Memories don’t Burn: Azerbaijani Bardic Singing and the Persistence of Culture

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Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte,
Adenauerallee 10, ÜR (EG)

The Ashiq tradition is a 500 year old genre of musical storytelling that is performed at weddings, holidays and festivals in Azerbaijan and Northern Iran. Ashiq arts are the Azeri people’s venue for oral literature, including epic, romance, lyric song, and verbal dueling. This talk will discuss the intersection of this traditional art with the tumultuous history of the modern world, focusing on the Republic of Azerbaijan, where it survived the Soviet experience and now faces the challenges of globalization and the digital age. This talk will also look closely at the importance of women in the genre, many of whom are leading performers who have used the dynamic between tradition and innovation to keep the art popular and current.