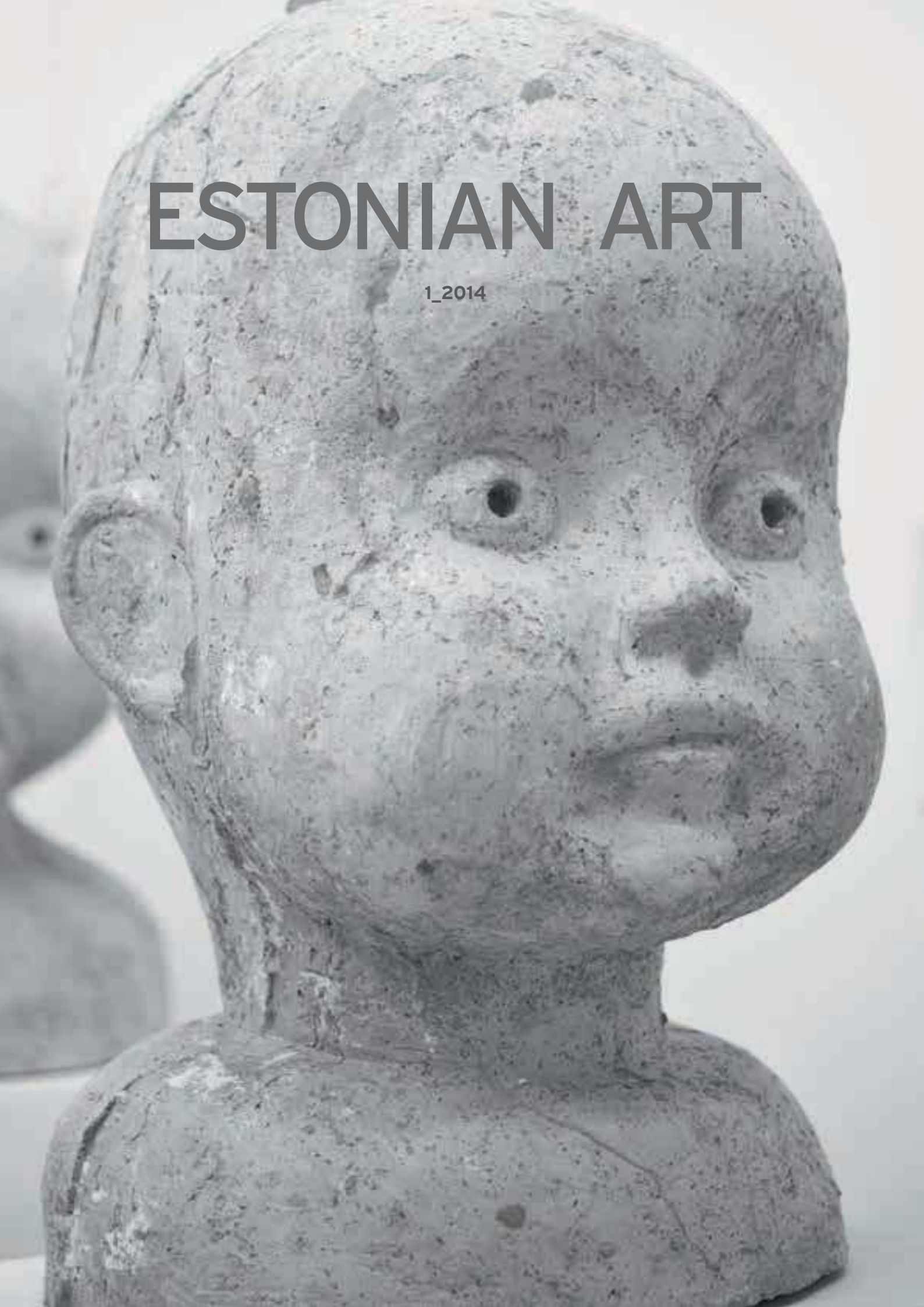


# ESTONIAN ART

1\_2014



- 1 News
- 3 Just doing Manifesta 10  
Hedwig Fijen interviewed by Liina Siib
- 6 "Art so dear that keeps me young and clear"? Impressions from Manifesta 10  
Andres Kurg
- 9 ALLURE'EM. A tale about Raul Meel  
Margus Tamm
- 12 From literacy to illiteracy and slowly back again  
Margit Sade in conversation with Maria Kjær Thomsen
- 15 About the Köler Prize, generally  
Hanno Soans
- 18 The one who breaks the rules wins in art  
Eha Komissarov
- 21 The end of architecture: Venice biennial 2014  
Triin Ojari
- 24 *Interspace* - a space where everything is possible  
3 questions to Johanna Jõeakalda, Johan Tali and Siim Tuksam
- Insert:* An education  
Raul Kalvo
- 25 Picture in a museum. Herbert Lukk  
Eero Epner
- 27 How to NOT narrate architecture  
Eva Närepea
- 29 Sound games  
Interview with Vladimir Tarasov by Kati Ilves
- 32 Participating in public displays of nationalism, shamelessly:  
Eva Sepping and her trilogy on nationalism  
Elo Hanna Seljamaa
- 35 Olga Jürgenson: theme-specific, site-specific & time-specific!  
Olga Jürgenson in conversation with Liina Siib
- 38 The home lover, the clubber and the ghost.  
About Marit Ilison's collection *Longing for Sleep*  
Mathieu Goulmant
- 41 Gram - a roomful of jewellery artists and a travelling greenhouse  
Eilve Manglus
- 44 Product designers at the furniture, interior decoration and design fair Habitare  
Monika Järg
- 47 Exhibitions
- 49 New Books

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Estonian Institute  
Suur-Karja 14  
10140 Tallinn, Estonia  
<http://www.estinst.ee>  
email: [estinst@estinst.ee](mailto:estinst@estinst.ee)  
phone: (372) 631 43 55  
fax: (372) 631 43 56

**Front cover:** Jass Kaselaan, winner of the Köler Prize 2014. *The Square of Dolls*. 2014. Installation. *Köler Prize 2014, Exhibition of Nominees*, Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia. Photo: Johannes Säre  
**Back cover:** Visible Solutions LLC. *A work commissioned from the painter Tõnis Saadoja*. 2014. Oil on canvas. *Köler Prize 2014, Exhibition of Nominees*, Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia. Photo: Johannes Säre

**Insert:** Raul Kalvo

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**Editor:** Liina Siib

**Graphic design:** Angelika Schneider

**Translators:** Tiina Randviir, Matthew Hyde

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## Jaanus Samma to represent Estonia at the 56th Venice Biennial

The competition for the Estonian pavilion in Venice was won by the joint project of the Estonian artist Jaanus Samma and the Italian curator Eugenio Viola, *Not Suitable/Safe for Work. From the Abyss of History*. The project further develops Jaanus Samma's *Chairman*, which in 2013 received the Köler Prize's audience and jury awards. The project is aesthetically and dramaturgically compact, an installation uniting different media, which through the personal history of a Soviet Estonian man provides a new angle on incidents in our recent history. In recent years, Samma has examined the illegal life of gay people in the Soviet era and social circumstances that influenced it. He has tried to memorialise and emphasise problems that have still not been solved.

The Estonian exhibition competition for 2015 received a total of 11 projects. The jury included the commissar of the Estonian pavilion in Venice, Maria Arusoo, the director of the Wales MOSTYN art centre, Alfredo Cramerotti, members of the council of the Center For Contemporary Arts, Estonia, Rael Artel, Sirje Helme, Andres Kurg and Kaido Ole, the project manager of the Estonian representation at World Expo Milano 2015, Andres Kask, and the adviser on visual arts at the Ministry of Culture, Maria-Kristiina Soomre. The 56th International Venice Biennale takes place between 9 May and 22 November 2015. Estonian participation in the Venice Biennale is organised by the Center for Contemporary Arts and financed by the Ministry of Culture.

See more: [www.jaanussamma.eu](http://www.jaanussamma.eu), [www.cca.ee](http://www.cca.ee)

## Design blog gathers good Estonian designs

The new Estonian design blog gathers the most recent and exciting designs. The aim of the Estonian and English blog is to show good domestic designs from various fields of activity.

The blog presents, for example, product designs, web pages and mobile apps, fashion designs and graphic designs. Those behind the blog, particularly the moderator, the Estonian Design Centre, hope that people will notice and learn to distinguish between good and bad designs.

See more: [disainiblogi.ee](http://disainiblogi.ee)

## Architecture Hub

In April 2014, the Estonian Centre of Architecture, together with the Union of Estonian Architects, opened the Architecture Hub at 27a Põhja pst. in Tallinn. The Architecture Hub, only a few minutes walk from the Old Town of Tallinn in the Kalasadam area, was established in an old power station. According to the head of the Architecture Centre, Raul Järg, "The Hub is a wonderful example of a rebirth of an old industrial building by Estonian architects, an example of uniting the old and the new."

From 28 August until 30 October 2014 the Architecture Hub is presenting a photographic exhibition displaying the most interesting examples of contemporary Estonian architecture that have attracted international attention, *Conversion in Estonian Contemporary Architecture*, which has been shown in London, New York and Helsinki. For the Estonian culture days in France, the exhibition travels to Nantes in December 2014. The curator is Andrus Kõresaar (KOKO Architects). See more at: [www.arhitektuurikeskus.ee](http://www.arhitektuurikeskus.ee)



## Estonian Art Manual

The Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia has published the *Estonian Art Manual*, in cooperation with the Estonian Institute. The booklet introduces Estonian art institutions, including galleries, museums, supporters, educational institutions and scholarships. The English-language manual is meant for art professionals, as well as for those interested in art who want to have an overview of the institutional landscape of Estonian art and exhibition venues. The booklet was compiled by Rebeka Põldsam, edited by Katrin Tombak and designed by Viktor Gurov. It is available at all of the above-mentioned institutions. More info: [rebeka@cca.ee](mailto:rebeka@cca.ee)





### Shifting Identities exhibition in Rome

From 21 May to 14 September 2014 MACRO Testaccio – was presenting the exhibition *Shifting Identities*, curated by Ludovico Pratesi and organised by the Väinö Tanner Foundation (FI). The exhibition brought together works by 21 members of the latest generations of Estonian and Finnish artists, united by deep reflection on the theme of identity. Separated by the Baltic Sea, Finland and Estonia are united by a history shared at various stages and conditioned by the proximity of the former Soviet Union, which critically influenced the development of the two peoples, under both dictatorship and democracy. The difficult and complex relationship with Russia has made Estonia's possibility of national definition especially problematic, whereas for Finland Russia has represented a challenge or threat that has still not been dispelled. While the question of identity was never a focal point in Finnish post-war art between 1945 and 1970 (excluding *The Harvesters* in the '70s), it has become a crucial theme for artists recently both in Finland and in Estonia. The exhibition was a reflection on the countries themselves and their positions in the globalised world.

From Finland, the exhibition presented works by Adel Abidin, Aino Kannisto, Riikka Kuoppala, Mikko Kuorinki, Antti Laitinen, Liisa Lounila, Nelli Palomäki, Anna Rokka, Jani Ruscica, Pia Siren and Pilvi Takala. The Estonian artists were Reio Aare, Flo Kasearu, Paul Kuimet, Eva Labotkin, Tanja Muravskaja, Kristina Norman, Mark Raidpere, Eva Sepping, Liina Siib and 10x10 meters.



### Arne Maasik's exhibition in the Vittoriano complex in Rome

Between 29 May and 15 June 2014 the Vittoriano museum complex in Rome presented a personal exhibition by the internationally acclaimed Estonian photographer and architect Arne Maasik: *Spazio dato/ Given Space*. The curator was the New York architect Giuseppe Provenzano. This was a retrospective of Arne Maasik's work, displaying series from the artist's more important exhibitions of recent years in Estonia and abroad. This was the first time the prestigious Vittoriano museum complex showed a personal exhibition by an Estonian artist.

### Eksperimenta!

An international contemporary art triennial for schoolchildren called *Eksperimenta!* will take place in Tallinn from 23 October to 23 November 2014.

The aim of the triennial is to support research-based art that develops socially sensitive and creative thought by bringing contemporary art practices and education closer together. The general concept of the current triennial, 'Art and Science', is aimed at encouraging young people, teachers and curators in different countries to look at their surrounding world through the prism of science, using research methods (observing, examining and understanding the world) as the starting point for creative work and translating whatever is worth expressing via art at both the personal and the universal levels. At the 2014 *Eksperimenta!*, 14–19-year-old schoolchildren from Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Russia, Germany, Slovenia, Portugal, Turkey, South Korea, Canada and Brazil will participate. Latvia will introduce the secrets of physics, Russia will focus on its traditionally strong school of semiotics, the Estonian display will dissect the ecology of human society and Canada will focus on links between technology and science. The venues are Catherine's Church (Vene Street 12) and the Hopner House (Town Hall Square 18). More info at: [www.eksperimenta.net](http://www.eksperimenta.net)





Hedwig Fijen

## JUST DOING MANIFESTA 10

Hedwig Fijen, Director of the International Foundation Manifesta, interviewed by Liina Siib, 12 June 2014

**Hedwig Fijen (HF):** You're from Estonia, right? Have we met before?

**Liina Siib (LS):** I guess we have. I was in St Petersburg for the Manifesta Coffee Break last December.

**HF:** I've been in Tallinn many times. We worked with Rein Lang, the Minister of Culture, to try to bring the Manifesta to Estonia.

**LS:** I have heard about that. We hope that it will happen.

**HF:** It is hopefully a good rehearsal here in St Petersburg.

**LS:** Yes, Manifesta is closer to Estonia than ever before.

**HF:** Are people talking about it in Estonia?

**LS:** Yes, they are. Since autumn 2013 there have been discussions about how to engage Estonian audiences and how Estonian artists can contribute to Manifesta 10.

**HF:** This is also what I discussed with Rein Lang: why he wants Manifesta, because we always check the possible long term impact of a project like this.

**LS:** Why was it necessary for Manifesta to come to St Petersburg? What is the mutual impact here?

**HF:** I think there were three reasons: artistic, historical and geopolitical. We wanted to do the Manifesta show during the decade in the 'east' from the western perspective and in the 'west' from the eastern perspective. It was through the good relationships between Hermitage Amsterdam and the St Petersburg Hermitage that we got to know each other, and then we found out about the 250th anniversary of the St. Petersburg Hermitage.

Manifesta is a child born in the post-Communist era and we have a kind of idealistic, ideological point of view in bringing people together and researching the changing DNA of European culture. If you go a little bit more deeply into the history of the Hermitage, which Peter the Great started and Catherine the Great built on, it is of course clear that the tradition of showing contemporary culture in the Hermitage did not start with Manifesta, that it was already there 250 years ago. We wanted to discover the meaning of contemporary art now in a changing, contested society like Russia. We were of course very much stimulated by the courageous attitude of Director Piotrovsky [Dr Mikhail Piotrovsky, Director of the Hermitage], who constantly affirms that the Hermitage as an institution has always been a place of free thinking, a place of humanistic ideals. It's very inspiring to research the notion of contemporary art in a museum like the Hermitage. Also, it is not a traditional museum but a kind of *Kunstkammer*.

**LS:** How much did the framework of the State Hermitage Museum determine the selection of works and projects?

**HF:** Artistically, we wanted to do something different than holding it in an industrial building, as we did in Manifesta 9 in Genk and in Murcia. A museum allowing an intervention as a parasite into the museum context is extremely interesting, plus of course the idea that in a museum we could focus a great deal on audience development. How do you create a different audience than the current one in the Hermitage, since audience development, mediation and education are at the very core of Manifesta. When you ask Dr Piotrovsky what might be the impact of Manifesta being in the city, he'll say, of course, that it's the understanding of contemporary art for a larger audience, as well as building up a different audience for the Hermitage and for the General Staff building (GSB). One-third of Manifesta 10 takes place in the Winter Palace and two-thirds in the GSB.

**LS:** The first Manifesta biennial took place in 1996. How do you see the development and changes of the European Biennial of Contemporary Art over the 20 years? How much does Manifesta reflect its time and how much is this connection with time and place important? Or, what is important?

**HF:** I started Manifesta in 1993, so it is now my tenth biennial. We have developed from a very idealistic organisation into a much more *Realpolitik* organisation. We need to consider that Manifesta is not a conservative, established organisation. It does not have its own financial reserves, and we have to raise a million euros every two years to stage a biennial. We are always in crisis. We are not a museum, we are not a political organisation, and we are not an NGO. We are a small experimental arts organisation.

The idealistic beginning differs from the current *Realpolitik* in that the expectations

have grown immensely. In the beginning, people expected Manifesta to do something new and they wanted to support it. Now many cities want Manifesta and they want to misuse Manifesta. Maybe they want to use it for cultural marketing, or maybe they want to use it for political reasons. For us, it is a challenge to find out whether there is an urge for Manifesta to exist, what dreams we can realise, and how Europe has changed. When we started there were four or five, maybe more, biennials in Europe; now the landscape of international perennial events has changed enormously. So we need to justify our existence every two years.

We are now working within a Shakespearian dilemma: to be or not to be, to engage or disengage. The complexity of Manifesta is that cities are financing a parasite which criticises them. And, we don't know, maybe Rein Lang understood that very well [laughing].

**LS:** He is gone now\*.

**HF:** There is a spagat – a split. People want to misuse us for the cultural marketing of their city, but actually they get a negative protagonist inside, a parasite which eats up the city from within. This doubleness is challenging and super complex. Manifesta has now been ranked – I don't know what it means; it does not mean anything to us – the fourth most influential biennial in the world, and this creates expectations. We need to try to free ourselves from these expectations. So we don't become an institution.

**LS:** You mentioned in one of your talks that Manifesta has always been a risk.

**HF:** This is what I keep on saying and people of course attack me for this. I took a risk when we came here. But I also would have taken a risk if I had not come here. Many people have criticised Manifesta, saying that we are not in East-European contested areas enough. We have been in safe havens. If we take a risk, people criticise us and if we don't take a risk they criticise us. This is the spagat. If you are really honest and committed to your experimental character, you need to take a risk and sometimes a risk or an experiment can fail. We do a lot of risk management, but of course this is also Realpolitik: if we have protection from the situation in the Hermitage, we are not relevant in the outside world. We are in Russia, in a very contested area with all its problems and we need to critically respond to this and take responsibility. Creating responses and creating a context in which everybody, including staff, artists and curators, can take responsibility is hard work.

**LS:** In Genk, Manifesta strongly addressed the place, with its history and geography. St Petersburg is a very unique city in Russia, its 'window to Europe'. Also, for Estonia and its culture, St Peterburg has meant quite a lot throughout history. How do you relate to St Petersburg's history, topography and psyche?

**HF:** The topography of the city, the locus and the mental character of the city have had enormous impacts. Especially for the Dutch people, because the original plan of the city of St Petersburg is based on Amsterdam, with its canals. For me, it is quite clear that almost all of the artists were super inspired while they were here, although the context is complicated. The deeply multi-layered history of St Petersburg, with its architecture, music, literature, its wars and the siege of Leningrad, as well as its direct relation to West-European history and culture, is tangible in every stone you pick up here. Getting artists inspired was our original ambition and dream.

**LS:** Can you tell us something about the curatorial practices of Kasper König at Manifesta 10?

**HF:** We selected Kasper because he is very trained in the public domain, like Münster; he has worked for many years as a museum director in the Ludwig Museum, which has one of the best Russian avant-garde collections in Western Europe. He has taught, and he was the Rector of the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main. So education, collections and art in public space are his expertise. He is of the same generation as Dr Piotrovski. Manifesta is a research biennial, so we ask the curators to base their proposals on research conducted. König is an artist's curator, he gave completely free space to the artists in the Winter Palace and the GSB, and for the public programme he invited Joanna Warsza from Poland and Rainer Schumacher from Germany to do the cinema programme. For König, it was important that all the artists come here to St Petersburg for a couple of weeks to do research in context, and submit proposals of how they could do interventions which were not only internationally understood in terms of how contemporary art reacts to specific geopolitical issues but that specifically deal with the Russian people. I always emphasise that the task we gave Kasper was to make an exhibition for a Russian audience.

**LS:** There are several works, commissions created specially for the Manifesta 10 exhibition in the Hermitage, new works by Marlene Dumas, Wolfgang Tillmans, Eric van Lieshout and Francis Alÿs among others. Some works are integrated from the Hermitage collection: the painting *The Dance* by Henri Matisse and a vase by Piranesi, site-specific work.

**HF:** I can't say anything about the exhibition because that is Kasper's story. He made a very interesting choice of artists. Of course, the question is how the Russian audience will react to what these artists have made. Manifesta doesn't show works by normal artists. Every two years there are radical differences in what Manifesta stages.

Everybody should see the incredible work that Kasper König has done by taking an art historical perspective on artists who have never been shown here. So every journalist and professional who comes to the exhibition and says "Ah we all know these names; we have seen these people", that's not the point. These items that are shown here have







Joseph Beuys. *Wirtschaftswerte* (*Economic Values*). 1980. Iron shelves with basic food and tools from East Germany; plaster block with pencil and fat; paintings from the collection of the host museum. Shelves: 290 × 400 × 265 cm; Plaster block: 98.5 × 55.5 × 77.5 cm. Collection of S.M.A.K. Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium. Installation view, MANIFESTA 10, Winter Palace, State Hermitage Museum.

never been shown in Russia. We made specific new commissions, site-specific work for this context of having interventions in the State Hermitage Museum. The Russian audience will have to look at it with different eyes because this may become an iconic exhibition in this context. Not only about a moment, taking place now in 2014, but also how the artists work in this context. Some with such amazing commitment; it's unbelievable.

**LS:** Manifesta strongly stresses educational tools, and the biennial in St Petersburg is no exception. We had a great opportunity to learn in the local situation about doing and understanding contemporary art, but also an opportunity to hear about educational plans within Manifesta last December at the Manifesta Coffee Break. How do you introduce and spread the message of Manifesta and contemporary art to wider audiences? How do you engage local people in the programme?

**HF:** This is the hope of Manifesta. If you asked me when Manifesta would be successful, I would say if we reached out to this young generation of new audiences, 10 000 school children, and maybe 2000 blind people and orphanages, to those people who never go to a museum, who are not connected to contemporary culture. It would be a clear sign of Manifesta's success if we got these people asking questions about what they are seeing, what they believe, and how what they are seeing or experiencing fits into their daily lives.

I think it was Piotrovsky, during a press conference in March 2014, who said that the

impact of the education programme will be felt in the next decade because maybe in ten years we can understand what Manifesta has meant, because then this generation who experienced Manifesta, worked in Manifesta, will hopefully have built up their own methodology and their own language and a way to relate to contemporary art.

The Manifesta education programme also has many workshops: Manifesta TV, Manifesta Dacha, Manifesta On Board, Manifesta Summerschools and Manifesta Nights. There are many training programmes for teachers, because if you don't start with teachers, the students will not be brought in easily. So it is a different pedagogical methodology which Manifesta uses, and I hope that this will last and have a long-term impact. It is good to work together with the Hermitage because they have a youth education department and they might be interested in our methodology, and use this pedagogical system for their own purposes. For the first time, there will be education spaces in the Hermitage for children to produce works themselves.

