

The Community

Connection

Georgia Newsletter



Community Connections

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In the Studio

with Besarion Darjania

Mr. Darjania, a person gifted with unusual talent, seems to be one of those people who are always in the process of seeking new opportunities, improving existing ones and creating a new environment to achieve artistic growth and diversity.

In 1997, Mr. Besarion first submitted his small business proposal to the US organization World Vision, from which he received \$600 to finance his project. With this money he purchased a generator and transformer, allowing him to work without interruption despite the ongoing electricity crisis in Georgia. In the same year Mr. Besarion became a member of the Georgian Artists Union. He is a private artist working in the field of applied arts, specializing in cameo carving. He carves his exquisite cameos from shell, coral, precious stones, and mammoth tusk. In 1998, with the support of his American friend, Hy Shelow, he purchased a personal computer and created an Internet website detailing his work:

<http://users.caucasus.net/besodar>

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After that, Hy Shelow arranged an exhibition of the works of Mr. Besarion and several artists at his house, helping them to promote their work. From the money he earned from selling his works, Mr. Besarion has been able to do a number of things and is thus very grateful for his friend's support. Mr. Besarion fondly remembers Ms. Victoria Sloan as well, former US Cultural Attaché in Georgia. He became acquainted with her during the exhibition. Ms.

Sloan liked his work and recommended him to participate in the Community Connections program. When he was selected as a finalist for the program he had the opportunity to travel and to have an internship in Washington D.C., where he was hosted by the Foundation for International Arts and Education. During his internship in the United States he made a number of new friends and gained great experience. During his stay in DC he was invited to show his works at an American artists' exhibition in Rockville, Maryland. Several photos were made of his work there, though Mr. Besarion did not even ask the photographers why they were taking pictures. At that time he could not have even imagined these photographs would be a part of *The Artist's Illustrated Encyclopedia*. One month ago he was sent a signed copy of the encyclopedia as a present, in which he was surprised to notice that the alphabetical entry for "Cameo" included not only a photograph of his mammoth tusk work, but also a brief note about him.



Besarion Darjania, Woman's Portrait, carved mammoth tusk



Mr. Besarion has also given an interview with Ms. Ketj Gabunia, from the editorial office of "Voice of America." With the support of his American friend Mr. Besarion purchased a small piece of land, where he is building a studio gallery. In the future he wants to invite older professionals of applied arts to his studio in order to transfer their knowledge to the future generation and in this way preserve the traditions of Georgian art technology. He noted: "In Washington DC and in Georgia too, I have noticed in my relations with American people that they are willing to support and assist people who show that they are making an effort. Thanks a lot to them for that."