely in the continuity and contradictory nature of global and regional processes.

The reality surrounding Georgia exacerbates the need for innovation, unconventionality and something completely new and progressive - dynamic, strategic and multi-dimensional thinking in our approach. Along with the 'material' components of national security (defence, economy, diplomacy), the viability of Georgian 'soft power', which is linked to democratic institutions, the rule of law, economic freedom and creative initiative in the country, is of paramount practical importance to us as a compact country. It is this 'soft power' that should be our calling card for asserting ourselves in the new order.

Understandably, it is difficult to make definite predictions about how to navigate this upside-down world. However, as Dwight Eisenhower once remarked, 'Plans are useless, but planning is necessary'. It is time for us to move away from serving narrow partisan and syndicated interests, which amounts to the already mentioned 'business-like' behaviour, to creating a whole-of-government policy necessary for a self-respecting nation and country. This means, among other things, understanding the lessons not only of the recent past but also of our difficult present and drawing timely conclusions.



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# Mixing Innovation with Care: Inside the Georgian-American Dental Research Center



GEORGIAN AMERICAN DENTAL  
RESEARCH CENTRE



Ana Sharvadze, founder

BY MARIAM RAZMADZE

The Georgian-American Dental Research Center (GAD) is preparing to redefine what high-quality, research-driven dental care looks like in Georgia. Conceived in alignment with American ideology of integrating healthcare with research, the center aims to set a new standard by combining clinical services with scientific rigor — all while offering around-the-clock services. Though its doors are set to open soon, the clinic is already attracting attention for its ambitious vision: mixing American clinical protocols with modern technology, research-based methods, and patient-oriented values. It will also be one of the very few facilities in the region to provide 24/7 emergency dental care, addressing trauma, pain, and urgent surgical needs at any hour.

The force behind this vision is Dr. Ana Sharvadze — a dentist, innovator, and founder of the Georgian-American Dental Research Center. With years of experience in both Georgian and American dental ecosystems, Dr. Sharvadze decided to create more than just a clinic: her goal was to build a space that mixes Western standards with Georgian expertise; where treatment, research, and education merge. Her extensive education, long-standing professional career, and commitment to medical ethics prepared the foundation for a clinic where patient care and scientific progress are interchangeable. “We’re not just building a clinic — we’re building a future-facing model of care,” say representatives from the Georgian-American Dental Research Center. The concept behind the center isn’t just to treat dental issues but to create a space where diagnostics, treatment, aesthetics, and ongoing research come together.

Placed in a bright, minimalist facility, GAD will be equipped with the latest digital scanners, AI-assisted diagnostic tools, 3D surgical planning software, and microscopes capable of 25x magnification. These technologies will allow for precise imaging, customized prosthetics, and micro-invasive procedures. But GAD isn’t just about tools. It’s about how those tools are used. As the team puts it, every decision is driven by a focus on precision and empathy.

Whether it’s planning a full-mouth reconstruction or designing a single crown, treatments will be catered to not only the patient’s clinical profile, but also to their facial structure, lifestyle, and long-term wellness.

The center’s philosophy is built around three pillars:

- Advanced clinical care
- Ongoing research and education
- And a global-standard training ecosystem for professionals.

As Dr. Sharvadze puts it, “Our goal wasn’t just to build a dental clinic — it was to create a space where science, art, and humanity come together.”

Services will range from preventive care and cosmetic dentistry to complex surgical cases like TMJ therapy and jaw reconstruction. Each case will be reviewed across different disciplines, ensuring that prosthodontists, orthodontists, and maxillofacial specialists collaborate to come up with individual treatment plans. Dynamic modeling, 3D-printed surgical guides, and AI-supported diagnostics will reduce patient downtime.

In addition to its main facility, the center plans to expand access through a mobile clinic program, offering regular services in regions where dental infrastructure is limited. The vehicle will be fully equipped for preventive care, diagnostics, pediatric dentistry, and even minor procedures.

At the core of the clinic’s philosophy is patient experience. Individualized waiting areas, calming interiors, and personal assistants assigned to each case are to reduce stress and anxiety often associated with dental visits. For children, the clinic will offer spaces to play with gentle pediatric specialists trained to treat young patients.