**LS:** Will Manifesta TV also address the issues of media freedom?

**HF:** I think Manifesta TV is a good example of 'just do it'. Then of course in the public programme, in the film programme, in the TV project – everywhere this criticality and the critical response to what is happening in Russia today will be specifically discussed. So we have to see how this works out. I can hardly say how we will manage this; we have to see what happens.

**LS:** Can we summarise the politics of Manifesta in the present situation as: 'just do it' and see how far we can go?

**HF:** Yes, maybe, because we need to be extremely modest. Let's first do something, let's first see if we can open the show, let's first see if we can put together the education programme, and then let's analyse it later. I ask everybody to allow us to do the work on an artistic level and of course we will address every issue which we face in our daily work in a critical way. People should understand that we are not a political organisation and we do not function like the European Commission or a multilateral organisation. Maybe this is the power of something like Manifesta.

**LS:** With Joseph Beuys as one of the artists in the Hermitage exhibition, there will be immediate associations with the artist's past during WWII and his links to Crimea and the Tartars who rescued him.

**HF:** That is amazing, I don't know if Kasper has that in mind. These kinds of associations are almost metaphors and will give power to the exhibition.

**LS:** Is there anything else you'd like to add?

**HF:** Please emphasise the engagement of the super committed staff here, the people in the Hermitage and the people in the city, and all the volunteers. This is super important for Manifesta: only because of them were we able to stage it. This Manifesta is a celebration of their efforts.

\*Rein Lang, Minister of Culture of Estonia in 2011–2013

## Manifesta,

the European Biennial of Contemporary art and culture that changes location every two years. Manifesta began as a Dutch initiative to create a pan-European platform for the contemporary visual arts. Manifesta 10 took place in St Petersburg from 28 June to 31 October 2014. For more information: [manifesta.org](http://manifesta.org)

## Hedwig Fijen,

the Founding Director of Manifesta, in charge of all aspects of the Manifesta organisation, including the selection of host cities for the biennial, thematic content and the curatorial selection.

# "Art so dear that keeps me young and clear"?

1



## IMPRESSIONS FROM MANIFESTA 10

Andres Kurg



2

A green VAZ-2101 (or Lada 1200 as it was marketed in the West, nicknamed the Kopeyka), crashed into a tree in the courtyard of the St Petersburg Hermitage museum, stood as an iconic entrance work to the European contemporary art biennale Manifesta 10 exhibitions, which opened at the end of June.

The piece, conceived by Francis Alÿs, represented a paradoxical fulfilment of the artist's youth-time dream of driving his car from Belgium to the Soviet Union, to a country that in the Cold-War capitalist West represented "the alternative way, the Cause, the Call-all that our parents feared", as the artist put it. Making this trip a reality only over twenty years after the demise of the Soviet Union, this original meaning had now been ironically over-turned, and the video installation inside the exhibition space focused on the final moments of the journey: a crash, signalling failed utopias of socialism and dreams that never materialised. But the piece was also telling in terms of the projections of the Western left of the Soviet Union as an other to the capitalist system, a long-time tradition that seldom has received critical exploration and whose ghost still seems to haunt much of the interaction with today's Russia. To an historian's eye, this work has additional meanings: the Lada car was manufactured in the Soviet town of Togliatti beginning in 1970, under a licence from the Italian car manufacturer Fiat, demonstrating a turn that started in the late 1960s, away from the self-sufficiency of state socialism towards a greater integration with capitalist economies and their forms of consumption. Thus, while for the critical left in the West the Soviet Union represented an other to capitalism, the Soviet Union of the 1960s and 1970s demonstrated an ever-growing desire to copy life in the West and achieve similar standards.

Many of these diverging expectations surfaced and converged, either intentionally or unwittingly, in other parts of the biennale and its numerous parallel programmes in the city of St Petersburg. The event attracted criticism and generated polemics internationally long before its opening: initially the curator Kasper König had to respond to calls for a boycott by international LGBT activists protesting against severe anti-gay laws in Russia; things took an even more dramatic turn with the Russian invasion of Crimea and its subsequent annexation in March 2014, leading to the withdrawal of some artists. On the other

1. Maria Lassnig. *Insectenforscher I* (*Insect Researcher I*). 2003. Oil on canvas. 140 x 150 cm. Collection of the Essl Museum Klosterneuburg, Vienna, Austria.

2. Francis Alÿs. *Lada "Kopeika" Project*. Brussels–St. Petersburg. 2014. Video (9 min) and installation. In collaboration with brother Frédéric, Constantin Felker, and Julien Devaux. Commissioned by MANIFESTA 10, St. Petersburg. With the support of the Flemish authorities.

3. Thomas Hirschhorn. *ABSCHLAG*. 2014. Scaffolding construction. 16.5 x 9.36 x 3.25 m. Commissioned by MANIFESTA 10, St. Petersburg. Installation view, MANIFESTA 10, General Staff Building, State Hermitage Museum.

4. Juan Muñoz. *Waiting for Jerry*. 1991. Wall, light and audio soundtrack (5:02 min). Collection of the Juan Muñoz Estate. With the support of Acción Cultural Española (AC/E). Installation view, MANIFESTA 10, General Staff Building, State Hermitage Museum.

5. Klara Lidén. Installation view, MANIFESTA 10, General Staff Building, State Hermitage Museum. Front: Two works each *Untitled* (bench), 2014. Back: *Warm up*: State Hermitage Museum Theater, 2014.

6. Gerhard Richter. *Ema* (*Akt auf einer Treppe*) [*Ema* (*Nude on a Staircase*)]. 1966. Oil on canvas. 200 x 130 cm. Collection of Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany. With the support of the Arts Foundation of North Rhine-Westphalia and the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V. Installation view, MANIFESTA 10, Winter Palace, State Hermitage Museum.

7. Wolfgang Tillmans. St. Petersburg Installation. 2014. Installation. Courtesy Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Berlin / Cologne, Germany. Commissioned by MANIFESTA 10, St. Petersburg. With the support of the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V. Installation view, MANIFESTA 10, General Staff Building, State Hermitage Museum.



3



side, the organisers had to deal with impenetrable Russian bureaucracy and a different kind of work culture, as well as the institution of the Hermitage, not accustomed to contemporary art and its tendency to upset traditions and hierarchies. The green Lada was one in a series of carefully – thoughtfully as well as cautiously – managed interventions in the show, aiming to shift or displace the perceived meanings of places and museum works, thus bringing forth previously marginalised meanings or new connections. In the case of the car, the Winter Palace was also the symbolic site of the beginning of the October Revolution, and now this was brought together with its failure, evoking perhaps some surprise among its middle-class visitors. Would eyebrows be raised at a crashed Lada in a courtyard of a prefabricated modernist neighbourhood in a St Petersburg suburb, where ‘really existing socialism’ left its strongest imprint?

and preparatory sketches of the work and the installation managed to conquer the copious space in simple but convincing ways (among other things, hinting at a parallel between the monumental doors of the General Staff courtyards and the gilded Kremlin doors). The work was also one in a series that could be seen as referencing the punk-band Pussy Riot, demonstrating in this way a return to the infamous late-Soviet artistic strategy of Aesopian language: conveying a ‘hidden’ message through a seemingly neutral surface. If this artistic strategy is actually showing signs of returning, that raises worries both in terms



Thomas Hirschhorn, well-versed in working with the ruins of both socialism and modernity, who had turned to peripheral territories in the past, this time had chosen to intervene in the somewhat pompous newly renovated series of courtyards of the General Staff building, the main venue for the curator show. His site-specific installation *Abschlag* was a mock-up of a crumbling wall of a neoclassical structure, revealing behind it ordinary apartments with now-precious avant-garde artworks on their walls. Hirschhorn's strategy in earlier works had been to uncover ‘minor’ figures in the culture of the hosting environment, thus deconstructing perceived canons of value and putting them to work for new ends. Here the works of Malevich, Filonov and Rozanova, could then be read in the same way, as attempts to tear them off from the depoliticised context and reactivate the original coexistence of new aesthetics with radical political ideas. In addition, the installation proposed to overturn the powerful architectural context, but perhaps its size started at some point to work against its aims, leaving the apartments too distant from the viewer and neutralising the deconstructive gesture.

From that perspective, Erik van Lieshout's displacement of the Hermitage cellar to the exhibition hall was more successful, operating on many levels. The installation focused on cats living in the basement of this huge museum complex; the cats had been brought in during the czarist era to hunt mice and rats. With the Soviet Union, and later the post-Soviet years, the status of the cats, now looked after by museum workers, became precarious. During preparations for Manifesta, in the basement Lieshout created new living conditions for the cats and put up a small exhibition. The viewers were shown documentation

of a diagnosis of society and the fate of critical artistic practice. Lieshout's reference to the oppositional music group was ephemeral, but it appeared as manifestly attached to the re-staged installation of Juan Muñoz's *Waiting for Jerry* (the mouse in the cartoon *Tom and Jerry*). In Oliver Mosset's monochrome paintings, on the other hand, the reference of bright hues to the similarly coloured clothing items of the Pussy Riot members required extra information to be understood.

A series of artworks in the main exhibition dealt with disciplining and training the body, as in classical ballet or gymnastics, as seen in the cleverly contextual works of Rineke Dijkstra and Klara Lidén. These can be connected with views of the unbound body through more traditional media, from Henri Matisse's *Dance*, which was included in the show from the Hermitage's permanent collection, to Gerhard Richter's *Ema (Nude on a Staircase)*. Other works, more directly commenting on the anti-gay laws, revealed different trajectories and means of bodily expression, representing queerness in intimate aesthetic details (as in Wolfgang Tillmans's installation) or in a charade and parody intersecting

with politics: Henrik Olesen's *Hysterical Men* depicted, among others, Chelsea Manning, the former US soldier Bradley Manning, who passed on secret information to Wikileaks and later in prison announced his plans for a gender change. In the same series, there were video works by Vladislav Mamyshev-Monroe, a Russian artist who died tragically last year, and who had been active from *perestroika* onwards in a group of radical Leningrad artists gathered around Timur Novikov. According to Mamyshev, he first became attached to the figure of Marilyn Monroe when his high-school teacher told her class the tragic life story of the American actress. Mamyshev became a Marilyn impersonator, re-acting in amateur films several famous episodes from the star's life (e.g. her affair with John Kennedy). Many trajectories come together in his works: the eccentricity of provincial Leningrad in the 1980s, Soviet-period interpretations of icons of American mass culture, and the successful career of the artist in the liberal post-socialist period and the bitter recognition that this moment had passed, while the works themselves still continued to have a bite.

In the Hermitage building, across the Palace square, Maria Lassnig's works represented a dialogue with the bodies and drags in the General Staff building. An Austrian painter who passed away this year at the age of 94, her works deal with images of the ageing body, the body torn up to reflect psychic disturbances, violence often represented in a grotesque way. But perhaps most telling in her exposition was the short film *Cantata*, from 1992, where she sings her life story in laconic verse yet in an amusing way, dressed in various costumes to parody the cultures and people she has encountered. Her message was that art had helped her overcome the difficulties of personal life and social circumstances: "I know its Art so dear that keeps me young and clear." "Art made me thirsty, now fulfilment's near", goes the refrain. This humorous yet melancholic film gains a broader relevance in the context of Manifesta: after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the organisers had to take a stand on whether to continue with preparations for the exhibition and announced their decision in a public statement. Their solution was a kind of 'criticism from within': to try to follow the laws and regulations of the hosting country and hosting museum, but maintain

standards that would satisfy the politically-oriented contemporary art world. For the St Petersburg radical art group Chto Delat, this position was too collaborative and they withdrew from the show and issued a public statement pointing out, among other things, that Manifesta's and its curator's decision showed the clear prevalence of 'art over politics'. Two weeks before the opening, Kasper König himself seemed to reverse his previous views, giving a critical interview to Deutsche Welle in which he told how the preparations of the biennale had hit an impasse and that he was working in a context where there was no public discussion tradition as in the West: "I think it's unfortunate that things are trivialised and there is no conflict. Conflict would actually be very positive because it could lead to change." One couldn't help then reading into Lassnig's bitter statement at the end of her life, of 'art so dear', a clandestine curatorial declaration, or perhaps even a withdrawal. (The lack of status of Manifesta in St Petersburg was clearly demonstrated by the fact that, on the public opening day of the show, the Palace square, from where both main venues could be entered, was taken over by sports events of the 'day of youth' and access to the museums was nearly impossible.)

There were some directly political works in the main show. Boris Mikhailov's series of photographs documented daily life on Maidan Nezalezhnosti during the uprising in Kiev in December 2013: people coming together in the hope of change and a better future. The presence of these works in the Hermitage was significant, and indeed on the second specialist preview day offensive comments had been added by local viewers to the labels on the artworks. The many Ukrainian flags shown in the photographs suddenly started to resonate with Timur Novikov's flags from the 1980s downstairs. Created when the Soviet Union was already disintegrating, these flags depicted imaginative combinations of flowery patterns, unexpected colours, silhouettes of swans, palm trees and pyramids, images not normally associated with standard flags. These images could be read as a dream of a better society – which could live under these kinds of flags – but they also signified a moment of fragmentation of supposedly universally held truths and the rise of new smaller states with their own symbols, imagery and aspirations. Now, when flags, ribbons and lintels were out in the streets and were significant again,

these two historical moments met up, recalling energies and hopes that could not simply be suppressed by manipulations from above or endlessly kept in check by force.

## Andres Kurg

(1975), architectural historian. In 2014 he received PhD from the Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA). He has written architectural criticism and curated exhibitions; currently Professor and Head of the Institute of Art History at the EAA.



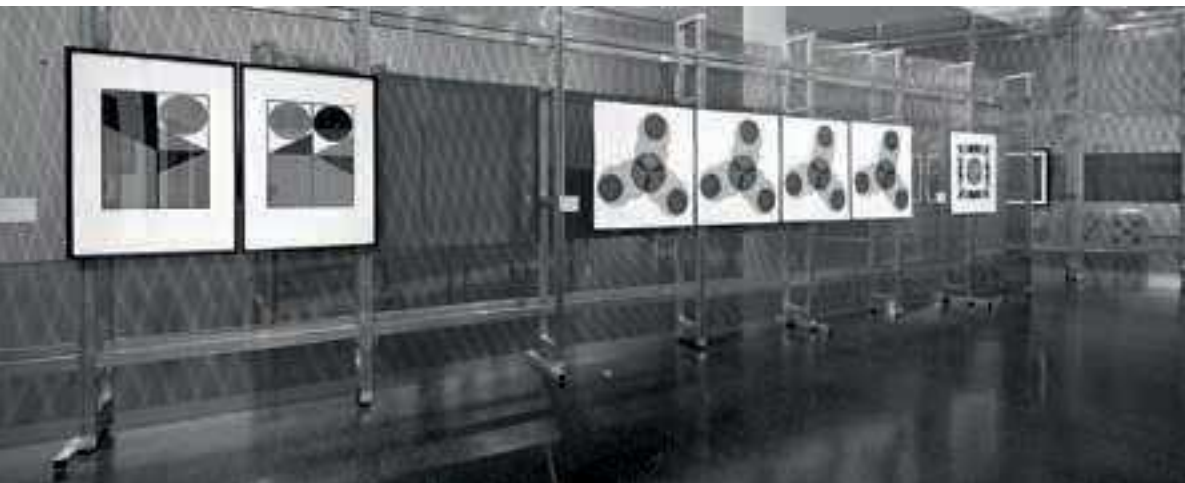
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8. Vladislav Mamyshev-Monroe. *Tragic Love*. 1993. Black & white photo, hand-coloured. Collection of Elena Selina - XL Gallery.

9. Timur Novikov. Works from the *Horizons* series, 1980-1991. Installation view, MANIFESTA 10, General Staff Building, State Hermitage Museum.



Raul Meel. *Dialogues with Infinity*. Exhibition view. Kumu Art Museum, 2014. Exhibition design by Raul Kalvo and Helen Oja.

## ALLURE 'EM (MERE LAUL) A tale about Raul Meel

Margus Tamm

### I MURAL LEE (ARM ELULE)

Flicking through reviews of Raul Meel's works, the usage of the word *myth* strikes the eye: self-myth, creation of myth, artist's myth, world myth. Raul Meel is therefore someone whose work as an artist can be compared with myths, and it fits into the framework of myth creation. Raul Meel's life has not been easy, establishing a career as an artist has been a struggle, his biography contains both triumphs as well as failures, as befits a hero, and the creative path has not been straight, but constantly searching and presumably occasionally also uncertain. Still, all's well that ends well and, looking around at the current grand and wonderful retrospective in the big hall of the Kumu art museum, we can say that this is a myth with a happy ending.

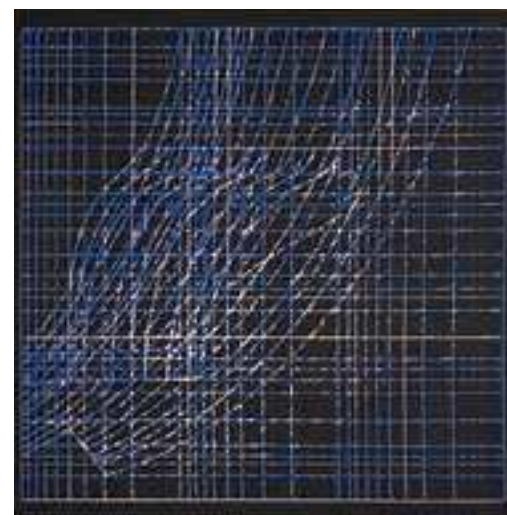
Myths with happy endings are known as *fairy tales*. Vladimir Propp's classic treatment *Morphology of the Folktale* (orig. 1928) states that the unchanging elements of fairy tales are the functions of characters, which despite varied circumstances are essentially stable. Propp lists a total of 31 functions, and while

they may not all appear in the same story, the sequence of functions is always the same. The later structuralist narratology, including Juri Lotman's analysis of the structure of an artistic text, largely rests on Propp's legacy. The central idea is that the plot starts with the crossing of borders. The tale begins when a character leaves his or her determined place and crosses the threshold of his existing world into another, unknown and miraculous world. This kind of character will become a hero. The hero's path is not easy; he not only has to face new dangers in the world beyond the borders but, what's worse, the act of border crossing makes him a stranger to the people back home. He is no longer recognised. The hero might thus be left wandering for a long time between the two worlds, without inheriting the fairy tale half of a kingdom or being able to return home.

Raul Meel's myth has two interconnected plot lines.

First, Raul Meel has a degree in electrical engineering. In another society, this might not have been a noteworthy drawback, but in the small and more closed Soviet Estonia, with its semi-totalitarian social organisation, Raul Meel was not seen as an artist. Artists came from the State Art Institute and belonged to the Artists' Association. Not Raul Meel. The fact that he moved from the army of engineers of the Scientific-Technical Revolution straight into the forefront of the artistic avant-garde constituted a serious disciplinary border violation. This was not supposed to happen. Nevertheless, he decided to take this step.

Raul Meel. *Under the Sky* No. 4. 1973. Silk-screen print. 64.8 x 63.1 cm. Art Museum of Estonia.





## II REAL MULE (ULM REALE)

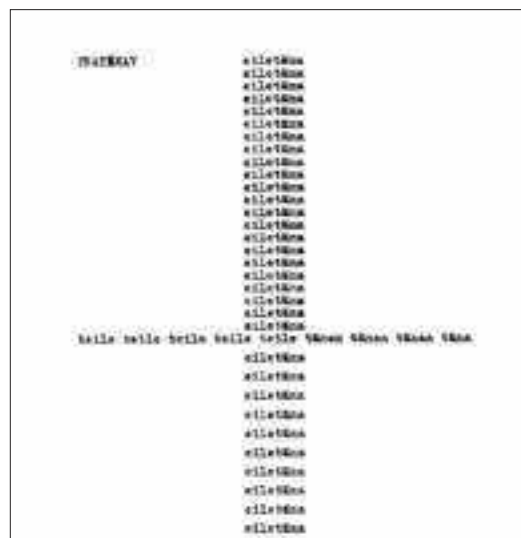
Raul Meel. *High Street*.  
Typewriter drawing from the  
unpublished manuscript of  
concrete poetry *Club (Klubi)*.  
1968-1969.

If you are planning to set off on a journey that will include illegally crossing a border, how do you prepare? The key word is suitable gear. Everything you carry must be as compact as possible and multifunctional, quickly assembled and taken apart. Simple and durable. Convertible and easily concealed. Excellent examples here are *Skatert-Samobranka* (a fairy tale table that sets itself), the Spear of Destiny, a Swiss army knife, a sleeping bag, a bomb belt or cocaine-filled condoms. Or a typewriter's mono-spaced font.

The first works which Raul Meel managed to get across the disciplinary border at the end of the 1960s and successfully carry into the art world were typewriter drawings.

Whoever has worked in various media knows that text is a very economical medium. Producing texts requires minimal resources and the final product is highly compact (spread James Joyce's collected works on the floor and they will cover the area of a small Pollock painting). Using a mono-spaced font with equal letter width makes the text extremely durable: as the space is the same for all phonemes, the bits of text can easily be replaced and rearranged without shattering

Raul Meel. *Political Balance*.  
Typewriter drawing from the  
unpublished manuscript of  
concrete poetry *Club (Klubi)*.  
1968-1969.

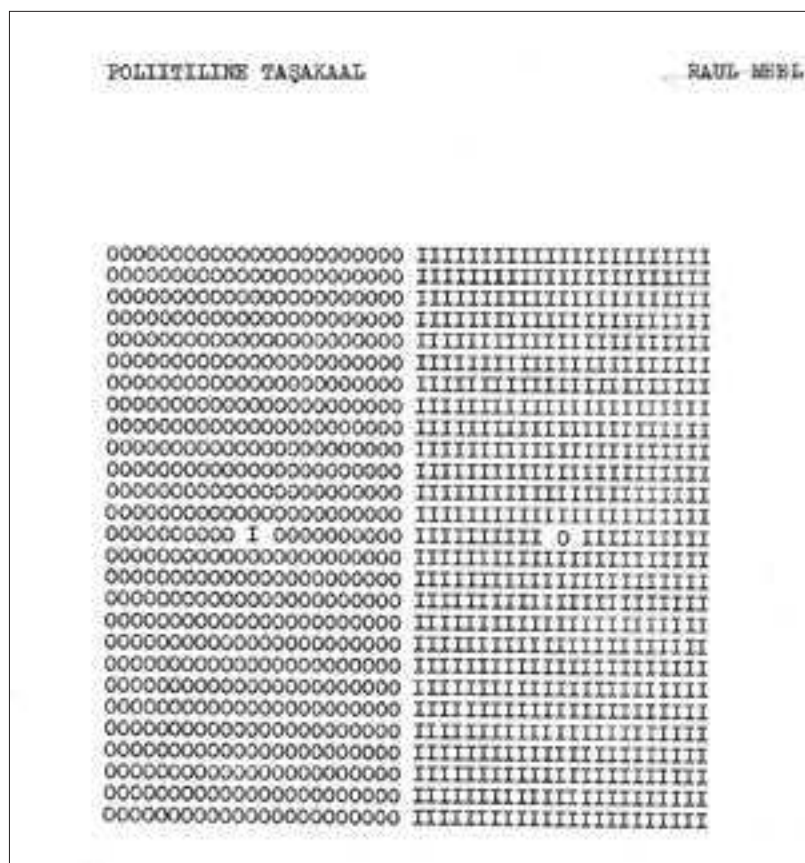


the text's compact structure. The only aspect that would still make the text rigid and clumsy is narrative. With acute foresight, Raul Meel left it out. The semantic unit of his typewriter drawings had the length of a morpheme or a word, less frequently of a phrase, and full sentences occur very seldom. Compositions made up of bits of text or single characters were enthusiastically received in the Estonian avant-garde art of the 1960s-70s. So, miraculously, the engineer became an artist.

