



UTA BEKAIA

LINKING NEW YORK, BUENOS AIRES AND TBILISI THROUGH FASHION AND ART
By Cristian Tonhaiser. Photos by Ji Hae Kim.

"San Telmo must be one of the most beautiful, cozy and romantic places on this planet, and definitely in Buenos Aires," says Uta Bekaia, a costume and fashion designer from New York, and his sincere smile assures me that he means it. Bekaia is originally from Tbilisi, Georgia, but resides and works in New York since 1998 where he has produced numerous theater and film projects as a costume/set designer and art director. Currently Bekaia is working at the Ideal Glass gallery located in New York's East Village—which he considers a sister neighborhood to San Telmo. "San Telmo has a very similar artistic vibe. I think it's a great idea to connect these two places with art and design projects. This is why we started our fashion line UTA LEVAN."

Bekaia first visited Buenos Aires in the middle of May to co-produce a project together with Levan Mindiashvili, another artist from Georgia residing in Argentina. They created a trilogy of multimedia performances titled Pheromone. The project, which involved other local artists, was a success. Fascinated by how well the collaboration resulted, Bekaia and Mindiashvili decided to produce another, more commercial, project by combining their art and design backgrounds. This is how the company UTA LEVAN was born, a "high fashion" brand of artistic casual wear. Bekaia had already worked in the fashion business before. In 2009 he launched a creative and colorful art clothing line under the Saint Hollywood label for Ideal Glass Gallery.

"I was always thinking of running my own project, but I never felt quite comfortable myself with regular, wearable clothes. I tend to make more baroque, theatrical garments, while Levan is more minimalist, constructive and analytic. So the idea behind UTA LEVAN was to make a synthesis of art and clothing, logic and creativity. Each of our garments

is hand finished and has a personal, unique touch, so that the person who buys it will have a one-of-a-kind piece, their own Haute Couture garment," explains Bekaia. This artistic duet doesn't have a showroom yet but one can see their work in Laguanacazul art gallery and design store or visit them at their studio in San Telmo, where the walls are covered with patterns, sketches and samples of their new collection for spring/summer 2012, which has a colorful disco style. "With our clothes we want to make people feel joy," Bekaia says. And indeed, these mini, hand-painted and printed linen dresses, with futuristic shapes and refined silhouettes make you want to have a good time.

The collection is for both sexes – men and women, with many pieces tending toward being unisex. "We like to play with the boundaries between gender, making our designs available to any person," says Bekaia. "This is what actually happens in the art world too: there are no limits between disciplines and everything is tending toward becoming more synthesized, complex and multilayered," adds Mindiashvili.

UTA LEVAN will first be presented at the Tbilisi Fashion Week this October and it already has an invitation in 2012 to the Toronto Alternative Fashion Week and CIBELES Madrid Fashion Week EGO.

Parallel to the new collection the team is working on T-shirts, accessories and bags with more affordable prices and have also produced a few more artistically-oriented products like their "Resurrected Vintage Shirts"—men's white vintage shirts and covered with paintings, stencils, studs, knitting threads and rhinestones.

"We want to make UTA LEVAN into an international label linking three cities: Buenos Aires, New York and Tbilisi, involving fashion and art projects and collaborating with local artists. The idea is to generate artistic exchange between these cities, each with their unique artistic experiences," says Mindiashvili.

For more information:
www.utalevan.blogspot.com
Facebook: UTA LEVAN.

Uta Bekaia es vestuarista y diseñador de moda, nacido en Tbilisi (Georgia) y radicado en Nueva York desde 1998. Este año viajó a Buenos Aires para realizar, junto a otro artista georgiano radicado en Argentina -Levan Mindiashvili-, un proyecto artístico. Como fruto de esta colaboración surge otro emprendimiento: UTA LEVAN, una marca de ropa donde el propósito de unir las experiencias de ambos artistas se conjuga de manera fascinante. Su ropa, de confección totalmente artesanal, es un puente entre la alta costura y el "casual wear". De esta manera los artistas vinculan tres ciudades: Nueva York, Buenos Aires y Tbilisi, generando un canal de comunicación y una fuente de proyectos en los campos de la moda y el arte.

English conversation
BUSINESS | UNIVERSITY | GENERAL

Balcarce al 1000 | San Telmo
Lawrence 15-3652-3979

mundo  español

The Spanish School of San Telmo
Individual & Group classes all year long
Spanish for travelers
Cultural Activities

One of the first Spanish schools in Argentina
Recommended by Lonely Planet

Chacabuco 649 | (+54) 11 4362 4647 | www.mundo-espanol.com | info@mundo-espanol.com