



# The Plundering

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A film by Oliver Ressler

40 min., HD, AT/GE/UK 2013

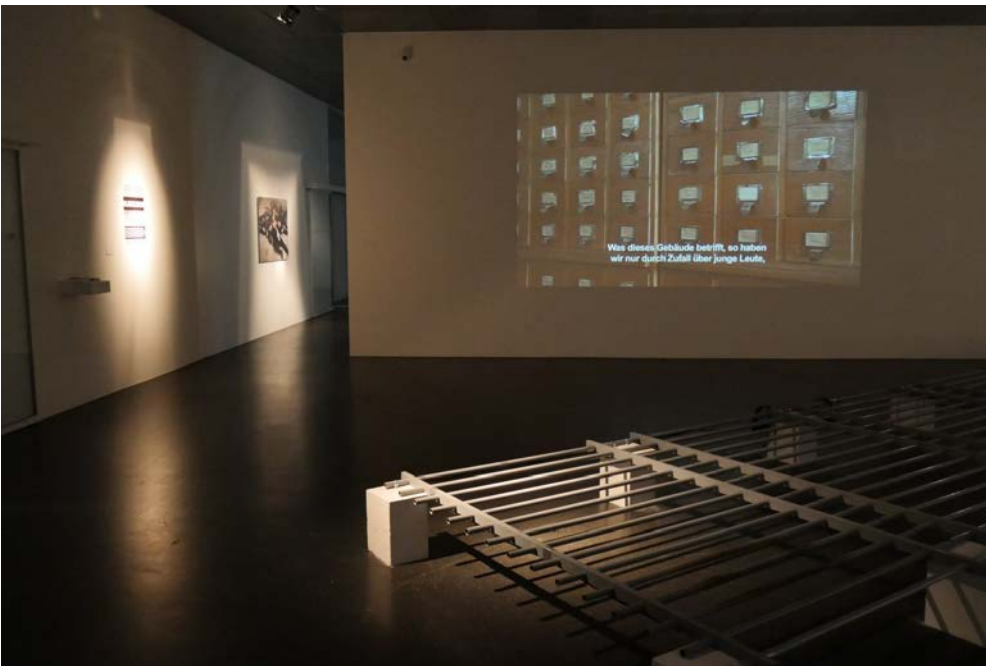
"We can talk about the 'plundering' of Georgia. Public property, which in fact should serve the common needs of society, has become the property of individuals. For example, if that project became successful, the citizens now using this park would not be able to use it."

– Mikheil Svanidze, *The Plundering*



"The Plundering". Installation view: "The Plundering" (solo show), Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz, 2014

Extreme levels of privatization can only be carried out under conditions where people are under severe pressure, as in the transformation of former Soviet republics towards independence and capitalism. Since the *Rose Revolution* in 2003, the former Soviet republic Georgia underwent such a radical transformation. President Mikheil Saakashvili implemented one of the most extreme neoliberal projects in the world. Today, Georgia is 9th of 185 states in the World Bank ranking "Ease of Doing Business". While the "common good accumulated within the communist regime during 70 years of its existence" (Rusudan Mirzikashvili, *The Plundering*) is being sold off, the unstable situation in a radical, free-market economy and the liquidation of most social safety nets drove most Georgian residents into un-experienced levels of poverty.



"The Plundering". Installation view: "The Plundering" (solo show), Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz, 2014



"The Plundering", still

The film *The Plundering* focuses on four cases of aggressive, state-property privatization policies in Tbilisi. Through interviews, it discusses the privatization of the water system in Tbilisi and of Tbilisi's popular market, the *Dezserter Bazaar*. A newly emerging movement prevented the attempted sell-off of the National Scientific Library, and the destruction and conversion of the historical Gudiashvili Square in Tbilisi's city center into a shopping mall.

"Objects of strategic importance were sold to the benefit of some people close to the government", Levan Asabashvili describes these processes of systemic corruption in the film. Usually the purchasers are hiding behind companies registered offshore.



"The Plundering", still



"The Plundering", still

Director and producer: Oliver Ressler

Camera: Niko Tarielashvili

Sound recording and film editing: Oliver Ressler

Sound design, mix and color correction: Rudolf Gottsberger

Music: Erekle Deisadze & Vinda Folio: *Agurit Khelshi*

Interviewees: Levan Asabashvili, Ani Chankotadze, Giorgi Chubinidze, Alexandre Elisashvili, Nino Gujaraidze, Lasha Kharazi, Zurab Kukuladze, Rusudan Mirzikashvili, Mikheil Svanidze

Translation: Soso Chauchidze

Organization and production assistance: Data Chigholashvili, Soso Chauchidze, Nini Palavandishvili, Ana Ramazashvili, Katharina Tchelidze

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