Unable, however, to firmly establish himself in the art world for several decades (until 1987 to be precise), Meel oscillated between the two worlds, working as an engineer at the Design Institute and actively participating in art life. Constant shifting between the two worlds was certainly quite stressful, but also quite profitable, allowing Raul Meel to foster both his intellectual and material independence. Besides, such cross-border to-ing and fro-ing provided him with useful experience, until Raul Meel finally managed to smuggle entire engineering manuals into the art field. This, however, was just the beginning.

Raul Meel's other act of mythical proportions was that he successfully got his art through the Iron Curtain.

Soviet Estonia was a significant centre of illegal transit. Besides considerable amounts of heroin, art with the highest avant-garde content produced in the Soviet Union crossed the borders of the Estonian SSR and moved on to the capitalist West. The Western world was quite keen on this sort of art, although the Soviet border guards were on the alert:



earlier, avant-garde artists used to send their work to the West by post, but controls were tightened in the 1970s and graphic art could be despatched abroad only with a special permit. Under such conditions, very few managed to get their work across borders. According to a legend, there was an open-minded official in Soviet Estonia who helped to register artworks as ordinary letters. Whether or not this person actually existed, a large number of envelopes containing the best Soviet avant-garde art passed through customs and arrived in the West. Alas, this happy situation did not last long. Something shrewder had to be invented.

Raul Meel associated with the local authority on art, Tõnis Vint, through whom he developed contacts with the Moscow underground art world. Meel found friends in the group- ing centred on Ülo Sooster, an Estonian artist living in Moscow and, as a result, he met one of the most influential underworld leaders in Moscow, Ilya Kabakov. The network of Soviet underground art concentrated in the metropolis had some highly functional contacts with Western dealers, and Raul Meel was able to take advantage of these new opportunities. He probably relied on his practical engineer's mind, as well as his earlier experience acquired in the course of many border crossings between the world of art and engineering.

Understandably, only the most compactly packaged avant-garde art was able to slip through the ever more impenetrable Iron Curtain: series-based, minimalist, abstract and conceptual. Raul Meel's most brilliant invention of this type is his print series *Under the Sky*, started in the 1970s. Theoretically, the series contains 5328 prints, all of which can be described as variations on a one-line formula. A huge work that could be transported completely invisibly, or as Raul Meel himself recalls: "inside me, in my head, in my heart" (conversation with Andres Kurg, 2014). You could walk calmly across the border, have the customs people carry out a thorough search, and all the while you have six thousand prints in your heart.

A few prints from the series reached West Germany, where they received second prize at the Frechen Print Triennial in 1974. This achievement can be seen as the realisation of Raul Meel's second heroic deed, an even more miraculous border crossing.

### III

#### RULE MALE (ERE MULLA)

There were failures as well: Raul Meel's deals with the São Paulo Biennial, MoMA and Flash Art were all foiled by the Soviet authorities. Still, deeds were done, the plot was sound and in the longer perspective it was no longer possible to divert the course of the myth. What was now supposed to happen, happened.

According to Vladimir Propp, the finale of a fairy tale shows the hero being recognised, and the hero then ascends to the throne. Indeed, in the late 1980s Raul Meel was finally recognised at home. Official recognition followed, and he was elevated to the status of a classic. Raul Meel took his seat on his well-earned throne.

Through Raul Meel's works of the last few decades – ritual fire installations, his artist's book *Solomon's Song of Songs* and others – the public has been addressed by a new archetype, different from the earlier hero: a priest- king.

*That, however, is another story.*

#### Raul Meel, DIALOGUES WITH INFINITY

**Kumu Art Museum,  
09.05.-12.10.2014**

It is difficult to use anything but superlatives about this exhibition.

A brilliant artist – Raul Meel – *check*.

Confident curatorial effort – Eha Komissarov and Raivo Kelomees – *check*.

Perfect exhibition design – Raul

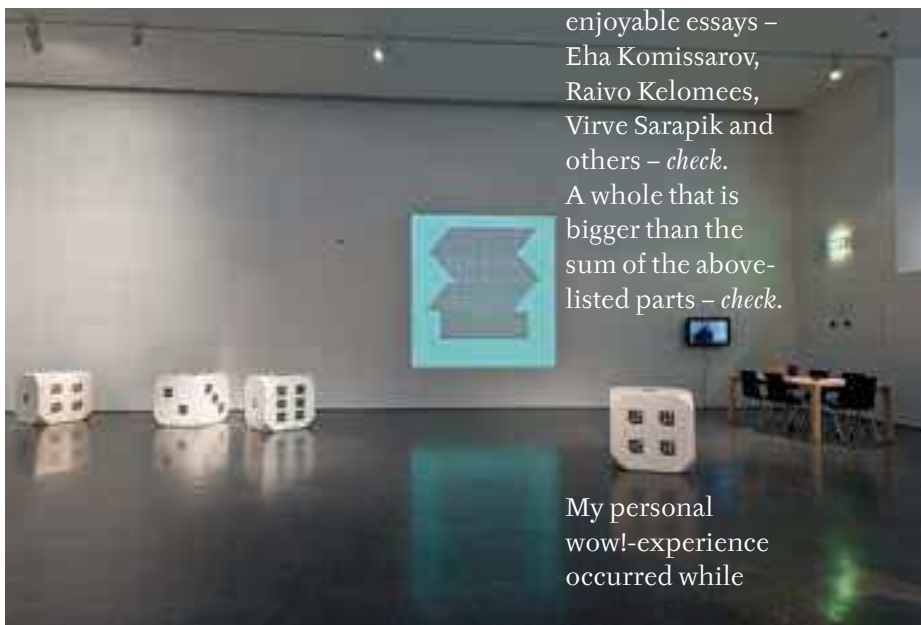
Kalvo and Helen Oja – *check*.

A beautiful catalogue – designer Tuuli Aule – together

enjoyable essays – Eha Komissarov, Raivo Kelomees, Virve Sarapik and others – *check*.

A whole that is bigger than the sum of the above-listed parts – *check*.

My personal wow!-experience occurred while



Raul Meel. *Dialogues with Infinity*. Exhibition view, Kumu Art Museum, 2014

#### Raul Meel

(1941), Estonian graphic artist, painter, sculptor, installation artist, concrete poet, fire performance artist, beekeeper. He represents the radical wing of the Estonian avant-garde art in the 1970s-1980s.

#### Margus Tamm

(1977), artist and graphic designer. PhD student at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Topics of research: tactical media, interventionist strategies. See more at: [tammmtamm.net](http://tammmtamm.net)

Komissarov's text in the catalogue, which suddenly introduced me to the link between the 20th century avant-garde and the exhibition design of metal framework. I at once headed back to the exhibition to have another look.

# FROM LITERACY TO ILLITERACY AND SLOWLY BACK AGAIN

Margit Sæde in conversation with Maria Kjær Thomsen,  
the curator of the 16th Tallinn Print Triennial  
*Literacy–Illiteracy*



View of the 16th Tallinn Print Triennial exhibition *Literacy–Illiteracy*. Kumu Art Museum, 07.02.–01.06. 2014. In the foreground: Marie Kølbaek Iversen (Denmark). –. Hand-bound book, risographic print, 2012; at the back: Jiří Thýn (Czech Republic). *History, Different Perspectives and Four Angles of View 1–3*, 2012.

**You have recently co-edited the comprehensive *Danish Artists' Books*. In your opinion, which historical Danish artists' books are important and why?**

We – the other editors and I – are very happy that Walther König wanted to collaborate with us and publish the *Danish Artists' Books* internationally, so it can be found in London, Paris, Berlin and Copenhagen among other cities. It is very difficult to point out particular books: some are classics as pioneer artists' books, and some I just happen to like. Personally, I am very fond of *white books*: books that appear to have only white pages, such as some of the earliest examples of artists' books by KJ Almquist and by the Danish author Hans Jørgen Nielsen.

**What brought you to artists' books and publications in the first place?**

I am very fond of books. That is a romance that goes back to my early youth. I first started to work professionally and get acquainted with the artists' books scene when I worked for Jacob Fabricius and his

Pork Salad Press. We attended the New York Art Book Fair in 2007, and I experienced a passion for very obscure, small, strange or even very plain books and publications made by artists. In 2010 I worked at Overgaden, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Copenhagen, and I was in charge of their annual Art Book Fair. I decided to extend the concept and invite some of the international art book publishers that I had met in New York and Berlin, and we created the concept Art + Text, which also included exhibitions with artists' books. Out of this event grew the idea of making a book about Danish artists' books, covering the history from the earliest attempts in the '30s to the very experimental and paradigmatic period of the 60s and all the way to our present contemporary new materialism.

**This spring you curated the 16th Tallinn Print Triennial *Literacy–Illiteracy*. How did you find working with such a traditional and historical format as the triennial for graphic arts in the 'post-medium' condition?**



That was a challenge! And I loved it. I got the chance to look into the archive of a great tradition, and of course show some new approaches that prove that printed matter is still a very lively art form. As a matter of fact, we now have a situation where the internet is such a dominant feature for all of us that some kind of backlash to materiality seems a necessity. We need something to hold on to, a book for example. It might sound reactionary, but in my opinion it is quite the opposite.

### Which works were the key works for you in the exhibition?

It was above all essential to have a triennial that wasn't too divided between the curated part and the open-call part, and in which a sense of coherence and connectedness was evident. I also liked including a young artist from Estonia, Katja Novitskova, who is having an international career living abroad, and who made a new work for the triennial that sums up some of the current strategies in the young contemporary art scene, her mix of the life of the internet era with some profound thoughts and original ways of printmaking, as in her iPad installation and big printed aluminium owls.

In your introductory text for the catalogue of *Literacy–Illiteracy*, you quote Goodiepal: “I argue that when we got the Internet we had this notion that NOW we'd get every facet of the truth, but in fact we just all get the same information – all of us. It erodes our imagination. I am sick of that whole thing where texts are simply being copied off the Internet. It is a huge problem. New knowledge must be generated; otherwise the thing has no legitimacy. There has to be some sort of revolt.” In which ways can this new knowledge be generated and what kind of revolt do you imagine?

Goodiepal himself serves as a great metaphor – as an artist, composer and human being – for this revolt. In his opinion, we should allow things to go slower again, as he wrote in a wall text at the Kumu Art Museum: “The further a message has to travel through time and space, the more importance you can add to its content.”

You see a lot of artists working from the same source, Wikipedia, and making works from and about this now accessible knowledge, often about more obscure or scientific matters, such as occult themes and the mysteries of quantum physics. Some works are very

interesting, and really succeed in generating new experiences of that knowledge; others, and this is where the approach fails completely, only use it to legitimise an art project that is nothing more than a poor reflection of some truly inaccessible and mysterious phenomenon. In other words, don't just copy-paste: do something with the stuff!

### As I wasn't in Tallinn when Goodiepal performed, I am very curious about his performance. What was it about?

The performance was an extension of his trip to Tallinn made by bike from Copenhagen through Sweden (it was in February, so of course it was very cold). In the performance he nagged about contemporary artists flying cheaply on Ryanair to whatever destination. In his view, contemporary hacking should not be done through the internet, but by writing letters. Or by going for a walk – or on a bicycle trip to Siberia – instead of repeating a hasty pattern, with no subversive strategies. If we want to be ahead of our times, we need to slow down.

### Can you briefly introduce the topics and speakers of the seminar. Where did the discussion start and where did it end?

We had four speakers: three from the Baltic countries – Maija Rudovska (Latvia), Valentinas Klimasauskas (Lithuania) and Oliver Laas (Estonia) – and the curator of the 30th Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana, Deborah Cullen (USA), who presented a very interesting paper called *Analogue to Digital: Observations of Continuity and Transformation*. We discussed whether a triennial of graphic arts was still relevant today, and how we could still develop the media in this modern digital world.

Digital language is dominated by images rather than text. Is our need for the visual constructed or rooted somewhere deeper? You mention in your text that reading became widespread only 500 years ago and our brains do not have a special neural basis for reading texts.

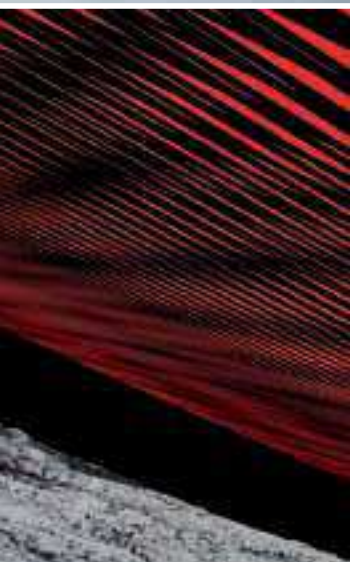
Hmmm, I'm not sure how to answer this, but I know that a lot of people actually write and read much more than they would have without the internet. It is not a secret that literature, newspapers and texts are often writ-



Alexandra Leykauf (Germany). *A Student at ease among the books*. 2014. Installation. 260 × 328 cm. 16th Tallinn Print Triennial, Kumu Art Museum.

Goodiepal (Paul Kristian Bjørn Vester, Faroe Islands/Denmark) and his installation at the 16th Tallinn Print Triennial, Kumu Art Museum.





Peter Thörneby (Sweden).  
*One day, all this will be yours.*  
2013. Object. 11 x 18.5 x 3 cm.  
16th Tallinn Print Triennial,  
Kumu Art Museum.

Ferdinand Ahm Krag  
(Denmark). *Habitat '0'*. 2013.  
16th Tallinn Print Triennial,  
Kumu Art Museum.

Katja Novitskova (Estonia/  
The Netherlands/Germany).  
*Never-ending Story*. 2014.  
Digital print, aluminium  
Dibond, iPad.

Raul Meel (Estonia).  
*Dramatism*. 1968. From the  
artist's book *Real Names*.  
1968-1988. 21 x 30 cm.

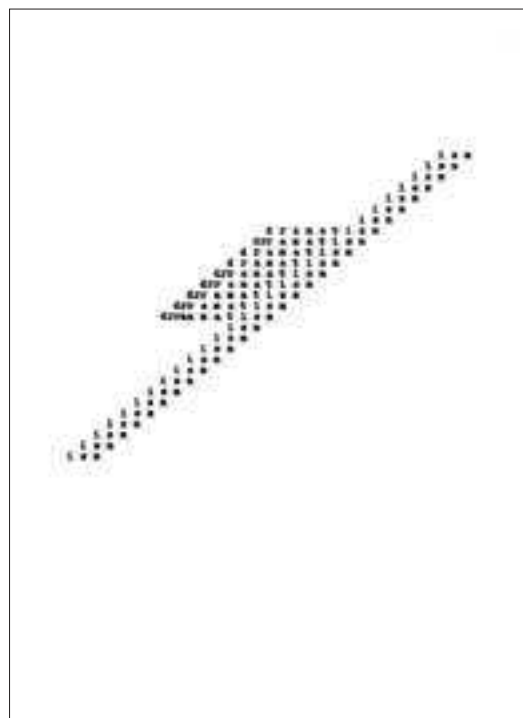
ten *and* read by more educated persons, and this is somehow changing with the internet.

Do you think the next generation of artists, who have been using smart phones and iPads since they were toddlers will only use the internet as a primary source of inspiration and information, or will the new materiality and the longing for different and slower ways to work just get stronger over time?

I think these two 'tendencies' will continue to grow: the two need each other.

I see the current longing for materials – and for more slow-paced working methods – as a very intelligent way to deal with the hasty production life of late capitalism. It is of course a reaction to the ever-present digital screen life – and a world surrounded by satellites bombarding us with information and binary codes – that we need something very grounded, heavy and slow in order not to lose ourselves completely. But it is also something that comes out of the financial crisis; before the crisis, a lot of artists had veritable factories with assistants that made their artworks in a hardcore production setting, where as now you see more artists working more slowly and being more integrated with their works.

As a curator and art critic, I assume your work also involves a lot of work in front of the screen; for example, we are doing this interview by e-mail, with me typing my questions



and you typing your answers. How do you think our conversation would have been different if it was spoken?

The oral situation is of course very different from the written one: that hasn't changed. The construction of sentences and utterances is much more controlled and hence edited in the written version but, of course, the online reality also allows for Skype meetings and chat interviews. They are just new formats that expand our communication.

What is your personal relationship with the screen? Are you a compulsive participant in the internet culture? How do you personally discipline yourself and control the time you spend in front of the screen?

I spend many hours on my computer. And I watch a lot of shows online. That said, I enjoy being offline a lot, and I know that a lot of people (myself included) are so internet- and facebook-addicted that we really need to set limits and strictly discipline ourselves in terms of engaging with the always present reality presented online. One of the most challenging things for a lot of people today is simply to stay offline for a whole day.

The 16th Tallinn Print Triennial *Literacy-Illiteracy* is the second time you have worked with the Kumu Art Museum in Estonia. How do you see the Estonian art scene in comparison with the scene in Denmark?

This is a difficult question for me to answer. One very big difference is the lack of commercial galleries in Tallinn. This makes the scene very different from the one in Copenhagen. On the other hand, I've met and seen the work of so many interesting and great Estonian artists, and I will continue to work with some of them. Coming up next is a show with Raul Meel in Copenhagen next year.

## Maria Kjær Thomsen

(1978), holds an MA in Comparative Literature, and works as an independent art critic, curator and editor. Author of numerous articles, texts and essays about art. Regular contributor to *Politiken*, *Kunstkrikk.dk* and *Artforum.com*. Chief curator of the 16th Tallinn Print Triennial. Lives and works in Copenhagen. See more at: [www.mariakjaerthomsen.com](http://www.mariakjaerthomsen.com)

## Margit Säde

(1984), independent curator and artist based in Zürich and Tallinn. In her work she emphasizes the self-initiated, collaborative and ongoing nature of art practice.

## Tallinn Print Triennial,

see more at: [www.triennial.ee](http://www.triennial.ee)



## About the Köler Prize, generally

Hanno Soans

Jevgeni Zolotko, winner of the Köler Prize 2011. *One Day of the State Archivist Life*. Installation from substance which is produced in the course of decomposition of different printed text materials. 2011. 5 x 9 x 3.5 m. Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia.

It was late autumn 2006 when the artists Marco Laimre and Neeme Külm set about cleaning up the former administrative building of a Tallinn heating company at Põhja pst. 35. It was meant to be a new exhibition venue. The first exhibition took place in June 2007, under the name the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (Eesti Kaasaegse Kunsti Muuseum – EKKM), which initially seemed rather pretentious. Who would have thought at the time that this grass-roots alternative institution, at first mainly following the DIY principle and organising student exhibitions, would in five years' time become the organiser of one of the essential events in contemporary art in Estonia: the Köler Prize exhibition, which pursues the international mainstream of contemporary art?

The gala of the last Köler Prize: the stage is taken by Anders Härm, the curator of EKKM, the organiser of the nominees' exhibition and the poster boy of the Köler Prize, who

told a true-life story. He had recently been walking along a street when a lad of about eighteen, clutching a folder with pictures, stopped him and asked how to participate in the Köler Prize exhibition. At first a bit pensive, Anders then became increasingly excited and said: "you have to make art..... for years and years, the kind of art that pleases Marco Laimre... and Elin Kard... and Neeme Külm and in fact all of us in the EKKM team, and at the same time it shouldn't be complete farce, you know, and you shouldn't be a village idiot either and, well, not too naïve, but there should be a point to it and also some sort of continuity or something along those lines. A kind of practice with a purpose, with duration, a development, exhibitions, you see, culminations and growth, and in any case...." The more fervent the curator became, the more embarrassed the young man seemed, pushing the folder behind his back, finally thanking Härm shyly and vanishing. Who could have imagined that in late autumn 2006...

What then is the difference between the Köler Prize and other art awards in Estonia? First, it is the most significant prize in contemporary art in Estonia based on private capital. The real difference, however, lies in its unique



approach. All the other awards in Estonian art, from the one named after Kristjan Raud to the annual awards of the Cultural Endowment, are essentially passive. The awards are given on the basis of completed projects: a closed process, rather boring for the press and the public. Nobody bothers to discuss whether one or another nominee is more worthy of the prize and why. In the case of the Kõler Prize, however, we lay our cards on the table: the nominees, who are introduced to the public via video 'screen tests', a catalogue and works chosen for the exhibition, spend over a month in the public eye before the international jury makes a decision. This is of course not a totally new model: the same logic is followed by the British Turner Prize, as well as Ars Fennica, which is closer to us. Still, it is not a question of originality, but what actually works, what generates the biggest chance of public participation and visibility for the artist. A few cosmetic adjustments aside, I wrote these lines on the occasion of the first exhibition of the Kõler Prize nominees in 2011. This still holds true for me today. The model has been worked out, it works, and there is no reason to change it.

I will briefly run through the main rules. Kõler Prize nominees are chosen on the basis of work during the last three years. The individual artist or group should be of Estonian origin or working in Estonia. Each time, the nominees each present one characteristic work completed during the three last years and also produce one new work for the exhibition. An international jury decides on the main award, so far provided by Smarten Logistics (it used to be 5000 euros and reached 6000 euros last time). The jury considers the presented works, the artists' portfolios, 'screen tests' and chats with the artists. There is also an audience prize of 1000 euros, initially funded by the Temnikova and Kasela Gallery, together with the law firm Lawin, and in recent years by Salto Architects.

As the Kõler Prize nominees' exhibitions are not curated with the goal of coherence, but constitute displays that emphasise individual authors' positions, there is no point trying to find a common denominator amongst the participating artists. However, it is still possible to distinguish between some trends on the basis of how the prizes have been awarded. In 2011, the first audience award went to Tõnis Saadoja. The reason might have been the realistic aspect of his drawings in the *Tallinn series*,



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but this has not been confirmed by the following audience prizes. Such artists as Marko Mäetamm (2012), Kristina Norman (2013) and Kiwa (2014) certainly have a larger number of fans because of their earlier activities, but they have not won the audience award. It therefore seems that the public tends to vote on the basis of what they see at the exhibition, rather than relying on their earlier preferences. In 2012 and 2013 the audience and the jury decisions coincided (Flo Kasearu and Jaanus Samma). I am glad that the latest Kõler Prize's audience award was won by Johannes Säre and his rather demanding installations that questioned the validity of neo-conceptualism. This could indicate that the Kõler Prize is attracting its own rather specific public. Despite the fact that the jury prize is given every year by different people, mainly an international group of curators and critics, they tend to favour large-scale spatial (Jevgeni Zolotko, 2011, Jaanus Samma, 2013 and Jass Kaselaan, 2014) or video installations (Flo Kasearu, 2012), which are able to fully engage viewers.

