

1/2017

Estonian Art



On Post-Internet Art

This issue of Estonian Art focuses on the phenomena of post-internet art. Inspired by Katja Novitskova, who is representing Estonia with 'If Only You Could See What I've Seen with Your Eyes' at the 57th Venice Biennale this year, we dig into the influential international art movement. As the term post-internet art itself is often misunderstood, for the purposes of this issue we will use a simple definition: all art that has been influenced by the experience of network culture and acknowledges the ontology and influence of the cyber, the digital and the glowing, pervasive screen.

As with media art, its lifespan and relevance seem to exist on a different temporal plane. Some have claimed that post-internet art is dead: if so let this be an autopsy, if it squirms a vivisection. Themes of post-apocalyptic survival, the anthropocene and the ubiquitous post-internet fern come together in a movement that merges art with design and has fooled observers into thinking the portrayal of the corporate is itself corporate: the shadows on the cave wall again.

The post-internet movement and its wake are approached from many different angles with articles and visual essays by seventeen authors.

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Post-Internet and Its Animals

During the current decade, the Estonian pavilion at the Venice Biennial has presented projects dealing with post-Soviet, feminist and queer topics, or has focused on pure aesthetic form while looking back at modernist architecture. This year's project sits in a fairly recent layer of cultural history and does not trace its roots back to the modernist era, nor is it based on former political rule. Similar to her previous works, Katja Novitskova's project *If Only You Could See What I've Seen with Your Eyes* for the 57th Venice Biennial focuses on contemporary culture. Katja has gained international recognition recently in Europe, particularly in Amsterdam and Berlin, as well as in Estonia. The historical significance of her work should be considered when thinking of her as a post-internet artist, as the term post-internet art is built upon prior 'post' movements in art history such as postmodernism.

The post-internet movement, which is characterised by a reaction to or extension of the internet, uses the internet not only as a platform or tool but also as a material to produce art. Net art blasted off in the 1990s as a way of making art that has no physical form and that uses the internet as a medium and final

environment. As the dematerialisation of art went hand in hand with the ardour of technological developments, net art culminated as fast as it emerged. In the new millennium, the internet has become a commodity, something that is part of everyday life and, while more people have easier access to it, it retains its original technophilic charm. The initial collapse of the physical form and space created in the art world at the beginning of the digital era started to make a comeback as early as the 00s. After that, the field was heterogeneous for about a decade before one could identify a more concrete movement and name it.

'Post-internet', as defined by such artists and art writers as Marisa Olson, Gene McHugh and Artie Vierkant, is an artistic style that does not bypass the internet but rather is an expansion of it, reflecting the changes that have taken place in the web environment. While net art is an online platform, post-internet art focuses on the visual experience one gets while online surfing. At the same time, bringing this art into a material form and to a physical space made it more attractive to galleries, art collectors and visitors who were used to a more traditional medium as consumers. For artists it was a new way to explore and translate contem-

porary culture, while for the art market (as well for artists themselves) it was a sublimation of the internet experience to a more appropriate form.

Katja Novitskova looks at contemporary culture through a wide range of essential topics, such as nature and science. Her work can be described as a collection of fractures that seemingly have no relation to each other: something inherent in everything one can find online, yet it all adds up to one meaning that can be described as contemporary life. Novitskova's first art project, the Post Internet Survival Guide, made her well known as a post-internet artist and the project is still widely referred to when talking about her work. The multi-platform project, which has been a virtually ongoing, was first launched in 2010 as a publication. The ostensibly disconnected images and information gathered from the internet analyse the human condition in a world of advancing technology. The imagery used in the book consists of not only photography but screenshots as well, resulting in somewhat collage-like rendering. These fragments of art, science and news are like threads of various narratives. The (mis)matched collages predict the future and technology as part of ecology and geology.

The Survival Guide can be seen as a depot of the visually and intellectually stimulating material Novitskova is interested in. Bits and pieces of the book can be found in succeeding projects as topics she has targeted for closer study. The following projects have looked even more into ecology as a bioscience by using animals to explore the complexity of living beings and their status as image-based entities.

Photographs of living creatures are repetitively used in her work as the internet overflows with visual representations of animals. Photographs online, just like animals in the wild, struggle to survive and dominate. In terms of this hierarchical battle, internet users act as a higher power, a kind of force of nature that determines which images go viral and which don't. Unlike the laws of nature, the internet has an inverted logic, in which strong intimidating animals are at a disadvantage compared to cute or aesthetically pleasing species. The logic of attraction on the internet and the attention given to adorable animals fuel this process. Novitskova finds her subjects by browsing through numerous images. The animal photographs she chooses from the internet are printed on huge aluminium plates and presented in a gallery space. While there is a strong element of physicality and materialism in her practice, her way of thinking is not mate-



Katja Novitskova "Mamaroo (storm time, robotic bugs)", 2016.
Photo: Martha Fleming-Ives. Courtesy of Greene Naftali

rial-based but focuses on the image. The lifespan of an image is important in a world full of visual attractions. Katja Novitskova's projects of animal sculptures expand the life expectancy of the chosen images by creating a cycle. The artist finds photos on the internet, she makes large sculptures of them, the pieces are exhibited in a gallery where visitors take photographs with or of the art work and the photographic material eventually ends up on the internet again.

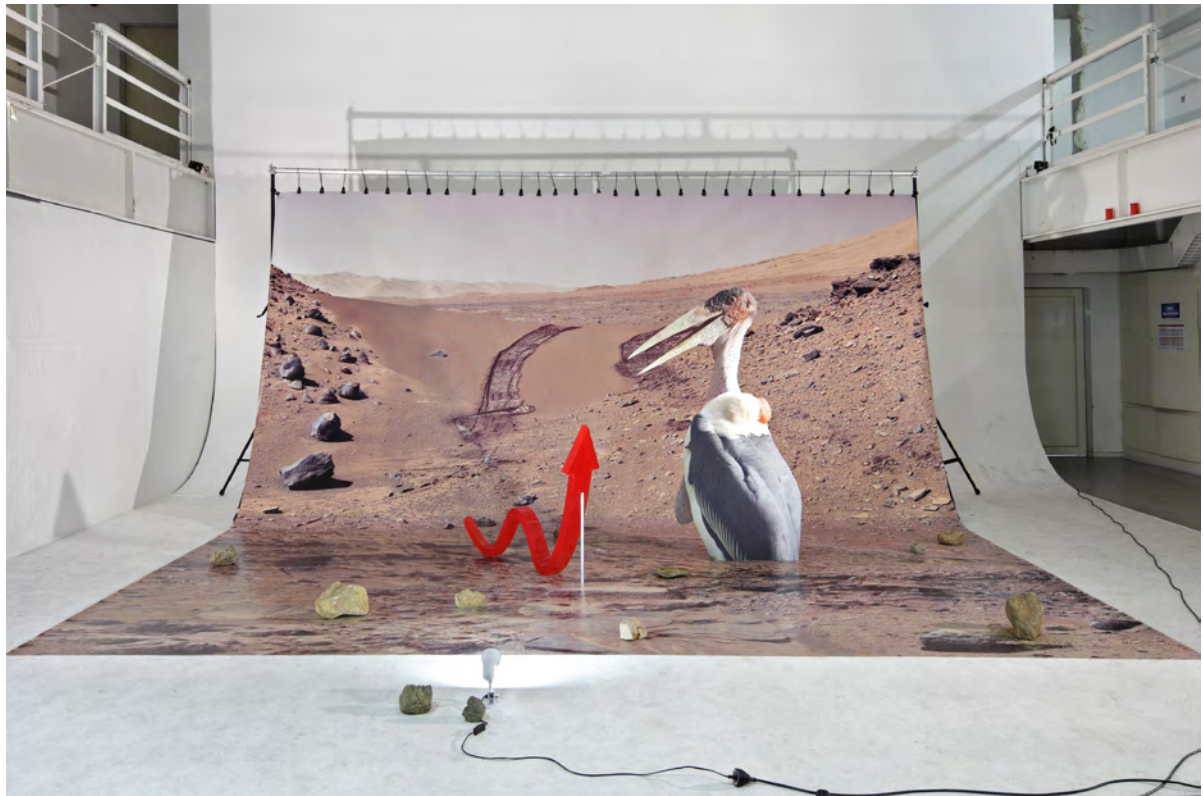
The loop created, where sculptures of images become images of sculptures not only addresses contemporary culture but also refers to the much discussed problem of the original in the age of reproduction. A photograph of a bird or animal gains a new meaning on the internet, as well as in the gallery space as a sculpture and eventually as a photograph of the sculpture again on the internet. The loop functions as a continuum of subject matter where the image ending up on the internet is something that has gone through a transformation without losing its similarity to the initial image. Through a circular structure, some sort of identity is established but it's hard to decipher it completely according to one conception, leaving room for interpretations. The two-dimensional sculptures, zigzags and fluctuating arrows which are frequent symbols in her work are visually appealing. The law of attraction that initially makes a photograph stand out from other images still functions when the image becomes a sculpture. The realistic representation of subjects and usage of widespread symbols achieve recognition. It could reasonably be stated that Katja

Novitskova's creation is above all associated with animals, as these pieces contain familiar animals in a new setting. The sculptures are preternatural in a sort of gratifying way, making them memorable and hyping the animals in the sculptures.

Novitskova's latest projects have looked more deeply into the artificial and its correspondence to nature. Curiosity about future technologies are revealed in odd artificial machines. Through these robotic installations, a search for a common denominator between biology and the synthetic is revealed. The 2014 project *A DAY IN A LIFE with THINGS I REGRET BUYING* includes kinetic sculptures that explore the borderline between the mechanical and natural, as the pieces made from electronic baby swings, polymers, rubber, metal and other materials resemble simple living organisms. The same kind of creatures can be seen in the 2015 project *PATTERN OF ACTIVATION* (planetary bonds). While the 2014 project still points to life on earth, with motorized caterpillars and artificial plants, the 2015 project relates to an environment outside of Earth, with sculptures of a comet's surface, citing the mission of NASA's space probe Rosetta. The polymers added to the white and light grey electronic swings are painted in bright colours and promote an HD image resolution-like

experience. At the same time, the level of detail of the pieces with fish bait, circulating artificial hair strands and electrical cables on the floor create an entropy, making one wonder if these synthetic organisms and artificial plants represent a gradual decline into disorder. The visual language of her work has gained more depth, detail and visual noise. The mobile organisms are impersonal and uncanny as they have little to no resemblance to actual biological creatures.

