

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS TBILISI

Elene Chantladze, Simon Lässig

LC Queisser

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By Alexandra Symons Sutcliffe ☼



Simon Lässig, 2:23 minutes from: *Anyaság*, 1974 As I watch *Anyaság* (Motherhood) from 1974, I come to know again how one learns to look through other people, how we take in, adapt and alter their thoughts, views and feelings. And if the rest of the film speaks about how we mimic and repeat—about how we are conditioned—then these stretched 2 minutes and 23 seconds remind us of the opposite: Of a moment in which we look out into the world and do not see ourselves reflected back. A reality comes into being that is closed off and something I've seen before repeats itself. (still), 2022, digital video, sound, 4:46".

This exhibition hinges on recent collaborations between Elene Chantladze and Simon Lässig, two artists from different generations who share an interest in the experiences of early childhood and education. Lässig edited Chantladze's most recent book, *Stories for Children* (2023), which is displayed here alongside twelve of her miniature paintings. Executed on pieces of irregularly sized and shaped cardboard, the images depict indistinct figures in enclosed and unidentifiable worlds. Hung in a linear procession, the paintings read almost like cells in a filmstrip, an effect that structures the multiple internal narratives into a larger story. The sense of movement created by the hang is bolstered by the labored intensity of Chantladze's brushwork. Rough and highly expressive, the compositions seem darkly animated. One feels compelled to return to them to make sure the figures have not shuffled about or crossed into a neighboring frame.

Lässig's contributions balance on a dichotomy of additive and reductive maneuvers. Bookending the exhibition are two obliquely titled silver gelatin prints of schematic architectural drawings, as well as a film whose 106-word title describes the emotional experience the artist had while watching Ferenc Grunwalsky's 1974 domestic documentary, *Anyaság (Motherhood)*. In *2:23 minutes from: Anyaság, 1974 .. . , 2022*, Lässig doubles the length of an excerpt from the source film that shows a woman running a bathroom faucet. Unnoticed by the woman, the shot pans away and across various details of the household, eventually drifting back to observe her again from hip height, the position a child would watch their mother from. In part of his expansive title, Lässig describes the footage as "a moment in which we look out into the world and do not see ourselves reflected back." This feeling of estrangement frames Lässig and Chantladze's collaboration.