Four years is enough for the local art public to get used to a new art prize and take it seriously. Today's graduates of the Estonian Academy of Arts already have the Kõler Prize nominees' exhibitions and awards firmly included among the expectations regarding their future activities as artists. The prize has also become established in the media. There is, however, another aspect, so far not much discussed in the Estonian media, although the EKKM team has been aware of it all along. I mean the relatively successful introduction of contemporary Estonian art to quite ambitious

1. Jaanus Samma, winner of the Kõler Prize 2013 and the Audience Award. *The Loge*. Part of *Chairman. The Opera* installation. 2013. Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia.

2. Jass Kaselaan, winner of the Kõler Prize 2014. *Garden*. 2012. Installation. Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia.

3. Flo Kasearu, winner of the Kõler Prize 2012 and the Audience Award. *esc aka 21.05.09*. 2010. Video, HD. 14 min. Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia.

4. Sigrid Viir, nominee of the Kõler Prize 2011. *Routinecrusher, Wanderlust, Tablebear*, etc. 2009-2011. Pigment print, series of 9 photographs on wooden constructions. Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia.

5. Johannes Säre, the Audience Award of the Kõler Prize 2014. *Ascent to the Abyss of Lost Ideas*. 2014. Installation. Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia.

6. Marge Monko, honorary mention by the jury of the Kõler Prize 2012. *Calze e Collants*. 2012. Photoseries, installation. Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia.



## Köler Prize juries:

**2011** Iara Boubnova, director of the Contemporary Art Centre in Sofia, curator of Manifesta 4 and 2nd Moscow Biennale; Leevi Haapala, curator at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art; Valentinas Klimašauskas, curator at the CAC, Vilnius; Mark Raidpere, one of the internationally best known Estonian artists; Elena Sorokina, freelance curator based in Brussels.

**2012** Anda Rottenberg, Polish art historian and curator; Johan Lundh, curator residing in Berlin and Derry, director of Derry Centre for Contemporary Art; Mara Traumane, Latvian curator and theoretician residing in Berlin; Jevgeni Zolotko, winner of the Köler Prize 2011; Tõnis Saadoja, who won the Audience Award in 2011 replaced Marita Muukkonen who was suddenly taken ill.

**2013** Luis Silva, director of the Kunsthalle Lisbon; Virginija Januskeviciute, curator at the CAC, Vilnius; Marita Muukkonen, curator at the HIAP in Helsinki; Eugenio Viola, curator of the LARGE Madre, Museum of Contemporary Art of Donnaregina in Naples; Maria-Kristiina Soomre, adviser of art at the Ministry of Culture of Estonia and former curator at the Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn.

**2014** Jaanus Samma, Estonian artist and the winner of Köler Prize 2013; René Block, German gallerist and curator, currently the director of Kunsthall 44 Møen in Denmark; Magda Kardasz, Polish curator working at the Zacheta gallery in Warsaw; Taru Elfvig, director of the FRAME Foundation in Helsinki and the curator of Finnish Pavillion at the Venice biennale in 2015; Mari Laanemets, Estonian art historian and curator.

foreign curators, who have visited Estonia due to their work in the international juries of the Köler Prize: Iara Boubnova, Elena Sorokina, Johan Lundt, Anda Rottenberg, Louis Silva, Virginia Januskeviciute, Mara Traumane, Marita Muukkonen, Eugenio Viola, René Block, Magda Kardasz and Taru Elfvig are names that speak for themselves.

I can't offer specific numbers, but it seems that taking part in this exhibition has given a number of artists a kind of new start. A good example here is Dénes Farkas, who after the Köler Prize exhibition went through changes in his author's position and has successfully represented Estonia at the Venice Biennale. The next artist to represent Estonia at the Venice Biennale was a laureate of the Köler Prize in 2013, Jaanus Samma. Marge Monko, whose work was specially noted in 2012 by the Köler jury, has exhibited abroad on several occasions. Kristina Norman is representing Estonia at the current Manifesta in St Petersburg. The Köler Prize seems to make the nominees take stock of their previous work, and through the 'screen tests' encourages them to reflect and further develop their author's positions.

## Köler Prize nominees and prizewinners:

**2011** Jevgeni Zolotko - Grand Prix, Tõnis Saadoja - Audience Award, Dénes Farkas, Timo Toots, Sigrid Viir

**2012** Flo Kasearu - Grand Prix and Audience Award, Marge Monko - honorary mention by the jury, Johnson and Johnson, Marko Mäetamm, Margus Tamm

**2013** Jaanus Samma - Grand Prix and Audience Award, Karel Koplimets, Paul Kuimet, Kristina Norman, Triin Tamm

**2014** Jass Kaselaan - Grand Prix, Johannes Säre - Audience Award, Kiwa, Kärt Ojavee, Visible Solutions LLC

## Hanno Soans

(1974), freelance art critic based in Tallinn. Has worked as a contemporary art curator at the Art Museum of Estonia from 1997-2008 and has run independent projects with various artistic collectives. He was the curator of Estonian pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2005 representing Mark Raidpere.

# The one who breaks the rules wins in art

Eha Komissarov

There is nothing more complicated than following the call of those who research Eastern European art space to focus on similarities, coincidences and differences from a broader, regional perspective. Unity often turns out to be the fruit of imagination, although the researchers of post-World War II art innovation in the Baltic countries might now hope for a unifying link that supports art treatments regardless of ethnicity.

In 2007, Visvaldis Ziedīņš, a local artist and bohemian, died in the Latvian seaside town of Liepāja. Since 1964, he had been working as a set designer at a Liepāja theatre and decorated the shop windows in town. To some extent, Ziedīņš participated in Liepāja's art life without ever attracting wider attention. There were no traces of posthumous fame for some time. His legacy – ca 3000 works and an extensive archive – was unsuccessfully offered to the Latvian Art Museum and it was saved from destruction thanks to the initiative of the commercial gallery *Galerija 21*, which purchased the collection at a low price and decided to examine it properly. The art historian Ieva Kalniņa did the research. In 2012 she presented Ziedīņš's work, together with a catalogue, in the Arsenal exhibition hall in Riga. In 2014 the Kumu Art Museum organised the same exhibition, and in 2015 it will travel to the USA.

Ieva Kalniņa has compared the emergence of Ziedīņš's legacy to a cosmetic operation on the art history façade of the Soviet period, which avoided any changes, and she has forced art institutions for the first time to consider artists who did not represent the official art world.

Latvia is thus faced with the issue of accepting the first consistently non-formal artist and trying to find a place for him in Latvian national

1. Visvaldis Ziedīņš on the beach in Liepāja. 1960s. Silver gelatin print. 5.5 x 3 cm.

2. Visvaldis Ziedīņš. *Bust (Object)*. 1980s. Papier-mâché, sticks washed up by the sea, oil and artificial ivy. 71 x 45 x 30 cm.

3. Kaljo Põllu (1934–2010). *Festive Night*. 1968. Wood, cardboard, glass, metal. 47.4 x 58 x 12 cm. Art Museum of Estonia.

4. Kaljo Põllu. *8 x 7*. 1996. Tempera, paper. 47 x 40 cm. Art Museum of Estonia.

5. Kaljo Põllu. *To the Teacher*. 1971. Wood, glass, metal, tempera. 88 x 58.5 x 24.2 cm. Art Museum of Estonia.

6. Jüri Arrak. *Objects with Number Seven*. 1967. Assemblage, mixed media, oil, objets trouvés, cardboard. 69.5 x 40 cm. Art Museum of Estonia.



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art history, whereas for Estonia Ziedīņš offers numerous fascinating points of comparison. The structure of non-formal art in Soviet Estonia was infinitely more elaborate, and the number of artists who could be classified as non-formal was considerable. Anti-Soviet art experiments moved through Estonia in waves, from the 1950s–1960s every emerging generation added something that could be seen as opposing Soviet art, and thus various trends characterising Western art innovations played out here. There was naturally quite a bit of confusion in Estonia in determining who was a non-formal artist. If it were based on whether an artist belonged to a creative union or not, there would have been only one serious non-formal artist in Soviet Estonia: Raul Meel, who as an avant-gardist was not accepted into any unions. As Ziedīņš started in the 1950s, his work can be associated with the Tartu abstractionists of the same period, whose wish to institutionalise their collage experiments led to a great deal of criticism. The next stage in Ziedīņš's development, when he moved towards assemblage and object art, has points of contact with the first attempts in pop and op art, represented in the late 1960s by the group *Visarid*, which operated at Tartu University under the supervision of Kaljo Põllu.

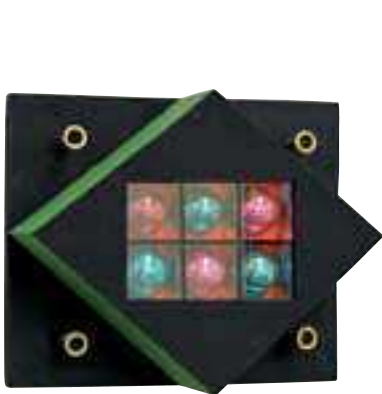
Compared with Estonia's narrowly specialised art experiments, Ziedīņš seems like a Latvian titan, and in his provincial solitude he managed to create an impressive number of original works. These are characterised by stylised figures, paintings inspired by abstractionism, and objects in the collage and ready-made techniques. Unfortunately for him, not one art trend in post-WW II Latvia supported this abundant flood of imagination. It is not easy to tackle this kind of

phenomenon in any art history or explain how Ziedīņš could have been so totally ignored and left to his own devices. After all, Latvia was not a Russian oblast, where a non-formal artist had to hide from the authorities.

We are linked with Ziedīņš by independent experiments in abstract art, surrealism and pop-art, where difficulties in trying to describe such attempts inevitably arise. If we are talking about completely replacing established cultural signs with new ones, they cannot generally be described without running into contradictions. It is therefore easiest to tackle Soviet art outside the official canon as a purely political discourse and ignore the aesthetic side. Consistent politicising often causes conflicts with the artists' own aspirations, confirmed by the unwillingness of Estonian, and more broadly all Soviet, women artists to associate their work with feminism. Non-formal art, whose emergence and development offer exciting material and are firmly connected with ideological opposition and dissidence, constitutes a total meta-phenomenon as an artefact. Non-formal art is an inconsistent structure, referring to almost all art phenomena standing outside the ruling cultural norm. Unfortunately, it is dealt with by systems that shun contradictions, for example art history, with its hierarchic structure, which only amplifies the incompleteness of the non-formal art structure.

Art innovation ceases to be a problem when an image of a maverick or barmy artist is sneaked into its structure, as probably happened in Liepāja with Ziedīņš. The work of a maverick does not evoke complaints about poor plastic thinking or lack of sensitivity in colour treatment. Since Boris Groys, the entire non-conformist art of the 1950s–1960s has been suspected of either imitating the West or lacking aesthetic competence. I would not be quite so harsh. Instead, I prefer to find a way to evaluate realisation reduced to the zero level, or objects made of local materials. How to be prepared for the fact that non-formal art always leads outside definitions?

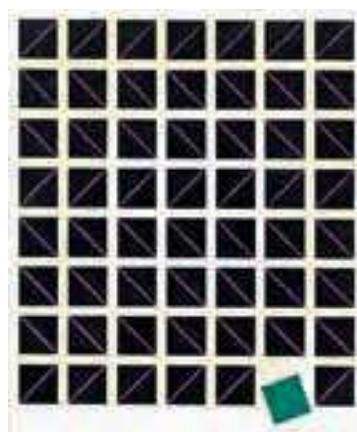
In the Baltic countries, the province participated in non-official art for a long period of time. It is increasingly difficult to understand this in Estonia; in his crazy biography, Ziedīņš in Latvia proved that it was perfectly feasible to cultivate non-official art over the course of 30 years if public attention were avoided. A local artist is a contradictory figure



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and has complicated relations with his environment. Connected with the activities of the local community, he is subjected to processes which deal with the identity development and myth creation of the local area. The local artist becomes synonymous with the critical artist when he takes an oppositional approach<sup>1</sup>.

The attitude of Ziediņš towards the Latvian art canon of the time was so critical that, after graduating from the Department of Decorative Design of the Liepāja School of Applied Art in 1964, he saw no point in continuing at the Academy of Art. Instead of the academy, Ziediņš began to cultivate his imagination and acquire esoteric knowledge. “I am experiencing a great crisis. I find myself between the constructed and the existing world. In the existing world, there’s a lot that’s not acceptable (any longer), and the constructed world is disrupted through contact with the existing one. Probably. If someone were listening to me talking about it (which I haven’t done), they’d regard me as mad.”<sup>2</sup>

The artist was thus forced to make do without any supporting structures and like-minded people. He kept a diary instead, where he interpreted his own work throughout the years. The authentic self-descriptions of this independent artist could well fill a gap in the non-formal art of the Baltic region. Unfortunately, no contemporary culture discourse takes seriously this brilliant artist who invented his entire body of work by himself. Critical art history, influenced by post-structuralism, fights against over-emphasising the romantic myth of the artist and the role of intuition, even when the actual practice contradicts the theory of the ‘artist’s death’. Ziediņš, who had no serious contacts with Western art, constructed his art universe from what was available, emphasised the importance of intuition and supported himself in every possible manner, for example by quoting in his diaries the later ideas of Tolstoj about the special status of the artist. To put art innovation into practice, Ziediņš went through the necessary purification stages, which led him to a bubbling diversity of art language. He absorbed the topics of the religious beyond and the universe, and tackled issues of the relationship between allegory and symbols.

There is a secret unity of ideas between Ziediņš and the first Estonian op and pop art cultivator Kaljo Põllu, although expressed in totally different ways. Both worked with



Visvaldis Ziediņš on the beach in Liepāja. 1960s. Silver gelatin print. 10.5 × 18 cm.



Visvaldis Ziediņš. *Optical Portrait Landscape*. 1966. Gouache on wood. 32 × 31 cm.

found objects and produced unique pieces of art out of mass culture residue. As was common with their generation, they expanded, in full seriousness, the boundaries of op and pop art. Faithful to the materials acquired from everyday surroundings that had no meaning as symbols, the artists produced compositions which ignited the interpretation process and thus created new associations and meanings. The 1960 generation only acknowledged art that led to assessment. This method, of course, had no success when artists influenced by the neo-avant-garde, such as Tõnis Vint and Raul Meel, began working with the concept of the empty room and began to appreciate the formal sides of a composition. The cheerful tradition of making art by gathering objects and making something out of them ended in Estonia in 1970. Põllu indeed afterwards focused on researching the mythological world of the Finno-Ugric boreal wing. Ziediņš had no competitors in Latvia and so could carry on, becoming immersed in primitive animism and magic, where his objects acquired totem-like features.

<sup>1</sup> In 1990 S. Rapoport tackled, in the context of Lithuania, the sociological profile of an artist operating in the provinces, focusing on establishing the negative features of provincialism. See Панопорт Сергей Самуилович, ““Синдром провинциальности” творческой интеллигенции”, [www.gumer.info/bibliotek\\_Buks/Culture/Article/Rap\\_Sindr.php](http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Culture/Article/Rap_Sindr.php)

<sup>2</sup> Entry of 20.02.1965 in Diary No.22 of Visvaldis Ziediņš. Ieva Kulakova (Kalniņa). *Movement. Visvaldis Ziediņš*. 2012, Galerija 21, p 154.

**Eha Komissarov** (1947), curator at the Kumu Art Museum; art critic, specialised in modern and contemporary art.





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## The end of architecture: VENICE BIENNIAL 2014

Triin Ojari

Architecture exhibitions certainly constitute a special theme in the history of modern architecture. They can be associated with modernism as a self-establishing programme which required both technological and communicative support all through the 20th century. The links of modernism with open media space, the development of the advertising industry and the emergence of communication strategies have been extensively researched. The apogee of all that was of course the fact that in the 1980s postmodernism found itself in the service of the desire-machine of the commercial media industry: architecture became a staged background, symbolic capital and part of the star system. The first architecture biennial in Venice in 1980 was thus a crucial event, connected with typical tendencies of its era. The first biennials became real manifestos of postmodernist performance architecture. Despite diverse main themes and world famous architects-curators, architecture biennials have to some extent followed the art biennials' format, which centres on the author: the exhibitions have been mainly about architects, their creative egos and fantastic ideas, occasionally presenting exhilarat-

1. Republic of Korea, winner of the Golden Lion. *Crow's Eye View: The Korean Peninsula*. 14th International Architecture Exhibition, Fundamentals, la Biennale di Venezia.

2. France, special mention. *Modernity: promise or menace?* 14th International Architecture Exhibition, Fundamentals, la Biennale di Venezia.

3. Reign of Bahrain. *Fundamentalists and Other Arab Modernisms*. 14th International Architecture Exhibition, Fundamentals, la Biennale di Venezia.

4. Latvia. *Unwritten*. 14th International Architecture Exhibition, Fundamentals, la Biennale di Venezia.

5. Rem Koolhaas, Director of the 14th International Architecture Exhibition.



The biennale shop, where the main elements of architecture have been efficiently turned into goods.

ing performances in real exhibition spaces. Biennials have conveyed new information about the state of various cities, the birth of grand projects and the results of architecture competitions; remarkable installations and multimedia performances have been created here, but they have always been architects' tales for other architects, a professionally specific vision of the situation of the society and space where we live. The latest architecture biennial, the 14th, considerably shifted this perspective. Biennials have uttered apocalyptic and social-critical predictions before, but they have never before been presented in such a cynical and brilliant way, the architect's position has never been abandoned before, architecture has never been taken apart down to its basic elements and nobody has ever before said that we were left with only these banal and mundane elements.

When the Dutchman Rem Koolhaas, one of the most charismatic architects in the world and possessing a very sharp tongue, was named the curator of this year's biennial, everybody's expectations shot up. This is a man whose absence from nearly all the biennials of the last decade has been regarded as both telling capriciousness and criticism of worshipping star architects. Nevertheless, on the brink of his 70th birthday he agreed to be the scriptwriter and director of the world's biggest and most prestigious architecture event. There is no need whatsoever for Koolhaas to prove anything to the world or acquire personal notoriety, as his entire career is characterised by an extraordinary visionary talent, excellent communication skills and an ability to remain critical of the whole society even in a situation where as an architect of huge projects he has accepted commissions from big corporations or (e.g. in the case of China's state broadcasting building) from totalitarian



regimes. Cynicism towards society and honesty towards today's situation of architecture have always been his trademarks.

Naturally enough, Koolhaas chose his favourite theme for the exhibition: modernism, including its meaning in history, global programme and today's situation. Koolhaas has always been fascinated by the impact of technology on architecture. In his book *Delirious New York*, published already in 1978, he wrote about the lift, escalator and air-conditioner as the most significant elements in the development of modern architecture. At the Venice display titled *Fundamentals*, every room was dedicated to a different element of architecture: doors, windows, facades, walls, floors, toilets, corridors etc. The sub-text showed how much contemporary architecture is shaped by these standard details, a fact about which architects and the history of architecture have remained silent. In an interview conducted in connection with the biennial by Charles Jencks, the grand old man of postmodernism and former teacher of Koolhaas, he summarised the exhibition as one big narrative. The whole galaxy of elements showed that everything in building is getting thinner and lighter, and everything ends up with total digitalisation. Iconography of any kind and symbolism disappear, only light materials and technology remain. In the same interview, Rem Koolhaas himself commented that architecture was amazingly rigid and unprepared to realise that things had changed ever since the late 19th century. He said that the most important aspect in the history of architecture was the mechanical side, e.g the lift and the air-conditioner. Half a century later, the importance of these things was still not properly understood. All those ventilation pipes, suspended ceilings, façade materials, surveillance technology and other stuff filling the rooms in the main pavilion in Giardini were not an insignificant side theme or an engineering addition, but precisely the things that have changed the essence of modern architecture. "From now on, architecture is these mechanical systems," said Koolhaas. He added that the systems were becoming increasingly digitalised, controlled and regulated by virtual means, while architecture was becoming more like a hybrid world of databases. A world where the human dimension might well one day disappear altogether: "Be careful. One day the houses might betray

you." *Fundamentals* was both an ironic and critical exhibition, and was displayed in an appetising format that attracted crowds: a cleverly assembled film programme, and diversely and fascinatingly designed theme rooms, where viewers were informed of the empirical relationship between the main truths of architecture, which they perceived via different senses. Truth should not be sought in theoretical treatises or declarations of the architectural world; it is instead right here, around us, in our everyday rooms, inside walls and under floor coverings, in the kitchen and in the bathroom.

At one of the discussions that took place in the biennial's opening turmoil, the architectural historian Aaron Betsky, the curator of the last but one biennial, cautioned that dismantling architecture into parts is tedious and complete nonsense from the point of view of the biennial: an exhibition of architecture should convey an idea of the experimental, new ideas and the future. Besides, a biennial that presents only anonymous architecture, suspended ceilings and toilet bowls, actually lifts onto the pedestal just one name and one man: the curator Rem Koolhaas. This was a biennial about vision and ideas, but it was also the vision of one man and his team, their *tour de force* through history, through the despised and mundane, through modernity. Even Zaha Hadid, a symbol of bravura star architecture, must obey the dictates of ceiling or façade manufacturers, noted Betsky. Architecture cannot be reduced to pure art, an escapist exercise in thinking or a theoretical formula. Modernism made architecture a field closely intertwined with the world of technology, where in the 21st century the role and power of architects has become nearly non-existent.

### **Estonian e-modernity**

Koolhaas tackled the basic elements himself and suggested to the national pavilions the topic of accepting and absorbing modernism: the common and special features this essentially universal paradigm produced internationally. What kind of symbiosis emerged when the typical and the local met, at the intersection of the regulated environment and traditional space? Following the given topic in national pavilions was amazingly unanimous, while each demonstrated its singularity, its special nature arising from the local context. Every nation except Estonia, which defined

### **Triin Ojari**

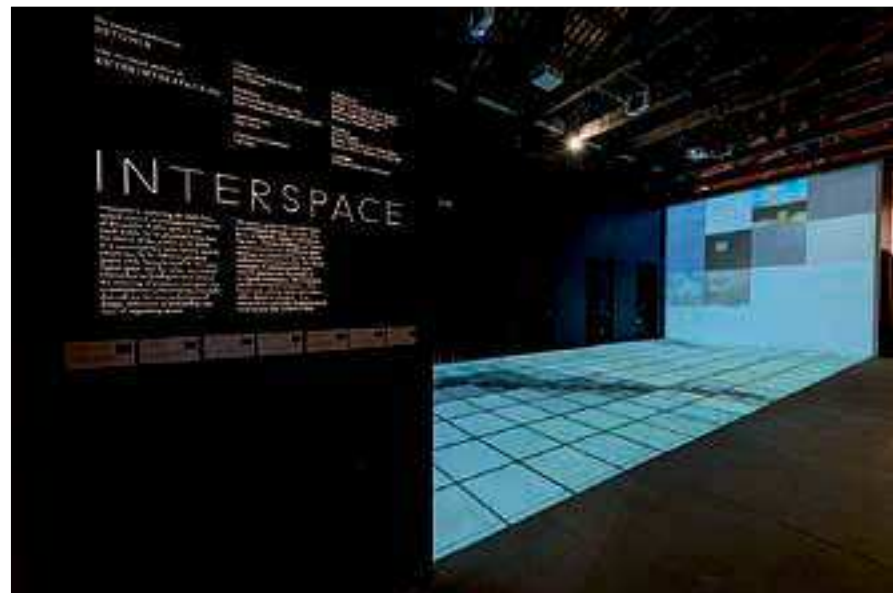
(1974), art and architecture historian. From 2001-2013 she was editor in chief of the Estonian architectural review *MAJA*. In 2014, she was appointed Director of the Museum of Estonian Architecture. Her research subjects have included the 20th century modern architecture, the housing and urban planning of the Soviet period, contemporary architecture and architectural writing.

the local context the other way round, in a universal key that operates with the means of digital technology. The Estonian curators Johan Tali, Johanna Jõekalda and Siim Tuksam left no room for doubt: the e-state is our new normality, and the specific nature of our space does not rely, for example, on climate, rich culture, historical legacy or dull disposition. We talk about space at the level of the global network and by means of digital tools; our space is created by algorithms, programmed without leaving the screen. The Estonian display *Interspace* examined the digital through the public sphere. According to the curators, we are at a breaking point, where we increasingly relate to the public space through real-time information overload, the internet of things and social networks. Designing a physical space depends on its digital equivalent. Central control is replaced by public participation, a narrow group of decision-makers by the (digital) community, and new design technology organises space in a different way. Koolhaas talked about the digital aspect and the blending of technology and architecture in a rather warning tone, whereas the eyes of the young Estonian curators sparkled and their brisk attitude, ready to change the world, dripped with optimism. We live in several spaces at the same time, the amount of information and the possibilities of processing and using it grow at staggering speed, and our psyche and understanding of the physical world depend on the development of the virtual environment. Screen projections were displayed on the walls and floor of the Estonian exhibition hall, and the 'virtual reality' shaped itself according to the movements and clicks of the visitors in the physical room. The real focus of the exhibition was actually on interspace, in-between space which lacks the features of three-dimensional space and the structure of the algorithmic world. In the curators' minds, this is free space where everything is possible. Even if in reality the freedom of the digital era is deceptive and we should not lose our critical attitude in exalting the user revolution, this new non-material space has begun to influence our physical environment in a way difficult to imagine at the moment, let alone visualise it at an exhibition. Regrettably, there were problems with visual attractiveness in our pavilion. Still, if all this is not absorbing modernism, then what is it?



