

### **Almagul Menlibayeva**

Born 1969 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. She lives and works in Berlin and Almaty.

#### **Education:**

1987–1992

State Institute of Art and Theatre, Almaty

#### **Artist Statement**

"My educational background is in the Soviet Russian, avant-garde school of Futurism, which I combine with the nomadic aesthetic of post-Soviet, contemporary Kazakhstan that I have been exploring in recent years through photographic and video work.

I use specific modes of expression in modern and contemporary art as a vehicle to investigate my personal archaic atavism as a certain mystical anthropomorphism. In other words, I explore the nature of a specific Egregore, a shared cultural psychic experience, which manifests itself as a specific form of thought among the people(s) of the ancient, arid and dusty Steppes between the Caspian Sea, Baikonur and Altai in today's Kazakhstan.

In the Russian language, Archaic Atavism is personalised as a being — which points to and creates a different meaning. We are not just speaking about an idea or archaic element in the collective subconscious of a people, but about the embodiment of our archaic atavism, which becomes an active entity, just like a creature itself. Our archaic atavism is not just internalised, but also externalised. It is as if It, like a being, has been awakened by the post-Soviet experience of the indigenous Kazakh people, who are becoming their own after 80 years of Soviet domination and cultural genocide. Suddenly, It (Archaic Atavism) became interested in enculturation and in modern behaviors. It also began to have entertaining dialogues with the trans-national circulation of ideas in contemporary art.

For this dialogue, I have chosen the medium of video and photography, and like to work with the notion of memory and reality. My archaic atavism is interested in my video explorations in the Steppes and in post-Soviet Asia. By editing raw data and combining documentary and staged footage, I become Its voice, enabling a cultural exodus from long oblivion. My work raises metaphysical questions such as Who am I? and Where shall I go?; this (psychic) experience and perspective marks my artistic language."

Almagul Menlibayeva's recent solo shows include at Museum Arnhem in Arnhem (2019) and at the Grand Palais in Paris (2016). Among recent notable group shows *As Though We Hid the Sun in a Sea of Stories* at the Haus der Kulturen, Berlin (2023), Thailand Biennale in Chiang Rai (2023), Sharjah Biennial 15 (2023), 7th Guangzhou Triennial (2023), Lahore Biennial 02 (2020), *Elective Affinities* at the NCCA in Moscow (2015), *The Union of Fire and Water* at the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (2015), 18<sup>th</sup> Sydney Biennale (2012), 1<sup>st</sup> Kyiv Biennale (2012).

## **Aspan Gallery**

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### **Selected solo exhibitions:**

2025

*I Understand Everything*, Almaty Museum of Arts, Almaty (upcoming)

2023

*Angry Tulips*, IArt Gallery, Tbilisi

2019

*Transoxiana Dreams*, De. Groen Fine Art Collection, Arnhem

*Genius Loci of Central Asia*, Andakulova Gallery, Dubai

2016

*Transformation*, Grand Palais, Paris

*Green, Yellow, Red, and Green Again*, TSE Art Destination, Astana

2014

*Videozone: Almagul Menlibayeva. Transoxiana Dreams*, Ludwig Forum, Aachen

2013

*Empire of the Memory*, Ethnographic Museum, Warsaw

*An Ode to the Wastelands and Gulags*, Kunstraum, Innsbruck

2011

*Exodus*, Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden

*Les rêves perdus d'Aral*, Galerie Albert Benamou, Paris

*Transoxiana Dreams*, Priska C. Juschka Fine Art, New York

*My Silk Road to You*, Tengri-Umai Gallery, Almaty

2010

*Daughters of Turan*, Priska C. Juschka Fine Art, New York

2009

*Exodus*, Tengri-Umai Gallery, Almaty

*Kurban*, Priska C. Juschka Fine Art, New York

2008

*Kissing Totems*, Priska C. Juschka Fine Art, New York

2007

*On the Road*, Galerie Davide Gallo, Berlin

### **Selected group exhibitions:**

2025

*The Shattered Worlds: Micro Narratives from the Ho Chi Minh Trail to the Great Steppe*, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok

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2024

*Dietmar Seitz: Das Kasachstan-Projekt/Almagul Menlibayeva: Transoxiana Dreams*, Freiburg University Library, Freiburg

*I'd rather be a Cyborg than a Goddess*, The Ellinikon, Athens

Thailand Biennale, *Chiang Rai 2023: The Open World*, Chiang Rai

2023

*As Though We Hid the Sun in a Sea of Stories. Fragment for a Geopoetics of North of Eurasia*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

5<sup>th</sup> Montevideo Biennale, Montevideo

*One Belt. Many Roads*, WUK, Vienna

*New Visions*, Triennale for Photography and New Media, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden

*Women Defining Women in Contemporary Art of the Middle East and Beyond*, LACMA Museum, Los Angeles

*The Fog of War*, Goethe Institut, Almaty, Tbilisi, Baku

*Thinking Historically in the Present*, Sharjah Biennale 15, Sharjah

*The Symphony of All the Changes*, 7<sup>th</sup> Guangzhou Triennale, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou

*Beyond the Last Horizon*, Art-Lab Berlin, Berlin

2022

19<sup>th</sup> Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh, National Art Gallery, Bangladesh Shilpkak Academy, Dhaka

*The Other Kabul. Remains of the Garden*, Kunstmuseum, Thun

*The Little Bird Must Be Caught*, 13<sup>th</sup> Survival Kit, Latvian Center for Contemporary Art, Riga

*Promise of Grass*, 5<sup>th</sup> Mardin Biennale, Mardin

*Life in Between: Mongolia and Central Asia, A Contemporary Art Perspective*, Satellite exhibition of the 2021 Asian Arts Biennial, National Museum of Taiwan

*Totems of Central Asia*, Andakulova Gallery, Foundry Downtown, Dubai

2021

*Art from Elsewhere: The MOMENTUM Collection*, Kulturforum, Ansbach

*"Blocks": A Story of Dialogues Beyond Limits*, Albergo Delle Povere, Palermo

*Point of Resistance*, Zionskitche, Berlin

*Living Together – Crossing Borders*, 4<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean Biennale, Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa

2020

10<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art, Gallery of Modern Art | Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

*Potential Worlds 1: Planetary Memories*, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich

*Up to Now*, Valleta Contemporary, Valleta, Malta

Sovereign Asian Art Prize Finalists Exhibition, Hong Kong

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*Once upon a Time, and Now!*, School of Arts, University of Kent, Kent  
*Between the Sun and the Moon*, Lahore Biennale 02

2019

*Bonum et Malum*, Kleiner Von Weise, Berlin  
*Eyes East Bound*, 13<sup>th</sup> Cairo Biennale International, Cairo  
*Planet Art Festival of Nature*, Kuehlhaus-Berlin, Berlin  
*Channels Festival*, International Biennial of Video Art, Melbourne  
*Water(Proof)*, Momentum, Berlin; Federation Square, Melbourne  
*Climbing through the Tide*, Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Tunis  
*This Land Is Your Land*, Valleta Contemporary, Valleta, Malta  
*Border Agency Liquid Landscapes: What if the Ground under Your Feet Can't Be Trusted*, Kunstfort, Vijkuizen  
*Uly Dala Hikayalary*, Museum of Fine Art, Shymkent; Atameken, Taldykorgan  
*Re-Membering. Dialogues of Memories*, House of V. Kubrin, Astana  
*Racing the Galaxy*, Astana Art Show, Astana  
*Sacrees Femmes*, Galerie BELEM/Benamou-Lagie-Maxe, Paris

2018

*DOTLAND II*, Peninsula e.V., Berlin  
*Bread & Roses: Four Generations of Kazakh Women Artists*, Momentum, Berlin  
*Focus Kazakhstan: Post-nomadic Mind*, The Wapping Project, London  
*Mystic*, Karl Oskar Gallery, Berlin  
*Bitch Material Mutter.schaft.neu.denken*, Studio 1, Kunstquartier Betanken, Berlin  
*Focus Kazakhstan: Bread and Roses*, Kunstquartier Bethanie | Momentum, Berlin  
*Tamyz*, TSE Art Destination, Astana  
*Inverted Worlds*, Neues Museum Staatliches Museum fur Kunst und Design, Nurmberg  
*Shop It!*, Haifa Museum, Haifa  
*The Dictionary of Evil*, Gangwon International Biennale, Gangneung

2016

*Urgent Conversations: Athens – Antwerp*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens; M HKA, Antwerp  
6<sup>th</sup> Daegu Photo Biennale, Daegu  
*DIS/POSSESSED?*, Folium, Zurich  
*Archipelago Karlag*, National Museum of Kazakhstan, Astana  
Shymkent Art Days, Shymkent  
*HERO MOTHER*, Momentum, Berlin  
*Memory and Continuity. A Selection from the Huma Kabakci Collection*, Pera Museum, Istanbul

2015

*German Cool*, Salsali Private Museum, Dubai  
*Izbiratel'noe srodstvo [Elective Affinities]*, NCCA, Moscow  
*BALAGAN!!! Contemporary Art from the Former Soviet Union and Other Mythical Places*, Nordwind Festival, Berlin  
*How to Gather? Acting in a Center in a City in the Heart of the Island of Eurasia*,

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6<sup>th</sup> Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, VDNKh, Moscow

*LINE*, Art Rooms, Cyprus

*Fairy Tales*, Taipei Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei

*Dusk to Dusk*, Samek Art Museum at Bucknell University, Los Angeles

*Union of Fire and Water*, Palazzo Barbaro, Parallel program of the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice

*The Nomads*, Artwin Gallery, Moscow

2014

*Chain of Fire*, Prologue Exhibition for the 2016 Honolulu Biennale, Hawaii

*The Color of Pomegranates*, Solyanka State Gallery, Moscow

*Changing Worlds: Contemporary Art from Central Asia*, Singapore Art Stage 2014, Singapore

*Update/Post-Memory*, Motorenhalle, Dresden

*At the Crossroads 2: Contemporary Art from Istanbul to Kabul*, Sotheby's, London

