

Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University

Tbilisi 0108 Georgia

Faculty of Humanities, Social science, Business and Management

**Relation of culturological models of urban space with the painting of generation of 1980s**

**Ketevan Jishiashvili**

**Dissertation Synopsis**

is presented by

a doctoral candidate in Art Studies

Academic advisor: Doctor of Art studies, professor Irine Abesadze

Academic co-advisor: Doctor of Phylosophy, professor Tamar Berekashvili

## Relation of culturological models of urban space with the painting of generation of 1980s

The subject of dissertation is to analyze the interpretation of culturological models of urban space in the painting of generation of 1980-ies. The study of culturological models in relation with art material gives us opportunity to outline not only urban problems, but also define the role of 1980-1990s painting in establishing urban image and discuss various characteristics of transitional period.

The aim of the dissertation is to identify and study different interpretations of urban image on the example of 80-ies Georgian painters and to define their relation with cuturological problems of post-soviet reality:

- Reveal specifics of urban space models based on urban image analysis within the cultural context.
- Define the role of historical and political process on creative perception and delineate points of coincidence.
- Define relation between typical Georgian spatial problems with international spatial problematics.

**Chronological period/painters:** The role of generation of 80-ies is extremely important in Georgian art of 20-th century. After the collapse of Soviet Union this very generation carried out the mission of interpreting information flow from western world and transforming it into new artistic forms. They managed to adapt western concepts and practices with existing creative tradition. For our research it is extremely interesting to analyze receptions of those artists that belong to the soviet period, the same time have lived painful transition and are continuing artistic work after the independence of our country. However, the urban space in their art represents the image of untouched urban texture of the first stage before the collapse of the system and the fragmented texture on the further stage thus the chronological boundaries of the study oscillate between 80-ies until nowadays. Nevertheless, this gives us opportunity to observe: a) the whole creative process in the scope of our research. b) The dialectics of urban image and related cultural concepts.

To respond to the main goal of the research we have studied urban image not according to its stylistic or artistic value, but we conducted semantic analysis and systemization in relation with culturological process. While selecting research material we were guided by following principles.

1. As an adequate research material we chose painters whose entire art is dedicated to urban theme and in-depth elaboration of urban motif. In the art of chosen artists a) urban motif is dominant. B) The authors have created artistic cycles dedicated to urban problems.
2. We have chosen artists whose art is in correlation with urban problematics of transitional period and provide adequate material for conducting culturological study.

For the same reason we found inappropriate to fix our attention on the painters whose urban themes are spontaneous and do not offer any creative analysis of the subject and likewise do not provide enough material for wider or complex analysis.

Together with 80-ies generation Karlo Kacharava (1964 -1994), Jemal Kukhalashvili (1952), Levan Laghize (1958), Mamuka Tsetskhladze (1960), Gia Bughadze (1956) we have analyzed the art of Gogi Chagelishvili (1945). Despite the fact that he started to work in the 1970-ies, the interest for modern urban issues starts in years 1980-ies. In this very period he develops his unique artistic style (his first solo exhibition takes place in the year 1986). Coming from the specifics of the study we found important to analyze art of Gogi Chagelishvili which thoroughly responds to the urban problems of transitional period and makes it central issue of his art.

**The importance and novelty of the research:** The scientific novelty of the dissertation consists in providing multilevel and complex analysis of the urban image. In the study the urban image is seen as the communication sign and artistic form at the same time. This kind of study has not been conducted before. Has not been studied and analyzed the models of urban environment nor their semantically close painting images. In the scope of the dissertation it's the first time that the factors defining mental image of the city has been studied.

This type of research is important especially because permanently developing urban environment needs support mechanisms in the process of self-identification and self-analysis. Culture, by means of art is performing this vital function and the same time is responsible for representing the process of keeping and rethinking values that take place in our society and human perception. On the other hand artistic image gives birth to new ways of perception of the city and stimulates realization of urban realities that has not been revealed yet.

**Research methodology:** For art material research we have used method of formal analysis that is widely used for studying architecture, sculpture and painting.