Central Pavilion. *Elements of Architecture. Window* – Brooking National Collection. 14th International Architecture Exhibition, *Fundamentals*, la Biennale di Venezia.

Estonia. *Interspace*. 14th International Architecture Exhibition, *Fundamentals*, la Biennale di Venezia. Below right: Estonian display and the curators (from left) Johan Tali, Johanna Jõekalda and Siim Tuksam



# INTERSPACE - a space where everything is possible

3 questions to Johanna Jõekalda,  
Johan Tali and Siim Tuksam

1. The 16th Venice Architecture Biennale has been going on for a few months. Are you satisfied with how your project *Interspace* has been realized in the context of the Biennale? Is this what you had in mind?

We are very pleased. Preparations lasted for over one year, and everything started with an essay presented to the competition. Although the initial tentative questions produced some amazing conclusions, we generally remained faithful to the original idea and theme all through the extensive process. We believe we achieved a certain level of maturity and focus in the course of our research in understanding the connections between digital and physical space. The Venice installation is, after all, fundamental, simple and honest. We did not aim to offer fixed answers or visions of the future, but to construct a realist experience of how a public space operates when it flirts with technology – with all its good and bad aspects. We knowingly retreated from design ideas that would have produced a poster exhibition based on facts and the time axis in accordance with the main curator's call, because we wanted to show visitors' personal interpretations and unpredictable reactions as part of the display: human behavior, after all, has a huge significance in describing public places. It is nice to see how visitors to the biennale, with its rather museum-like format, get flustered in the Estonian pavilion as they have to step out of the comfort zone. And it was even nicer to see at the opening an enormous number of Estonian and foreign architects, whose presence and encouraging words constituted great recognition and support for us.

2. Have you had any feedback or interpretations from viewers? Do they correspond to what you intended? What is the difference from displays in other pavilions?

We wanted viewers to find things for themselves, and thus we 'programmed' the pavilion with various layers of meaning. A visitor inter-

ested in history can approach the display through the 'information spaces' on the walls. According to the specific interest, the viewer can then find information (on a wall) about how various power arrangements have established themselves in the last one hundred years in the public space in Tallinn, or how the same public space has developed thanks to citizens' initiatives. Visitors with a more innovative nature may focus on the 'data landscape' projected on the floor, which invites them to think about the future of public space in the surveillance society. In addition, the exhibition has a model describing the physical space of the area and a live transmission depicting the digital space of the area in question. The pavilion space is charged with the same field of meanings in several different ways: this makes visitors think along how to create maximum freedom in a public space and how much control is needed to achieve this. As visitors have said, this line of thinking is indeed reached through the historical dimension projected on the walls, the surveillance mechanism projected on the floor and through the virtual pavilion constructed as coded into the internet's digital space ([www.enterinterspace.ee/en](http://www.enterinterspace.ee/en)).

Supported by digital space, the Estonian display demonstrates a test model of a new public space: it is an attempt to show the necessity and possibilities of participation-based processes in an open space. As expected, various opinions have been expressed. It has been fascinating to observe, in some reviews, a certain confusion and yearning for a more classical exhibition. This kind of confusion and yearning can be compared with emotions provoked by digital systems in conservative users faced with any new improvement ... Some older Estonian architects have not agreed that the tackling of the theme is actually relevant from an architectural point of view and feel that problems in this field should not be left to the IT sector. Nevertheless, we have received a lot of praise from professionals from all over the world who deal with digital architecture and its theory for managing to emphasise such a topical theme at this kind of biennial.

3. What are your new challenges? What have you learned from the biennial?

The biennial project has given us a lot of new experience. It was the first really big, independent project, so we decided to do most things together. We tried to make use of all the opportunities open to us within the framework of the biennial. The research carried out with students of the Estonian Academy of Arts and IT College was very synergistic; the workshop at the end turned out to be a real challenge and a test of knowledge, where we constructed, together with the students, an interactive test installation using the available means; our pavilion was just a part of a bigger system, and we tried to follow the work of other curators and introduced our idea to Rem Koolhaas's team both in Rotterdam and in Venice. At the same time, we had to creatively manage the budget difficulties. For example, via crowdfunding we organised a campaign for the virtual pavilion, which would have been impossible to realise otherwise. It was also necessary to constantly update the book for the exhibition, while also arranging a seminar that was part of the opening programme. We invited top people from digital architecture and its theory, built up the pavilion and promoted it ... It was the first such activity for us and we are immensely grateful that we were trusted enough to do this. It has been a marvellous experience. Our future plans are still not fully determined at the moment.





City Form Lab. *The Singapore University of Technology and Design library pavilion*. Dover Campus, Dover Rd, Singapore. Design Team: Andres Sevtšuk, Raul Kalvo.



# An education

Raul Kalvo

1. Raul Kalvo. *Aerogramm*. Ongoing research and art project visualizing aviation, flu and dataflow.

2. Raul Kalvo. *Telephone numbers from 5M to 6M*. Raul Kalvo: In 2009 I tried to find out what telephone numbers are being used in Estonia. Black pixels are the numbers in use and white are free. The upper left corner is number 50 00000 and the right corner below is 60 00000. It is interesting to mention that some floating numbers belong to embassies.

## Raul Kalvo

(1983), born in Tartu. Graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in the field of architecture and urban planning. Has worked at the architectural office 3+7 Architects, at the Estonian Academy of Arts and at the Singapore University of Technology and Design. In addition has cooperated within various smaller projects. See more at: <http://www.inphysica.com/raulkalvo/>

Your MA work, the *Aerogramm* project, was shown in 2011 at the Hobusepea Gallery in Tallinn. The curator, Maarin Mürk, noted in the introduction to the exhibition that “the first thing you notice about Raul Kalvo’s drawings is their aesthetic side: the whole world map is covered with a fine network of rays; the rays gather at one point and then separate, in order to come together somewhere else.” You convey a lot of information here by packing it into fine networks.

Raul Kalvo: *Aerogramm* opened many themes for me, some of which are very practical, and others more philosophical. There are a lot of data about aviation, luckily quite easily accessible. Even if we look at flights only as connections, there are at least 7000 aircraft in the air at any given moment. All of that data makes you realise that the list in text form does not reveal much. Hence a very practical question: who should deal with the data, and how should they be presented? It is logical to link the data in a geographical context. A background system emerges, and no aircraft can exist outside it. The geographical background has a clear visual outlet via a map. It is necessary to make information perceptible in any kind of mapping. Mapping can also be used in other situations: colours, for example, fall into a spectrum, which is easy to measure in wavelengths. If a colour is missing, it will be obvious. This model also offers an opportunity to move from one colour to the next. The same goes for aeroplanes: it’s obvious when there is heavy traffic. All flights must move across a map smoothly. Mapping as a method or even a metaphor has been important to me in many subsequent projects, as it offers clarity and understanding about data.

As for *Aerogramm*, I often think about travel, the meaning of which has changed considerably due to aviation. Before there was extensive flying, travel was going from one place to the next, whereas now travel seems to be about staying in the same place. Travelling as an activity has disappeared. By quietly moving from one culture to another, one could gradually adapt to time and climate. Now we arrive before we even begin to go anywhere physically. Arriving at an airport gate, waiting for the flight, you already sense the cultural and social environment of your destination.

In cooperation with Andres Sevtšuk, you produced the architectural solution for the library pavilion of the Singapore University of Technology and Design. Would you tell us about this cooperation?

In spring 2012 I joined the City Form Lab, operating at the Singapore University of Technology and Design, where our first project was the addition to the library. It gradually evolved into a huge project: a pavilion with a crustal structure. The project involved thorough research, which tackled a geometric solution in which a double-wall structure would make it possible to construct crustal surfaces so that all details were cut out two-dimensionally. The solution made it possible to build rather complicated structures using simple and available means. We also constructed a number of software tools, mainly tools to model complex forms, which according to the general form parameters interpreted geometry in terms of the unique details necessary to realise the building. We therefore did not actually design any details, only large finite geometry.

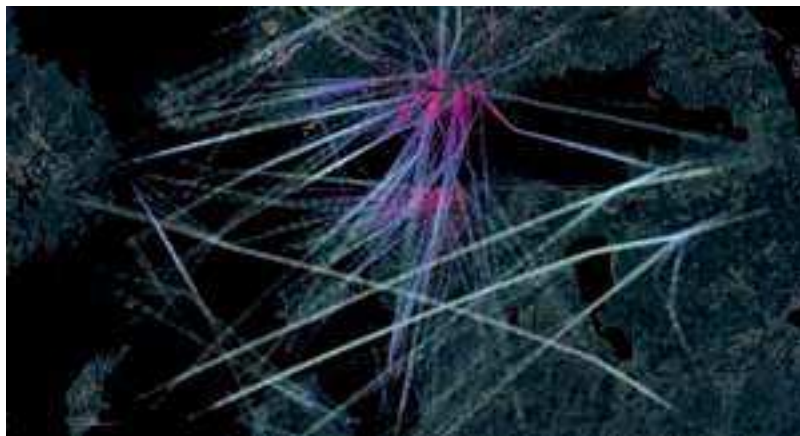
Besides modelling, other significant software tools help maintain and offer information to highly diverse parties. An architect needs a precise spatial model to make aesthetic decisions. An engineer needs lines to calculate loads. A model needs surface spreading that is easy to fold and glue. A producer needs typewritten (G-Code) cut files with illustrative drawings. Despite the building’s unique and elaborate form, the builders of our pavilion did not need drawings. The aim was to make the assembling of the pavilion simple. How could we make the assembling of a structure with seven thousand unique details logical and understandable to anyone? To find a solution, we gathered all the necessary information details, which were cut into the details in the factory. The assembling proceeded smoothly, as it was possible to focus on one detail at a time, and there was no chance of making a mistake.

One of the peculiarities of architecture is that even if you have one compact model, it will be interpreted. You just have to hope that after all the interpretations by various parties everything falls into its proper place in the physical world.

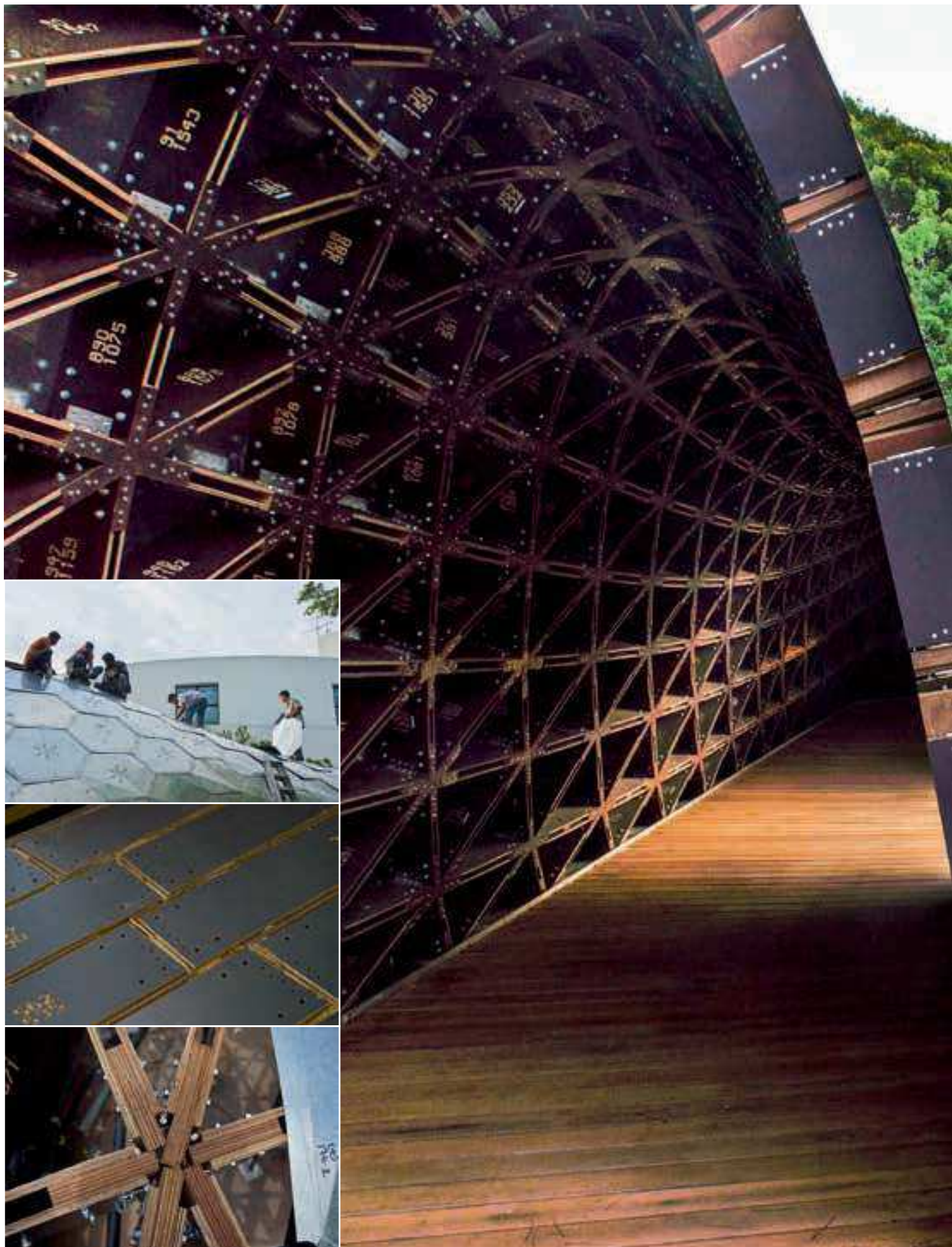
### What are your next big (joint) projects?

We are currently working on very practical projects on a larger scale. One of them is software for the design-friendly programme Rhino3D to research urban networks (roads, streets and corridors). It will bring many GIS functions over into the design environment, which will help unite analytical and design methods.

1







City Form Lab. *The Singapore University of Technology and Design library pavilion*. Design Team: Andres Sevtšuk, Raul Kalvo.





## Picture in a museum. HERBERT LUKK

Eero Epner

In March 1919, a newspaper published a few columns mixed in with adverts. “It is not right and proper that we send off the first few vital intellectual forces of our small young nation, which is only beginning to get its bearings, straight into the line of fire,” wrote Ants Laikmaa, one of the founders of Estonian 20th century modernism. “This is not right and proper housekeeping.”

Laikmaa’s fury is understandable. Several of his students had been killed during the previous few months in the War of Independence, and he had considered these students to be a crucial addition to the still modest number of Estonian artists. One of those killed was Herbert Lukk. Although every death in war is unexpected, Lukk’s was even more so. He was not one of the inexperienced school-boys, full of enthusiasm and national ideals who had rushed into battle. He was a professional soldier, having served for years in the Russian army, in charge of elaborate machine guns. A few months before going to war, his

good friend the artist August Jansen painted his portrait. Although barely 25, Lukk seems strangely grim in the picture, bearded, looking down, serious. No need to believe in omens, but less than two hundred days later the reconnaissance group led by him came under attack by an armoured train. Lukk is the only one who was killed.

Among the artists who arrived in art in the 1910s, attracted attention and died shortly afterwards, Lukk is part of the destruction that accompanies the older art history of Estonia. Besides hundreds of artworks that were lost – in wars, fires, evacuations and bombing raids, from homes, museums, studios and public places – dozens of artists were lost as well. The Estonian ‘art world’ emerged in the 1900s, and there were perhaps only a dozen or so people who established its foundation. They nevertheless quickly managed to create an environment through studio schools, exhibitions and the like, where a number of young talents appeared as a second phase of the process.

Herbert Lukk. *View over Tallinn towards the harbour (View of Tallinn)*. 1918. Oil, canvas. 60 × 70 cm. Art Museum of Estonia.

And then almost all of them died, some of tuberculosis, some of war wounds, and some of a mixture of tuberculosis and hunger. A whole circle of artists gone before they even turned thirty.

It is rather pointless to ask, but I will anyway: what would have happened if death had not intervened? Would Estonian art history have been different?

Although the 'artists of the second phase' often developed under the instruction of the first generation modernists (Ants Laikmaa taught most of them), they were by no means inferior imitators. Their handwriting was fresh, different, and raced in new directions. It was somehow more refined, more intertextual, international, critical and conceptual. Herbert Lukk's contribution would perhaps have been the most unexpected. Compared with other young artists, he was very clearly a painter. The history of Estonian art is mainly the history of painting. From the early 20th century until the early 1960s, with after-effects reaching into the early 1980s, Estonian painting was colour-focused, aspiring towards harmony and wholeness of composition, romantic, work-consuming, perpetuating motifs of nature and emphasising the sensitivity of impressionist subjects to the surrounding world. Lukk was different, and if he had had a chance to influence the local art history more strongly, maybe we would have had an additional stream here, or perhaps the entire mainstream would have been different.

This dramatic introduction to Herbert Lukk is almost the only way to talk about him as a human person, because we know next to nothing about him. We have no idea why Lukk painted as he painted. He was born in 1892, the son of a country parish clerk, and was introduced to art at the age of 18, when two artists decided to make some money as his father's assistants: Jansen and Anton Starkopf. Lukk had had no contact with art before, but he quickly developed a taste for it and they produced art together, associated with cultural circles, and even performed plays for fun in the more intimate home milieu (under Jansen's guidance, Lukk for example played Kalev, the father of the Estonian ancient hero). Art contacts became closer through family ties: Lukk married Starkopf's sister.

In autumn 1911 the trio parted. Starkopf travelled to Munich to study, Jansen to St. Petersburg, and Lukk went to Helsinki,

where he studied painting for four years, but we know nothing about this period. We know almost nothing about him in general, just a few fragments of recollections, and a brief officer's file in the archive. In the file, his biography fits on one A4 page. We learn that in October 1915 Lukk was conscripted into the Russian army and served in St Petersburg, Narva, Riga and Paide. He was allowed to requisition grain and carry a Brauning gun. There is no other information.

It is curious that while on active service Lukk exhibited his work. It is not known how he managed to combine a machine gun with a brush. The even bigger mystery is what made him paint and why he painted the way he did.

In March 1918 Lukk was discharged from the army. In the following eight months, Lukk earned his place in Estonian art history: he worked, painted and took part in exhibitions. The exhibitions were different than they are today. Instead of fetishizing an individual work, the walls were covered with pictures like wallpaper. One exhibition might well consist of several hundred paintings, but Lukk's pictures stood out. Reviews appeared about them. Critics babbled about 'lush brush-strokes' and 'seeking sunshine'. From today's perspective, it is quite clear that there was something in Lukk's art that was totally different.

Okay, maybe not 'totally different'. Emphasising radical differences is, after all, one of the most banal methods of art marketing. Lukk was the child of his time, but not really a child of his environment. At a time when other Estonian artists mixed colours and painted 'fascinating' under-brush, Lukk also focused on colour, but his approach was far more conceptual. Instead of nature, he focussed on towns, instead of interesting angles his were banal, and his colours do not mix according to the emotional state of the subject at the moment, but try to capture something objective. Geometrical rhythms do not reveal the artist's inner being, but instead resemble colour spot poetry à la Damien Hirst: the focus is firmly on colour itself, autonomous and independent, objective and real. Colour is here as matter, as an object, and not as spiritual expression. A cool, almost conceptual approach to art, and a romantic, almost heroic biography: Herbert Lukk's place in Estonian art history was shaped by the integrating points of such contrasts.

## Herbert Lukk

(1892-1919), Estonian painter, cultivated Jugendstil and neo-impressionist art. Was killed in the Estonian War of Independence near Narva.

## Eero Epner

(1978), art historian; dramaturge at Theatre NO99.



# How to NOT narrate architecture

Eva Näripea

I was quite excited when about a year ago it was announced that the students of the Baltic Film and Media School (BFM) would produce a series of shorts on contemporary Estonian architecture. 'Finally!', I thought. My expectations were raised even higher when I read the following introduction on the web page of the Union of Estonian Architects:

'How to present architecture? How to make people outside architectural circles understand it or to be interested in it? [---] How to address someone who encounters architecture daily, both in the office and at home, working or resting? How to communicate an architect's visions to them?

