

MERI KHARAISHVILI

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RESEARCH AREAS: History of museums, collecting, and exhibitions; interpretation; curation and ethics; museums and politics; cultural diplomacy; repatriation and decolonization; religion and museums; antiquities; South Caucasus; digital humanities; museum education

EDUCATION

M.A. in Museum Studies, New York University, New York, NY 2025
Received NYU GSAS Tuition Scholarship (2023–25) for academic excellence and scholarly potential
Thesis: “Framing the Divine: Representation of Ancient Sacred Objects in Modern Secular Museums”

M.A. in American Studies, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia 2017
Thesis: Decision-Making and U.S. Foreign Policy: The Initiation of the Iraq War in 2003

B.A. in Cultural Heritage and Tourism Management, Shota Rustaveli Georgian State University of Theatre and Film, Tbilisi, Georgia 2006

RESEARCH AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Thesis: Framing the Divine: Representation of Ancient Sacred Objects in Modern Secular Museum Spaces 2025
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), NYU, New York, NY
Analyzed the display, interpretation, and historical narratives surrounding ancient religious objects at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Vani Archaeological Museum. Employed visual and comparative analysis, historiographical research, critical theory (Foucault, Hall, Benjamin, Duncan), and museum ethnography (including curatorial interviews, gallery studies, and visitor observation). The study highlights the tensions between secular museum frameworks, colonial collecting histories, and contemporary curatorial strategies.

Medea in the Frescoes of Pompeii and Herculaneum: Myth and Image as Agents of Cultural Memory 2024
Supported by Antonina S. Ranieri International Scholars Fund Grant, NYU, New York, NY
Independent research
Examined myth and image as systems of knowledge and agents of cultural memory by exploring the representations of Medea in the frescoes of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Through this project, I explored the interpretive power of myth in understanding ancient belief systems and cultic practices.

Textile from Georgia, Interdisciplinary Project 2018
Winner of the [European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra](#) in the category of research
Art Palace of Georgia-Museum of Cultural History, Tbilisi, Georgia

Worked with historians, ethnographers, and conservators to document the [history of Georgian textiles](#), integrating archival research, field research, and object-based analysis. Contributed to the publication and to the development of digital and educational resources that illuminate regional craftsmanship, material culture, and historical production techniques, supporting the preservation and transmission of knowledge to contemporary society.

Alphabet as a History, Exhibition and Guidebook 2018
[Frankfurt Book Fair 2018](#), [Klingspor-Museum](#), Offenbach, Germany

Conducted archival research and co-organized an exhibition on the evolution and cultural significance of the Georgian script for an international audience. Adapted the exhibition narrative for the [Google Arts & Culture](#) platform to extend global access to the history of Georgia's three living alphabets.

FURTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Gallery Assistant*, **Christie's Asian Art Week 2025**, New York, NY 09/2025 – 09/2025
Supported senior specialists with operational and research efforts, reinforcing teamwork in a high-profile environment. Enhanced audience engagement through providing interpretive materials, including catalogues and condition reports. Facilitated engagement with high-value artworks, ensuring accessibility and artwork safety during previews.
- Exhibition Docent*, **Institute for the Study of the Ancient World**, NYU, New York, NY 10/2024 — 05/2025
Developed research-based interpretive content for public tours for the exhibition [Madinat al-Zahra: The Radiant Capital of Islamic Spain](#). Delivered educational programs for Columbia University undergraduate students in collaboration with course instructors and ISAW's curatorial team. Produced short-form digital interpretation (video and text) to extend in-gallery narratives to online audiences.
- Intern, Collection Care and Educational Activities*, **Villa La Pietra**, NYU, Florence, Italy 05/2024 — 01/2025
Conducted provenance research and ensured comprehensive documentation and cataloging of the museum's collection in the Museum System database (TMS). Designed and delivered public programs using culturally responsive learning strategies to enhance audience engagement. Produced research-based social media content to broaden public awareness of the museum's holdings.
- Ambassador/Operations Assistant*, **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York, NY 04/2021 — 09/2023
Liaised across internal departments and with external partners to resolve visitor inquiries and support audience engagement. Assisted researchers, scholars, and students with inquiries related to object access, institutional scholarly resources, and collection information.
- International Projects Manager*, **Art Palace of Georgia**, Tbilisi, Georgia 01/2018 — 07/2020
Contributed to research projects and coordinated administrative and logistical aspects of international exhibitions and cultural initiatives. Key projects included [British Sources about Georgia](#) (2020), a research initiative on 17th–18th-century British publications on Georgia, and [Neorealismo Italiano nel Cinema Georgiano](#) (2020), a touring exhibition at Casa del Cinema, Rome, examining cross-cultural connections