Urban image representation in painting requires complex approach and adequate research methodology. However, we found relevant to use semiotic method, that can help us define and analyses encoded information in art images that should be studied in the scope of our work.

While using the concept, "Spatial model" we refer to the spatial sample with its specific sociocultural function. In the term, "spatial culturological model" we mean typologically alike functional spaces developed by culture during historical process that is systematized in cultural studies.

**Bibliography:** The bibliography used in the dissertation consists of scientific works of Georgian authors as well as scientific works of foreign authors: urbanists and philosophers dedicated to sociocultural problematics.

## Chapter 1. Historical context of 1980 and 1990s and urban transformations

The chapter consists of three subchapters: 1.1980-1990s political reality and urban transformations. 1.2 Social and economic dysfunction and its urban results. 1.3. Psychological results of increased urbanity.

A city as a constantly evolving and renewing fabric becomes especially sensitive in transitional periods. A clear example of this is the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, in the 1980-es and 1990-es, when a string of significant events occurred: the step up in the national-liberation movement, the breakup of the Soviet Union, the gaining of political independence, military tensions in two regions of the country, a civil conflict in the capital city and the economic crisis. Radical changes took place in people's daily life and physical environment.

Each historical economic and political formation created its own "city." Bearing this factor in mind, let's look at Tbilisi: on the one hand, the Soviet system assumed the responsibility for the urban development of the city and dealt with all social issues of the city, regulated the correspondence of its structures with one another. In short, the capital city was a manifestation of functioning system, an arena of its sociocultural functioning and therefore, with the end of the Soviet epoch the city lost this solid system and was given a real chance of autonomous development.

A dysfunctional state of the first years of independence put a daily life of Tbilisi under a new, special regime of economic and social relations. As a result of total economic collapse the city as a system broke up and became a field of accidental actions. The city turned into a physical arena of struggle for self-survival.

This new objective further increased the role of street. The street was no longer a space for political actions alone, but also a space mirroring economic and social factors: With the paralyzed transportation and fuel crisis, streets were filled with pedestrians, which led to perceiving the scale, architecture and landscape of the city in a different, new way. This changed the meaning of notions “far” and “near” accordingly. Difficulties in movement actually turned a number of territories within the city unreachable. The shortage of staples led to the increase in the number of people in streets. The street became a place where food could only be “obtained” through long queues. Power shortages added to a general grave social situation, turning the city into a dark, lightless scene and charging the urban image with heavy, subconscious tension. The life was associated with the time and space exclusively assigned to the city, being out of step with the world dynamics, which could not be escaped.

After the demise of the socialist economic system, the necessity arose to overcome stagnation and establish an economic model of a new type. The city came to face a new challenge: the capital city proved to be the only *topos* that assumed the function of meeting new requirements – search of new opportunities, increase in importance of certain geographic zones, shift of centers, construction of new functional buildings, et cetera.

New economic relations became a dominant and vital impulse of the city life. However, the existing social environment found it painful and often, even inconvenient to accept forms of market economy that were well established and tested outside the Soviet space. Strong technological and commercial flows, being an integral part of urban development, manifested themselves in the city culture, primarily, architecture. Architecture is a clearly functional art. It is the best indicator of signs of “internal movement” of society and at the same time, it nudges society, towards transformation.

Such mutual influences are difficult to separate, thereby further complicating differential analysis. For example, if a social environment is dominated by trade relations an adequate architectural phenomenon are the zones such as market places and shops created within the space of the city, the rental of historic-cultural buildings to catering and other trade facilities; also, the outdoor trade and various advertising billboards. Architecture which is a most “socially honest” art unambiguously reflects the sidelining of historic-cultural values of society and the emergence of new priorities instead. Architectural communication of Tbilisi largely acquires a consumer connotation; cultural impact of buildings is sidelined as something weaker and less aggressive. Even in trying to establish cultural communication, it uses a different language for interaction – be it a billboard announcing a concert or a poster of theatrical performance containing, at least, logos of sponsoring companies, which apart from its main message conveys

the information about certain financial relations and liabilities. Thus, a traditional cultural layer, once representing a significant part of metaphysical image of the city, has weakened gradually and notably.