How to create an interface between architecture and cinema? And to do it so that architecture isn't merely a random decoration, but rather an active agent, as in Jacques Tati's *Playtime* or *Mon Oncle*, or in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*?<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, the six shorts completed by the students of BFM did little to live up to these expectations, as in comparison with Tati's and Kubrick's complex features they came across as empty, replete with all kinds of cinematic and narrative stereotypes, and easily forgettable. The above-quoted introduction called for a mode of presentation which would provide more substance than just 'carefully chosen camera angles; straight, optically manipulated vistas', yet in most of the films the neat cinematography is clearly the dominant element of the representational regime, perhaps especially so in *Flow and Ebb* (*Tõus ja mõõn*, directed and written by Anna Hints). Close-ups of wooden or concrete surfaces, flashy angles and meticulously framed views of buildings and their surroundings might indeed present viewers with a certain sense of contemporary architecture as desirably elegant and modern, and perhaps even give clues to the sensitive relationship with

their immediate environment. However, the films did not succeed (or weren't interested) in digging deeper into the layers of social, cultural and historical relevance and associations, or did so by means of hackneyed images and stale stereotypes. For example, the author of *Air Castle* (*Õhuloss*, directed and written by Marleen Roosna), which portrays the Seaplane Harbour, chose to include a rather off-topic and banal reference to the sinking of the *Titanic*, yet paid no attention to the significant fact that the impressive hangars of the harbour, now housing the Maritime Museum, were the world's first reinforced concrete shell structure. *The Third* (*Kolmas*, directed by Maria Reinup, written by Greta Varts and Maria Reinup), filmed in the Tartu Health Care College, verges on the pornographic with its objectified presentation of a sexy ginger-haired nurse, without considering the controversial nature of such an image. While *Zone* (*Tsoon*, directed by Andrew Bond), presenting the home of the Baltic Film and Media School, is somewhat amusing in its paraphrase of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (Craik, 1979), the association between the film and the film school in Tallinn, located quite close to the place where Tarkovsky shot part of *Stalker*, is rather predictable and clichéd, especially considering Tarkovsky's position as a sort of 'holy cow'<sup>2</sup> in the local film scene. By the same token, *The House That Reflects History* (*Maja, mis peegeldab ajalugu*, directed and written by Doris Tääker), introducing the exquisite architecture of Narva College of the University of Tartu, conjures up quite predictable associations with the city's glorified and long-lost Baroque history, instead of taking up more intriguing and pressing issues of its present (including those related directly to, and addressed by, the building's design, both architectural and interior).



*Flow and Ebb* (*Tõus ja mõõn*). 6'16". The film is about the nominee of the 2012 Cultural Endowment's architecture award: Boatshed of the Vilsandi Marine Rescue Station. Director-screenwriter: Anna Hints [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjMBejtykOs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjMBejtykOs).



*Air Castle (Õhuloss)*. 4'10".  
Director-screenwriter:  
Marleen Roosna.  
The film is about the  
nominee of the 2012 Cultural  
Endowment's architecture  
award: Seaplane Hangars.  
[www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=B-WDgCG-djo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-WDgCG-djo).



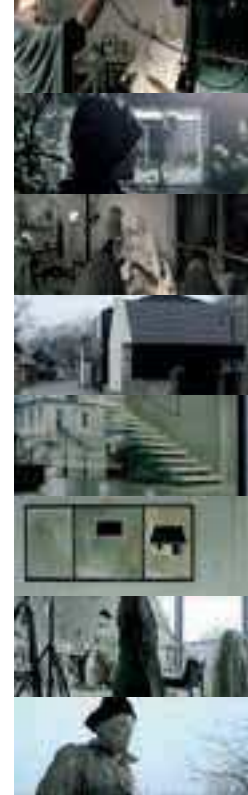
*The Third (Kolmas)*. 6'43".  
Director Maria Reinup.  
The film is about the  
nominee of the 2012 Cultural  
Endowment's architecture  
award: Tartu Health Care  
College. [www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=3lrbi0hJSPE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lrbi0hJSPE)



*Zone (Tsoon)*. 7'35".  
Director-screenwriter:  
Andrew Bond.  
The film is about the  
nominee of the 2012 Cultural  
Endowment's architecture  
award: the Baltic Film And  
Media School. [www.youtube.  
com/watch?v=v3coXznoBcl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3coXznoBcl)



*The House That Reflects History  
(Maja, mis peegeldab ajalugu)*.  
6'22". Director-screenwriter:  
Doris Tääker.  
The film is about the  
nominee of the 2012 Cultural  
Endowment's architecture  
award: Narva College of the  
University of Tartu.  
[www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=yVA0u-jBD6Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVA0u-jBD6Y)



*Design Lighthouse  
(Disainimajakas)*. 4'21".  
Director-screenwriter: Janis  
Rizhovs.  
The film is about the  
Kuressaare Regional Training  
Centre.  
[www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=x-lg5urMfZA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-lg5urMfZA)

All in all, these shorts demonstrate a striking – and dangerous – lack of critical thinking and testify to a gravely worrying tendency to avoid asking uncomfortable questions and to shy away from presenting viewpoints that go against the grain of the socio-cultural mainstream. What they also demonstrate is an apparent inadequacy of instruction: while the ignorance of students might be excused due to youth and inexperience, the inability of their teachers to encourage them to pay

due attention to artistic research (of both historical resources and subject matter), to go against the flow and to acquire a critical edge comparable to Tati and Kubrick is certainly not. In marked contrast to both Jacques Tati and Stanley Kubrick's works, these films come across as shallow commercials, promoting the dominant discourses and following tediously 'safe' modes of representation, despite the fact that their subject matter provides ample potential for just the opposite.

- 1 [http://www.arhliit.ee/  
arhitektuurifilmid/](http://www.arhliit.ee/arhitektuurifilmid/)
- 2 See also Karin Paulus, Arhitektuurist, sisuliselt, filmikeeles. – Sirp, 27.02.2014.

## Eva Näripea

(1980), is the author of *Estonian Cinescapes: Spaces, Places and Sites in Soviet Estonian Cinema (and Beyond)* (Estonian Academy of Arts, 2011) and has taught the course *Modern Architecture Meets Cinema at the University of Tartu* (2009) and at the Estonian Academy of Arts (2008, 2013, available at [www.e-o.ee/  
repository/otsing?@=8aot#euni\\_  
repository\\_10895](http://www.e-o.ee/repository/otsing?@=8aot#euni_repository_10895)).

# SOUND GAMES. Interview with **Vladimir Tarasov** by Kati Ilves

**1. You were born and raised in Archangelsk, a city in the north of Russia near the White Sea. There you started to play drums and take an interest in jazz. What was Archangelsk like back in those days and what brought you to jazz and the drums? Why the drums, instead of some other instrument, such as piano or violin.**

Performance-lecture  
by Vladimir Tarasov on  
27 September 2013 at the  
Kumu auditorium, Tallinn.

I was five or six when I first heard Louis Armstrong's orchestra and his voice. It was impossible for me not to fall in love with that music, and for some reason I decided straight away that I wanted to be a drummer. At that time Archangelsk was probably the biggest commercial port in the country, so there were a lot of foreigners in town, who brought us records and written material on jazz. There was actually a similar situation in Tallinn. Plus we listened regularly to the jazz hour on the Voice of America radio station, every night at 23.15. All of us jazz lovers were able to meet the host of that programme, Willis Conover, at the 1967 Tallinn Jazz Festival. To this day it remains a mystery to us how Heinrich Schultz managed to organise such a top rate festival, for which of course he was never forgiven by the Soviet bosses.

**2. Later you went to St Petersburg to study at the conservatory, from which you were eventually expelled because of your interest in jazz music. What was the music scene like in St Petersburg then, and what was allowed/prohibited by the authorities or inside the conservatory?**

St Petersburg was considered the city of Dixieland, and there were a lot of good bands playing that music, maybe because the authorities in the city forbade any manifestations of more modern styles of music. At the conservatory one couldn't even mention Arnold Schoenberg's name, although by that time he was already recognised throughout the world.





**3. You moved to Vilnius, Lithuania in 1968. Was the attitude toward sound culture there different from what you experienced in Russia (St Petersburg)? What made you stay in Vilnius and not go back to Russia or escape abroad?**

I was invited to play with the jazz orchestra of the Vilnius Philharmonic, and it was not difficult to become part of the team, and part of the cultural community of the city, since all the musicians, writers and artists, I mean those who didn't want to serve the authorities, lived their own lives, completely independent of Party life. It was a small intellectual underground, in which everyone was closely linked and knew similar people in all the large cities and republics of the Soviet Union. From the Philharmonic I transferred to the Radio and Television orchestra, and then to the Vilnius Symphonic Philharmonic. So in Lithuania I 'grew up', and it became my home. Ganelin and I met in Vilnius, and we formed the Ganelin-Tarasov-Chekasin Trio. We performed in many countries, all over the world, with that trio, and released a lot of records and CDs in the West.

**4. You visited the other Baltic states several times during the Soviet period. Compared to Russia and Lithuania, what was the music/jazz scene here in Estonia like? Whom did you meet and collaborate with while playing here? Which events did you participate in?**

In the Soviet period, they watched television from Helsinki in every kitchen in Tallinn, and it was of course a Western outpost for non-official artists and musicians. Of course there were wonderful friends and acquaintances, such as Tõnu Naissoo, with whom I have often played, Rein Rannap, Raivo Tammik, Valter Ojakäär, Tiit Paulus, Jaak Sooäär and the indefatigable, endlessly energetic Anne Erm, not to mention Tõnis Vint, Jüri Arrak, Sirje Runge and Raul Meel. All of these artists are the pride and identity of Estonia. I have given many concerts in Estonia, mostly in Tallinn, but also in Tartu and Pärnu... The last concert was several years ago on a tour with the Joseph Nadj Theatre from France.

**5. What brought you to the visual arts in the 1990s?**

It was of course the influence of many friends, most of whom are artists, and in particular Ilya Kabakov, whom I worked with in the 1990s. Then I began to work independently. I define my works to myself as 'Sound Games'. After all, I came into this area from music, specifically from jazz, so in my works I leave space for improvisation within the bounds of the given idea.

Raul Keller. *Torpedos in.* 2011. Sound installation. Courtesy of the artist. Exhibition *Out of Sync – Looking back at the History of Sound Art* at the Kumu Art Museum, 2013.



**6. Sound art, as we understand this (still complex) term today, developed from different roots in visual and sound culture. 'Sound Games' installations can be linked to the sound art phenomenon. What are your feelings about this label ('sound art')?**

I know that a lot of art historians and critics try to divide this art form into musical and sound dimensions, but my view is that if there is a visual element, then these two components should fully complement one another. I think that the German musicologist Helga Motte-Haber is completely right when she says that 'Sound art is intended in equal measure for the senses of hearing and sight.' Sound is of course a kind of magic, and if it interacts properly with the visual element, you enter the field of the Total Installation, and you become a participant, not just a spectator, according to Ilja Kabakov. And despite the fact that art historians and musicologists still can't completely define what Sound Art is exactly, its roots go far back into the past to Ancient Chinese sound sculptures and Aeolian music in Ancient Greece.

**7. In 'Sound Games', Western philosophy meets Eastern. You've also touched on religious matters. Drums, in this sense, are more physical and bodily instruments. Maybe you can comment or reflect on this idea? Maybe I have got it completely wrong?**

Of course the fact that I am a drummer, a percussionist, helps a lot. Percussion instruments are probably the only ones not invented by man: they started out as stick

against stick, stone against stone, and stayed that way. There is something truly shamanistic in these instruments: a sound which comes from somewhere deep down, and the performer often becomes a part of the sound. In some senses, this is meditation...

**8. Interest in sound-related art practices can also be mapped through the number of sound art exhibitions across the world. Some of them show the current trends in (sound) art, while others analyze the development of the phenomenon. When visiting the *Out of Sync. Looking Back at the History of Sound Art* exhibition at Kumu in Tallinn, what did you see?**

A unique exhibition, I must say. An exhibition which analysed the history of the development of Sound Art from the trailblazers of the first half of the 20th Century to the current day. From Ilmar Laaban to Kiwa. I have to commend the outstanding curatorial work and understanding of the fundamental idea.

## Vladimir Tarasov

(1947), legendary drummer and sound artist was born in Archangelsk, Russia. Since 1968 he has lived and worked in Vilnius, Lithuania. For many years he performed with the Lithuanian Symphony Orchestra and other symphonic, chamber, and jazz orchestras in Lithuania, Europe and the USA. From 1971 to 1986, Tarasov was a member of the well-known contemporary jazz music trio - GTC (Viatcheslav Ganelin, Vladimir Tarasov, Vladimir Chekasin). Since 1991 he has been working in the visual arts, both solo, and collaborating with artists such as Ilya Kabakov, Sarah Flohr, and others. He gave a lecture about his work at Kumu Art Museum during the exhibition *Out of Sync. Looking Back at the History of Sound Art*. See more at: [www.vladimirtarasov.com](http://www.vladimirtarasov.com)

## Kati Ilves

(1984), art historian, curator of contemporary art at Kumu Art Museum. Together with Ragne Nukk, curated the exhibition *Out of Sync. Looking Back at the History of Sound Art* (27.09.13-12.01.14) at Kumu, displaying works by twelve Estonian and foreign artists, which provide a survey of sound art as a diverse art medium.

# Participating in public displays of nationalism, shamelessly: EVA SEPPING AND HER TRILOGY ON NATIONALISM

Elo-Hanna Seljamaa



Eva Sepping. *Public Displays of Nationalism where I was Present*. 2014. Video still. Solo exhibition *15 Minutes of Shame*. 2014. Hobusepea Gallery, Tallinn.

to engage in systematic research on nationalism in Estonia from an Estonian perspective. Her Estonianness matters because she creates art out of her encounters with Russians, Russian-speakers, Siberian Estonians and their descendants in contexts where ethnic and national belonging matter. Sepping began to collect visual data on nationalism in the late 2000s and has produced three solo exhibitions so far, all in Tallinn's major art galleries. 'Research' is an apt description of her activities because she is close to completing her doctoral studies at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Academia has provided the artist with fluency in contemporary theories of nationalism, ethnicity and citizenship, as well as with a site for (self-)reflection on the workings of ideology and group identity. Looked at from this perspective, nationalism is for Sepping only a model that enables her to examine human psychology and the logic of subjugation.

Sepping works mainly in video, photography and installation. Though she is not out to shock or provoke, her works challenge the mainstream to broaden its horizons, and they do so by treating, in a nonjudgmental manner, people and phenomena whose positions and meanings are always overdetermined. Sepping's neutrality is not that of an uninvolved bystander. Rather, she achieves it by means of empathy and by turning herself into a research instrument. Her approach is ethnographic in that she observes, participates, documents, conducts interviews and reflects on these encounters as well as on her own emotions and her position. She cannot cast aside her Estonianness as she seeks to see and show the world through the eyes

The distinction between the study and practice of nationalism can be a fine one. This is particularly true for places like Estonia, where writers, artists and other members of the educated elite have long positioned themselves as guardians and servants of the national culture, and where cultural nationalism prevails over other forms of nationalism. Criticizing nationalism in Estonia and elsewhere in the post-Soviet realm is an easy task, thanks to sophisticated theories imported from the West. However, it is more difficult to explore conundrums of belonging in daily life and to strive for empathy.

Eva Sepping (b 1978) is one of the few, if not the only, contemporary Estonian artist who has had the guts

## Elo-Hanna Seljamaa

(1980), folklorist, PhD, researcher at the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu. Current research interests include ethnicity, nationalism and multiculturalism in post-Soviet Estonia.

## Eva Sepping,

graduated from the history department of the University of Tartu in 2003, in 2009 received her MA in interactive multimedia at the Estonian Academy of Arts and has also studied in Prague and Bristol. Currently doing her PhD in art and design at the Estonian Academy of Arts. See more at: [eva.city.ee](http://eva.city.ee)



of others, showing sincere respect to her 'informants'. Yet unlike an anthropologist writing on the basis of fieldwork notes, Sepping is free to edit her visual data and amplify selected symbols in producing appealing images and drama.

Fieldwork on nationalism has taken Sepping to Estonian song festivals, Independence Day military parades and various other commemorative ceremonies and public performances in which the Estonian state and nation are defined and recreated. She is not afraid to get carried away by such events' sententious spirit and conservative aesthetics. On the contrary, participating in patriotic mass rituals earns her the moral right and sensuous expertise needed to discuss the allure of nationalist practices. At the same time, Sepping willingly takes her Estonian habitus and accent to situations and places that are considered Russian and where she is likely to be taken as a spokesperson for the whole Estonian nation and state. For example, Sepping has frequented Victory Day celebrations both in Estonia and in the Russian Federation. Depending on the point of view, Victory Day, observed on May 9, can mark the capitulation of Nazi Germany to the Soviet Union and the end of World War II, or it can be condemned as a practice that glorifies Soviet occupation and Russia's supremacy.

Sepping deconstructs such polarizations and breaks down monoliths by zooming in on individuals. Her first solo exhibition,

Eva Sepping. *I Am Here*.  
Exhibition view at the Tallinn  
City Gallery, 2012.



Eva Sepping. Still from the video *Travellers*. Solo exhibition *I Am Here*, 2012.

Eva Sepping. Still from the video *Alyosha*. Solo exhibition *Us*, Draakon Gallery, Tallinn, 2011.



*Us* (2011), at the Draakon Gallery in Tallinn (with Tanja Muravskaja) displayed several videos about families and individuals in the never-ending process of building coherent selves in sociohistorical conditions not of their own making. *The Place of Dreams* (12:16), for example, follows a young man's journey, over a period of several years, from his place of birth in Russia to his grandmother's homeland, Estonia. Sepping masterfully captures how Sergei's enthusiasm wanes and his self-image of himself as an Estonian is shattered as the imagined idealized homeland is gradually replaced by first-hand experiences of local realities. *The Last Estonian* (3:20), on the other hand, portrays a lonely elderly man in what used to be an Estonian village in rural Russia. The video juxtaposes Sepping's high expectations for their meeting with the old man's reluctance and inability to play the role of the last living Estonian in the village. Several other shorter videos (e.g. *Long live!* (3:27) and *Alyosha* (1:17)) document Russian-speakers' participation in Estonian Independence Day parades. Their mere presence at these events continues to be counterintuitive to many inhabitants of Estonia.

Sepping's second solo exhibition, *I Am Here* (2012), at the Tallinn City Gallery continued the pattern of short videos that bring to viewers perceptive snippets. For example, *The Travellers* (5:15) pulls viewers into a small car packed with passengers travelling the muddy spring roads of Siberia. Driven by the middle-aged woman, the travellers, the artist included, sing popular songs in Estonian and Russian. The driver explains, in a mixture of Estonian and Russian, her feelings towards

Estonia, her 'historical homeland', and her actual place of birth in Russia. *We Were Born in the USSR* (5:40) was likewise filmed in Russia. An elderly woman sits in a summery garden and recounts her life under different regimes. Memories of Stalinist repression and reminiscences on the absurdities of Soviet propaganda do not stop her from talking about the Soviet time approvingly as a time when people knew their place and not everybody had the cheek to speak up. *Born in 1991* (3:30), on the contrary, captures a spontaneous performance of national togetherness in Tallinn's main square in August 2009, after a patriotic sing-along concert dedicated to the restoration of Estonian independence in 1991: dozens of young people born in independent Estonia run hand-in-hand, singing and drawing the masses along with them.

There were altogether four videos displayed at Sepping's *I Am Here* exhibition. While the works emphasized individuals' abilities and right to adapt to given ideological circumstances and the existence of freedom of choice, however limited, viewers were forced to move through the gallery space according to a trajectory determined by the artist and could see only one video at a time.

The organization of space also played a crucial role at Sepping's most recent exhibition, *15 Minutes of Shame*, at the Hobusepea Gallery in Tallinn at the beginning of 2014. The title of the show paraphrased Warhol but also referred to the feeling of 'sinking through the floor' due to extreme embarrassment. The two-part video *Public Displays of Nationalism where I was Present* was displayed on two floors of the gallery, with screens placed directly above each other. In the first part on the ground floor (10:00), we see a nervous young woman presenting to an academic committee a video entitled *Public Displays of Nationalism where I was Present*. The video within the video contains scenes from the same ceremonies and mass events that Sepping has documented and analysed over the past several years: Estonian song and dance festivals, Independence Day parades and Victory Day celebrations. We see and hear members of the dissertation committee – artists, art critics and historians – chastise the young artist for picking such an unoriginal topic, for propagating nationalism and inciting hatred. The artist leaves the room quietly – by sinking through the floor – only to reappear in the second part of the video (2:00), showed in the basement hall of the gallery. After some hesitation, the artist in the video decides to (re-)enter the examination room in order to observe her work and its reception from a distance.

Eva Sepping plays all of the parts in the video. The video is accompanied by a series of six postcards entitled *I do not know it, but I am doing it*, which feature Sepping in various 'public displays of nationalism' in Estonia and the Russian Federation. Messages scribbled on the postcards reveal that the sender has a soft spot for 'public displays of nationalism' and takes part in them for the sake of participation and the feeling of effervescence they produce.

Taken together, and by means of juxtaposing Estonian and Russian 'public displays of nationalism', Sepping's two newest works lay bare the universality and corporeality of techniques of incorporation deployed by states, political parties, ethnic groups and various other movements seeking to engage masses. Body and mind are inseparably tied together and those in control of the form can manipulate the content. Even those of us who are well read in critical theory are not immune to bodily practices and sensory experiences designed to hold people together. A keen perception of an underlying conflict between participation and research, body and mind, is a major driving force in works created for the *15 Minutes of Shame* exhibition. By openly discussing her own susceptibility to nationalist mass rites, Sepping empowers herself to share her observations of her colleagues in academia and the art world. She confronts us with intriguing and somewhat scary ques-

tions. For instance, what should we think of a person who goes in for nationalist ceremonies for fun and aesthetic pleasure rather than loyalty to a particular national group? Should this person be ashamed of herself, or is Sepping stating the obvious?



Eva Sepping. *I do not know it, but I am doing it*. Exhibition *15 Minutes of Shame*. Hobusepea Gallery, 2014



# OLGA JÜRGENSON: theme-specific, site-specific & time-specific!

Olga Jürgenson in conversation with Liina Siib

**Liina Siib (LS):** To begin with, can you tell me something about your background and studies?

**Olga Jürgenson (OJ):** My first art school was in Jõhvi [a town in north-east Estonia]. It gave me a very good start I think, people were very supportive there, and after all these years we still keep in touch. I still speak on the phone with my former teacher (Margarita Ostroumova) every so often when I am in Estonia. In 1984 I was accepted into the Secondary Art School in St Petersburg (Leningrad then). It was like a normal secondary school, but with a lot of art lessons added. I started when I was 15, and finished at 18. I was very determined to get in there and knew what I wanted.

**LS:** You wanted to become an artist?

**OJ:** Yes, and a 'proper' one. I wanted to be able to draw and paint academically, because I thought that if some people were able to do that, then I had to learn to do that too. Then there was the Academy, the Ilya Repin Institute in St Petersburg, and its graphics department. The competition to get in was very tough; some people tried five or six times, year after a year, so I was quite proud to be accepted in my first attempt. It was interesting in the beginning, thanks mainly to printmaking: we could learn different skills and techniques, but in the middle of the third year I became rather bored.

**LS:** To me, the biggest problem in the Soviet Art Institute was that we were not allowed to think on our own. We were kept busy doing everything, fulfilling the curriculum requirements, working all the time.

**OJ:** I see. Yes, thinking was the last thing the system wanted us to do. I was given great training in terms of skills during the first three years, and it's a shame that I barely use them now. Although, more recently... yes, actually, I do, as I started painting again and feel quite excited about that.

**LS:** In the late 1980s Russian avant-garde art was starting to be shown again in the art museums of the Soviet Union.

**OJ:** Yes, and it was exciting. I remember a big Malevich exhibition that was great, definitely influenced me, as well as works by Matiushin and Kandinsky. Also, I remember a big exhibition by Filonov and his followers, and of course there were many combined, group exhibitions of Russian avant-garde.

Also, since we are still talking about influences: in the mid-nineties, I was introduced to Ivan Gurin, who became my mentor for a while. He certainly was a great support then.