In future, the facility aims to become a local hub for knowledge exchange. A dedicated training wing will host workshops and seminars for Georgian practitioners, alongside collaborations with international specialists. Clinical trials and research projects will focus on innovations such as new implant materials and bite correction techniques.

By combining Western standards with local needs, the Georgian-American Dental Research Center offers an advanced and accessible model.

## What Maqro Development Means When It says “Price Will Rise”

BY TEAM GT

You may have already seen the message — bold, minimal, and a little mysterious: “Price will rise.” While it might look like a simple teaser, it’s rooted in a proven strategy and signals the beginning of something significant.

Maqro Development is preparing to launch its newest project, and this campaign marks the first public hint. Known for their strategic market positioning, Maqro’s pricing approach consistently rewards early buyers while driving long-term value growth across its developments.

The company employs a dynamic pricing model — starting with lower entry prices and gradually increasing them over time. This approach has proven highly effective in driving sales and maximizing revenue while keeping

Maqro’s offerings competitive in a fast-moving real estate market.

This isn’t just theory. In past projects like Green Budapest, units were initially offered at \$700 per square meter and rose to \$1,500 during pre-sales. Today, those same apartments are valued between \$2,500 and \$2,750 per square meter on the secondary market. Green Diamond followed a similar trajectory — starting at \$700, increasing to \$1,350, and now averaging around \$1,500 per square meter.

These figures highlight the advantages of early investment in Maqro projects. Buyers who recognized the opportunity early not only secured homes at lower prices, but also benefited from significant value appreciation even before project completion.

With the launch of the new project approaching, this teaser campaign serves as a clear message to those paying attention: the window for early access — and early pricing — won’t be open for long.



# Tbilisi Joins the Global Reuse Movement with CAMPA and Fabrika Pilots

Continued from page 1

**DRINKS, TOKENS, AND A GREENER FUTURE AT FABRIKA**

Located in one of Tbilisi's most visited cultural and hospitality hubs, Fabrika is transitioning all resident bars and restaurants to a reusable cup system. The goal: to eliminate single-use plastic cups, which previously accounted for up to a million discarded items annually. We spoke with Salome Kuprashvili to learn more about the shift.

**A NEW ECO-FRIENDLY SYSTEM IS STARTING AT FABRIKA. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN, AND WHEN SHOULD CUSTOMERS EXPECT THIS INNOVATION?**

We're introducing a reusable cup system at Fabrika, which will fully replace single-use plastic. It's a small change in daily life with a significant environmental impact. The new system officially launches in June. Visitors will be able to enjoy their drinks in reusable cups by leaving a small deposit. After use, they can easily return the cup and get their deposit back. With one simple action, they can actively contribute to positive change.

**HOW DOES THE SYSTEM WORK? WHAT IS THE PROCESS LIKE FOR CUSTOMERS?**

It's very simple: when you order a drink at Fabrika, you receive a reusable cup and a token. You leave a 3 GEL deposit and can reuse the cup as many times as you like. When you're ready to return it, just drop off the cup and token at any of Fabrika's locations to get your deposit back.

It's a circular system: Take it. Return it. Reuse it.

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE A REUSE MODEL INSTEAD OF RECYCLING?**

We've been collecting recyclable plastic for years and partnering with Tene, which transforms the material into new products. However, disposable cups present a challenge—separating them for recycling is often difficult, especially when Fabrika is crowded. That's why we decided to take a step further by introducing a reusable solution. It eliminates the need for recycling and more effectively supports our environmental goals.

**YOUR MODEL RELIES ON USER ENGAGEMENT. HOW DOES THAT WORK IN PRACTICE?**

The user is the key participant in this system. They take the cup, use it, return it—and in doing so, help keep the cycle going.

In many European cities and festivals, reusable cup systems are already the norm. At Fabrika, we've often seen guests—both locals and foreigners—ask to refill their drinks in the same cup. So, this project feels like a natural next step. In a space where such environmentally conscious customers gather, this system is relevant and consistent.

**HOW ARE CUSTOMERS REACTING? ARE THEY READY FOR SUCH A CHANGE?**

Many guests already preferred using the same cup even before we introduced the system. That tells us the demand was already there. We're simply making it easier for people to act on their existing habits—integrating them into a system that supports sustainability and becomes part of everyday life.

