The Importance of Place vs Space  
Displacement, Art, and the (Re) Imagining of the Armenian Diaspora

Illustrated talk by Neery Melkonian

In this illustrated lecture, Neery Melkonian extends a critical reflection on disparate contemporary artistic and curatorial practices that have redefined how the Armenian diaspora is perceived globally. First, she surveys aesthetic and exhibition trends of the prior century (1915-2015) through cultural capitals as diverse as Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, Paris, Venice, Los Angeles, New York and Istanbul. Next, Melkonian unpacks the so-called “paradigm shift” after the 1990s to propose that the pervasive sense of transience of the transnational, with its ensuing fragmentation, deserves to be reimagined through more lasting deliberations of cultural agency.

Art historian by education, Neery Melkonian is an independent researcher, lecturer, writer, curator and cultural critic based in New York City. She is the founding director and co-curator of Blind Dates: New Encounters from the Edges of a Former Empire (2006 - present) and is currently working on Accented Feminism: Armenian Women Artists from Representation to Self-Representation. Her recent exhibition essays include “Undoing Denials” (reprinted in Hyperallergic.com), “Traversing the Intimate yet Infinite Universe of MF Husain” (Tamarind Art), “On the Front Line” (Mosaic Rooms) and “Elective Affinities” (LIFE:100, forthcoming).