**LS:** It is very important that these types of non-institutional kinds of working relationships exist.

**OJ:** Absolutely. It was very important for me.

**LS:** Then you had some residencies abroad?

**OJ:** The very first experience was the three-week International Symposium in Finland in 1993, which absolutely blew my mind. One of the most important ones was probably a residency in Vienna, which I was awarded in 2000. It enabled me to stay there for three months (and then for another three months in 2001). It was a great opportunity to be paid for just being there, seeing exhibitions at museums and galleries, meeting other artists from all over the world, and in the end producing and exhibiting a work. It was probably my first proper insight into the art scene of a Western country. In 2002 I was invited to take part in one of the exhibitions of the Liverpool biennial in the UK, and I ended up staying in the country. I was given a visa labelled Artist. Sometime later, when I was trying to get 'a proper job', usually rather unsuccessfully, I said to myself: "who am I kidding? Even the British government thinks you are an artist!"



Olga Jürgenson. *The Tower of Babel*. 2005. Sculptural installation. Part of *Go West!* 2005 installation. Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery, UK.

1. Olga Jürgenson. *We Are Made Of Dust*. 2011. Series of works on Perspex, collage. 45 x 45 cm each. Freud Dreams Museum, St Petersburg, Russia.

2. Olga Jürgenson. *Olives and Cheese*. Ural Industrial Biennial. 2011. Oil, charcoal pencil, enamel, 3 canvases, height 51 cm. Exhibition at Rizzordi Art Foundation, St Petersburg.

3. Olga Jürgenson. *Art Buffets*. 2014. Still from the video. Part of installation *Art Buffets*.

4. Olga Jürgenson. *Gagarin is a Dove of Peace*. 2011. Still from the video. 2 min.

5. Olga Jürgenson. *By Decorating Protective Clothes You Hit at Capitalism!* 2009. Still from the video. 7 min. Part of installation *New Workwear Fashion*.



**LS:** You have become part of the art scene in Britain. How has the UK influenced you as an artist?

**OJ:** At the beginning, I was extremely excited about the richness of the contemporary art scene I was able to experience, especially digital art and all sorts of cross-disciplinary variations; also, community-based art I found quite intriguing, a totally new thing for me then. I remember it reminded me of the quote by Lenin 'Art should belong to the People'. I have been there for 12 years now. Gradually everything became familiar, normal, but the great thing about the UK, and London in particular, is that there is always tonnes to see, and often you can see real gems.

In the very beginning, I was lucky enough to become a resident artist at Peterborough Digital Arts. As a town, Peterborough is not particularly remarkable, but it was very interesting in the sense that there was a very big community of migrants from Eastern Europe, and it was growing rapidly then. I had the idea of producing a work on migrants and PDA supported it. I applied for a grant from Arts Council England and was successful; that's how the *Go West!* project came about.

The exhibition *Go West!* in the Peterborough Art Gallery was a major outcome of my research. I built a sculptural installation from TVs and TV tables, painted them all white with wall paint, so the objects would become 'as one' with the plinth and radiators attached to it. There were bright colour photo prints of food, imitating conveyor belts, and wallpaper on the walls, as I wanted to represent elements of the life and homes of migrant workers who had to work at conveyor belts for at least eight hours a day and who could only afford second-hand furniture. And, of course, the karaoke version of *Go West!*, which was played simultaneously on 16 TV screens. In Hainburg (Austria) and in various other venues, this karaoke video was projected on a wall, and a microphone and speakers were installed, so the audience could participate, sing along, and they did.

**LS:** You made a series about workers' clothing. How did that come about?

**OJ:** It was one of the ideas that I had during my research on migrants. I had come across a fascinating trend in fabric design in the early years of the Soviet Union, specifically between 1927–1933, when the Communist leaders tried to turn the country into some

kind of modern, mechanised utopia. There were a lot of abbreviations, such as CCCP (USSR) and VKPB (All-Union Communist Bolshevik Party), images of tractors and hammers and sickles for example, that were used in the fabric designs.

**LS:** Like mobile propaganda.

**OJ:** Yes. Imagine sleeping on sheets with VKPB on them? Or wearing a dress all covered with images of tractors and young pioneers. Nice! For my works, I used normal protective clothing used in factories. The designs I stencilled were meant to relate to the jobs the migrant workers did.

**LS:** There was also a miners' theme. Could you tell me a little bit about your collaborative work with Mare Tralla: *When Estonian peasant meets Russian miner or...*

**OJ:** Well, as you know, when the Bronze Soldier was moved in 2007 in Tallinn, the situation was quite tense in Estonia. Mare and I both wanted to do something about it. I suggested that we do some research on our stereotypes – Estonians about Russians and vice versa – so we both came up with a list each, and then used those lists to develop the installation. It was divided into three parts: one part was Mare's wall, where she arranged some printed quotes from our e-mails, copies of photographs, her early drawings etc. I provided her with the requested materials, but didn't take part otherwise. For my part of the installation, I bought some second-hand armchairs and TV tables with TVs, and arranged them in a way that if people sat in front of one of the two TV screens they wouldn't be able to see the person sitting in front of them, because the TV screen would block the view. There were Russian TV channel broadcasts on one of the TVs, and Estonian channels on the other. To add to the domestic atmosphere of that common home, I also painted two paintings, pastiches of *The Potato Eaters* by Van Gogh; they also represented two different families: of an 'Estonian Peasant' and of a 'Russian Miner'. I added the elements from our research lists to my pastiches of Van Gogh's painting. The title for the installation was *Spot The Difference!* What I was trying to say in my work was that we were in fact very similar and living in the same small country (i.e. house), but we were constantly being brainwashed by the media of two different governments. Plus, of course,



stereotypes always 'helped', our common Soviet past etc.

And, of course, there was a video, which was filmed at Mare's allotment in London, and we both performed there, dressed as a miner and a peasant, chasing each other with a hammer and a sickle respectively, accompanied by the theme from the Benny Hill films.

**LS:** What about the collaboration with the Freud's Dreams Museum in St Petersburg?

**OJ:** The title of the series I exhibited there was *We are Made of Dust*; it's a part of a quote from one of the descriptions of Freud's dreams. The theme was based on my research during a residency at the Addenbrooke Hospital in Cambridge, where I collaborated with molecular geneticists. Basically they provide a service for people who think there are some diseases running through the generations of their families; those people can come to the hospital and have tests done and see whether they are at high risk of transmitting those illnesses to their children and then they can decide what to do about that, whether to have children or not. Somehow it became connected with the iconic image of Black Square by Malevich; it's ironic in a way that Russian contemporary artists seem not to be able to stop referring to Black Square, and I myself have thought sometimes: 'how many more works will be done with that?' Yet, I decided to do something with that myself. Also, it was like coming back to myself in the mid-nineties, when I became fascinated by the Russian avant-garde. I used to read writings by Malevich then and quite seriously researched the subject. Also, I had a friend who was pregnant then and, looking at her, I thought that she looked totally like the *Black Square*, as there was one life inside another, one body inside another, which for me was quite directly associated with the black square being inside a white one. I also used some of Malevich's words, in particular: '...a black square is an embryo...'. He actually said that, although I chopped the original sentence for a better effect. Somehow, there was also a connection between life and death. It became about our (human) life cycle in the end and, yes, my Black Square became a very Female Black Square.

This research and my interest in science gradually led me to a discovery of Russian Cosmism, which I am still fascinated by, and I continue working on the theme. There's so



much in it, a lot to dig into there and a lot to think about... I have already exhibited some of the works in group shows, one part in the Moscow Biennial last year, and others in Belgium and Germany. There was also a solo exhibition, *Fedorov On Holiday*, at the Youth Centre of the State Hermitage Museum in 2013.

**LS:** And now you have returned to the theme of food?

**OJ:** Yes, somehow food keeps 'appearing' in my works. I guess you mean the very recent series of paintings and the installation *Art Buffets*. It was exhibited in a group exhibition of British artists at the Rizzordi Foundation in St Petersburg in May of this year (the exhibition was a part of the UK/Russia Year of Culture), and before that a couple of paintings from the series were a part of the exhibition *Dinner is Served* at the Russian Museum. So, the idea was inspired by different kinds of buffet food, which, as you may know, are often served at previews of art exhibitions. At a certain point, I decided to take photos of food and drinks at different openings and art-related parties, and I still take and collect them. Using selected photographs, I paint rather meticulous photo-realistic paintings. In the exhibition, they are combined with blank canvases (covered with satin enamel) and drawings on canvas, so each work consists of three or four canvases. Plus, there is a video, where the viewer can see my hand painting all the tiny details of canapés, with sound I recorded at a preview of an art exhibition. There is the juxtaposition of the quiet, slow and almost meditative process of painting with the noise of the exhibition preview, where you can hear visitors gossiping, discussing jobs, houses, relationships, which all altogether adds up to life!

Olga Jürgenson. *Spot the Difference!* Part of the exhibition *When Estonian Peasant Meets Russian Miner or When Russian Miner Meets Estonian Peasant* (with Mare Tralla). 2008. Installation, City Gallery, Tallinn. In the background: *Estonian Family as Potato Eaters*. 2008. Canvas, acrylic. 110 x 76 cm. Part of *Spot the Difference!* installation.

## Olga Jürgenson

(1969), graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg (Russia), and has lived in the UK, Russia and Estonia since 2002. She has participated in significant group exhibitions and residencies in Europe, Asia and Australia, including the Liverpool and Moscow biennials. She has received numerous grants and awards from several European foundations, and in 2011 was nominated for the Kandinsky Prize. In 2013 she had a solo exhibition at The Youth Centre of the State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), and is currently taking part in *SALE*, one of Manifesta's 10 parallel programme exhibitions. See more at: [www.olgajurgenson.net](http://www.olgajurgenson.net)

# THE HOME LOVER, THE CLUBBER AND THE GHOST

about Marit Ilison's collection

*Longing for Sleep*

Mathieu Goulmant

April 2014, Hyères, France. I discovered Marit Ilison's collection *Longing for Sleep* at the Villa Noailles (a great modernist house built by the French architect Robert Mallet-Stevens in 1925) during the International Fashion Festival. I don't have to hide anything: under the plastic tent of the Showroom and the afternoon warmth, my first and formal impression was straightforward. Once more some coats made from granny's blankets, whose dialogue with the sequined dresses on the same rack was quite expected, even if it seemed wise as regards colours and textures.

My second impression, under spotlights: stunning. The show, taking place in an old salt warehouse, totally catches me off guard. What seems first out of the ark takes a deliciously outdated tone, a comfy feeling. The moving figures, wrapped up in wide felt patterns, let some sheens filter through: here a reptilian dress with a petrol-shimmering play of light, there a collar letting form a bright red paste, as a metonymy of celebration.

A few months later, thinking again about the amazing work of Marit Ilison brought me to a specific triangulation, a kind of *ménage à trois* for a – not fairy – tale: the home lover, the clubber and the ghost.

The collection is based on *kaamos*, a specific part of winter when we almost don't see the daylight in Estonia and the Scandinavian countries. A time when we would give way willingly to a nice cosy stay at home. Indeed, what hurts at once in *Longing for Sleep* is these large coats, which plunge us into the housing world, into *domesticity*. They are made from old original Soviet woollen blankets (making each piece unique). The blanket symbolizes warmth: it is the love of the inside. Comfort lined with comforting. Hence the home lover figure, who proceeds from the inside. The blanket becomes the sign of the indoors: its emblem. That means staying in the unit (the

home, the bedroom, the head-box), staying without the wish to go outside. Therefore the coat's cut is apparently simple, originating in folding. The fold and the turn of the material take over the traditional and graphically naive patterns from the blanket, patterns which symmetrically answer each other. The inner turns down the inside, over and over again. Indeed, what is more inner than a blanket? Firstly, does it have a right side and a wrong side? I don't think so. It seems that the blanket item is after all made up of a unique inner side, like a Möbius strip. We could take Gilles Deleuze's sentence in *Le Pli* (The Fold), which is about the baroque front, which he splits into two parts, and we could apply this to the silhouettes : "it is the upper level which is closing itself, pure inside without outside, weightless enclosed interiority, covered in spontaneous folds which are finally and only a soul's or a mind's folds." Then, the subject (the lover of inside), whose mind is made from many folds due to his movement

"My main goal is to create experiences, haunting and memorable feelings; to have and to keep – be it a mind-blowing space installation or an act of wearing a simple black dress." – Marit Ilison





within the house, is encircled by time: the Möbius strip blanket becomes the expression of duration. This means, in Bergson's terms, "*a succession of qualitative changes which are blending, penetrating each other, without any precise outlines*", as a melody we could consider as a whole, whose notes we cannot separate. Marit Ilison's blanket? This is the conceptual place of interpenetration and continuity. Marit Ilison's art? This is a real care for the material and an intelligent use of it (here a vintage blanket in this collection, there hand-cut and hand-tied hanging viscose threads in the *Teine* (The Other) installation).

If *Longing for Sleep* directly echoes Chekhov's novel *Let Me Sleep* and the agonizing indecision between the wish to sleep and the guilty of not working, the silhouettes make me think about another story, Gontcharov's novel *Oblomov*: the story of a St Petersburg landowner spending his time lying on his favourite piece of furniture, a sofa. He will end his life on his sofa, forming one body with it. Облом (oblom) means break, crack: Oblomov is a man whose spring is broken. In contrast, with Marit Ilison the spring is well stretched: in spite of the coat's weight, there is some vitality, something ready to explode, to come out. Under the Soviet granny's blanket, there is potential and powerful youth.

The collection silhouettes waver between two figures: the home lover, who only wants to be inside, and what I call the clubber, who only wants to go out. Paradoxically (and we'll take up this paradox again later), the going outside signs are less visible, because they are under the blanket-coat. They are mainly built up of iridescent dresses – either diaphanous and luminous, or sparkling like scales – flowing tops and pearly leggings. The straight edge of a collar makes

us notice richly coloured pearl embroidery, as if these full-of-life and diaphanous clothes deposit from below and by capillary action signs of lightness and seduction, of radiance and evanescence.

The clubber's time is the event. It is the party which punctuates the week (in this connection, Marit is also a set designer for live action and VJing), as all these sheens, with their short appearances, punctuate the silhouettes. They are discreet fineries, moments of an unveiled light spectrum. Fragile and sumptuous. Ephemeral. These punctuations make me enter into the sense stratification of the collection. These lighted points are *puncta*, in the same way that Roland Barthes uses the Latin word *punctum* in describing a photo-

Marit Ilison. *Longing for Sleep*.  
Conceptual collection





graph (in *La Chambre claire: Note sur la photographie*): “punctum is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole – and also a cast of the dice. A photograph’s punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).” Thus, on the coat’s wrong side, the finery becomes injury. The luminous injury, as an event in the silhouette, brings to the fore a figure born from a paradox: being stuck between two carriers, one for the home lover, whose blanket’s weight and heritage pull to the bottom, and one for the clubber, whose luminous and night attributes strive toward the top (and this makes sense with the Aurora Borealis shedding light in the *kaamos* night). In this way, this new figure emerges within a no-man’s land, taken over from the ambiguity of the collection’s title. Does *Longing for Sleep* mean the desire for sleep or sleep nostalgia? Is it an imminent rest or an insomniac wandering? In the no-man’s land of winter, Marit Ilison reveals the *kaamos* ghosts.

Memory of the Hyères show: the models, anti-Oblomov, a shade Pre-Raphaelite, a shade Virginia Woolf, build a bridge between generations, centuries and hours. Pictures fly out of my mind, bringing an iconographic vibration. It captures, at the same time, under my eyes, the end of the 19th century and a clubbing night: the apparition of the ghost.

The collection’s strength is the creation of a new composite figure, who has no resting place, and who creates a tension between physical and conceptual material. The ghost is simultaneously the visible and the intangible. The ghost allows us to point and to reveal an absence: he creates the photogenic moment. Indeed, the collection brings to the fore an impediment: not being able to live inside and feeling oneself trapped. It is the seat of a beauty neither smooth nor violent, but specifically introspective: in the same way, the *Teine* installation, which earned Marit the prestigious Kristjan Raud Art Prize in the spring of 2014, set up with many hung threads the 70 000 daily thoughts of someone, developing a conceptual space to experience, in order to multiply the connection options to the world, as well as cutting all ties with the same world...until lost in a so-contemporary loneliness.

The art of Marit Ilison produces pictures. In *Longing for Sleep*, there is something photographic, the poetry of a hard-stretched moment, between wandering and stability, between well-being and guilt, between the light spectrum and the light-ghost. The image of a double-take, at once a capture, as the camera captures the moment, and a rapture. One attracts me inside, and the other pushes me out of myself. In this way, Marit Ilison’s work makes me think about Laura Veirs’s song *Rapture*:

Marit Ilison. *Teine (The Other)*. 2013. Conceptual site-specific installation. Solo exhibition, Hop Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia.

*With photographs  
And magnetic tape  
We capture  
Pretty animals in cages  
Pretty flowers in vases  
Enraptured  
(...)*

*Love of color, sound and words  
Is it a blessing or a curse?  
Enraptured*

What if this controlled dramaturgy collection, made of micro-emotional cataclysms, at heart doesn’t deal with anything else than awakening? I don’t want to choose. I want both home comfort and evening excitement, a safe asset and vanity, the mainstream and the avant-garde, the injury and the bandage, the night and the daybreak. Going inside and going outside. Or going outside and going back: *Longing for Sleep* lives in this tension. At the threshold.

The ghost’s place, in a way.

## Marit Ilison

(1984), conceptual fashion artist and designer, represented Estonian fashion at the London fashion week. In 2014 received the annual Kristjan Raud art award and the title *Vogue TALENT 2014* from the Italian Vogue. See more at: [maritilison.com](http://maritilison.com)

## Mathieu Goulmant,

art director, set designer and illustrator based in Paris area, France.



## a roomful of jewellery artists and a travelling greenhouse

Eilve Manglus

The Gram jewellery studio is comprised of ten young jewellery artists who all graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts: Linda al-Assi, Merle Kasonen, Kristiina Kibe, Lisa Kröber, Marita Lumi, Kärt Maran, Maarja Niinemägi, Ettl Poobus, Birgit Skolimowski and Kertu Tuberg. The studio started working by hiring a joint space in Kadriorg in Tallinn. The artists later moved to a studio space of the Estonian Artists' Association in Hobusepea Street. The house has historically accommodated many jewellery studios. Working side by side and sharing a budget, a crucial factor gradually appeared that galvanizes existing undertakings: the joint aspirations and effort needed to get things done. Inevitably, some members of the team have left and others have joined, but the eagerness to work grows steadily and mutual cooperation has become essential. The roles are distributed and the presence of others is perceived; it is easier together. The artists organise sales of their work in the oval hall, and take part in design events and exhibitions. The Gram girls have always attracted the public with special thematic solutions. On 15 December 2012, for example, shortly before the world was supposed to come to an end because the Mayan calendar was ending, a huge jewellery sale was arranged, entitled *The Shroud Has No Pockets*. It suggested people exchange their money for jewellery as the value of money would vanish along with time.

Last winter another idea began taking shape in the Gram studio. In March, the travelling exhibition of Nordic jewellery *From the Coolest Corner* arrived at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design. During its opening, a number of satellite events took place in the Tallinn urban space; it was also a weekend of open jewellery art and blacksmiths' studios. Gram welcomed visitors to the inner courtyard at Hobusepea 2, which presented the exhibition *Around the Corner* as a contrast to the 'coolest corner'.

In the crisp Estonian spring, the Gram girls this time worked together with KAMP architects. Together they created an alternative movable exhibition space – a glass greenhouse – in a bleak abandoned courtyard in Old Town. Instead of warmth-loving vegetables,



Gram jewellery studio.  
*Around the Corner* in the inner  
courtyard at Hobusepea 2,  
Tallinn, March 2014.



pieces of jewellery 'grew' there. The new space was a near-perfect exhibition interior space: at the street level, in an attractive Old Town area, and sheltered from the cold rain by glass walls. Curious visitors were also able to peep beyond the mysterious closed gates. At the same time, the greenhouse as a space offered a sense of security in the damp spring, an intimate place where jewellery and viewers could be together.

We can certainly draw parallels between local triennial events, the annual March jewellery event *Schmuck* in Munich and several dozen jewellery exhibitions in the Munich city space in all kinds of official and alternative exhibition venues. On a smaller scale, which of course is more familiar to us, the hullabaloo of the openings of the Nordic triennial and its satellite events in Tallinn was quite exciting, although the weather here is not as inviting and demands an effort to leave home, unlike the warm March in Munich. There was a sense of unity, belonging and triumph in the air. Gram's display remained open for several weeks.

In early summer the greenhouse was moved to a Mardu talu farm in the national park of Soomaa. Jewellery and various objects created by the Gram artists were again planted there. The exhibition was opened on the day of a concert called *Mosquitos Start To Buzz*. The after-party took place at the farm at night. I happened to move over to the party place

shortly before the wider masses arrived. The scene was spellbinding: mist, dampness and warmth, a corncrake somewhere nearby, trying to find my way in the dark-greyish-blue nocturnal darkness to the greenhouse. I found the electric cord: the greenhouse lit up! Such simple, abundant and wild beauty cannot be imitated in any other environment. A greenhouse in a park works totally differently than one in urban space. The protective effect of a glass space in town here turned into a blending with nature; the contrast between the close-to-nature jewellery and the environment of the urban greenhouse formed an entirety with the national park. Kristiina Kibe's patinated bulrush-brooches continued acquiring a beautifully toned layer of rust in this 'glass case'. The greenhouse itself gradually sank into the increasingly taller grass, and bright yellow buttercups squeezed through the floor boards.

All ten Gram studio artists participated in both exhibitions with jewellery specially made for the occasions. The starting point for creating jewellery was the greenhouse as an architectural image, and everything happening inside a greenhouse, and the relevant processes in people's heads and in the plant world. The jewellery displayed at the *Around the Corner* exhibitions was produced in the spirit of a greenhouse: the collection was fresh in terms of ideas, inspired by nature and spring. Spring here means new buds and a tender sea of blooms, but also glorifying the



Marita Lumi. Brooches/  
pipes/boxes *If there's a  
hunger, the stomach can hold  
a cone. Smoking feet up, even  
cockroach feels good, so the rats  
were allowed to go in the world.*

Ettel Poobus. Necklace  
*Stubborn.*



Kristiina Kibe.  
Brooch *Sedge.*



Maarja  
Niinemägi.  
Bracelet *Dream  
Horse Black.*



Birgit Skolimowski.  
Necklace *Butterflies  
in the belly/ Ants in  
the pants/ Flies in the  
head.*



beauty of decay and rot appearing from under the melting snow.

Everyone at the exhibition had a tale to tell. Birgit Skolimowski's neck jewellery *Butterflies in the belly, ants on the back, flies in the head* superbly express the coexistence of birth and final destruction: the beautiful winged insects, engraved in bone and stone, on dull yellow rubber hosepipes, are like accidental finds from a spring wasteland. Kristiina Kibe's patinated copper and brass brooches imitating the leaves of various plants were this time sharper than ever before. Fear of nature is beautiful: to get stung, needled, nettled or suffocated under weeds. The same kind of painful beauty is expressed by Ettel Poobus's needle-leaf necklace. People normally want to root out weeds, maybe even kill them off with pesticides, at the same time destroying the bees, despite the fact that none of us has ever seen an ugly dandelion.

