



www.noravanklingeren.nl
nora@vanklingeren.nl

Vormgeving: Eric van Casteren

Chiatura

Crossroad for Architecture and Textile

ჭიათურა



Nora van Klingereren - Textile Art

Chiatura

Crossroad for Architecture and Textile

Georgia, a country with a long and turbulent history. Situated on the ancient silk road, lying on the south face of the Caucasus. Lying amidst a variety of cultures. And needless to say the Russian occupation has left its marks. In this country there is a village called Chiatura, founded around 1800. This village is situated on the river banks amidst mountainous terrain. These mountains contain half of the worlds manganese deposit. For the inhabitants mining was the thing to do. At its peak some 30.000 people inhabited this village.





The geographical location caused a lot of time-consuming traffic for workers to and from the pits. The Russian authorities thought of a solution to increase efficiency.

Around 1950-1960 a network of 70 cable cars was constructed. A large spider web covering the air comes to my mind. Just like the busstops in (former) Soviet republics care and attention was given to the construction and the architecture of public transport.



Some stations are real architectural jewels: large and strong, but also delicate pieces of engineering. The same can be said about the cabins. Some are simple steel boxes, sometimes called coffins of death, while others have rounded glass walls. Still despite the efficient transport life must have been hard for the miners.



Nowadays the mines continue to be in production, but the transport to the pits is done by cars. Combined with lack of maintenance on the ropeways only about 7 lines are still functioning. Georgia is a relatively poor country and settling with the (negative) past by removing its symbols is part of human nature. Therefore the remaining lines also have to fear for their future. Along with the possible destruction of other industrial heritage in the village, that would be a real pity.

My hope is focused on the young people. In this village the older inhabitants hardly speak English. But when I asked a boy, about 14 years old: Do you speak english? he immediately answered: But of course I speak english! The youth holds the future. I trust they will have an eye, if only a wink for the architectural jewels and industrial heritage of their village.

All this forms inspiration for a series of textile art-works in wool and silk: Chiatura, its miners, its people and its cablecars.