Tbilisi gained in its attractiveness as an arena of intellectual-trade possibilities, which led to intensification of the flow of population to the capital and increase in the concentration of individuals per unit of space. This increase was expressed not only in a quantitative indicator, but also the diversity and frequency of communication. The establishment of new, consumer-oriented capitalist market principles implies a drive towards such “accumulation” of masses for the aim of maximizing monetary gains. Consequently, psychological impacts characteristic of megalopolis, a clear manifestation of capitalist order, became noticeable. It would be incorrect to compare our capital city with European or American megalopolises where any aspect of urban life – commercial relations, employment market, technical and intellectual activity – reached incomparable level of intensity and consequently, had a much stronger impact on a mental state of an individual, but with its new vector of development Tbilisi also displayed some qualities of megalopolis, which, taken together, gradually changed the perception of the city and pushed an individual towards a greater isolation and aloofness.

The abundance of new constructions significantly altered the appearance of many districts of Tbilisi. In addition to stylistically diverse high-rise buildings new micro-districts were created, causing a new redistribution of social connotation. Incompatibility of styles and striking contrasts introduced a certain fragmentation in the perception of space. Since the space was utilized without any preliminary plan, but only according to the market principle of demand and supply, individuals became detached from their familiar space. Due to such a fast and chaotic change in the image, they failed to adapt to a new form which, in turn, led to their estrangement, detachment from the architectural space of their own city.

## **Chapter 2. Culturological models of urban space in the paintings of Jemal Kukhalashvili**

This chapter consists of two subchapters: 2.1. Urban landscape – old city; 2.2. Social models of urban space: yard, café, baths, celebrations, market, meeting.

The rhythm of city reflects the intensity of repetition of certain events within the city. Emotional irritants alternating at a certain frequency cause an adequate reaction from a subject. As a result of frequent nervous irritations a subject “exhausted”, wears out his supply of emotions. An indifferent, cool attitude towards any

fact is a sort of responding defensive reaction from an individual, the only weapon against aggressive objective reality.

As the city had an oppressive impact, an individual started to seek spiritual forms of self-defense as well as a “material shelter” that nudged a subject towards the spaces enabling to free oneself from a feeling of tension and overwhelming anxiety. The only requirement an alternative space was required to meet was to be different from a large city as only by perceiving the difference the brain could fire a signal of “relaxation.” A space that largely met this requirement were old districts of the city. A proof of it is a heightened attention that has been observed of late towards the European and “old-Tbilisi-style” part of Tbilisi. Cultural and historic value of these parts of the city has always been adequately appreciated. Wooden architecture of the Old Tbilisi has always been treated with great care and in the Soviet period, it was unanimously recognized as the image of the city life and culture, a sort of trademark of Tbilisi.

The interest in old cultural spaces is fully represented in the city image of Jemal Kukhalashvili. However there are two main urban images in the art of Jemal Kukhalashvili one is Whole, untouched structures of old Tbilisi districts and the second is types of social spaces typical to Georgian city culture.

The old/small city in Kukhalashvilis art is one of the main motifs that is marked with emotional approach and intimacy. The painter perceives architecture as living body with its own life, feelings and inner dynamic. Uneven contours of moved structures of wooden architecture is precisely portrayed in the pictures dedicated to small city image.

Together with small city J. Kukhalashvili gives wide gallery of social space models as well. One of characteristic urban spaces for Tbilisi city is the yard in a common neighborhood. Its architectural communication discloses the hierarchy system of sociocultural values and actively participates in the creation of the city image. In Kukhalashvili’s painting, the spatial model of a Tbilisi yard is well represented. The specifics of Tbilisi yard architecture with its light wooden constructions, open, shared balconies and common yard is an architectural sign of social relationships and lifestyle. In order to intensify the semantic of a typical city yard, the painter activates an everyday life modus. In his pictures we can see different social groups, women, and children old people etc. that are inhabiting shared yard. Shared space is a place where any kinds of social differences are neglected and so radical opposites ‘self’ and ‘other’ are not so drastic. With his artistic decision of avoiding any direct communication between the neighbors, Kukhalashvili achieves a relaxed atmosphere of a natural coexistence and a tranquil harmony among the people bound by profound personal ties.