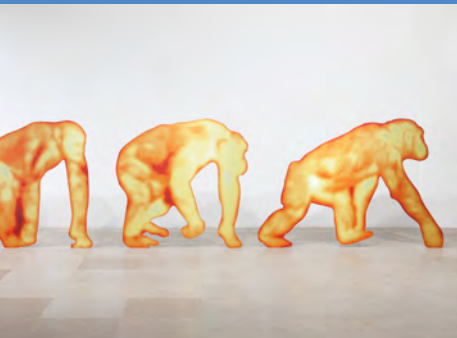
Nevertheless, similar to the animal sculptures, or any of her two-dimensional sculptures, such as trees, comets and arrows, the weird electronic cradles photograph well. Maybe it's the angle and lighting of the photographs or the fact that one doesn't have to face their bizarre motions in a physical space, but they become more magnetic on the screen. While Novitskova's work looks into the future, trying to predict the upcoming dynamics of the environment we will live in, it also functions as visual material that will end up on the internet again. The inner evolution of the pieces is to commute between the physical and virtual space, which makes the afterlife of an exhibition of the works fruitful, as it lives on according to the law of attraction on the interweb, especially if the photographs turn out to be half as cute as a sloth hugging a tree trunk.



Katja Novitskova "Pattern of Activation (on Mars)", 2014. Photo: Hans-Georg Gaul.
Courtesy of Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler

IRC with Katja Novitskova

Jaakko Pallasvuo (b.1987) is an artist. He makes videos, ceramics, comics, textiles and images.



Top
Artwork by Jaakko Pallasvuo

Bottom

Katja Novitskova "Storm Time Approximation (hominids, IR thermal vision)", 2016. Photo: Martha Fleming-Ives. Courtesy of Greene Nafali

JAAKKO:
~TM~TM~8"8"7"76"4"4TM*****~TM~
this symbol chain marks the begin-
ning of our chat log

KATJA:

let's go

this chat exists in the context of
Estonian Art magazine
or for that future context
i'm writing from the past

Katja is repping Estonia in Venice

let's see

if i have a question

10 things you've always wondered
about but were afraid to ask

:---p

I think the magazine is going to
frame your practice within the con-
text of post-internet art

which is how it is often contextual-
ized institutionally

we often talk about the ambiguity

of that term

and like certain frustrations that

come with it

I guess my question or prompt or

whatever to you would be: what

would be some alternative readings

/ histories to your work

yeah i think there is a certain limita-
tion to today's idea of what post-in-
ternet means: corporate aesthetics,
mimicry of corporate forms, etc
and that is just so narrow

or like webcam instagram personal
performance stuff

or a combo of those two

at my most "corporate" installation i
did in basel in 2014, with a massive
growth arrow on a trampoline and
a white stallion, my aspiration was
always actually to somehow pro-
voke ideas about ecologies ... and
corporate stuff is just one of them,
but i always try to connect to wider
things -- environment and "nature",
artistic / pictorial cultures, relation-
ships of these things to attention
economies

it seems like there is a more fluid
connection between your work
and the work of, say, emily jones
and joey holder, maybe marguerite

humeau
like new representations of tech-
no-biosphere or whatever

yeah exactly, they are some of my
favorite artists of the moment
emily's work is one of the earliest
inspirations for me

i started thinking about it in gen-
eral, this desire, maybe my desire,
to pinpoint artists or like draw
circles around them

i guess that's where "post-internet"
comes too

i'm thinking if there's a way to
approach work without the idea of
this sphere of influence / sociality,
altho it is also important of course
to see artists as formations /
many-headed growths

i think these circles kind of exist of
course

but they are not venn diagrams

they are networks, clusters

i'm thinking of bacteria or lichen
based on people going to school
together, doing co-labs, sharing
aesthetic vibes

yeah rhizome

and of course i did that myself at
some point: asked myself whose
work i am into at this point, what
word could capture the moment
and similarities, etc: and so post-in-
ternet survival guide happened

do you feel like there is a fric-
tion between the cultures, these
growths / rhizomes and The Indi-
vidual
like how do you feel about being an
artist, The Artist

yeah i think I feel cornered now to
be the Artist

like i could earlier curate things, do
editorial and graphic design work,
collaborations, all as one flow of
practice ... now i have to make some
major Artistic gestures, often by
myself

it's interesting how things some-
how only become recognizable and
Real for the art system through
individual practices
the like slime of the collective is

harder to historicize
there is no mechanism in place to
fully engage and support practices
with blurry edges
and that of course affects my
output
or like now i realize i have to still do
stuff that is less defined, but it is
better to go against the art system
flows

i think it's interesting how you've
managed that in the past, like
moving from semiotics to design to
curating to art

it feels like that's how the world
should be now, like interdisciplinary
and fluid

i mean i was not officially an artist
until my first solo show i guess

did you feel like there was a lot of
friction in moving through these
different scenes or was it a "natu-
ral" progression?

yeah definitely, and with lots of
subtlety :: i see people whose little
instagram feed is like the most
sensitive art work ... but it is just too
fluid to be registered

the natural thing about it was that i
just kind of told myself to follow my
interests in the most real honest
way, and once the field, like graphic
design, felt limited, i had to switch
but it was also just a chaotic pro-
cess of bouncing between schools,
internships, money gigs

until i could "make a living" from Art

i think at the eve of your Venice
debut there is this temptation to
sort of smooth out the past
to like make it seem as if it was
inevitable and logical

or that seems to be how artists'
practices are written about
although from observing your work
in the last 5-6 years it does feel like
there is something inevitable
like there is some constant fre-
quency flowing through your
activities

there is definitely nothing obvious
about how i started and ending
up doing Venice, there was like

0.000000000000000001

chance of that happening

i think in some sense i just got mad
lucky, and i will have to pay for it
somehow eventually

survivor's guilt

haha maybe yeah, also massive
impostor syndrome

yeah impostor is somehow a good
term to bring into the discussion
like not in terms of you as a person
but i think in your work there is
something about things posing as
other things, trying to pass
like the robots that mimic the
movement of a parent cradling a
child
or hard aluminum 2d planes trying
to pose as soft cute animals
but it also doesn't feel that the
works are fakes, but more like their
true nature is posing as something
other
if that makes sense lol
like actors

i get what you are saying

like with animals, the most hd
images of them are still not them
this sounds like a dumb-profound
statement, but it is often kind of
not obvious
these are image files, artifacts,
dead
capturing something which is an
animal
but it can still affect us as if it is a
little bit of a wild animal
you cannot help it somehow
and so this power of the image
to manipulate your attention and
emotions

it's also weird how this image pro-
duction gets more and more sophis-
ticated while the actual ecosystems
that support the material existence
of these animals becomes more and
more degraded / low-resolution

yeah definitely, in some cases there
are more image files of certain
species than actual live represen-
tatives of these species left on the
planet
and the files are probably what

stays around, and their dna strains

i was wondering how you feel about
these terms
animal & nature

cos it also feels like your work is
maybe trying to destabilize them
or somehow saying that your work
is "about animals" feels off

definitely ... after post-internet,
"animals" is the second most com-
mon summary of my work
but i get it of course

it's interesting to me that the
ecological aspect seems kind of
underrepresented
or maybe i'm reading the wrong
media lol

but i feel like for me the most com-
mon summary of your work is that
it's about like images and how they
circulate

yeah which is level O1 to me some-
how

like that they are about the poten-
tial virality of cute animal imagery
more than about "actual" animals

it is about images as machines of
attention grabbing

partially
and it is also about the unfathom-
able complexity of the animal forms
that have been evolving for billions
of years which is hardly comparable
to our current "advanced technol-
ogies"

and this is the tension and angle to
displace the animal / nature cate-
gory

like a marabou bird, or an octopus
is so much more mysterious than an
ipad, but we just eat them or they
just exist eating our garbage
and there are all kinds of tensions
and trajectories in that
their complexity then translates
into their "viral" potential
as images

it's almost like a biblical tension
like we are jealous of "The Creator"
and wanna make our own things
golden calf
like those new robots by Festo
the flying penguin robot and the

kangaroo robot

and like biomimicry is the ultimate
goal somehow

yeah exactly or boston dynamics

it's in architecture too of course,
like biomorphic forms
i was thinking about cat and dog
memes

like how many representations
there are of cute pets for people
who can't have pets

it has been there since the first
architectures, since the first art,
since the first costume

but i think it's interesting that the
representations you have chosen
to make of these living beings are
quite cold
like they are cooler / less affec-
tive which negatively effects their
virality

Jane Goodall, the famouschimp
primatologist, once said she sup-
ported viral images of cute chimps,
because overall they do bring them
funding for their conservation prac-
tices ... but even the fact that this
is an actual economic cycle -- from
viral image to cash, is so weird still
to me

it's interesting tho that since your
work is mainly existing online as
installation shots, it communicates
detachment

like the lonely animal in sterile cube
while the cute animal photos aim
for a more "naturalistic" (lol) look
like they lack the "critical" distance
of the surrounding sterile architec-
ture

yeah because ultimately i guess i
am kind of deconstructing it a little
bit, especially by presenting it as
art objects ... isolated images of ani-
mals, printed on cold kind of cheap
display material -- isolated value
somehow

which of course partially stops
being its origins, and partially still
functions, but already in a different
economy with different codes
the white cube codes, and early-on
tumblr codes



it was an interesting deviation
when you made the work where
you placed this bird in the context
of a mars landscape
like that the Actor got a Stage

yeah more and more i think of my
exhibitions as sets

i think it would be interesting to
think about your work in relation to
props and stage design

where something is taking place
and where something is docu-
mented

yeah basically one of the few things
i can say about my Venice project
is that me and Kati, the curator,
are taking The Blade Runner, as a
reference

and for me especially, some of the
sets of Blade Runner
and Aliens

blade runner loops back to mimicry
/ imitation too

like trying to pass as human
someone was saying that the
paradox of blade runner is how the
main character has to suppress his
empathy to kill the androids
but then his empathy is supposed
to be the thing that separates him
from them

yeah i re-watched it recently and it
felt insane how many cross points it
has with my work
synthetic animals

they're not androids really i guess..
oh true the owl too!
"do you like our owl?"
that would be a good show title
hehe

there is a whole thing about real
and synthetic animals, and the dif-
ference in the price between them
and the idea of an eye who is look-
ing and what and how they see it
humans build androids to colonize
space, but what ends up happening
is that androids are the ones seeing
the unseen worlds for the first time
with their eyes, like the Mars rovers
in a way the cut outs are more

comforting
like they are old school in the sense
that they are extremely easily dif-
ferentiated
from the real thing
they are not uncanny valley

for sure, also i had to respond to the
codes existing in the art world in a
way too ... like "you want a sculp-
ture?" -- "here is a sculpture"
in the most simple way

i was reading something recently
about the roy batty speech in the
end of the movie, like how his ability
to have this aesthetic experience is
like this last claim to a right to exist
my work in a way still starts on the
screen

yes, it is beautiful

in a way the androids and the ani-
mals have to market themselves to
humans in the same way
like it's also sad in that sense, like
we have to be moved to protect /
let live
affective labor lol

yeah exactly, you got it ... this idea
that nonhuman beings have a right
to see the world at all, and to live

in it..