**DO YOU THINK SOCIETY IS READY FOR MORE ECO-FRIENDLY SOLUTIONS?**

Today's consumers care about the spaces they visit—how those spaces reflect their values, show social responsibility, and take real steps to protect the environment.

We believe Fabrika's visitors are ready.



The key now is to turn awareness into action. Environmental responsibility should be easy and accessible. When the system is convenient, participation becomes natural.

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FINANCIALLY, AND IS SUCH A SYSTEM PROFITABLE FOR BUSINESSES?**

Disposable cups not only harm the environment but also come with recurring costs. Implementing a reusable cup system helps businesses save resources in the long run and strengthens customer relationships. It's a smart step both financially and ethically.

**BOTTLES, BINS, AND A CIRCULAR START AT CAMPA**

CAMPA, one of Georgia's most recognizable beverage brands, is launching a bottle return and reuse system in partnership with Tbilisi International Airport and Cavea cinemas. The system involves the collection and return of empty glass bottles to CAMPA's facility for cleaning and reuse. We interviewed Ana Chkhetia to understand the details of this transition.

**WHAT IS THIS PARTNERSHIP ABOUT?**

At CAMPA, environmental care and strong relationships with our consumers have always been top priorities. These values inspired us to develop a bottle reuse system.

CAMPA juices—known for their

unique design and high quality—are widely enjoyed and can be found in many Georgian households. Customers often ask, "Can CAMPA bottles be returned?" This interest has motivated us to take action.

CAMPA bottles are durable and ideal for multiple uses. However, Georgia has not previously had a practical bottle reuse system. To address this gap, we decided to launch a pilot model, which required acquiring technical knowledge, mobilizing resources, and learning from international best practices.

Our collaboration with Tbilisi Airport and Cavea marks one of the first and most important steps in this direction. Consumers will be able to buy our products and return the empty bottles at the same location using dedicated return containers. This is particularly easier with restaurants where customers drink their beverage on the spot and the restaurant can simply collect and store the empty packaging. This initiative is made possible with the support of CENN and GIZ. With help from international experts, we've created a system that is environmentally sustainable, easy to use, and economically viable.

**HOW DOES THE BOTTLE RETURN AND REUSE SYSTEM WORK, AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS MODEL?**

CAMPA's system is simple: partners collect the empty bottles, which are then returned to our factory. There, they are washed using a new, multifunctional

machine and prepared for reuse. The main motivation behind this model is to reduce single-use packaging and promote sustainable consumption.

**WHY DO YOU THINK REUSE IS BECOMING A GLOBAL AND LOCAL TREND?**

The climate crisis, growing waste problems, and increased consumer awareness are all driving the shift toward reuse systems. In Georgia, this trend is also gaining momentum, particularly among young people and leading businesses that value social and environmental responsibility.

**HOW IMPORTANT ARE PARTNERSHIPS LIKE THE ONE BETWEEN CAMPA AND THE AIRPORT?**

We hope this initiative will serve as a model for other businesses. Meaningful environmental and sustainability progress requires collective effort. A bottle return and reuse system can't be implemented by one company alone—it requires logistical cooperation, partner facilities, and consumer awareness. These kinds of collaborations help build circular economy models that are beneficial for both the environment and the businesses involved.

**WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED FROM THE AIRPORT? WHAT IS THEIR VIEW OF THE COOPERATION?**

The Tbilisi Airport administration has

been supportive of eco-friendly initiatives from the outset. Environmental care and aligning with European standards are top priorities for them. Our collaboration has been very productive, and they see this model as a service enhancement.

**HOW PROFITABLE IS THIS SYSTEM FOR BUSINESSES—PARTICULARLY FOR CAMPA?**

At the initial stage, the system requires investment—such as bottle-washing equipment and logistical resources. However, over time, these costs are balanced by increased customer loyalty and a stronger brand image. For CAMPA, this initiative is strategically, environmentally, and marketing-wise a sound decision.

**WHAT ARE CAMPA'S FUTURE PLANS? WILL THERE BE EXPANSION, NEW PRODUCTS, MORE PARTNERS? WILL YOU COLLECT BOTTLES DIRECTLY FROM CUSTOMERS?**

Yes, we plan to expand the system to more locations. We're also working on introducing new flavors and functional drinks in response to evolving market trends. In the future, we plan to implement a direct bottle return system for consumers.