Linda al-Assi conducted mysterious tests in small containers filled with liquid which you wear around your neck. Lisa Kröber's tale is expressed in a lacy idealistic collar-necklace with anonymous empty medallions attached to it. Maarja Niinemägi's wooden bracelets offer a contrast between material and form. Fabrics, seemingly trampled on or buried under snow, are sensitively

carved into heavy and strong wood. Merle Kasonen, on the other hand, explores spatial effects, transparency and opaqueness in her neck jewellery. Kärt Maran's earrings charm with their geometrically simple forms. A strong sheet of metal seems to be folded gently and effortlessly, defying the natural characteristics of the material. Kertu Tuberg's fearsome, awe-inspiring sculptural skeleton of a winged monster of rusting iron and wood attracted a humble audience among Soomaa's inhabitants. A family of deer and the farm tomcat offered wordless assessments. The cat also highly appreciated Marita Lumi's mouse-brooches, charming creatures with especially forceful and repulsive tails. The greenhouse became a part of the local landscape, and people looked through it, trying not to crash through the glass. It was worth taking a look at the jewellery both inside the greenhouse and from outside through the glass in order to produce and lose a sense of distance.

The exhibition in Soomaa National Park closed in the second half of July. Glass, frames and jewellery were carefully packed into boxes, and the artists will have a brief rest. A natural continuation would be to move further on with the packages, perhaps to Munich to deservedly represent the Estonian contemporary art of jewellery.



Lisa Kröber. Necklace *Cornelia*.



Gram jewellery studio. *Around the Corner*, Mardu farm, Soomaa, 01.06.-27.07.2014.

Linda al-Assi. Brooches *Splash-splash, it's March!*



## Eilve Manglus

(1977), jewellery artist, project manager of metalwork at the Viljandi Culture Academy.

# PRODUCT DESIGNERS AT THE FURNITURE, INTERIOR DECORATION AND DESIGN FAIR HABITARE

10–14 September 2014, Helsinki

Monika Järg

Supported by the Estonian Design Centre and Enterprise Estonia, six small product design enterprises are participating in this year's Habitare fair in Helsinki.

The aim is to better introduce Estonian original products and product designers in Finland and in Scandinavia generally. The strategy of the display this year is having all participating designers show their work on personal stands in the appropriate areas. The main reason for such a method of display and representation is to clearly emphasise each participant's singularity and handwriting, which on a joint stand would inevitably get a bit lost, and also to spread the message of Estonian design more widely across the fair. As participating in the fair forms part of the enterprises' marketing and sales activities, consistency is further enhanced by each enterprise's own established sales strategy, which is considerably easier to communicate within specific product presentations.

Although the creative field of design seems more connected with enterprise, for various reasons our design has not yet taken root, much less spread its branches. One reason for this is certainly a lack of the necessary competence in business: we have focused on design, product development, exhibitions and related activities, and we do this well, but there is not enough time, resources and skills for sales and marketing. However, we do have a number of designers and their businesses that have managed to progress further: a fair requires products that are fully developed, ready for production and have clear identities. Participating in a fair offers an opportunity to make contacts and increase credibility.

Participants at the Habitare fair come from different fields, and all of them have extensive experience in the design world: Tõnis Vellama (Seos Valgustus Company) and Tarmo Luisk (2Pea) work with lightnings, Monika Järg (Tekstiil Ruumis) and Annike Laigo (Loomelabor) with interior textiles, Jaanus Orgusaar (Borealis) with furniture, and Raul Tiitus and Kaido Kivi (Ulaelu) with outdoor furniture.

**Tõnis Vellama's** passion is creating lamps. Tõnis is an experienced product designer, and has also operated for years in prominent European design enterprises. Tõnis's business Seos Valgustus seems to contain two trends. One is ready solutions for everyday lamps, which express functionalism and a highly singular and finely tuned sense of style.

His other trend is creating one-off solutions: special and thoroughly stylish solutions for demanding interiors. This requires good knowledge of different eras and an excellent perception of space, plus reliable cooperation experience.

Tõnis's 'stock-in-trade' includes grand, but clear and sensitive chandeliers for interiors with very different characters and sizes. These solutions are always innovative. His new developments in chandeliers are also presented at Habitare. Tõnis's work is always noticed when design awards are being distributed.

Tõnis Vellama. *Albert*. Floor lamp. Coloured steel, fabric. Ø 39 × 140 cm.







Raul Tiitus, Kaido Kivi. *Ulaelu*.  
Outdoor kitchen.

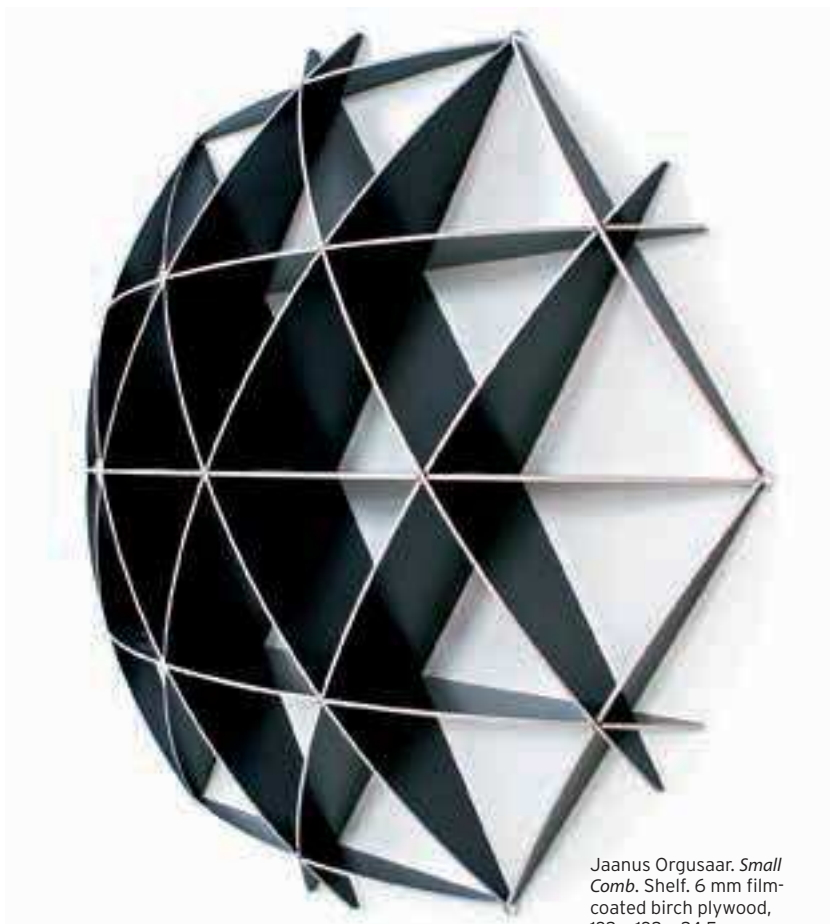
Tarmo Luisk. *A Year as a Day*.  
Wall clock. Metal, silk-screen  
print. Ø 60 cm.

**Tarmo Luisk** is a 'natural-born designer'. He creates lamps, furniture and various objects of interior design. None of Tarmo's works are mere products: they all contain approval or criticism and, according to their aim, humour or irony, everything in an intelligent key and relying on the artist's position. However, for years Tarmo's handwriting, approach and manner of operating have also addressed producers; his cooperation with them has been consistent and successful.

Every detail in Tarmo's work is justified, each of them has a significant function, and the rational seems emotional and enchanting, leaving no-one indifferent.

Tarmo Luisk has mainly designed lamps, having a lot of experience cooperating with various enterprises. However, the best outlets for his ideas and imagination are his personal exhibitions and experiments. The results of his special projects are also presented at the





Jaanus Orgusaar. *Small Comb*. Shelf. 6 mm film-coated birch plywood, 132 × 132 × 24.5 cm.



Monika Järg. *Pohl/Cowberry*. Floor carpet. Handtufted, woollen, with felted dots.



Annikke Laigo. *Float*. Handtufting, dyed by hand, 100% wool. 1.4 × 2.0 m, 1.7 × 2.4 m.

fair. Tarmo's work has been deservedly recognised with numerous awards.

**Monika Järg**'s passion is creating interior textiles, which she is displaying at the fair, together with her collections of carpets.

Monika's work is characterised by Nordic cool and minimalist handwriting, and by the rhythm created by repeating a few details. In her textiles, mainly of large format, she mixes different unexpected materials (e.g. wood and concrete) with natural textile materials. The starting point is often a contrast found in nature or a landscape rhythm.

Monika experiments with various technologies, in a symbiosis of handicrafts and today's production possibilities, on the basis of local production, and the ideas thus become functioning products.

Monika's products are acclaimed and have been awarded both at home and abroad.

**Annikke Laigo**'s enterprise Loomelabor is displaying handicraft carpets at the fair. These are contemporary but classical, aesthetically sustainable, with enduring quality, founded on traditions that are known in both Estonia and Scandinavia. In her carpets, Annike

combines a touch of retro and modern notes and uses sustainable materials which have proved their worth over time. The carpets are woven on looms, using classical carpet-weaving methods and traditions. The backbone of the collection is formed by evergreen solutions, supplemented with original Mooki models. She uses classical natural hues, as well as joyful and bright colour combinations.

Annikke Laigo is also known for her earlier innovative textile design solutions, having successfully displayed them at various exhibitions and fairs for years in Europe; she has won several prestigious awards.

The starting point of **Jaanus Orgusaar**'s work is powerful geometry, which combined with his ideas and skill forms miraculous images. The human touch and dimension, however, make his work practical and enables it to be called design.

At the fair, Jaanus Orgusaar/Borealis present objects that at first glance seem to be artworks, but function as shelf systems. These products stand apart from all popular trends, offering practical solutions for different rooms.

It is no exaggeration to say that Jaanus Orgusaar's ideas and products are world famous.

**Raul Tiitus** and **Kaido Kivi** are experienced interior designers. They initially developed furniture for outdoor use to respond to practical needs. In due course, they established their own business, Ulaelu, which would never have been born without design. Ulaelu produces outdoor furniture, primarily solutions for outdoor kitchens, based on light aluminium frames. The frames contain various modules, where people can choose among work surfaces, sinks and charcoal grills of various materials (stone, wood and plastic).

The outdoor furniture produced by Ulaelu is minimalistic, but remarkable and striking, and has attracted interest and cooperation partners at various fairs.

## Monika Järg

(1975), textile designer, entrepreneur and curator, organiser of the Design Night. Received her MA from the Estonian Academy of Arts in 2003. Since 2002 she is running the company Tekstiil Ruumis. See more at: [www.tekstiilruumis.ee](http://www.tekstiilruumis.ee)



# Exhibitions

## Kumu Art Museum

Weizenbergi 34 / Valge 1, Tallinn

<http://www.kumu.ee/en/>

Open: Oct-March Thu-Sun 11 am-6 pm, Wed 11 am-8 pm

April-Sept Tue, Thu-Sun 11 am-6 pm, Wed 11 am-8 pm

Permanent exhibitions:

*Treasury*

*Difficult Choices*

27 June-2 Nov

*Merike Estna and I'm a Painting*

4 July-23 Nov

*Our Modernism.*

Estonian Sculpture in the 1960s-1970s

26 Sept-15 March 2015 Richard Kaljo. *Stories in Prints and Letters*

11 Oct-18 Jan 2015 *A Moveable Feast.* Art Deco Fashion Design from Alexandre Vassiliev's Collection

15 May-5 May 2015 *Art Museum at the Airport.* Sculptor Mati Karmin

31 Oct-22 March 2015 *A Hundred Years of Art Education in Tallinn.* Works by the Estonian Academy of Arts

21 Nov-29 March 2015 *Telling Tales.* Swiss and Baltic Artists

5 Dec-1 March 2015 *The Tartu Circle of Friends and Ülo Sooster*

## Niguliste Museum

Niguliste 3, Tallinn

<http://www.nigulistemuuseum.ee/en/>

Open: Wed-Sun 10 am-5 pm

Permanent exhibitions:

Ecclesiastical Art from the 14th-20th centuries

The Silver Chamber

Until 31 Dec 2015

*Interactive Rode Altarpiece*

## Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design

Lai Street 17, Tallinn

[www.etdm.ee](http://www.etdm.ee)

Open: Wed-Sun 11 am-6 pm

Permanent exhibition of Estonian design

6 Sept-9 Nov

*Estonian Design. Industrial Textile*

25 Sept-26 Oct

*Made in Poland.* Polish posters from 1980-2014

11 Oct-2 Nov

*Mini-Kaamos.* Accessoires by Estonian young designers

## Museum of Estonian Architecture

Rotermann's Salt Storage

Ahtri 2, Tallinn

<http://www.arhitektuurimuuseum.ee>

Open: Wed 12 am-6 pm, Thu 12 am-8 pm, Fri-Sun 11 am-6 pm

The museum is temporary closed until 31 Dec 2014

## Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia

Põhja pst 35, Tallinn

[www.ekkm.ee](http://www.ekkm.ee)

Open from April-October: Tue-Sun 1 pm-7 pm

18 Sept-26 Oct

Raul Keller.

*What You Hear is What You Get (Mostly)*

## Kadriorg Art Museum

Kadriorg Palace, Weizenbergi 37, Tallinn

<http://www.kadriorumuuseum.ee/en/>

Open: Oct-April Thu-Sun 10 am-5 pm, Wed 10 am-8 pm

May-Sept Tue, Thu-Sun 10 am-5 pm, Wed 10 am-8 pm

Permanent exhibitions:

Paintings from the 16th-18th century. Dutch, German, Italian and Russian masters. Western European and Russian applied art and sculpture from the 18th-20th century

27 Sept-15 March 2015

*Lux Aeterna.* Italian Art from Lithuanian and Estonian Collections

## Adamson-Eric Museum

Lühike jalg 3, Tallinn

<http://www.adamson-eric.ee/en/>

Open: Wed-Sun 11 am-6 pm

Permanent exhibition:

Works by Adamson-Eric. Adamson-Eric (1902-1968) is one of the most outstanding Estonian painters of the 20th century. He also devoted much of his time to applied art. The museum's permanent exhibition consists of a display of Adamson-Eric's works (painting, ceramics, porcelain painting, leather art, metal forms, jewellery, decorative tiles, textile, and furniture).

28 Aug-19 Oct

*Ruhnu Elegies*

1 Nov-15 March 2015

*A Hundred Years of Art Education in Tallinn.* Works by Professors Emeriti of the Estonian Academy of Arts

## Mikkel Museum

Weizenbergi 28, Tallinn

<http://www.mikkelimuuseum.ee/en/>

Open: Wed 10 am-8 pm, Thu-Sun 10 am-5 pm

Permanent exhibitions:

Collection of Johannes Mikkel: the Art of Western Europe, Russia, and China from 16th-20th centuries

27 Sept-1 March 2015

*Lux Aeterna.* Italian Art from Johannes Mikkel's Collection

## Tallinn Art Hall

Vabaduse väljak 6, Tallinn

[www.kunstihoone.ee](http://www.kunstihoone.ee)

Open: Wed-Sun 12 am-6 pm

25 Oct-30 Nov

*Can't Go On. Must Go On.* Kristi Kongi, Anna Shkodenko, Mart Vainre, Mihkel Ilus, Mihkel Maripuu, Katrin Koskaru, curators Elin Kard and Mihkel Ilus

5 Dec-18 Jan 2015 *Artist's Footprint.* Paintings by Aili and Toomas Vint

## Tallinn Art Hall Gallery

Vabaduse väljak 6, Tallinn

[www.kunstihoone.ee](http://www.kunstihoone.ee)

Open: Wed-Mon 12 am-6 pm

Until 26 Oct

Tarmo Luisk. *Back in Business/Annual Report*

30 Oct-23 Nov

Jaanus Samma. *Jumper's Shop. Hair Sucks*

27 Nov-21 Dec

Kaido Ole. *Bastards*

## Tallinn City Gallery

Harju 13, Tallinn  
www.kunstihoone.ee  
Open: Wed-Mon 12 am-6 pm

16 Oct-9 Nov	Tiiu Pallo-Vaik, Mall Paris, Marje Üksine, Mari Roosvald. Watercolours
12 Nov-7 Dec	Kristi Kongi. Paintings
12 Dec-21 Dec	<i>Art Salon of the Tallinn Art Hall</i>

## Hobusepea Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn  
www.eaa.ee/hobusepea/english/enindex1.htm  
Open: Wed-Mon 11 am-6 pm

15 Oct-27 Oct	Saskia Järve. <i>Visual Flight</i>
29 Oct-10 Nov	Alina Orav
12 Nov-24 Nov	Marta Stratskas
26 Nov-8 Dec	Helen Melesk
10 Dec-29 Dec	Anu Hint
7 Jan-26 Jan 2015	Armands Zelchs
28 Jan-16 Feb	Peeter Allik

## Draakon Gallery

Pikk 18, Tallinn  
http://www.eaa.ee/draakon/english/eindex.htm  
Open: Mon-Fri 11 am-6 pm, Sat 11 am-5 pm

Until 18 Oct	Eike Eplik
20 Oct-1 Nov	Art Allmägi
3 Nov-15 Nov	Vano Allsalu
17 Nov-29 Nov	Marta Vaarik
1 Dec-13 Dec	Sirja-Liisa Eelma
15 Dec-10 Jan 2015	Mari Roosvald
12 Jan-31 Jan	Holger Loodus
2 Feb-21 Feb	Maria Ader
23 Feb-14 March	Pille-Riin Jaik

## HOP Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn  
www.eaa.ee/hop  
Open: Thu-Tue 11 am-6 pm

10 Oct-28 Oct	Eve Margus-Villems, Piret Hirv
31 Oct-18 Nov	Piret Kändler
21 Nov-9 Dec	Hibernate Group (FI)
12 Dec-2 Jan 2015	Piret Ellamaa

## Vabaduse Gallery

Vabaduse Sq 6, Tallinn  
http://www.eaa.ee/vabaduse/  
Open: Mon-Fri 11 am-6 pm, Sat 11 am-5 pm

9 Oct-28 Oct	Helle Vahersalu
30 Oct-18 Nov	Kelli Valk
20 Nov-9 Dec	Marje Taska. <i>Stories Under the Skin</i>
11 Dec-6 Jan 2015	Annual exhibition of the Estonian Glass Artists' Union

## A-Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn  
www.agalerii.ee  
Open: Mon-Fri 10 am-6 pm, Sat 11 am-4 pm

Until 20 Oct	Triin Pukk
24 Oct-17 Nov	Curated by Katarina Kotselainen
21 Nov-15 Dec	Mari Pärtelpoeg
19 Dec-12 Jan 2015	Ivo Pottsepp

## Vaal Gallery

Tartu mnt 80d, Tallinn  
www.vaal.ee  
Open: Tue-Fri 12 am-6 pm, Sat 12 am-4 pm

Until 7 Nov	Mauri Gross
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## Tartu Art Museum

Raekoja Square 18, Tartu  
www.tartmus.ee  
Open: Wed, Fri-Sun 11 am-6 pm, Thu 11 am-9 pm

Until 2 Nov	Pilvi Takala. <i>Attires and Attitudes</i>
7 Nov-1 Feb 2015	<i>Typical Individuals.</i> Tartu Graffiti and Street Art from 1994-2014

## Tartu Art House

Vanemuise 26, Tartu  
kunstimaja.ee  
Open: Wed-Mon 12-6 pm

### Big hall

Until 19 Oct	Group <i>Duul 100</i>
24 Oct-16 Nov	Timo Toots
17 Nov-23 Nov	<i>Crazy Tartu</i>
28 Nov-14 Dec	Estonian Glass Artists' Union
19 Dec-11 Jan 2015	End-of-the-year exhibition

### Small hall

Until 19 Oct	Kaie Luik
24 Oct-16 Nov	Ulla Juske
21 Nov-14 Dec	Art Allmägi
19 Dec-11 Jan 2015	End-of-the-year exhibition

### Monumental Gallery

Until 19 Oct	Laura Põld. <i>Ruins</i>
24 Oct-16 Nov	Hanna Piksarv
21 Nov-14 Dec	Manfred Dubov
19 Dec-11 Jan 2015	End-of-the-year exhibition



# Books



## **Out of Sync. Looking Back at the History of Sound Art**

Edited by Ragne Nukk and Kati Ilves  
Texts by Ragne Nukk, Kati Ilves, Kiwa, Sven Vabar, Teodor Hultberg, Kaur Garshnek and Katrin Parbus  
Designed by Kaarel Nõmmik, Priit Pärle and Janar Siniloo  
In Estonian and English  
128 pages  
Published by the Art Museum of Estonia - Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn 2013

This book is a companion to the exhibition *Out of Sync. Looking Back at the History of Sound Art* at the Kumu Art Museum (27.09.2013-12.01.2014). *Out of Sync* deals primarily with developments in Estonian sound art from the 1960s to the present day. Before the 1990s, we can speak only of practices related to sound, since the term 'sound art' was not widely adopted until the 1990s. The history of Estonian sound art is sporadic in nature and lacks a consistent discourse. However, it can be examined against the general developments in sound art, based on the individual experiments and works that have survived. We can speak of contemporary Estonian sound art from the late 1990s and the beginning of Kiwa's and Raul Keller's activities.



## **Eveline von Maydell. A World in Black and White**

Edited by Linda Lainvoo and Juta Kivimäe  
Texts by Juta Kivimäe, Kärt Pauklin and Aleksandra Murre  
Designed by Angelika Schneider  
In Estonian and English, summary in Russian  
184 pages  
Published by the Art Museum of Estonia - Kadriorg Art Museum, Tallinn 2014

This book is a companion to the exhibition *Eveline von Maydell. A World in Black and White* at the Kadriorg Art Museum (29.03.-07.09.2014). The exhibition and book, which was a collaborative effort of the Art Museum of Estonia and the National Archives of Estonia, introduces a unique art collection left behind in Estonia during World War II. Eveline von Maydell (1890-1962), who was connected to Estonia but identified herself as a Baltic German, was a noblewoman and artist, for whom silhouette art became a profitable source of income and means of self-expression. The book also provides information about Eveline von Maydell and the history of the shadow pictures tradition, and deals with issues related to the preservation and conservation of works of art on paper and made of paper.



## **Raul Meel. Dialogues with Infinity**

Edited by Eha Komissarov, Ragne Nukk and Raivo Kelomees  
Texts by Eha Komissarov, Raivo Kelomees, Erkki Luuk and Virve Sarapik  
Designed by Tuuli Aule  
In Estonian and English  
304 pages  
Published by the Art Museum of Estonia - Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn 2014

The book accompanying the exhibition *Raul Meel. Dialogues with Infinity* at the Kumu Art Museum (09.05.-12.10.2014) provides the first comprehensive survey of the oeuvre of Raul Meel, an avant-garde classic. Raul Meel is one of the most significant representatives of conceptual art and concrete poetry in Eastern Europe, and he is known as Estonia's most renowned autodidact and outsider. In the West, Meel's experimental work was recognised with many awards as early as the 1970s, and the artist received invitations to many distinguished exhibitions. In the 80s and 90s, Meel's talent and large-scale work also started to be recognised at home. Raul Meel has participated in numerous exhibitions at home and abroad and has received many important awards. The authors of the articles examine Raul Meel's various creative outputs, and a large section with reproductions and biographical photos provides a thorough survey of the artist's work.