and this right is barely acknowl-
edged

i guess they are called Replicants
not androids

yeah whatevs

haha

we can change it when we edit lol
or just leave this observation here
like oops

i mean we know what we are
talking about, there is an android in
Aliens

but yes, it's like how the only
interface with other beings is how
human-like they are
animals only go viral when they do
cute human-like things
and it's cute that they can't be us or
something

Aliens adds up to this in a way that
the beings there are so mysterious
and terrifying and powerful, that
they kind of almost get to destroy
humanity -- and for me it is more
representing our AI fears

was it the 4th alien movie that tried
to kinda humanize the alien, like it
was a mother or something
and Ripley was more alien too
she was starting to understand
that point of view

yeah she was a hybrid

also her failed clones that she
smashes

we should put screen shots of all
this shit as illustrations
have you seen The Thing?

i feel like The Thing overlaps with
your work too, like the alien that
wants to take the shape of these
other beings but then it's always
caught in the middle of an awkward
transition
and creates these like monstrous
but also sculptural and magnificent
half forms

Yeah there's always something
uncanny about these transitional
forms

that's the baby swings in a way
like what the f, these bird-like medi-
cal machines that cradle babies

did a military designer come up
with those? how come they look so
awkward
and for me the interesting part
is how they just exist in the most
banal way in the homes of millions
of families, as if it is all chill

yess
there's an interesting difference
between the cutouts and the baby
swings
like the cutouts are very german
vibe, like ok here are these things
that exist
but then the baby swings are really
baroque and ornamental
like you decorated them to be these
weird plant reptile characters
like that baroque painting of the
head made of vegetables
i remember it seemed like a dra-
matic shift when i saw them the
first time

yeah it had to be a shift
i was thinking about making some-
thing in between a robot and a
jurassic park prop
and the challenge was to make
something with a strong presence,
but the opposite of the flat animal
images
and i didn't want to make any obvi-
ous robots
once i had the skeletal shapes of
the swings in my studio it felt like
the next step should be this very
simple ornamentation
like a christmas tree, or a traditional
dress
inspired by Isa Genzken in a way,
but with more symmetry

there is something aristocratic
about the swings
too
like they could be at home in a
palace
yeah that is maybe the symmetry
they look like weird altars too
right now imagining them in some
kind of gilded room among venice's
artificial waterways
in a way that city is a good context
for your work

because it's all about like the mas-
tery of "nature"
but it's being fucked up by nature
like literally sinking already

the pavilion in venice is not very
fancy, not baroque
but it still has this vibe of an italian
palazzo apartment, the floor and
the ceiling
do you think about "context" in that
sense
like in a way ur work feels resistant
to stuff like that
like you're not a super "reactive"

yeah i've been thinking to make an
obvious climate change apocalypse
work for a while, but it never feels
right to make it really obvious
on a purely intuitive level it feels
wrong to be direct
but "cooking" the work, the context
is very important
in blade runner the theme of a
climate apocalypse is also on the
background
and so the way i'm thinking about
the pavilion and the whole thing, is
as a set of post-collapse
i guess there are two ways to think
about context
like the political / societal / his-
torical context and then the like
material / architectural context of
wherever you're showing
but i guess in this sense they are
quite wrapped up in each other, like
venice is collapse and larger context
is also collapse
fin-de-siecle

yeah
and the collapse of europe (dark
humor)
yes
it feels like our time is characterized
by this sadness
about an end that is coming
and feels inevitable
which seems somehow oddly simi-
lar to europe before WWI
altho of course any other time could
be compared
fall of rome, medieval times etc
yeah i think you are good at actually

capturing these connections in your
video works
like even this thing of bringing the
medieval back into present, chang-
ing the meaning of the present
like we are still in many ways in the
same world
in Estonia the medieval is part of
the landscape and tourism indus-
try still, so it never went away ... in
venice the renaissance is still part
of the landscape ..
not sure where i'm going with this,
but i guess these continuities are
suddenly more obvious to me:
things can and have collapsed sev-
eral times, within very few genera-
tions from each other
growing up it felt like things can
only get better, but that feeling is
kind of gone

we are in the middle of a mass
extinction event
but it's weird to think that there
have already been five other ones
it's also interesting in relation to the
art world, how art somehow wor-
ships history and archive
or it's like both totally amnesiac and
forcing "contemporaneity"
but it is also protecting like slide
projectors and film reels and bronze
casting and lithography
like an umbrella to all these soon
extinct manufacturing techniques
i guess there is no question here
yet hehe

i read this super interesting article
about how plexiglass and plastics
are actually not that permanent
-- plexi boxes develop "acid rains",
bacteria eats through plastics, etc..
a lot of these contemporary syn-
thetic materials are actually more
vulnerable than pottery
your work, and the work of a lot of
people in our network, coming up in
this system via "looking futuristic"
like feels like in the past five years
there have been soo many shows
about the future
but then i think the sense of an
actual livable future is disappearing

yeah for me the example of early Russian futurist aesthetic is very interesting -- how it aged and i think it aged in an interesting way and maybe that futurism was also a syndrome of / parallel to the chaos of the first world war yeah or like it is clear that most people won't have the access to the "livable" part of the future and also weird to think again about archives and museums, when all this art value might just get wiped out

it's kind of a simulation like i think about it all the time, how will we be remembered what is going to be left behind it's kinda like the "anthropocene" like for that word to matter we have to first imagine a geologist that lives 100,000 years in the future and needs to have a name for what-ever this was which is like a really abstract seeming projection right now i think the same goes for post-internet like it's the name that this stuff could be described with if there is art history in the future or things become "history" in 30 months

it is also about what gets to be fossilized and what doesn't too not everything will be discoverable even so the view of us from 100,000 will already be distorted and even the view of what we did in 2010 has been distorted since 2013 so yes, 30 months hehe

yeah, we get back to the beginning of the chat in a nice way hehe like how collectivity, slimy online culture blobs maybe disappear because they're not an anecdote, not a narrative but The Artists might remain in history because individual narratives

are strong enough as a format yeah there is almost no paleontological research of mushrooms, because they hardly left any fossils..although we know that mushrooms are one of the largest clusters of life it is a crude form, the individual, it is carried by gossip and faces, and those are remembered better

there is something nice about that thought with the mushrooms like the mushroom is a dance while the mammal is a sculpture or something

mushrooming as a performance like the mammal leaves an awkward skeleton behind mushroom just does its shit and disappears

mushrooming as tumblr mushrooms as status updates of the network that lies beneath the ground lolll

mammals with their large eyes and cute fur, it is our main mental paradigm and our main limitation to imagine other possibilities in life yesss

it's interesting tho how far this metaphor can go, or like if it is also somehow flattening out the profound weirdness of technology as a thing in itself

even that still for the average curator it is difficult to imagine code as art, versus sculpture as art what do you mean flattening?

yeah, it's interesting also, in relation to net art, how insulted people are that the institutions didn't like subsume it

and i kind of understand their frustration even though the point seemed to be that it would be something that couldn't be subsumed, that would be more free

also maybe coding already assumes a different art system the museums are just not the right fit

it is like the difference between religious art vs autonomous art once you assume a subjectivity independent from God, you don't need a church haha

im going deep somewhere yes, i feel like we are peeking into a future where the current institutions are obsolete which is why being an artist right now is so full of friction / frustration and maybe guilt

basically i think we are a conflicted generation we are on the edge of all these things, ultimately still pulled towards the old fashioned institutions

like guilt of playing to the old order when u can smell the new mushroom scene coming up that's very venice too but in our hearts we know things will and have to radically mutate yes

basically this like every national pavilion has at least once or every second time done the "fuck nationalism" pavilion so my venice project is a huge contradiction too

from start to finish like the Finnish one it was listed in the open call as the goal that the pavilion has to critically reflect on national identity or whatever which is kinda like hmm maybe just discontinue the pavilion and give the money to open borders activism and the ambassador will still be at the opening giving a speech yess

it's like double consciousness Replicants survival

i think i will be a walking issue in this too: during my press conference the nation will see i make lots of mistakes while speaking Estonian which i am ok with, embracing the contradictions

doing my best

yes, this was something i wanted to
ask about also
trying to quickly google but coming
up empty
i just remembered this early project
of yours
Lasnamäe natives?
which was combining District 9
alien aesthetics with the area in
Tallinn you grew up

yeah i think i took it down
never felt like it was finished

yeah

i really liked that project, while i
agree that it felt unresolved possi-

bly

one of the reasons i could never
finish it was that i could not imagine
my conversation partner for it
it was filled with too much insider
info for a global circulation, and
back then i did not have a lot of
peers in Estonia itself
so it felt like i did it for a non-exist-
ing viewer

maybe it would be interesting to
resurface that now

like that it's not made for the people
who grew up where you grew up?
but for a more detached audience?
if it's in the art world

it would be made for someone who
grew up there with me, but none of
those people "get" contemporary
art

so it had to be for a more general
audience, but then the meanings
and visuals had too many local
meanings

yeah, it's a really tricky problem
like how to weave in history and
experience if it's not a "general"
communicable experience neces-
sarily

like i feel like only people who grew
up in places like new york have this
life that people are used to looking
at, or have seen several different
kinds of representations of

yeah me and you get nyc refer-
ences, because of all the movies
and so it is easier to make those



references as default

it's an interesting thing about your
work too, like that you are not min-
ing your identity/experience very
directly

in a way it makes your work com-
pressed, like it's light enough to
travel

because there is nothing too spe-
cific that would weigh it down
but that also feels like the thing
that made the berlin biennial as a
whole kinda heavy and tiring
for example

like the sort of unbearable lightness
of things that look general

yeah, not many things were placed
but maybe that was also the point ...
the gooey global mediocre similarity
of forms

or the vague feeling of being in the
future

yes

i think "futurity" seems to mean
that often now

comes from like all the specificity
disappearing

like cleaned from trauma or some-
thing

i think in my case i have a long his-
tory of escapism from my current
social environment

so for me this global thing always
helped mentally to detach myself
from my reality

and that was main coping mech-
anism while on the cold bus from

school

i could listen to radiohead, play a
computer game or whatever and
completely disassociate
and that is still kind of how i oper-
ate ... i am very sensitive to reality
but half of the time i have to disas-
sociate to deal with it
(lol using this chat as my therapy
session)

yes

that is a big upside about the white
cube

like that it creates this "neutral" /
calm environment where things can
be contemplated as if without a
context in a way
or with this over-historical context
that is not somehow unstable or
messy or full

and my work is born in that feeling
of escapism: let's dream about what
the Mars rovers see now, instead of
the rise of extreme right
maybe why i could transition into
the white cube art system too, it
supported this

i have a great deal of respect for
people who are not able to be
escapists and actually fight in the
real world

yeah, i was googling your work and
there's this image of you and a bird
and an upward arrow in the mars
rover stage design you made in the
berliner zeitung office building
which feels somehow accurate as a

description of the world out of joint
#2016 style

haha yeah

i guess distance is necessary in any
case, and all distance is maybe not
escapism, or hopefully not
like there has to be ways to zoom
out of a situation

yeah and people have different
degrees and forms of engagement
so as long as not everyone is like
me, the world has a chance

i guess everyone has that feeling
now, or seems like it
like the feeling of what one does
being not enough
in relation to current world events
like also all the activists etc i know
because it is obviously not?