We aim to make the return process simple and accessible. As an environmentally responsible company, our mission is to use resources efficiently and reduce environmental impact. We hope our initiative will be positively received.

**SOME PEOPLE MAY BE SKEPTICAL ABOUT REUSED PACKAGING. HOW DOES CAMPA ENSURE HYGIENE AND SAFETY?**

CAMPA has implemented strict hygiene protocols at our factory, including thorough washing, sterilization, and quality control for every glass bottle. Only bottles that meet our high standards are approved for reuse, ensuring safety and peace of mind for consumers.

**TBILISI'S CIRCULAR FUTURE IN ACTION**

With these two pilots, Tbilisi Circular Lab begins its mission to test and promote reusable packaging systems in real-world urban settings. As part of a global GIZ initiative, the project not only addresses waste and emissions but also encourages systemic cooperation across business, government, and civil society. By supporting models that are both economically viable and environmentally sound, TCL is helping lay the groundwork for a more circular and sustainable urban future.



# From Protest Walls to Auction Halls: Gagosh on Art, Activism, and Voice

Often called the “Georgian Banksy,” Giorgi Gagoshidze—known as Gagosh—is one of Georgia’s first widely recognized street artists. His sharp, thought-provoking images are found all over Tbilisi, lingering in the mind and sparking conversations. Last week, his mixed-media miniatures were sold in Bonhams’ first-ever auction dedicated to Georgian contemporary art.

In this candid interview, Gagosh shares his approach to blending text and image, the role of street art in political and social protest, and his perspective on Georgia’s evolving creative scene. He also reflects on how art, humor, and resistance shape not just his practice but his worldview.

**YOUR WORK OFTEN APPEARS DIRECTLY IN PUBLIC SPACES, ENGAGING WITH URGENT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THEMES. WHAT DRAWS YOU TO STREET ART AS YOUR PRIMARY MEDIUM FOR THESE POWERFUL MESSAGES?**

I see walls as open canvases—public forums where people can voice their thoughts, frustrations, and hopes. For me, street art isn’t just about painting; it’s about provoking thought and sparking dialogue. In many ways, today’s street artist plays a role similar to that of the ancient philosopher—walking among people, asking difficult questions, challenging the status quo, and urging society to confront what it would rather overlook.

Through my work, I strive to bring taboo or stigmatized topics into the public eye—whether political, social, or environmental. That, to me, is the responsibility of the street artist: to ensure art exists where life happens—not hidden in galleries, but visible, persistent, and impossible to ignore.

**YOU ADDRESS A BROAD SPECTRUM OF THEMES—FROM URBAN GREEN SPACES AND LABOR RIGHTS TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION. IS THERE A COMMON THREAD OR CORE MOTIVATION GUIDING YOUR CHOICE OF SUBJECTS?**

I see art as a tool—a way to speak about everyday life with honesty and urgency. My inspiration comes directly from the challenges we face day to day, so my themes shift as society shifts. That’s why I believe a street artist must keep their hand on the pulse of the people. Street art, at its core, is about presence—being among the people, listening, reflecting, and responding. It’s not just about making images; it’s about being a responsible citizen through art.

**YOUR STYLE OFTEN COMBINES STRIKING IMAGERY WITH TEXT, SOMETIMES IN A VERY POETIC OR EVEN CHILDLIKE SCRIPT. COULD YOU TALK ABOUT THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE VISUAL AND THE TEXTUAL IN YOUR WORK, AND HOW YOU DEVELOP THESE DISTINCTIVE PHRASES?**

I’ve always loved poetry, and at first, I tried writing full poems on walls. But I soon realized that street poetry needs a different form. It has to be short, sharp, ironic—something a passerby can catch in a single glance, yet something that lingers in their mind like a tune. It should provoke curiosity and invite decoding the hidden message beneath the irony.

Sometimes I create stencils resembling tear-off flyers—the kind people usually use to advertise tutoring or moving services. Except mine might say something political or social, for instance, “Poor country for sale at a good location. Ren-



Photo: Gagosh’s street art of the old man selling violets on a Janashia Street wall, Tbilisi.

ovation needed.” I add my own number, just like in real ads, inviting people to call me. It’s part of my practice. I want to blur the line between art and everyday life. Because, to me, art isn’t just a statement from the artist—it’s an invitation to a conversation with the public.