between Georgian and Italian cinematography. Managed grant-funded projects, including proposal and report writing and budget tracking. Coordinated institutional partnerships across Europe and the U.S.

Art Curator, Art Palace of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia 01/2016 — 01/2018
Conducted curatorial research and developed conceptual and interpretive frameworks for in-house and touring exhibitions. Key exhibitions included [Edward Curtis & The North American Indian](#) (in collaboration with the Library of Congress, 2017) and [Alphabet as History](#) (in collaboration with the Klingspor Museum, Offenbach, 2017-18). Expanded global access to the museum's collections by establishing a partnership with [Google Arts & Culture](#) and overseeing the digitization of artworks and online exhibitions. Coordinated logistics and communications with artists, lenders, and institutional partners, and prepared grant proposals and exhibition reports for international collaborations.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

- [AAM Museum Advocacy Day](#) 02/2025
American Alliance of Museums (AAM), Washington, D.C. (Capitol Hill)
Delivered remarks to state legislators on the economic, educational, and cultural impact of museums, advocating for federal funding and equitable cultural policy
- [Translocations: International Perspectives on the Translocation of Cultural Assets](#) 10/2025–01/2026
University of Bonn, online lecture series
Organized by the Research Center for Provenance Research, Art and Cultural Property Law
- [Introduction to Archaeology](#) 02/2022–04/2022
University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, online course
Examined the history and development of archaeology as a discipline, including core methodologies and analytical techniques
- [Archival Studies, Source Studies – Trends and Challenges](#), International Conference 09/2019
National Archives of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia
Presentation: “International Communication and the Role of Innovative Digital Technologies in Modern Museum Practices”
- [Managing a Museum Today](#), International Workshop 04/2018
International Training Centre for Museum Studies (ICOM-ITC), Beijing, China
Presentation: “The Art Palace of Georgia’s mission, strategic planning, curatorial vision, and approaches to ethical and engaging object-based teaching methods.”
- [Museum Curation and Exhibition Design](#), Professional Exchange Program 05/2017–06/2017
Organized by the U.S. Embassy in Georgia, Open World Leadership Center, and the Library of Congress
Collaborated with the Library of Congress’s Interpretive Programs Office on the development and delivery of a photo exhibition dedicated to the legacy of Edward S. Curtis, an American photographer and ethnologist

GRANTS/HONORS/AWARDS

Antonina S. Ranieri International Scholars Fund Grant, NYU \$850 for supporting summer internship and independent research in Italy	2024
NYU Graduate School of Arts and Science Tuition Scholarship 50% scholarship for academic excellence and scholarly potential	2023–25
Certificate of Appreciation from the Ministry of Culture of Georgia National recognition for contributions to museum practice and cultural outreach	2019
Certificate of Appreciation from the Ministry of Culture of Georgia For the contribution to raising international awareness of the cultural heritage of Georgia	2016

LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

Georgian (Native), English (Fluent), Russian (Fluent), French (Intermediate High)

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Collections research ▪ Object Interpretation ▪ Multimodal & inclusive pedagogies ▪ Documentation, cataloging, and data management ▪ TMS (The Museum System) ▪ Canvas ▪ WordPress ▪ HTML ▪ Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Alliance of Museums (AAM)
International Council of Museums (ICOM)
Center for Ancient Studies NYU
Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC)
American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR)
Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA)
Museums Association (MA)