like we are still sliding into some-
thing

i've been browsing lots of reddit
recently and i get a sense that most
people are in this weird manic state
of losing control

from all spectra

alt rights are also in panic mode

i mean i think this sense of urgency,
like "something has to be done" is
also what is making us slide into
shit
and what creates violent acts

the hysteria

it's so weird to think that if we
could all somehow just stop trying
to fix things the ecosystem would
simply go on and fix itself
like that there's nothing essentially
wrong with the world
besides our attempts to like "fix it"
like that the inactivity is not the
problem, the activity is, although
this is also a lazy person's justifica-
tion for watching seinfeld at home

lol

yeah so maybe a dose of sit-back
escapism is healthy

all of a sudden i watched all sea-
sons of the Walking Dead
because it matched the mood this
fall

like i was in nyc, with protests
against trump happening ... but

i was in my airbnb watching the
walking dead

zombies are interesting
or like the idea of the undead
the collapse too
maybe something like the replicants
the walking dead is referring to the
living too, uncanny forms

the walking dead and those kinda
post-apocalyptic narratives are i
guess a kind of fantasy of simplicity
like that there is no bureaucracy
anymore
and all desires are simple
yeah and the laws are primitive

like braaaaiinss
or just to survive and stay human
back to tribalism too

yes
anarcho primitivist
that's the wet dream

the mushroom fantasy
i think mushroom civilization would
actually be the opposite of the
walking dead

it is like the antidote
to our mammalian issues

i remember watching this donna
haraway / anna tsing lecture
which was referencing nausicaa
like how the mushrooms in that are
somehow cleaning toxicity
like the same as the plastic eating
mushrooms etc

like we are the problem child and
maybe these other species clean
up our shit when we are skeletons
later on
also the mushroom that lives in the
chernobyl reactor and eats radia-
tion

it's funny how the hopeful futures
are about mushrooms, like jenna
sutela's work too
no more humans, just slime mold
covering the earth

yesss

im reading now Haraway's latest
book: and she is basically push-
ing this idea of "staying with the
trouble" -- like avoid the escapism,
avoid the speculative utopias/disto-
pias, be mindful and deal with what

is happening to the world right now
and really look deeply into the
present: find the mushrooms who
are eating the plastics, and relate
yourself to them

it is not about the anthropos, it is
about seeing ourselves in connec-
tions to all these other beings, like
mushrooms and gaining mutual
empathy

she is brilliant, so it never sounds
too "hippy", she is on point and
critical
and there is joy in that, not just
panic

i have been really moved by her
realism

like she is not overtly optimistic but
also not desolate

she had this lecture that somehow
starts with like how all biological life
through time has been relational
like there has never been a living
thing that is "separate"

yeah, and not too far out with her
theories, it always comes back to
beings and people and earth

which makes the cutouts feel dou-
bly cutouts
like cutout of aluminum and also the
representation of the animal placed
in isolation (cut out) in a way that is
impossible
or like would kill them
if they weren't already images
haha

yes but then you know it gets acti-
vated by human eyes and emotional
systems, the visual patterns of
these animals

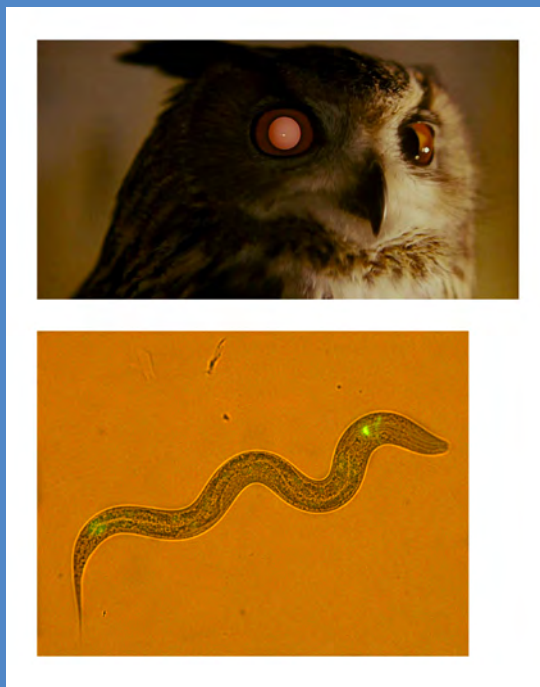
it is a form of capsuling though, like
i'm collecting reality in a way and
isolating it

ooops i have to go now

ok this was fun! we can each find
some images, and then we send
them to the magazine

If Only You Could See What I've Seen with Your Eyes

If Only You Could See What I've Seen with Your Eyes addresses the emerging relationship between visual culture, big data-driven industries, and the ecology of the world today. Currently, almost all aspects of the human and non-human are registered or modelled by software on an environmental scale. Collecting and processing data has transcended the limits of our planet, and have become tools used to map surfaces on Earth and beyond. As a result, new visual languages and pictorial material are continuously being generated in enormous quantities at high resolutions. This intense visual production is radically expanding the domain of what is visible to us as humans. We can now see the surface of Mars, and the shapes of individual neurons in the bodies of lab-test worms can now be modelled in great detail. The scope of data sets is enormous: satellite images of all major storm patterns from the last thirty years, millions of 3D embryo and MRI scans, hidden camera footage of wildlife, databases full of human faces and DNA strands, etc. Just like hydrocarbons, or rare earth minerals, these collections of visual data are another resource that is being extracted from the environment to be sold or utilised.



Kati Ilves (b. 1984) has worked as a curator of contemporary art at Kumu Art Museum. She is the curator of the Estonian Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale, displaying works by Katja Novitskova.

Project study: film still from the film 'Bladerunner' (1982), photograph of *C. elegans* model worm organism with fluorescent protein markers, 2017. Screenshot by Katja Novitskova, digital collage. Courtesy of the artist.

Katja Novitskova takes the aforementioned premise as a working catalyst within the exhibition *If Only You Could See What I've Seen with Your Eyes*. Her artistic role here is in some ways that of a medium: she is herself a filtering organism receiving data in its most picturesque form from various processes, and the organism then forwards it to the recipient, the possible exhibition visitor, in a carefully synthesized manner. When working from these new forms of imagery taken from the expanding realm of present day visual representation, Novitskova sweeps the Internet for specific images and data visualizations related to scientific research. Through *If Only You Could See What I've Seen with Your Eyes*, she explores this radically new articulation of the role of the image, and the way in which constant planetary scale mediation gains an ecological dimension.

Novitskova's objects are far from unconditionally stabilised within the realms of sculpture, photography or installation; instead, they are rather liminal. Erected previously mostly within rigid white cube environments, and increasingly presented in more dispersed iterations than seen here, Novitskova's objects act with a certain sense of alien otherness. Standing scattered in gallery spaces, too uncanny to fully belong to our present world, but recognizable in their imminence, they are bound together as pan-historical curiosities.

Pinpointing the contemporaneity—or archaic tendencies or even futurist ideas—in Novitskova's practice is therefore a rather ambiguous act: when approached through the choice of materials—mostly polymers with variable melting points combined with ready-made objects, video, light and sound—it's highly characteristic of the production culture of the current day. It's also characteristic of the physical bodies of those machines that process data. However, when looked at in terms of the content they carry, we might want to reconsider and place them as part of another, long-passed realm that is known to us through archaeological excavations and fragmentarily collected pieces of materiality from a particular time. Novitskova, rather than commenting on the observable moment, transforms these various incarnations of data from different eras over many millennia into an immersive environment that depicts the world to come.

In terms of our use of language, Hito Steyerl suggests that we are living in the times of the Data Neolithic: "The vocabulary deployed for separating signal and noise is surprisingly pastoral: data 'farming' and 'har-

vesting', 'mining' and 'extraction' are embraced as if we were living through another massive neolithic revolution, with its own kind of magic formulas."¹ By pointing this out, Steyerl places us at the dawn of the culture: what is understood to be characteristic to the beginning of our civilization might now be found reoccurring through the activities defined by language. Even if it's not the Data Neolithic—or rather if the coming generations collectively decide to give it another label—then we are undoubtedly at the dawn of something transformative. This time, in comparison to every previous epoch since the beginning of the Enlightenment, we might actually look back and inside rather than towards the future. What we are about to see is something that has always been there but impossible to see using the always stationary naked eye: it is the surface of Mars, molecular structures of proteins, shapes of individual neurons in the body of a lab-test worm, satellite images of all the major storm patterns of the last thirty years, millions of 3D embryo and MRI scans, hidden camera wildlife footage from all over the planet, databases full of human faces and DNA strands.

If Only You Could See What I've Seen with Your Eyes aims to observe this matter closely, with the necessary tools now available. The exhibition takes the visitor from the conventional surroundings and comfortable mode of viewing art, several millennia into the future, placing him/her in a claustrophobic space divorced from its initial purpose. Encounters here will occur between carriers of both human and synthetic eyes. The work is not about what you see, but about what you might experience while navigating the space: an unsettling sense of collapse that has already taken place or is about to, and the resulting hybrid beings which are perhaps looking back at you, following your every step. A time capsule where visual artefacts from the current moment, fossilized in synthetic resin, might get re-discovered and then studied in the distant future, when the world as we know it is no longer there.

1 Hito Steyerl, "A Sea of Data: Apophenia and Pattern (Mis-) Recognition," *e-flux*, no.72 (April 2016), <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/72/60480/a-sea-of-data-apophenia-and-pattern-mis-recognition/>

EXHIBIT_ ONSCROLL

Interview with Kristina Õllek and Kert Viiaart

The infinite screen of content
invites you to scroll through
In a moment things flash and
seeing becomes inhabiting

MR First off, I want to say that I have been fascinated with your EXHIBIT_ONSCROLL project since it was launched and I have impatiently awaited the roll-out of each new instalment. I find it atmospheric, enchanting, crisp, futuristic, clean and poetic. At the same time, it's also empty and possibly dystopian.

Kristina, you've been moving in this direction for quite some time now with your WHEN YOU HAVE THE OBJECT ITSELF IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES project, which has been exhibited in several places, including Konstanet, a hybrid gallery space mixing the online and offline

worlds. Could you talk a bit more about the process and how you and Kert ended up making this exhibition, and why you chose Instagram?