**YOUR ACADEMIC BACKGROUND IS IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION. HOW, IF AT ALL, DO THESE FIELDS INFLUENCE YOUR ARTISTIC PRACTICE, PARTICULARLY YOUR INTEREST IN INTEGRATING ART WITH IT AND NEW MEDIA TECHNIQUES?**

Technology can enhance street art, but for me, the heart of it remains the same: engagement with society. The goal is always to start a conversation, to create a moment of connection—and technology can deepen that connection in sur-

prising ways.

I’ve experimented with this in a few projects. One example is the Talking Wall. I installed hidden sensors and a sound system in a wall in old Tbilisi. As people walked by, the system would randomly select someone and invite them to listen to poetry. If they ignored it and walked away, the wall would start whining. But if they stopped and listened, the wall would recite different poems aloud.

It was a playful, even surreal experience. People would look around, searching for who was talking to them, only to realize—it was the wall itself. The sensors were nearly invisible, so the interaction felt magical, like the city was whispering something personal.

That’s what excites me: using technology not to replace the human aspect of art, but to amplify it—to create unexpected moments that invite reflection, curiosity, and connection.

**MANY OF YOUR PIECES—SUCH AS THE WALL OF AUGUST OR YOUR STENCILS PROTESTING THE “CREEPING OCCUPATION”—ARE DIRECT RESPONSES TO PAINFUL AND ONGOING POLITICAL REALITIES IN GEORGIA. WHAT ROLE DO YOU BELIEVE ART, AND STREET ART IN PARTICULAR, CAN PLAY IN TIMES OF NATIONAL TRAUMA OR IN FOSTERING POLITICAL DISCOURSE?**

Street art has long been part of political discourse, and one of its most powerful qualities is its accessibility—you don’t need to be a trained artist to take part. All you need is a strong concept and the courage to put it out there.

During the Tbilisi protests, I was deeply moved by people’s creativity. Walls and banners became platforms of protest. Each message reflected irony through the lens of different professions, regions,

religious, and ethnic identities. It was raw, diverse, and honest—a true portrait of collective resistance.

That inspired me to create a New Year’s project. I put out a call on social media, asking people to send in the banners they had made during the protests. Then, on New Year’s Eve, I created a stencil on Freedom Square: a New Year’s tree made from those protest banners.

It was both a celebration and a reminder—that hope and resistance often grow from the same root. For me, this is what street art should be: a space where voices come together, and where art meets activism.

**WHILE MUCH OF YOUR WORK LIVES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN, YOU’VE ALSO EXHIBITED IN GALLERY SETTINGS. HOW DOES THE EXPERIENCE OF CREATING AND PRESENTING WORK FOR A GALLERY DIFFER FROM MAKING ART FOR THE STREET—AND DOES THE CHANGE IN CONTEXT ALTER THE MEANING OF THE WORK FOR YOU?**

Street art and canvas work follow very different rhythms. Street art is fast, raw, and unpredictable—it starts with finding the right wall, prepping a stencil, and working quickly, often under pressure. There’s adrenaline in it, a poetic urgency. It’s imperfect but alive.

Canvas, by contrast, offers time and space for reflection. Even with the same themes, the process is slower, more deliberate. You can sit with the piece, refine it, and think through each detail.

I enjoy both. Street art is public, fleeting, bold. Canvas is internal, precise, contemplative. They let me explore the same truths—one through action, the other through reflection.

**LOOKING AT THE CURRENT GEORGIAN ART SCENE—ESPECIALLY AMONG YOUNGER ARTISTS OR THOSE WORKING OUTSIDE TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS—WHAT TRENDS OR ENERGIES DO YOU FIND MOST EXCITING OR MOST CONCERNING?**

I see street art as a cultural pulse—especially the spontaneous messages written by ordinary citizens. There’s raw energy in those unfiltered expressions; they reveal what people truly feel, in real time.

What concerns me is the growing commercialization of street art. Large-scale murals, often curated, are becoming more decorative than critical. Beautifying public space has value, but for me, street art is closer to conceptual protest than visual ornament.

It’s meant to provoke, not just please. When it’s reduced to aesthetic filler, it loses its edge—and its soul.