The semantic model of the café, based on the example of Kukhalashvili's paintings, is a complex vehicle of imagery signs. At the same time, it provides cultural information regarding interpersonal communication and social relationship prototypes: the café, as a space related with urban pleasure, gives us interesting socio-cultural material about the dialectic of traditionally established forms of relaxation and entertainment. The paintings selected and examined in our study are grouped around two semantic aspects of the café: firstly, it is considered as a space of comfort and a familiar environment within the stressful life of a city while offering a relaxed atmosphere for citizens. Secondly, the café could be the possibility of an anonymous presence within the social dimension closely related to irrational and instinctive forms of city entrainment.

Kukhalashvili goes further than a simple illustration of a semantic model of the café: he transforms the space into the complex semiotic system where the café's interior is combined with public baths. Consequently, he creates a place where the physical joy of the bath ritual and the spiritual pleasure of communication are united in a single space. By overlaying these two different visual layers, Kukhalashvili restores the semantic of a city's multilayer cultural substance.

Baths belong to the deepest layers of urban myth. The legend about warm springs remains not only as a story but also as a part of the name of a city.

Among the wide range of public events represented in Kukhalashvili's paintings, the images of public and religious celebrations are especially interesting. His consideration of the socio-cultural context of celebrations highlights a number of semantic aspects present in visual spatial models.

To reinforce the impact of the Soviet ideology, the Soviet system eliminated historically established cultural models of public festivals and religious celebrations and substituted them with a new calendar of significant days. Soviet ceremonies were distant from traditional cultural roots and inner personal needs that constituted the basis of any historically established rite. Public celebrations and games that were still an important part of city life in 19th century in Tbilisi were replaced with Soviet spectacle-type festivals consisting of only theatric or consuming functions. As a result of restricted access to religious celebrations, the transcendental side of human existence disappeared and the living experience was limited to the scale of everyday life. Consequently, any kind of massive discharge or personal self-expression through traditional rites was made impossible. However, despite the well accommodated social life, the main channel to express the non-material needs of the individual remained blocked. The elimination of public celebrations is common beyond Soviet boundaries as well. The same social tendency was observed in Western cultures in the 20th century.

The central concept of celebration and its main social function is to give a chance to the individual to obtain wholeness with the universe. It is a place where a person exhausted from a monotonous routine and social clichés can reach liberation through dissolving himself in an anonymous celebrating crowd. The celebration is an indispensable instrument that grants the opportunity to a human being to destroy his individual self and join in the collective body of a higher existence.

A whole unbroken texture of a colorful fabric is the dominant sign of celebration in Kukhalashvili's artworks. The integration of the crowd and an environment symptomatic of the celebration semantic model is an important expressive tool in his imagery. The human figure forms a part of the entire fabric. Actions are not clear. The crowd as a protagonist of the painting diminishes the role of the individual.

We grouped paintings dedicated to market places as a separate semantic group. The social function of the market goes far beyond the simple action of buying and selling. It is a space where people try to accomplish their inner need for communication and social belonging. Traditionally, fairs and markets formed a part of a celebration. Additionally, the cyclic nature of celebrations related to special dates of the year is habitual for fairs. We can consider the market as a transitional space that oscillates between celebration and routine as it implies not only the buying and selling communication but the social function as well. The unity of the human being and the crowd that is a significant aspect of traditional fairs and markets discloses another important sign of the celebration semantic. The market is a ceremony of acquisition – an action that could be considered as a social rite.

On the artistic level, the parallels between markets and celebrations can be seen in a panoramic view present in both cases. A long shot of the action and the natural environment is an effective artistic instrument to change the scale of routine actions and increase their semantic impact. Through this approach, the pragmatic action of trade gains the scale of an abstract transcendental phenomenon so habitual for transitional spaces of Kukhalashvili's art.

### **Chapter 3. City as the existential space in Karlo Kacharava's Art**

This chapter consists of following subchapters: 3.1. Conceptual and esthetic bases of urban image in Karlo Kacharava's painting; 3.2. The morphology of urban image in Karlo Kacharava's painting; 3.3. The deformation of values and grotesque city image; 3.4 the metaphysical dimension of the city.