KÕ With my project WHEN YOU HAVE THE OBJECT ITSELF IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES, I was specifically interested in the phenomenon of art documentation and its representation, regarding how its position has changed in contemporary art today, at a time when most artworks are seen online in the form of photographic documentation. The project was formed by a series of three exhibitions (in a physical-virtual space, a physical space, and in a publication). The trilogy used the exhibition format to move between three different modes of structure and representation of an exhibition, within the materiality and the "aura" of the artworks transformed. I emphasised the perception of the space, the various ways of circulating the artwork and its potential to become a

new version of the work, acquiring re-contextualized meaning and position in terms of the viewer.

Throughout the whole process of doing that project, I was in constant dialogue with Kert Viart, my boyfriend. He is the first person with whom I discuss my ideas and have constructive dialogue with, and therefore he becomes part of all my projects. While working on "WYH-TOIIFOYE", we also collaborated on the publication part for it, and that made us realise that, besides common interests and mindset, we also have a good working flow together. Our long discussions about that project led us to the very first ideas, and almost a year's worth of work can now be seen as @exhibit_onscroll.

We've both been using Instagram for some time, but have always wanted something more out of it than merely a photographic diary of everyday life. We started to think about how artworks, primarily the documentation of them, are usually presented in the context of Instagram, and how confusing it is for us as viewers, as they are often presented with very little information and are taken out of context.

The idea of Instagram's distributed images and infinite feed, in which you may find total strangers from all over the world within one scroll, is what fascinated us about using this platform. While doing an online show on a website, visitors are aware of entering/seeing the exhibition; it's not a random "feed", but a definite choice of visiting that website. Instagram spreads images all over and one can never know who exactly he/she is seeing and what the intentions behind them are.

What interested us was how we could use the Instagram platform as an exhibition format and could use the limited three-column grid-view to evoke the viewer and the logic of Instagram's common use.

MR What's the architecture of your project and what has the experience of working with the Instagram environment been like?

KÖ The rendered architecture is developed together with the presented artworks, which jointly become the entity. Our idea was not to create a utopian space, but rather a realistic one, which the visitor (viewer) could relate to and also "locate" him/herself in. Taking into consideration Instagram's white grid lines, we decided to use the white-cube aesthetic, so that the grid wouldn't be so visible. But instead

of having an isolated white space, we created window panels (on the scale of a smartphone screen) and daylight, which lights up the works and creates shadows in the space. The rendered daylight and the sight out of the window also refers to life outside of the space, to the infinite Instagram world.

Usually when rotating your phone from the vertical viewpoint to the horizontal, the phone's screen adjusts the rotation, but with the Instagram app it doesn't, and this allows us to use the grid line horizontally. The shift between common usage as the vertical grid, to a horizontal one gives us an opportunity to have a better view range and movement in the space. Also it invites the viewer to interact with it: by rotating the phone and using a finger to view/experience the exhibition.

As the whole exhibition was made of 321 Instagram posts, we decided to divide the "instalment" into four parts throughout February 2017. Each time we uploaded approximately 60-90 posts, considering the "traffic" and prime-time of Instagram. The instalment usually took us about 30min to 1h, and the large number of posts took over our followers' feed for the following hours. Although Instagram has certain rules/advice on how many posts can be published in a day/hour, luckily we were only blocked twice throughout the whole process.

We decided not to use any e-mails to inform people about our project, but instead to use Instagram's own environment and the direct message (DM) system; we started to send out our invitations through DM one by one. After we had sent out about 150 direct message invitations, Instagram blocked us from using it for 24 hours. The second time was during our third instalment; when uploading the last three images, it stopped us and didn't allow us to add more for another 24 hours. But the whole process of doing the instalment, and manipulating the Instagram robot-detector became part of the exhibition.

MR Is site-specificity something that has been part of your concept from the start?

KÖ Sure. Site-specificity was our starting point for doing this exhibition. We even called it not an exhibition, but an exhibition*grid. The project engages

with Instagram as an exhibition format and addresses its influence on the viewer, contemporary artistic practice and exhibition making.

MR Kert, you work mostly as a designer in the collective Le60 with Carl-Robert Kagge. What is your background in art and how does this exhibition fit into your practice?

KV As Kristina already mentioned, we use to have long constructive dialogues about her work, and different matters of contemporary art and visual culture, and this has had a huge impact on my work as a designer. I've always considered myself a critical visual thinker and have used conceptual input in my graphic design practice. Although this is the first time I've positioned myself as an artist, it has developed in an organic way.

MR So what is the exhibition about?

KÖ The exhibition is not about the displayed single elements, but about the whole experience and dialogue that it starts within, with its viewer and Instagram. Its carefully constructed architecture is divided into three rooms and each room has its own presence, together with its exhibited elements. It is also important to note that the whole exhibition is seen via photographic and video documentation of it and is presented as a whole in the grid-view.

KV In the first room, there's a large-scale hand sculpture pointing a finger to the video installation, which is seen on one of the window ceiling panels. The video is a screen recording of a scroll through #viewfromwindow in Instagram, referring to itself in a tautological way, and the hand acts in a god-like way, having power over Instagram while liking, following, unfollowing or not reacting at all.

In addition, there's a cut-out of a stock image with three people posing with a selfie-stick, who act as the exhibition's stock-visitors and also as a measurement "tool" to give a better understanding of the size and scale of the space and the artworks. Behind the "visitors", there's a curved 4K LCD display with a video loop of greenhouses and water systems, next to an artificial-loop-robot-plant.

In the second room is the photographic installation with a view of the Alps, together with liquidized sculptural-slick-forms. The third space's entrance is covered with a moving "sunscreen" curtain, and inside the room are sun chairs and a specific light temperature, which has an effect on the melatonin hormone, which

regulates sleep and waking cycles, and is often disturbed by the bluish cold light of smartphone or computer screens. On the wall, there's the text "Amount of Now and There, the Melanopic Light of the Screen Takes You".

In the first two rooms the light is connected to the existence of natural light, the sun, but in a different way, as rendered daylight; in the third room, the soft melanopic light replicates the temperature of a sunset. Along with the presented images and videos made with a smartphone, which have been transformed into a "physical" photo and video installation in the rendered environment, the presence of artificiality is generated. The whole space and all of the artworks we see are in a flawless shape and environment: a custom-made space with shiny reflective walls and floors.

It all addresses the context of contemporary art and the Instagram image culture, as well as Instagram's influence on society, on personal psychology, and on the body's physical reaction, and more broadly its dystopic estrangement.

MR What does it mean to take one particular element and use it as a hashtag, a meme, a vehicle of generalised meaning? It's obvious that you have used water/liquid, plants, grids, windows etc. very conceptually.

KÖ We posted our exhibition in four parts and each part had its own hashtag collection, which also acts as a title or as reference words for the specific views and artworks. We decided to keep the hashtags naive and simple, as they are usually used in Instagram. The hashtags also act in this case as vehicles for spreading the exhibition and archiving it immediately in the collection of those certain tags' metadata.

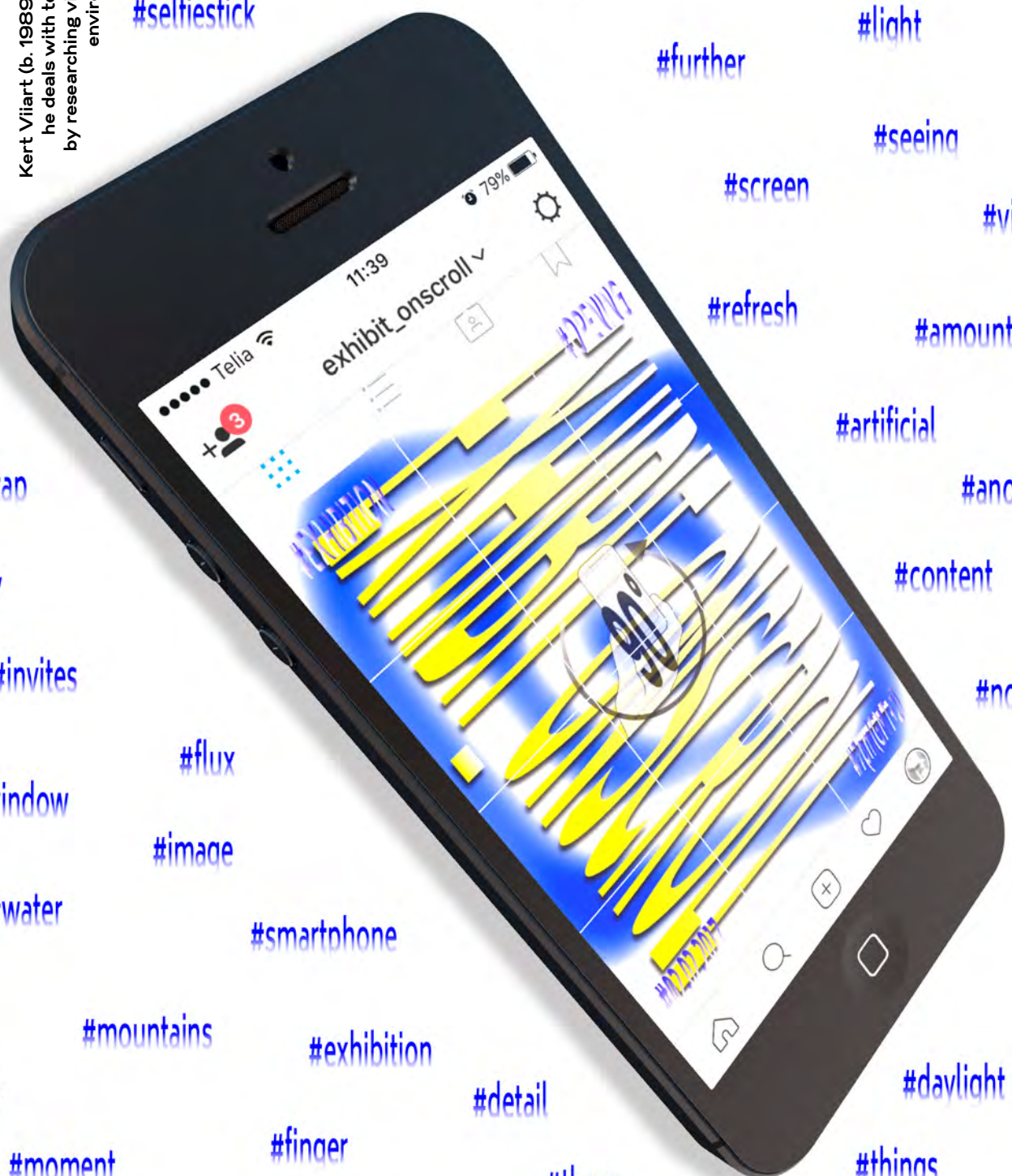
MR I love the language you have used; it's very alluring and relaxing. It hypnotises me and makes me lower my guard. What role does text play in your project?