**IF YOU COULD INSTALL ONE PIECE OF YOUR ART ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, WITH NO RESTRICTIONS, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHERE WOULD YOU PLACE IT TO ACHIEVE ITS MAXIMUM INTENDED IMPACT?**

It’s difficult to choose one work, as each subject I explore—migration, eviction, Russian occupation, femicide, labor rights, environmental justice—is deeply important. But if I had to pick, I’d choose a piece from my series on the old man selling violets.

To Georgians, he’s a familiar sign of spring, but to me, he symbolizes something deeper: a kind of metaphysical spring. Amid daily struggles, when people pass by this image, I want it to quietly remind them that spring—hope, renewal, beauty—is still here.

It’s not just about flowers. It’s about resilience. The violet seller is a gentle, human resistance to despair. If someone feels even a flicker of warmth or reflection from it, the piece has done its work.



Gagosh (Giorgi Gagoshidze), Untitled, 2025. Mixed media on gypsum. height: 11 cm. This work was sold at Bonhams’ Georgian Art Now auction in 2025. Photo: Giorgi Shengelia

# Restart

BLOG BY TONY HANMER

Since my wife and I started our Demetrian double life three winters ago, the cold half of the year in Tbilisi, warm half in Svaneti, much has changed for us. Now, before each move, we must close down one living space, then relocate and open up the other. Given things like subzero temperatures (mostly in Svaneti), high heat (mostly in Tbilisi), plants to care for and more, it bears some thinking through to keep things unspoiled by their conditions.

Leaving Tbilisi: close the curtains. Leave the key with a neighbor to come in once a period and water the plants. Roll up the as-yet not-hung carpets to keep dust off them. Empty the fridge of whatever won't last the summer; put what you can in the freezer. Take out last garbage. Pack what's needed for Svaneti (separate, long lists), and off in the morning for the roughly 8-hour drive. Longish stop in Zugdidi for final shopping en route.

Arriving in Svaneti: shop and take with you as much as possible for the season

in the shop and guest house. Check all water pipes and points for any winter freezing damage. Replace or repair as necessary, but hopefully this is little to nothing if you've winterized well. Work the garden, hoeing, planting, taking advantage of the short growing season. Sweep, mop, get rooms ready for guests who have already booked much of the summer.

We take from the barn and re-install a 1000L water tank with electric pump for the summer, to try to prevent any water shortages when flow is weak and we know guests are coming. This has been one of our biggest stresses during the summer season, and it must improve, for everyone's sanity. The tank is one of the few things we didn't have in the garage which burnt down a few years ago, so that's a small mercy.

This spring, we've had some friends from Tbilisi come and help with renovation and repair jobs up here, which has been most kind and useful. Some water, in our bathroom in the house and in the whole cafe, we've decided to re-route from inside the walls or under floors to pipes fully accessible. This is both to repair inaccessible damage and just to have everything visible and repairable in future. Plus, the house kitchen cold



water has been frustratingly much too slow for a few years, and now is our chance to redirect it and vastly improve this situation.

Children come bringing flowers for Lali, their beloved English teacher and friend. We reconnect with them and with the whole village, which expresses its gladness to see us once again. They come for this and also because our shop has enough items not found in the SPAR down the road: more of a general store, we are. Boots to rope to carpets, clothes, nuts and bolts, nails and renovation sup-

plies, kitchen and house appliances, crockery, cutlery.

Weed-whack the front area around the house and garden, for guests' and our comfort. Arrange for a neighbor to scythe the rest, once the current spate of rain stops and the hay will have a chance to dry out after cutting. He'll then stack and take it away, doing both his cattle and us a service.

Weed around several saplings, chiefly the tiny three-year-old walnut, barely hanging on but still alive, and a new Korean cedar which a friend brought

and planted from afar late this winter. We really hope both of these will take. Our other two planted walnuts are now over our heads after about 16 years, and hopefully this fall will give us their first nuts.

New this year is a nest in one of our pear trees which is at about chest-height for me, with four eggs in it, empty when I first see it but now with a small bird sitting. I hope to see through the whole cycle of hatching and eventual takeoff from the nest of the little ones, assuming nothing gets to them first! More details to follow.

I glimpse from the corner of my eye the "watchful dragons" mentioned by C.S. Lewis, in clouds, mountain/snow interfaces and elsewhere, and shoot what I see: more material for my fantastical short stories about Svaneti. The mythology continues to expand. Svaneti continues to enthrall.