The urban image in Karlo Kacharava's painting is loaded with existential conflict deeply rooted in spiritual discomfort of citizen. The same time we perceive parallelism with urban esthetics of expressionism movement of after war Germany where modern European megapolis was born. The urban image in Karlo Kacharava's paintings is not based on architectural imagery. The author's focus is on personal world of the citizen. His characters are the main vehicles of city image.

The conflict of real environment and moral values that took place in the period of socio-political transformation is one of the most important parts of Kacharava's urban image. The city represents a place where the panic ceased by tragic obedience to reality and moral values cross each other. While creating this image Kacharava uses the textual graphics – the phrases, words, names written directly on the painting. This writings mainly serve as a philosophic comments to the existantional deadlock space.

The city as mystic space converted into complex phsycological phenomenon is one of the important themes in Karlo Kacharava's painting and poetry. Dream and reality do not exist in opposition regime but are seen as two consisting parts of the whole that permanently touch each other. The dream is like a mirror where reality is reflected and on the contrary. There are various representations of dream world in Kacharavas paintings: silence, ugliness, impotence, exaggeration, claustrophobia, illogical sequences etc. This is the permanent collision of unconscious space and reality crossing point for which is the city and its characters.

There is one more type of the city in Kacharava's painting – transparent city where the space is more respired then viewed. City is the topos of deep diving into one's self. As the painter claims himself: „the white planet of desperation’.

The separate subchapter is dedicated to night city. We see the image of night as a symbol of mystery, unconscious, hidden world that can only be touched at night, only in night city can be seen the characters that are not visible in the daytime city.

The dominant tendency of the generation of 1980-ies – the attempt to integrate Georgian cultural tradition with western experience is broadly represented in Karlo Kacharava's art. In his paintings the western cultural heritage is synthesized with social reality of Tbilisi of 1990-ies.

#### **Chapter 4. Discourse of demolition and traumatic special experience.**

The chapter consists of four subchapters: 4.1. The discourse of demolition in urban context. Nostalgia and esthetization; 4.2. The problem of spatial identity – G. Chagelishvili's series of paintings, „Abandoned street”; 4.3. The deconstruction of spatial image in the context of nature/culture opposition; 4.4. Postwar traumatic space – Gia Bughadze's series of paintings.

In the fourth chapter of dissertation we discuss psychological results of demolition and its emotional-aesthetic elaboration in the works of G. Chagelishvili and G. Bughadze.

During transition period the demolition discourse is observed in three directions: 1. The demolition of architecture, its fragmentation or disappearance. 2. The discourse of demolition in natural zones. 3. The demolition and space change caused by war.

The image of modern urban ruins plays important role in the image of modern city. Empty buildings, cracks, unconsciously give birth to melancholy and nostalgia giving stimulus to human being to load the space with personal interpretation. Ruins in modern city texture are decomposed parts of urban image, empty space is the gap – the sign of time passage and the same time the sign of its memory.

In the art of Gogi Chagelishvili the concept of abandoned space is first observed in the end of years 1990-ies in the series „abandoned street”. The space to which Gogi Chagelishvili gives emotional dimension – demolished houses, ruined facades and old wooden window frames - tell us about its history and past. Dirty, unclear colors of building surfaces creates exact map of fading and cracking. The delicate rhythm of moved old elements of the houses tell us a story of deformed architecture. The vague image brings impression of fading architectural phantoms that are almost disappearing before our eyes. The disappearance of material substance is a representation of spiritual and emotional distance between the painter and his real environment.

The collapse of Soviet Union formed wide zones of transformed landscapes. This new images are closely linked to spatial identity problems. Full with past phantoms, abandoned landscapes, buildings dominated by nature represent the battle won by nature forces. The concept of urban image deconstruction in Chagelishvili works is closely related with decomposed, ruined architecture and metaphysics of demolition. Architecture that generally is seen in vector time G. Chagelishvili places in cyclic time flow of nature cycles.