KÖ That's great to hear, as this is exactly what we hoped and aimed for. Additionally, this hypnosis often happens while scrolling through an Instagram feed: realising that you're no longer aware of seeing the image, but your finger is still doing the same repeated action, in search of more.

KV We decided not to use any press release material on our Instagram account, but instead to write this poetic text, which gently refers to the artworks and the project. The idea was also to use the text in this specific floating way to address the looseness and imaginative experience.

Kristiina Öllek (b. 1989) is a visual artist. She mainly works in the field of photography, video and installation, within she examines contemporary image culture and the relationships between space, object and image. She is a co-founder and a member of an artist-run space Rundum.

Kert Viiart (b. 1989) is a graphic designer and a visual artist. In his practice he deals with technological developments' influence on visual language by researching virtual representations relations to everyday objects and environments. He also co-runs a graphic design studio Le60.



The infinite screen of content invites to scroll through

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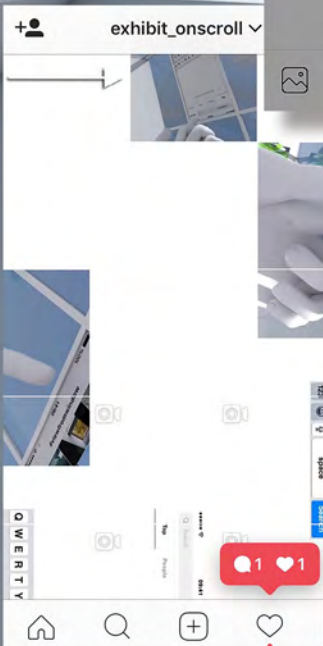
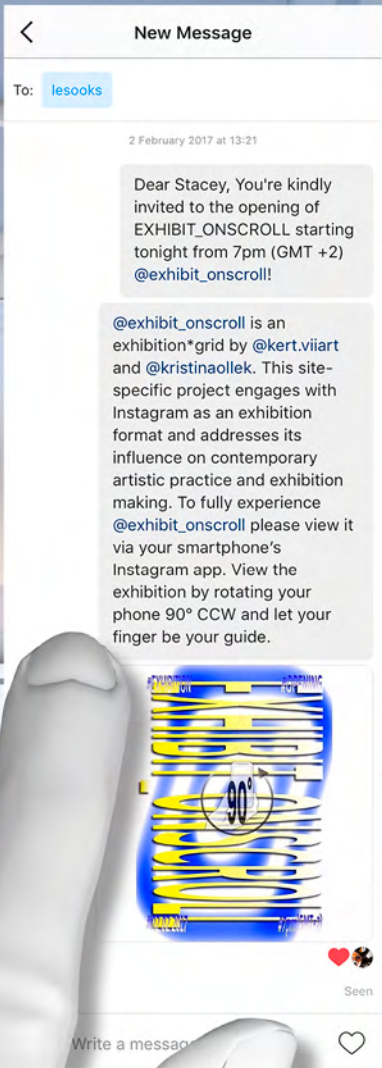
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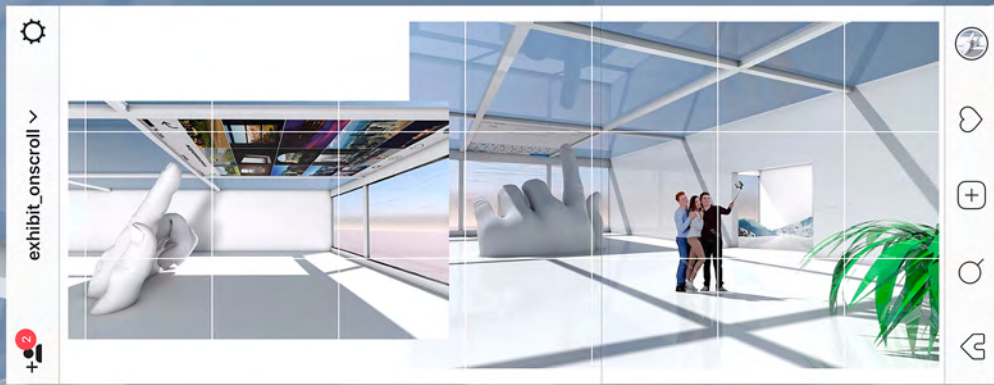
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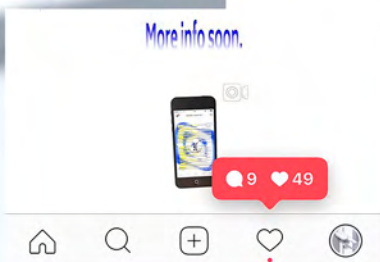
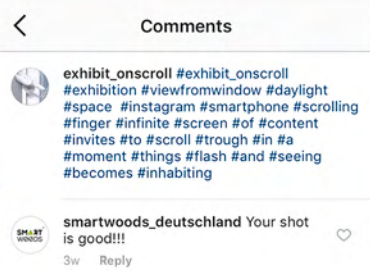
Report problem

invited to the opening of EXHIBIT_ONSCROLL starting tonight from 7pm (GMT +2) @exhibit_onscroll!



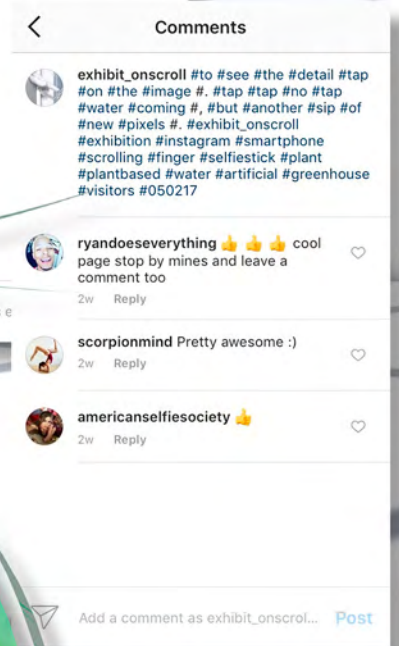
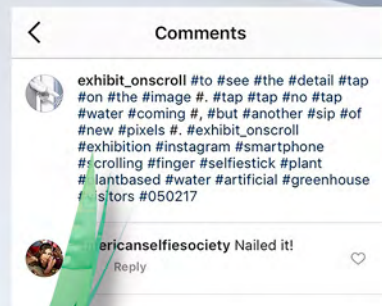


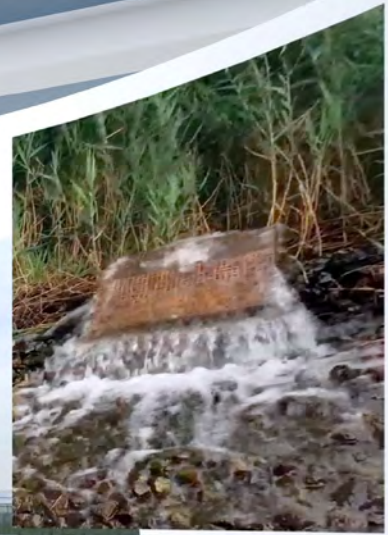
In a moment things flash
and seeing becomes inhabiting.



Add a comment as exhibit_onscroll... [Post](#)

To see the detail,
tap on the image.

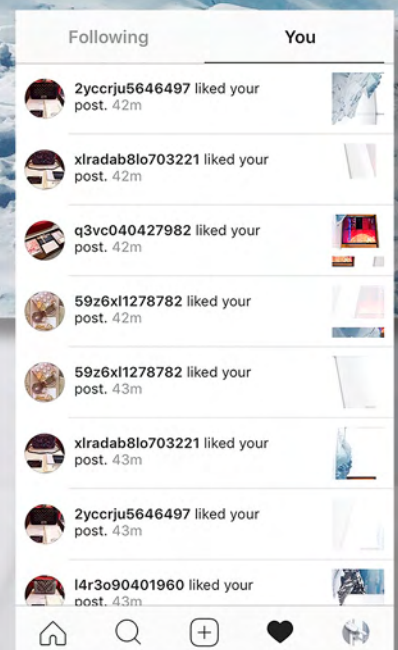
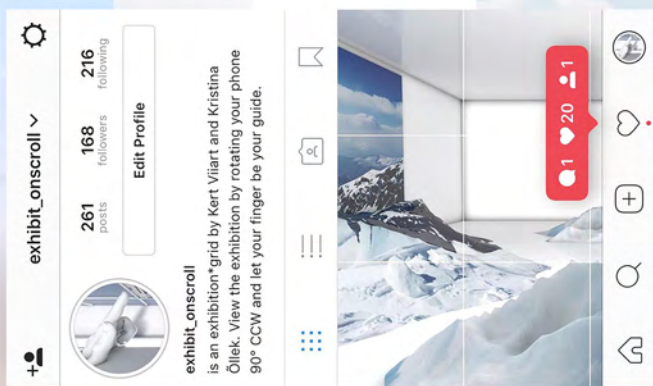




Tap-tap, no tap water coming,
but another sip of new pixels.



Pixels opening up another space of grids.