We also note the disquieting report that one of our most important guest countries now has a Georgia travel advisory out for its citizens: Poland. (The other so far is France, with some but far fewer visitors to Georgia). Must confirm if anyone's canceling because of this. Summer is still in flux.

Tony Hanmer has lived in Georgia since 1999, in Svaneti since 2007, and been a weekly writer and photographer for GT since early 2011. He runs the "Svaneti Renaissance" Facebook group, now with over 2000 members, at [www.facebook.com/groups/SvanetiRenaissance/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/SvanetiRenaissance/). He and his wife also run their own guest house in Etseri: [www.facebook.com/hanmer.house.svaneti](http://www.facebook.com/hanmer.house.svaneti)

## CULTURE

# A Panther Wakes: Fashion as Epic and the Birth of Gio Levan



From Instagram: giolevanofficial

BY IVAN NECHAEV

In an era where fashion often races toward the disposable, Gio Levan's debut exhibition at Lolita on May 30 did something radically different: it slowed down. It leaned in. It invoked a 12th-century Georgian epic poem and dressed it in draped silks, armored silhouettes, and echoes of medieval chivalry. The event, spanning just four hours but vibrating with a timeless emotional pitch, marked not only the launch of a new Georgian luxury brand, but a moment of cultural reframing: a fashion collection as an interpretative exegesis of *The Knight in the Panther Skin* by Shota Rustaveli. It was a salon of memory, ambition, and myth. Here, clothes served not to flatter the eye, but to awaken a national subconscious.

Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther*

Skin — often dubbed the crown jewel of Georgian literature — is a text dense with philosophical idealism, cross-cultural love, codes of honor, and lyrical mysticism. Gio Levan didn't take it as metaphor; he took it as blueprint. The garments were haunted by textuality. Patterned satins and brocade referenced Persian influence. Fluid wraps recalled both medieval robes and warrior capes. Embroidery traced poetic lines. In a single piece, one could detect the ghost of Avtandil's longing, Tariel's fury, and Nestan's fierce independence — emotions transformed into couture geometry. Each outfit functioned as a chapter. Together, they comprised a narrative cycle. This is design as scholarship, fashion as interpretive ritual.

At the center of this quiet storm is Gio Levan himself — a designer who speaks less like a brand ambassador and more like a literary translator with a tailor's hand. In his own words: "a commitment

to quality fabrics and quality construction, a healthy amount of historicism, a transportive story..." And crucially, "to be Georgian in theme and presentation."

Yet this is no mere national costume revival. Gio Levan's work resists the expected. The historicism here is restless, intelligent — less museum replica, more archival remix. By choosing *The Knight in the Panther Skin* — a work that itself claims Persian roots, shaped in Georgian syntax — Gio Levan positions his brand within a fluid lineage of translation, adaptation, and hybridity. The exhibition becomes a quiet argument against purist nationalism. It insists instead on a version of Georgian identity that is palimpsestic, contradictory, and gloriously unfinished. This is heritage not as museum label, but as living archive. These garments do not speak of a past that was, but a past that still speaks — if only someone is willing to listen.

The choice of venue — Lolita, a haunt more known for its hedonist cocktails than literary fidelity — felt pointed. It turned a familiar space into a chamber of resonance, where patrons could circle the clothes as one might relics or icons. The lighting was gentle but theatrical. Each mannequin was staged like a verse in midair. For a few charged hours, it felt like walking into the epic's afterlife. And yet, this wasn't a dusty canonization. It was a seduction. A whisper. A calling.

It is no small thing, in 2025, to launch a fashion brand with such a profound literary and cultural thesis. In doing so, Gio Levan is signaling a return to slowness, to thought, to the idea that luxury lies not only in material richness but in conceptual density. This exhibition marks a significant moment in the Georgian cultural landscape. At a time when the



From Instagram: giolevanofficial

country is caught between global modernity and its own contested mythologies, here is an artist who says: let's look back — not to freeze ourselves, but to dream forward.

It also marks a wider trend in post-Soviet design circles, where the fashion world is increasingly less interested in Parisian imitation and more invested in regional language — literal and symbolic. Levan's work speaks to this urgency. It is Georgian not just in name or motif, but in structure. The way a poem breathes

through a garment. The way memory touches the body.