The painter draws our attention towards the original construction and geological composition of the earth. The earth in his pictures is mostly dry, cracked. Its structural texture demonstrates the movement of tectonic forces. In its overall movement architecture is also involved. Buildings become organic part of the earth and are created and demolished by the earth itself in a constant manner in accordance with natural cycles. Architecture as a creation of the earth is seen as a part of dynamic movement of the soil. This is a process that is launched beyond the human being and at the very starting point leaves the sphere of human control and activates creative forces of the nature.

Gia Bughdze's trilogy *Victima, Profuga, Lacrimosa* is created after war in Samachablo region in 2008. Here the painter tries to reconstruct experience of after war traumatic space. Unlike nostalgic approach of G. Chagelishvili, Gia Bughadze's spatial image is active pain that unexpectedly outbreaks into existing space and strongly shakes its stable constructs. Reflexion on pain and its transformation into artistic forms is the way to overcome the problem. The image of ruined time and space is converted into symbolic icons such as wires, nails, etc. that carry the metaphysics of active pain.

The artistic motif elaborated by Gia Bughadze a symbol of lost identity – simple white cube with red triangular roof without doors and windows is a stamp that is repeated in almost every painting and that represents dissemination of mental trauma in our real space. In this image the simple form and red color are strong accents on monochromic background that awake association of blood. The sharp form of triangular roof reminds us sharp pain of war. The panoramic scale that is often observed in this series of paintings is quite close to modern cinema language. By using this tool author tries to show that the vibration of pain is spread not only within the local space, but reaches larger, cosmic scale.

## **Chapter 5. Culturological models of foreign city**

This chapter consists of two subchapters. 5.1. Romantic transformations of urban image in the art of Mamuka Tsetskhlade; 5.2. Two images of foreign city' in Gogi Chagelishvili's painting.

The city is the universal symbol of culture in Mamuka Tsetskhlade's art. The virtual journey through iconic European cities serves as compensation for soviet citizen, whose geographical boundaries are limited. This very sense of limitation is overcome by the discourse of traveler. However, the journey is not only

through space but through time as well: Tsetskhladze's city is free from any modern element and is loaded with details that come from romantic past. With this approach M. Tsetskhladze tries to create alternative space without technological progress, pragmatic approach or extreme rational mentality. Tsetskhladze's city is part of romantic world, full of emotions and classical beauty where mystery and attraction still have its place. The painter often depicts historical cities of Europe like Paris, Rome, and Venice etc. The priority is given to cultural heritage like old classicist buildings, strict heroism, barocal curves or gothic temples. Artistic tools are elected in coherence with artistic goal: The author often uses grey dramatic sky, clouds that contribute to dramatic tension of misty atmosphere. One of his favorite motifs is the sunset, also lightened windows and twilight. Important role is given to light and shadow. All abovementioned artistic tools are meant to show the unachievable delight of past romantic cities.

As an opposition to these romantic cities Mamuka Tsetkhlaze creates the series of paintings dedicated to Tbilisi (2015). Here we uses different aesthetics not usual to his artistic style. He is concentrated on modern buildings and does not ignore details of actual life such as billboards, Christmas decorations etc. While depicting architecture we see flat elaboration of volumes, rough, rectangular outlines that generates the image of unattractive city where nothing spontaneous or delightful can happen. The dominant grey color in Tbilisi series leaves the city image without any emotional feedback. Compared to colorful images of foreign cities one has to face dull and dark space of his hometown.

The restricted space so typical to Soviet system found its representation in Gogi Chagelishvili's art as well. In the series of paintings dedicated to Istanbul two different images of the city are elaborated. In the first image we can see eternal city Constantinople with its binary spatial model: the west and east earth and water are united in the chronotopos of Istanbul. The crossing of oppositions is performed in the form of abstract painting. The city is represented as a part of cosmic material. The archaic structure of the earth and cosmic dynamics of the water coexist in the mythical city image. For the second image of Istanbul the author uses the stories from everyday life of actual Istanbul told by ordinary traveler. Chagelishvili gives vivid impressions from actual city with its people, local characters and quite real, not mythical geography. The unique location of the city is the part of its image. The unexpected views on the sea as the important component of Istanbul city life is often highlighted in this series.