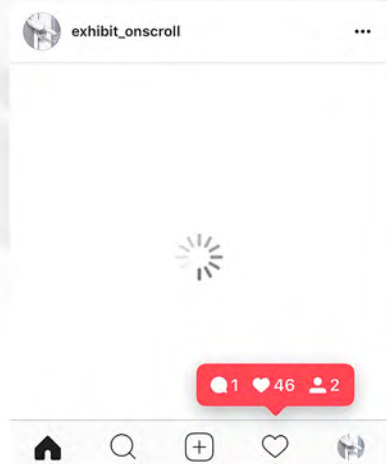
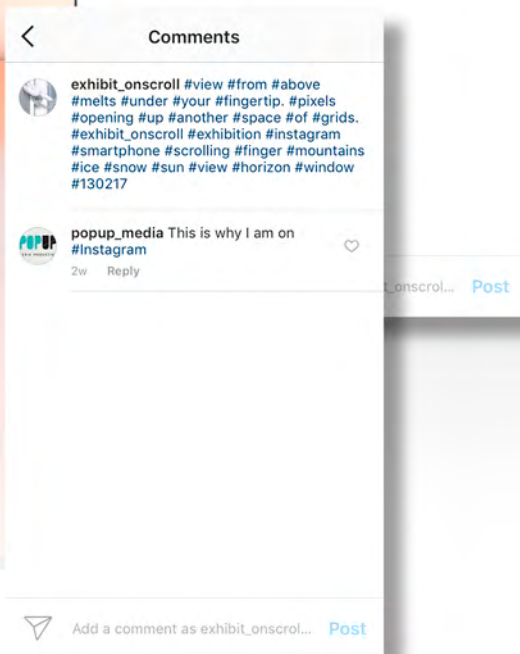
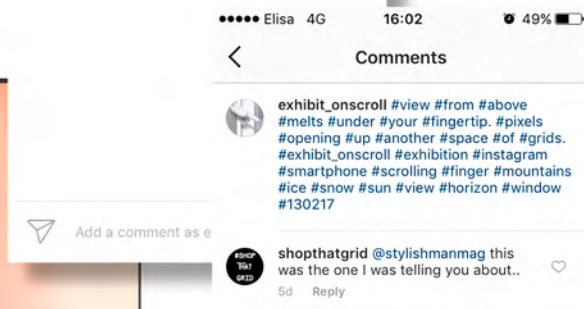
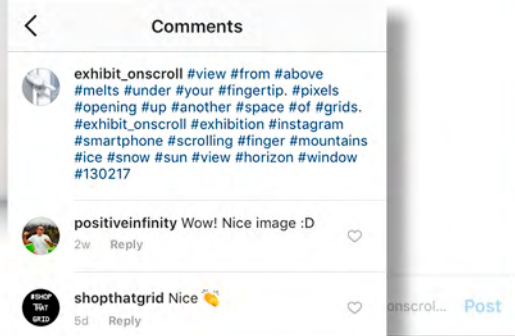




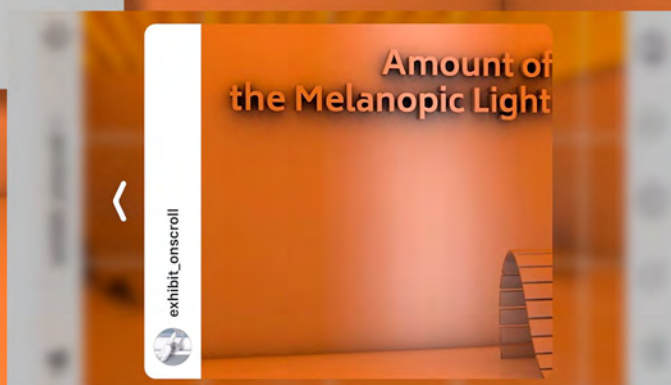
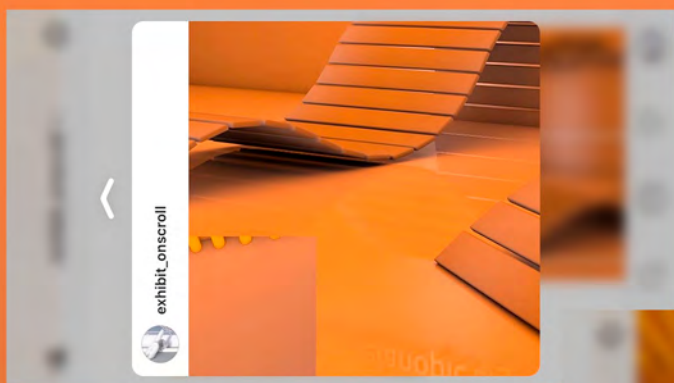
View from above melts
under your fingertip.

Refresh and scroll further.
Refresh again and the circle
is doing another round or two.

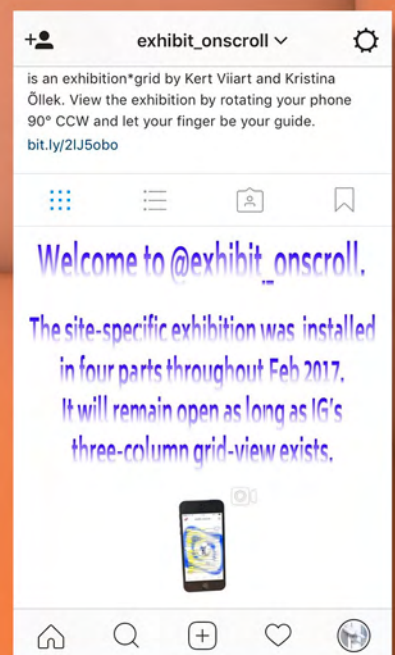
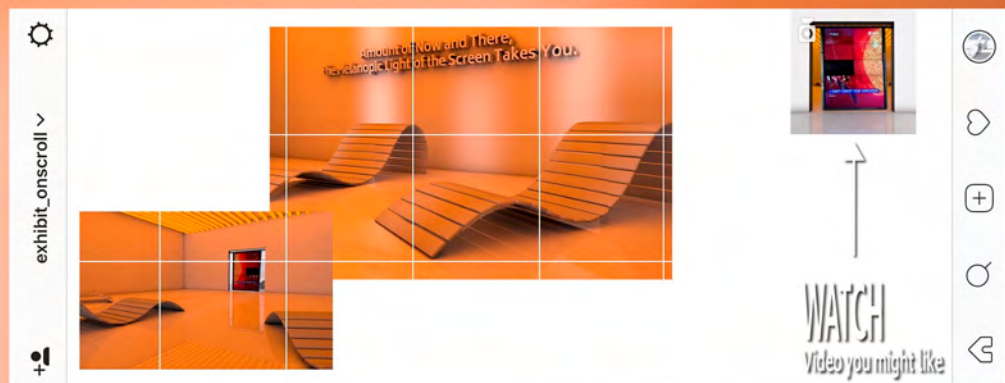




Scroll down for more.



Amount of
the Melanopic Light



Amount of Now and There,
the Kibinopie Light of the Screen Takes You.

Konstanet

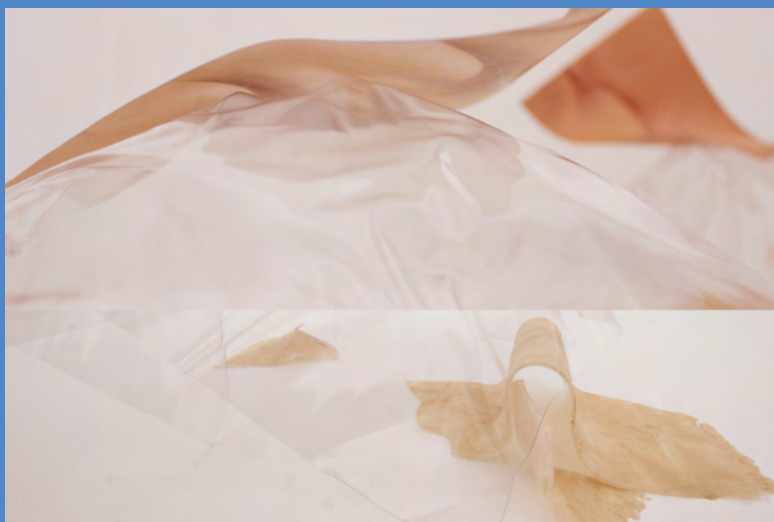
In July 2013 the non-profit gallery Konstanet was founded in Estonia. In the same year and same month, the American art critic Michael Sanchez published his article “Art in Transmission” in *Artforum* magazine. In it, he accurately described the shifting paradigm which was provoked by the rapid proliferation of smartphones. The ubiquitous screens and accessible 24/7 internet altered the way we experience exhibitions. “An image of an exhibition can be posted the moment it opens, or even before. An artist, curator, or dealer receives an update containing images of the show on her phone, which she then forwards to colleagues, in a chain of events perhaps leading to another exhibition. <...> What had been a process of legitimation, attributable to particular institutions or critical bodies, now becomes a process of simple visibility, attributable to the media apparatus itself, largely outside the channels of print media and cumbersome zeitgeist-encapsulating exhibitions.”¹ Documentation comes first.

With images of installations travelling faster than visitors’ bodies, the exhibition becomes outdated as soon as its documentation is released online, shared, reached and taken in by thousands of anonymous eyes and fingertips. Another show immediately takes its place. It is a new paradigm that (of course) Hito Steyerl called Circulationism. “Circulationism is not about the art of making an image, but of post-producing, launching, and accelerating it.”² What is more important in this new paradigm is not merely its focus on images, but its ability to blend physical and virtual realities and thus transform physical real-

ity itself. “The tools of postproduction: editing, color correction, filtering, cutting, and so on are not aimed at achieving representation. They have become means of creation, not only of images but also of the world in their wake.”³ The art world was not an exception here but more of a pioneer: with the sterile, luminescent-light-bright, painfully high-res installation shots, and the wiping away of visitors’ bodies and any traces of these bodies, they have gradually transformed exhibition spaces themselves, making them more and more uniform with every new documentation released into circulation. The White Cube has returned. With a vengeance.

A disembodied eye roaming around empty gallery space inhabited only by lifeless works of art was the ideal scenario for the White Cube. The modern gallery space described by Brian O’Doherty back in the late 70’s as “constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church.” In which “The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off. Walls are painted white. The ceiling becomes the source of light. ... The art is free, as the saying used to go, ‘to take on its own life’.”⁴ And although recent attempts by the artist duo New Scenario to drag art outside of its comfort zone and put it into a limousine, Dino park and all possible body holes, or to bring human flesh with all of its sensuality back into the exhibition space through a series of exhibitions’ documentations made by DIS collective brought some fresh air into the stuffy enclosed White Cube, the prevalence of the hermetic gallery space remained.

Anna Slama "techskin", 2016. Photo: Raiko Suits



Daria Melnikova "EX-UVIA", 2016. Photo: Daria Melnikova



Dieuwertje Hehewerth "STAY IN THE PHYSICAL SPACE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE", 2015. Photo: Dieuwertje Hehewerth



The founders of Konstanet—Epp Õlekõrs & Keiu Krikmann—saw this new paradigm not as a danger but as a new field of opportunities. It was no longer necessary to have a proper life-size gallery space in order to produce exhibitions: one could simply simulate it with some camera angles and digital tools, similar to what Thomas Demand did with his precise mini-replicas, models of mundane interiors. Thus Konstanet blended the two realities—the digital (the circulatory, the edited, the bodiless) and the physical—into an indivisible one. Made up of two spaces—the online space at konstanet.com and a scaled (1:5) physical space located in the centre of Tallinn, Estonia—Konstanet invited emerging local and international artists to explore the opportunities offered by these specific spaces.

It was curious that the majority of the invited artists decided to play according to the rules of the White Cube: to accurately simulate a conventional exhibition setting, and to display artworks among white walls for the bodiless viewer's eye. Since the inaugural exhibition—*Xenotica. Excavation, Exegesis, Exopolitics*—made by the digital artist Norman Orro and the social theorist Rene Mäe, there have been over 24 solo or duo shows that have perfectly simulated contemporary art exhibitions “experienced” on the screen of a mobile device. Yet, looking closer, one could detect a common thread among the disparate projects, a thread that kept pointing to the very conditions of making, sharing and viewing these projects. This thread was hybridity.