As Rustaveli once wrote:

"This Persian tale I found in the Georgian tongue.

Here, at the will of my enchantress, haughty and fair,

I have contrived to set it in verse, as a pearl re-strung."

Gio Levan has found this tale again — not in a scroll, but in a seam. His enchantress is the fabric. His verse, the silhouette. And it is only the beginning.



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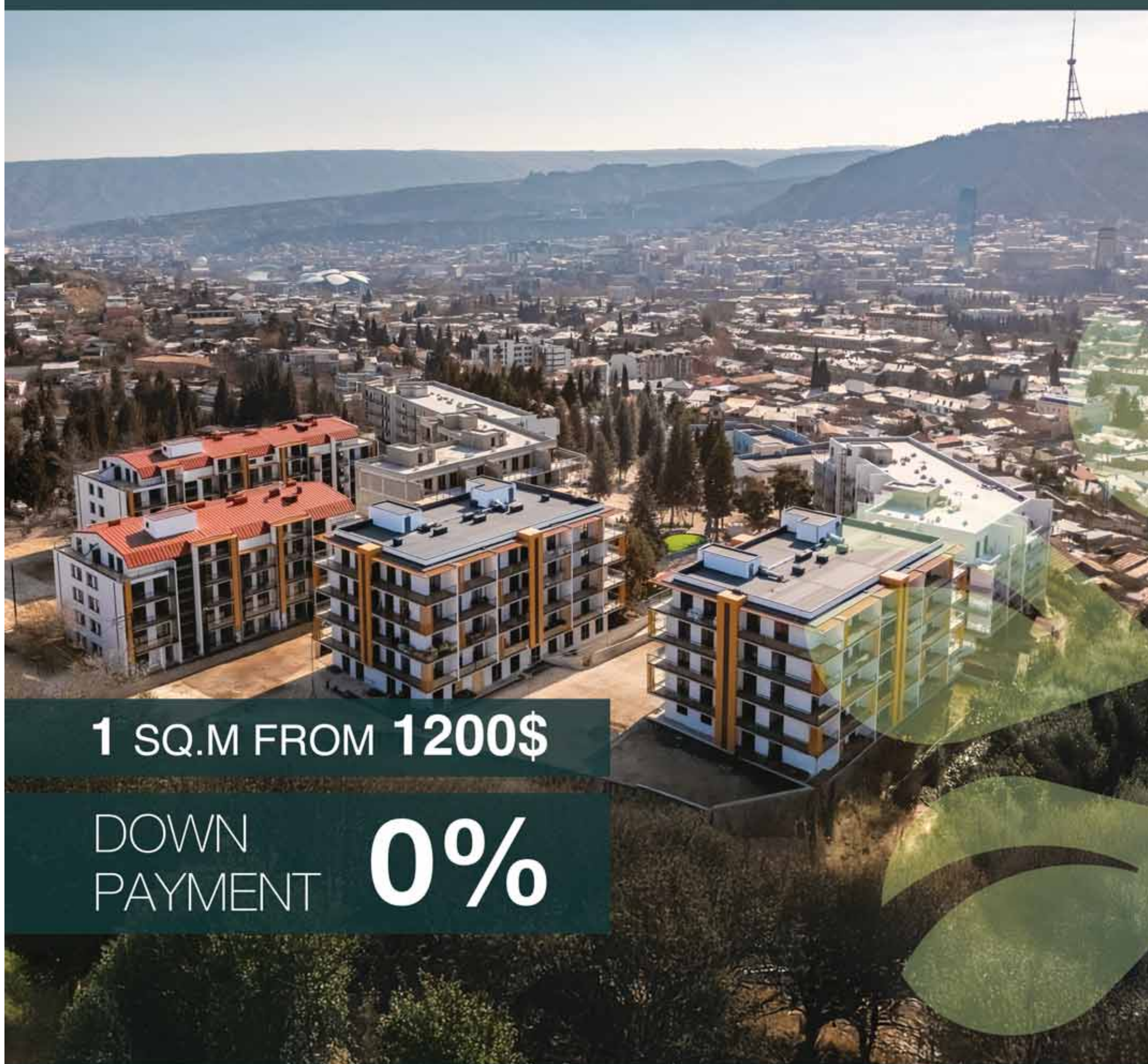
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