

## Rethinking Identities: Categories and Contradictions

My talk is an attempt to focus on the paradigm shift that has been taking place in the artistic practices of contemporary Armenian art; a shift that, marked by "gender", is showing a tendency of leaning towards an epistemology of female subjectivity starting from the 1990s. Along those lines, the brief talk will also linger at some length on the different narratives, vocabularies, and significations habitually used when representing "female art" in Armenia. The talk will start with a brief excursion into the early Soviet era, the characteristic unequal representation of female artists at local museums and galleries will also be examined, as will be the tensions that saturate the conceptual attempts to define and analyze the work of contemporary Armenian female artists from a feminist art and gender discourse viewpoint.

The current opinion is that in the post-Soviet context the issue of the construction of national identity of the former soviet peoples, along with the issues of gender roles are the most dramatic, the most painfully perceived ones, with occasional bloody outcomes. This situation is due to the fact that the post-Soviet times have allowed issues such as post-colonialism, ethnic and sexual minorities, feminism and gender to become topics of public debate. All these have expanded the idea of identity, and have also enriched the subject-object (subjectivity) interrelations both in local contexts and in global processes, along with their incorporation and ideology touching upon issues of overlap, interpenetration, self-identification(s), with all their diversities of values in national and gender systems.

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Some of her critical articles deal with the emerging problems of relations in the current artistic practices connected with the establishment of market relations.

She is the president and co-founder of the "Art and Cultural Studies Laboratory" (ACSL) and the founder of the "Art Commune" International Artist-in-Residence program in Armenia.

Susanna Gyulamiryan has held a course in Cultural Studies at the Armenian Open University -Department of Fine Arts (International Academy of Education) for over 10 years and was an editorial board member for the "CinemArt" periodical, writing the leading monthly columns, "The name of Art" and "Art-Situation". Since 2006 she has been a board member of the AICA – Armenia (International Association of Art Critics).