The foreign city in the art of Mamuka Tsetskhladze and Gogi Chagelishvili is the result of artistic elaboration of cultural dialogue with different cultures. During this meeting Tsetskhladze chooses western

art and cultural values while Chagelishvili prefers to demonstrate east-west crossroad and focuses on problem of historic memory.

## **Chapter 6. City-text of Levan Lagidze**

The chapter consists of two subchapters: 6.1. Postmodern city – new spatial paradigm; 6.2. Textual principle of spatial construction in L. Laghidze's art.

In Levan Laghidze's paintings city as the environment reveals its immanent characteristics with the signs of actual culture and epoch. Modern city is seen as the prevalence of non-material environment that fully changes the context of discussion.

The crisis of reality in postmodern era is reflected on the city as well: the physical environment steps back, it is transformed into schemes randomly placed in urban texture. The human perception is changed together with changing environment: the act of decoding significances that is inevitable in modern communication transforms the viewer into reader. Consequently, the city is seen as text or unity of narratives. The only approach to the city-text could be game, labor of decoding that is followed by creating own significances.

Laghidze's artworks are surfaces, standing "before the viewer just like a text or screen. The viewer is involved in reading process. He has to follow verticals and horizontals on the painting surface as while reading the text. The legibility of postmodern city is the main communication tool in Laghidze's art. The author does not give the ready text, on the contrary, he tries to involve the viewer in the journey, in the game where the image is created by means of cooperation between the author and the viewer.

The process of creating the picture reminds construction process: first the basic skeleton is drafted in the form of rectangular cells that cover whole surface of canvas. This carcass is kind of permanent structure that reflects the fundamental structure of the world, the icon of its stable substance. The next working stage is adding precise details to the drafted scheme. Here important role is played by graphic elements. Special attention is drawn to giving depth to flat surface that is achieved by adding transparent layers.

For postmodern paradigm communication with the view is crucial component. In order to read the text of the city numerous information and conventions are needed. Without common language communication between humans and ever-changing substance of the city is impossible. In Laghidze's case the viewer receives poetic comment from the author to every painting he has to encode. They serve as spatial guide for those who would like to travel in his spatial and emotional labyrinths.

## Conclusion

The analysis of peculiarities and scale of transformation of the city enables us to conclude that the capital of Georgia as an independent, autonomous organism is still in the process of auto-identification and strives to identify and establish its own image and potential.

In describing the post-Soviet urban dynamics of the city, several stages of transformation are outlined: a) Urban paralysis which was a process accompanying the breakup of the Soviet Union and dysfunction of the state; b) Step up in private initiatives in the setting of weakened state governance, which caused the city, as a system, to get engaged in accidental, spontaneous, fluctuating processes; c) Alongside the identification of state priorities the regulation of the city function has begun and led to the increase in the importance of cultural-esthetic and pragmatic potential of the city; In parallel to these processes, an alternative space of the Old City has been outlined and its value is proportional to its difference from the rest of the city. Along with the increase in autonomy, this part of the city is being formed as a unique temporal-spatial unit that meets those cultural, esthetic, psychological, existential requirements of a citizen, which a modern city environment is not able to ensure.

Alternative space of the old City has been outlined and its value stands forward just as much as the increased urbanity is dominating the city. Old part of the city is being formed as a unique temporal-spatial unit that meets those cultural, esthetic, psychological, existential requirements of a citizen which a modern city environment is not able to ensure.

As a result of the study several features characteristic to Georgian culture have been revealed and are present on the connotation level of the spatial models: we can distinguish the layers of contemporary and

past paradigms the synthesis of eastern and western traditions and the complex character of social spaces, among others.

The cultural model of the traditional yard unfolds to reveal important signs of social structure. It is the transitional space where the boundaries of intimate and familiar life are broadened and the chronotopos between personal and social spaces is created. Placing interior utilitarian objects in the exterior space of the yard points to the subtle character of borders between yard and home – a sign of open, secured social relationships. At the same time, the yard is a self-sufficient unique world ruled by traditionally formed social rules and a specific lifestyle.