*Threads*, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem

*La vie est une légende e.cité – Almaty/Kazakhstan*, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg

2013

*Lost to the Future: Contemporary Art from Central Asia*, LASALLE College of Arts – ICA Singapore, Singapore

*A Sense of Place*, Wellin Museum, Hamilton, New York

*Female Power. Matriarchy, Spirituality & Utopia*, Museum of Modern Kunst, Arnhem

*At the Crossroads: Contemporary Art from the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Sotheby's, London

2012

*0 – Now: Traversing West Asia*, 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Gallery of Modern Art | Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

*Contemporary Art from Kazakhstan*, Center of Contemporary Art at Vinzavod, Moscow

*Moya Yugra*, 3<sup>rd</sup> International Biennale of Contemporary Art, Khanty-Mansiysk  
*Bio-Cultural Heritage and Identity*, Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts, Bishkek

*All Our Relations*, 18<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney, Sydney

*Lightness & Gravity: Contemporary Works from the Collection* Gallery of Modern Art | Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

*The Best of Times, The Worst of Times – Rebirth and Apocalypse in Contemporary Art*, Kyiv Biennale of Contemporary Art, Arsenal, Kyiv

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*The Bride's Face*, PERMM Museum of Contemporary Art, Perm  
*Colors of the Oasis*, Seattle Asian Art Museum, Seattle  
*Paganism*, Kalmar Konstmuseum, Kalmar  
*East is West: Three Women Artist*, LASALLE College of Arts – ICA Singapore, Singapore

2011

*Rewriting Worlds*, 4<sup>th</sup> Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow  
*Between Heaven and Earth - Contemporary Art from the Centre of Asia*, Calvert22, London  
*COLLECTION XXVII: East from 4° 24'*, M HKA, Antwerp  
*Plot for a Biennial*, Sharjah Biennial 10, Sharjah  
*Mezhdru proshlym i budutschim. Arkheologiya aktual'nosti* [*Between the Past and the Future. The Archeology of Contemporaneity*], Goethe-Institut, Almaty

2010

*21<sup>st</sup> Century: Art in the First Decade*, Gallery of Modern Art | Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane  
*Lonely at the Top, Europe at Large #6 (Refrains from the Wasteland)*, M HKA, Antwerp

2009

*Off the Beaten Path: Women, Art and Violence*, the Stenersen Museum, Oslo; University of California, San Diego, CA; El Cubo-Tijuana Cultural Center, Tijuana, Mexico; the Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City; The Chicago Cultural Center, IL; The Global Health Odyssey Museum, Atlanta, GA; New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Newcomb Gallery, Tulane University and Prospect.2 Biennale, New Orleans, USA; Redline, Denver, Colorado  
*Re-imagining October*, Calvert 22, London  
*Unconditional Love*, Arsenale Novissimo 89, Parallel program of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice  
*A est di niente: Contemporary Art from Post-Soviet Asia*, Fondazione 107, Turin  
*Tarjama/Translation: Contemporary Art from the Middle East, Central Asia, and Their Diasporas*, Queens Museum of Art, Queens; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca

2008

*World on Video – International Video Art*, Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozzi, Florence; Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, Florence; Palazzo Strozzi, Florence  
*Love Love Love*, Martos Gallery, New York  
*The Distance to the Sun*, Galerie Davide Gallo, Berlin  
*Time Code*, Mambo Museum of Contemporary Art, Bologna  
*I Dream of the Stans*, Winkleman Gallery, New York

2007

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*Live Cinema/The Return of the Image: Video from Central Asia*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia

*Destination Asia*, Galerie 88, Mumbai

*Muzykstan: Media Generation of Contemporary Artists from Central Asia*, Central Asia Pavilion, 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice

*Time of the Storytellers: Narrative and Distant Gaze in Post-Soviet Art*, Kiasma - Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki

*Thermocline of Art - New Asian Waves*, ZKM - Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe

*The Paradox of Polarity: Contemporary Art from Central Asia*, Bose Pacia Gallery, New York

*Central Asian Project*, Tengri-Umai Gallery, Almaty, Centre for National Arts, Tashkent.

2006

*Zones of Contact*, 16<sup>th</sup> Sydney Biennale, Sydney

*Art from Central Asia: Contemporary Archive*, Russian Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography, Moscow; Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw

*The Syndrome of Tamerlan: Art and Conflicts in Central Asia*, Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI; Palazzo dei Sette, Orvieto

2005

*Art from Central Asia: A Contemporary Archive*, Central Asia Pavilion, 51<sup>st</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice

2004

*From the Red Star to the Blue Dome: Art and Architecture in Central Asia*, ifa Gallery, Berlin; ifa Gallery, Stuttgart

*... and Others*, 1<sup>st</sup> Bishkek International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts, Bishkek

*Pueblos y Sombras*, Canaja Gallery, Mexico City

2003

*Caravan Café*, Rocca di Umbertide - Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea, Perugia

2002

*Catmania*, Illuzeum, Amsterdam

*Off the Silk Road: No Mad's Land: Contemporary Art from Central Asia*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

*re-orientation: Kunst zu Mittelasien*, ACC Gallery, Weimar