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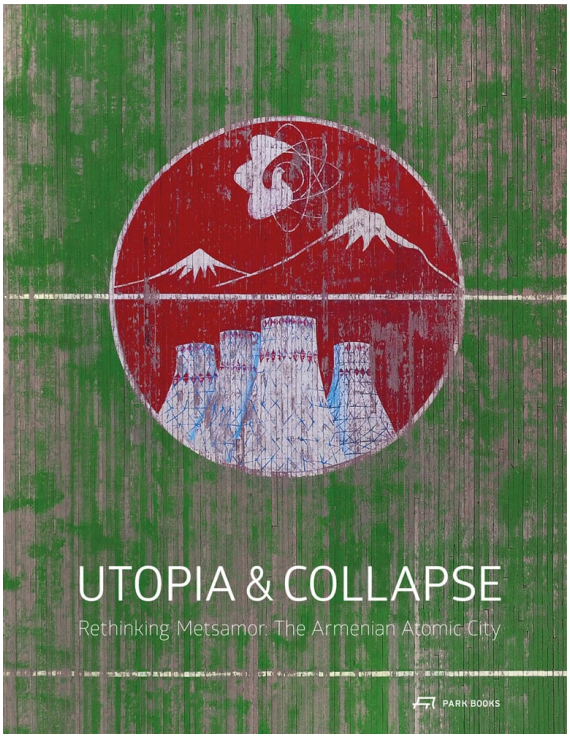


# Utopia & Collapse

## Rethinking Metsamor - The Armenian Atomic City

### Edited by Katharina Roters

### Contributions by Sarhat Petrosyan

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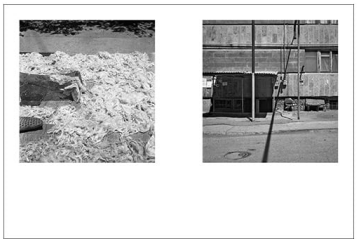
- First book on 'Atomograd' Metsamor in Armenia
- A unique, fascinating study on Soviet idealistic modernism and failed utopias
- Featuring the most recent artistic project by award-winning Hungarian artist Katharina Roters

Built in 1969, Metsamor, Armenia (then the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic), was intended as a settlement for employees of a nearby nuclear power plant to be completed between 1976 and 1980. But the power plant would never realise the ambitions of its creators. In 1988, an earthquake caused the facility to be shut down and in 1991, the collapse of the Soviet Union prompted a complete construction freeze in the city. The symbol of the dream of a technologically advanced nation, Metsamor remained incomplete and fell into decay undiminished by the recommissioning of the power plant in 1995. *Utopia & Collapse* documents the rise and fall of Metsamor. The book brings together an oral history of Metsamor with essays by Sarhat Petrosyan and a team of contributors and photographic research and visual mapping by Katharina Roters, including more than one hundred images. Among the topics discussed are Armenia's cultural and and architectural histories; the typology of Soviet atomograds, or atomic cities; and the phenomenon of modern ruins. Although today the power plant's workers live in a partly built failed utopia, Metsamor stands as an example of the highly idiosyncratic Armenian variety of Soviet Modernism of the 1960s and '70s, making this a fascinating story for anyone with an interest in Soviet-era buildings and architecture.

**Katharina Roters** lives in Budapest where she works as an artist. Her previous book *Hungarian Cubes: Subversive Ornaments in Socialism* (ISBN 9783906027432, Park Books, 2014) won the DAM Architectural Book Award 2014. **Sarhat Petrosyan** is an architect and urbanist and founding director of Yerevan-based urbanlab, an independent research institute.







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