The café model provides an artistic interpretation of urban pleasure types. Kukhalashvili offers spaces marked with erotic, irrational semantics as well as romantic, salon-like spatial models. In his art, the topos of the café is linked with public baths that indicates the important cultural tradition of Tbilisi. The fusion of the eastern baths tradition and the entertainment model established in Western society during enlightening epoch reveals the multilayer cultural texture of the city.

The semantic of celebrations is based on the wholeness of material and non-material substances indicating the unity between the human being and the universe.

In frequent paintings representing fairs and market places, Kukhalashvili points out the traditional importance of the markets and gives a transcendental dimension of the universal occurrence to the action of trade.

The influence of western urban models more clearly is observed in the works of Karlo Kacharava, especially in the model of street that has been transformed during 1980-ies. Urban environment is represented with extremely concentrate spatial image where central place is given to the citizen and its existential problems. (K. Kacharava). The city is converted into claustrophobic space that arouses instinctive sense of discomfort. Western experience is borrowed by artistic language as well. New urban characters are created with tense mimic, gestures and appearance. All of them strongly emanate the tense vibration of urban environment.

Widening of physical space is also observed. In several works the city is located on the semantic crossroad of dream-reality binary model. In the same urban space coexist textual images, biographic citations, philosophical comments included in the paintings are marked with intertextuality and represent direct cultural dialogue with western world.

In given period special importance is given to culturological model of house. Different demolition discourses so characteristic to transition period outlines the problem of spatial identity and brings forward the intimate dimension of human life. The destruction of main function of architecture and urban demolition process is compensated by urban model of memory – the house. This very model is linked the important sense of owning the space.

The model of house the same time is closely linked to actual refugee problems within the country. The problem of losing time or one's period of life is also symbolizes in the same model (G. Chagelishvili).

The house becomes a central spatial model during the traumatic experience of war. Horrible battle landscapes gain their significance only together with image of house. Specially elaborated house image (G. Bughadze) becomes anti-house- the symbolic icon that is loaded with traumatic experience, pain and tragic identity associations. Simple white cube with red triangular roof without doors and windows are kind of stamps that are repeated in almost every painting and that represents the dissemination of mental trauma in our real space.

The personal experience of deconstruction of urban image is related with (time passage, denaturalization in post-soviet period and relevant emotional spectrum) observation of fundamental materials and its transformation rhythms that gives birth to creative impulse of conceptualization and formalization. (G.Chagelishvili). In this process the mythic-archetypic image is created that contradicts to the idea of megapolis. In this image we can observe ruined architecture - material that is integrated in permanent rhythms of the nature.

As an important tendency we observe representation of European cities and marking their main culturological models. European city represents universal symbol. Emotional approach to these models is compensation for soviet citizen who lives within the restricted boundaries. Main emphasis in the spatial models of western cities is on ancient architecture, emotional environment and superficial, touristic approach (M. Tsetskhladze).

The vision from inside to outside accompanied by tendency of cultural approach is manifested in travelers discourse. The semantic of eternal city (G. Chaelishvili) with its deep, multilayer texture is represented in spatial model of Istanbul. On the one hand we can observe broad archetypal image of Constantinople where binary oppositions – earth and water, east and west- meet each other. The city is represented as a part of cosmic material. The archaic structure of the earth and cosmic dynamics of the water coexist in the

mythical city image. On the other hand we perceive the city with its everyday life and characters enriched by unique geographical location with different views to the sea and mountains that participate in every human story of Istanbul citizens.

The postmodern city paradigm - the prevalence of non-material environment is represented in L. laghidze spatial models. On the crossing of verticals and horizontals new significances are created and the viewer of the city is converted into city reader. This way a painter is stimulating communication process. This type of urban model is designed for further interpretation just like literature texts. In the visual representation of the city the graphical construction of the text also plays important role.

As the dominant tendency of 80-ies generation we should underline adapting of urban culturological models with traditional cultural-artistic forms and implementation of western artistic and forms and perception. However, together with traditional models new themes and western type urban perception is observed.