



The Shape of What Remains:

Six gestures of repair across broken geographies

Aea: Culture Initiative's first exhibition at the Venice Design Biennial 2025

October 4 – November 2, 2025

Venice Design Biennial, Collateral Project

 Tanarte / Spazio Tana, Fondamenta della Tana, Castello 2111, Venice

Open Tuesday to Sunday, 11:00 – 19:00

Closed on Mondays (except October 20)

Free admittance

A cozy soirée with a simple dinner prepared with care by the Aea team, followed by a conversation about the exhibition and about what remains, will take place on October 4 at 18:30.

[Aea: Culture Initiative](#) is a transdisciplinary laboratory for émigré creatives, centered on the female perspective. It has been selected to participate in [the 5th edition of the Venice Design Biennale](#) as a Collateral Project, where it will present its first offline project. [The Shape of What Remains: Six gestures of repair across broken geographies](#) is an exhibition that explores how we live when the world is ruptured.

The show, named after American poet and writer Lisa C. Taylor's novel on the slow return to life after tragic loss, consists of six compartments shaped by the lived experiences of women from the Aea community. Each is a response to fracture, and together they form a non-linear atlas of survival. These women — from Italy, Georgia, Ukraine, Iran, and beyond — have not only crossed borders, but found themselves navigating the aftermath of crisis: political, ecological, cultural, personal.

From fragments of ceramics to planted seeds, from improvised music to gardens and tapestries, the artists' works trace gestures of care, attention, and persistence in the face of loss. These are not stories of restoration, but of living *inside* the break — with disorientation, grief, and uncertainty, yet with hope.

The exhibition does not tell stories of restoration. It presents stories of living inside the break — with disorientation, grief, and uncertainty, yet with hope. It reflects the choice to stay with what is broken rather than look away, shaping meaning from the rubble. In a world that seems to be fraying at every edge, the project offers not solutions, but ways of continuing when continuing is no longer a given.

Nata Tatumashvili, Curator of the exhibition, Aea core team member:

I saw women responding to collapse not with force, but with care — tending, supporting, repairing. In their quiet gestures I recognized a different way of thinking and making: intuitive, relational, offering a counterpoint to rigid systems. In their persistence, I found a form of hope — restrained, grounded in presence. This exhibition began with a wish to collect and share their stories.

About Curator

Nata Tatumashvili

Architect, researcher, and educator. She is the co-founder of Aea: Culture Initiative, a transdisciplinary laboratory for émigré creatives centering female perspectives; co-founder of NWDS, a multidisciplinary architecture office powered by female minds; and co-founder of Ubani—Tbilisi Cityscape Research Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to researching Tbilisi's cityscape. Her work marks a transition from architectural practice into a broader artistic domain — supporting and producing interdisciplinary projects that engage with memory, identity, technology, and displacement across media and formats.

About Artists on Show:

Sarah Cowles

(based on Tbilisi, Georgia)

Landscape architect, writer, and educator. She has taught landscape architecture and urban design in the US and internationally, and now lives and works in Georgia. She is the founder of Ruderal, a practice rooted in process-based approaches to ecology and landscape architecture. Her work evolves from field observation — walking, sketching, and documenting ruderal landscapes — into projects that address the intersections of ecology, culture, and geopolitics. Living and working in Tbilisi, she explores how disturbed sites and overlooked ecologies can be re-foregrounded as spaces of resilience and renewal.

Nanka Dolidze

(based in Tbilisi, Georgia)

Photographer and designer. Born in Donetsk, Ukraine, into a family of Georgian, Ukrainian, Russian, Azerbaijani, and Persian roots, she grew up in Paris and studied photography in Prague. In 1999 she returned to Georgia, the first in three generations of her family to do so,

seeking belonging through place. Her practice intertwines photography, organic gardening, and the restoration of a family home, exploring how identity is shaped through landscape and self-sustenance. In her work she emphasizes care for biodiversity and the wisdom of natural systems, approaching gardening as a philosophy of attentiveness and humility

Silvia Gelain

(based in Drôme, France)

Italian-French architect and landscape architect. After training in Venice and Barcelona and working with international practices, she founded Atelier Chony in 2025 in France, her mother's homeland, as a site for spatial inquiry where landscape is not backdrop but actor. Now based in the rural Drôme, she lives in a century-old house whose gradual renewal has become a daily practice of attention, where materials, traces, and histories shape an ongoing dialogue with place.

Olena Grankina

(based in Berlin, Germany)

Architect and scenographer. Born in Kyiv, she began her professional practice there before spending many years in Moscow — an early experience of migration that sharpened her sense of roots. Since 2022 she has lived in Berlin with her children, navigating a second displacement shaped by war. Her practice has expanded from architecture into scenography, creating spatial narratives attuned to memory, loss, and the fragments that remain. A family tapestry, woven from unravelled threads yet left unfinished, has become a guiding image in her work — survival as care, attentiveness, and the making of beauty amid ruins.

Lisa Kolesova

(based in Tbilisi, Georgia)

Collector and curator of objects currently based in Tbilisi. Born in Moscow, she studied architecture before turning to set design, styling, and floristry, and in 2017 founded *out____of*, a project devoted to her collection of repaired and timeworn curiosities. What began as an inner exile in the countryside has, since her emigration, shifted into a life of real displacement. Her practice remains shaped by attentiveness to fracture and repair, and by the question of how identity can be carried forward across geographies through the stories objects hold.

Alisa Gvozdeva

(based in Paris, France)

Artist born in Saint Petersburg, Russia, with a background in cognitive science from the Liberal Arts and Sciences. She spent 2019 and 2023-24 in Tbilisi, where she met Kimia Dehghan and began their collaborative musical and performative partnership. Since 2022 Alisa has lived in motion, working across places and now based in Paris. She has held two solo exhibitions in Saint Petersburg and joined numerous group projects, including at MMOMA. Using painting and ceramics outside academic conventions, she cultivates an ironic yet naive language where naturalist curiosity meets anthropological observation, and where the creative process itself

becomes a journey shaping both form and meaning.

Kimia Dehghan
(based in Tbilisi, Georgia)

Artist from Tehran whose practice moves across visual art, sound, and movement. What began with painting and drawing expanded into dance, piano, and voice, guided by a curiosity for the roots of creativity. This synthesis of influences defines her current work as a holistic multimedia practice, where each idea finds its own form — painting, digital image, or composition — with technique serving only as a vessel. She describes herself as a methodological pluralist, creating through a versatile, non-linear language that carries peace and wisdom, seeking to give shape to feeling with lightness and depth.



About Aea: Culture Initiatives

Aea is a transdisciplinary laboratory for émigré creatives, shaped by the experience of migration and centered on the female perspective. Bringing together over 60 women from nine countries, the initiative develops artistic projects through collective making and collaborative methods, spanning publications, residencies, workshops, public events, discussions, and exhibitions. Aea's work is guided by horizontality, collective action, and the shared knowledge that comes from lives shaped by displacement

[Instagram](#) [Substack](#)
www.aeainitiative.com

Venice Design Biennial

About Venice Design Biennial

A permanent forum on design culture, connecting Venice to an international network of design leaders. Every two years it takes the shape of diffuse design exhibitions in Venice, coinciding with the Architecture Biennale. Launched in 2016, the Venice Design Biennial was founded by Luca Berta and Francesca Giubilei and is divided between a thematic Main Group Exhibition and a series of Collateral Projects at unique locations across one of the most beautiful cities in the

world. The theme of 5th edition, proposed by the curators and founders of the project Luca Berta and Francesca Giubilei, is *Extinction / Salvation*.

www.venicedesignbiennial.org

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