

SAUDADE

A collaborative exhibition by American artists Karen Lee Sobol and Sara Zielinski
The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia
Tbilisi, Georgia
March 2016

Mother and daughter Karen Lee Sobol and Sara Zielinski have been making art together and separately for decades. In creating *Saudade* specifically for The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, the artists sought to honor The Library's scholarly history and offer visitors a hands-on, library-like experience.

For *Saudade*, Sobol and Zielinski drew inspiration from the printed word. By 1859 The Library was home to materials in 19 different languages. Paying tribute to this and welcoming international visitors, the exhibition features text in many languages, including Georgian, English, Mandarin, Spanish, Turkish, Dutch, Hebrew, and Japanese.

Cluttering the surfaces of the exhibition hall are hundreds of pages of printed matter, from handwritten drafts of Sobol's memoir to fragments of correspondence, from Zielinski's college exams to notes and lists and drawings. Sobol and Zielinski printed, painted, wrote, and drew on top of materials that might have been thrown out years ago in other households. The pages are resuscitated here, revealing the artists' shared drive to collect and release mementos from their lives.

In the rich spirit of The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, Sobol and Zielinski considered and incorporated words and phrases in many languages into their work. The Portuguese word *saudade* lacks an exact translation, but encompasses a series of emotions and meanings, including feelings of melancholy as well as fond memories, a sense of longing for things, people, or experiences past, solitude and health, and a yearning to enjoy the past. By selecting and releasing papers full of personal meaning, Sobol and Zielinski repurpose these papers, updating them to the present.

Saudade reveals the artists' individual styles, visual vocabularies, and working methods. Regarding subject matter, Sobol focuses on states of being and transitions among them; Zielinski explores motives and feelings in a wide range of relationships. While Sobol's lines tend to be calligraphic and fluid, Zielinski's lines have a naive yet strong character. Sobol's palette employs transparencies and color overlays; Zielinski's palette employs dense, saturated color. The work of both artists can be by turn somber or humorous.

Operating in the accessible spirit of the public library, visitors are invited to touch, leaf through, and move the prints and papers in the installation.

The artists wish to thank The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia for the opportunity to create and present *Saudade*. They also wish to thank Dr. Sophia Adamia for making this opportunity possible, as well as all in Tbilisi who supported and facilitated this installation.