The hybridity of digital and physical realms were the main topics in exhibitions such as: *Take It From Here* by Ott Metusala and Erki Närep; *A Pastiche So Hardcore* by Sandra Kosorotova and Keiu Krikmann; *Striving for Perfection; POP (free trial) & Relics from a Netscape* by Kamiel Porseleijn; *When You Have The Object Itself In Front Of Your Eyes /konstanet.com* by Kristina Õllek; *Sustainability & Opportunities* by Ella Goerner and *STAY IN THE PHYSICAL SPACE FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE* by Dieuwertje Hehewerth.

Other exhibitions explored the hybridity of the natural and artificial such as: *Xenotica. Excavation, Exegesis, Exopolitics; They are standing there, under the weather, totally waterproof or completely wet* by Michele Gabriele; *A Rare Bird in Estonia* by Maximilian Schmoetzer and *The Archive from A Place to Disappear* by Pablo Lerma.

Exhibitions such as *El Konstalytics* by Jaak Kaevats, *places for things to grow and die* by Katherine Botten, *techskin* by Anna Slama, *EX-UVIA* by Daria Melnikova, *Body Extended, Self-Construal* by Nuno Patricio and *Fuchsia version 3 rebooted* by Maria Met-salu + Nikola Knezevic focused on the hybridity of the body and its technological extensions that cause altered perception and a sense of constant placelessness, both mental and physical.

These broad categories outlined here are open and fluid: the projects could move from one to another without much friction. It is because they all deal with the contemporary state of things, a state in which we cannot distinguish the two realities—the physical and the digital—any longer and this merging has touched and altered almost all possible levels of our being, from intimacy to work, from friendships to art viewing. And viewing has become scrolling. And fast. The eye becomes the ultimate device for “experiencing” documented shows from around the globe, from Mexico City to Tallinn. The viewer's body once again has been eliminated from the gallery space and it makes me wonder why no artist has taken the opportunity to bring the physical body, with all of its clumsiness and physicality, back into the miniature Konstanet space.

Returning to art viewing: while the physical Konstanet space for some reason provoked the artists to play along with the laws of the White Cube, the digital platform of the project was used in a much more prolific way. It held online performances, included sounds and music in the documentations of the shows at the Konstanet gallery space, offered open online documents for an update from artists from time to time, had videos as/or in place of documentations and used background images to create multilayered and hyperlinked viewing experiences. Perhaps this playful approach to the online “space” of the gallery is a symptom of a certain new (?) kind of subject, a subject which feels more comfortable and at home online than in any physical space. There's no place like the screen. And that's OK if one knows how to use this paradigm productively. And Konstanet seems to know.

1 Michael Sanchez, “2011: Art and Transmission,” *Artforum* (Summer 2013), p. 297.

2 Hito Steyerl, “Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?,” *e-flux Journal* #49 (November 2013) <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/49/60004/too-much-world-is-the-internet-dead/> (accessed 11 January 2014).

3 Ibid.

4 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. Santa Monica San Francisco: The Lapis Press, 1999, p. 7.

The Importance of Envisioning Hybrid Ecologies

Probing into the speculative world of hybrids and alternate ecologies, the Lithuanian artist duo Pakui Hardware create their artworks through meticulous research and a strong focus on visual imagery.

The artist duo Pakui Hardware was formed in 2014 when Ugnius Gelguda and Neringa Cerniauskaite decided to start working together as a collective. The same year they had their first exhibitions, “The Metaphysics of the Runner”, at 321 Gallery in New York and later that year in the Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, and “Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker” at Jenifer Nails in Frankfurt. Both of these shows established the landscape Pakui Hardware has been navigating since. “The Metaphysics of the Runner” presented a transhumanist fiction, where high-performing bodies merge with objects, materials and technology, while “Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker” created a poetic amalgam of references to high frequency trading, non-human ecologies and digital materiality.

These tendencies and themes are also evident in their name. Pakui Hardware, a name or a brand conceived by the curator Alex Ross, conflates ideas about virtual mythologies and materiality. While “Pakui” refers to the special attendant to a Hawaiian Goddess who can circle the island of Oahu six times a day, “hardware” evokes more material connotations: “Semio-Capital meets materiality”, as the artists themselves have expressed it.

Emerging at a time when posthumanist ideas and interest in materiality were gaining ground again in the art world, Pakui Hardware has also made use of the philosophical apparatus that came with them. The duo creates research-based projects with sound theoretical underpinnings, their works citing such influences as Ray Kurzweil, Ray Brassier and Bernard Stiegler, as well as 1970s sci-fi films. Even though Pakui Hardware features objects and materials that at first glance seem to function independently, forming and showcasing different kinds of ecologies, the human sphere has not vanquished entirely. Rather than handing their imagination over to techno-positivism and techno-utopianism, the duo is interested in different forms of hybridity that combine notions of nature, the human (mind and body) and technologies to various degrees.



Pakui Hardware, *Vanilla Eyes*, 2016

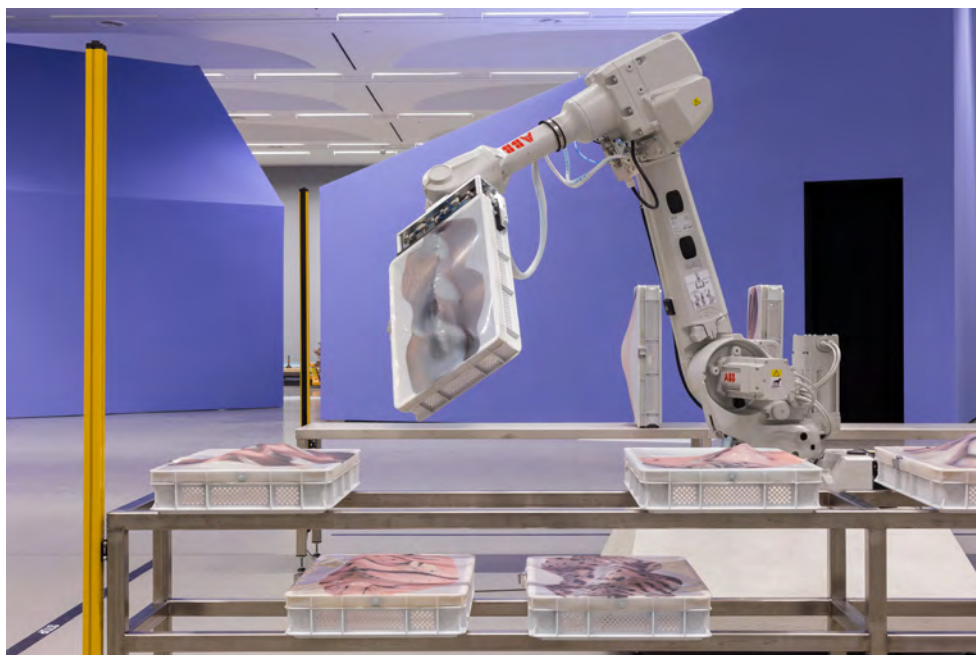
They create intricate speculative worlds, using a wide array of substances, materials and liquids, as well as technologies, which, having been seemingly left to fend for themselves, take on agency. In their 2015 show “Dawning”, created in collaboration with another artist duo, Fenêtreproject, for the Parisian gallery Exo Exo, bacteria collected from the city’s metro system was cultivated in small pools in the exhibition space as a reminder of the ever-present external biological presence in our lives, which, from time to time, can induce an intense sense of danger and paranoia.

In their latest work, Pakui Hardware created the installation “Hesitant Hand” for the “Citynature” group exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius (2017). In this work, they created a robotic hand that, over the course of the show, arranged new compositions of images from NASA’s digital archive that had been made into sculptural objects, convenient for the automated limb to handle. With “Vanilla Eyes”, a solo exhibition in Vienna’s mumok in 2016, Pakui Hardware looked into the world of hybrids through ideas connected with prosthetics and modifications, only to find that the concepts of “natural” and “synthetic” are hopelessly enmeshed. Even though viewers and their specifically human points of view may not be directly addressed, the installations do establish an indirect dialogue with human activity on a broader scale.

Another notable characteristic of Pakui Hardware’s work is their attention to visual detail. They are smart about it and, as any artist today would, they know

the significance of good presentation, both online and offline. They exhibit objects and materials, often stripped of their original function, in a highly aestheticised way, so that viewers are presented with almost familiar constructions, ones that are simultaneously known and unknown to them. With visual cues drawing heavily from such areas as science, technology and the commercial sphere, the installations make us question our relationship to and knowledge of objects we encounter in our everyday lives, as we often know little of the things we use daily, i.e. not much beyond their perceived and limited, directly experienced functionality. Without expert knowledge it’s not easy to recognise the possible biographies of things and see how they might extend to future scenarios.

Pakui Hardware intentionally create ambiguous environments, where the viewer may not be able to distinguish between the visual and the “functional” and is left to wonder about the proposed themes and scenarios, and their plausibility in the present and future. This feeling of uncertainty is exacerbated as the temporal reach of speculations about the future seems to have contracted: science fiction looks much less into the distant future and is more concerned with near future predictions. And, as we know from the words of William Gibson, the future is already here, just not evenly distributed, it is vital that art still provide an imaginary to examine the borderline between what is and what might be, and whether the latter can be envisioned differently from its predicted course.



Pakui Hardware “Hesitant Hand”, 2017



Fig 1. State of Cloud (2014), digital print, dimensions variable

Rainar Aasrand (b. 1986) is an artist, who currently lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he is studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Mikk Madisson (b. 1987) is an artist and writer currently living and working in Berlin, Germany.

Mikk Madisson & Rainar Aasrand

The Order of the Scrunchy

#digitallywelcome
#physicallynotwelcome

I. State of Cloud

What role can singing play
when a nation is faced with
annihilation by its neighbours?
What role can a ponytail play
when a country is under cyber
attack by its neighbours?
What role can a **user** play in a
state of cloud?

Self-articulation of a collective subjectivity through singing becomes an expression of freedom. Self-articulation through a ponytail on earth and in the cloud becomes a governing norm. The long blond hair bound into a ponytail with an ID-card reader implies the idea of a fixed identity conflated with identification. It indicates cybernetic governance over subjects whose subjectivity is irrelevant. Hair is people. Hair is a collective subjectivity. A soldier's head is shaved to incorporate him as a cog in the war machine.

1.1 Cloud Identity is a State of Affect

In a state of cloud, a **user's** cognitive borders dissolve the same way a country's physical borders do, making them non-contiguous to its neighbouring countries. The state of cloud (*'pilvesolek'* to be inside a cloud, to be high, euphoric, under the influence of some kind of drug) transfigures a person's cognitive borders that hold together their identity. An identity is a fixed state of affect which can be dictated.

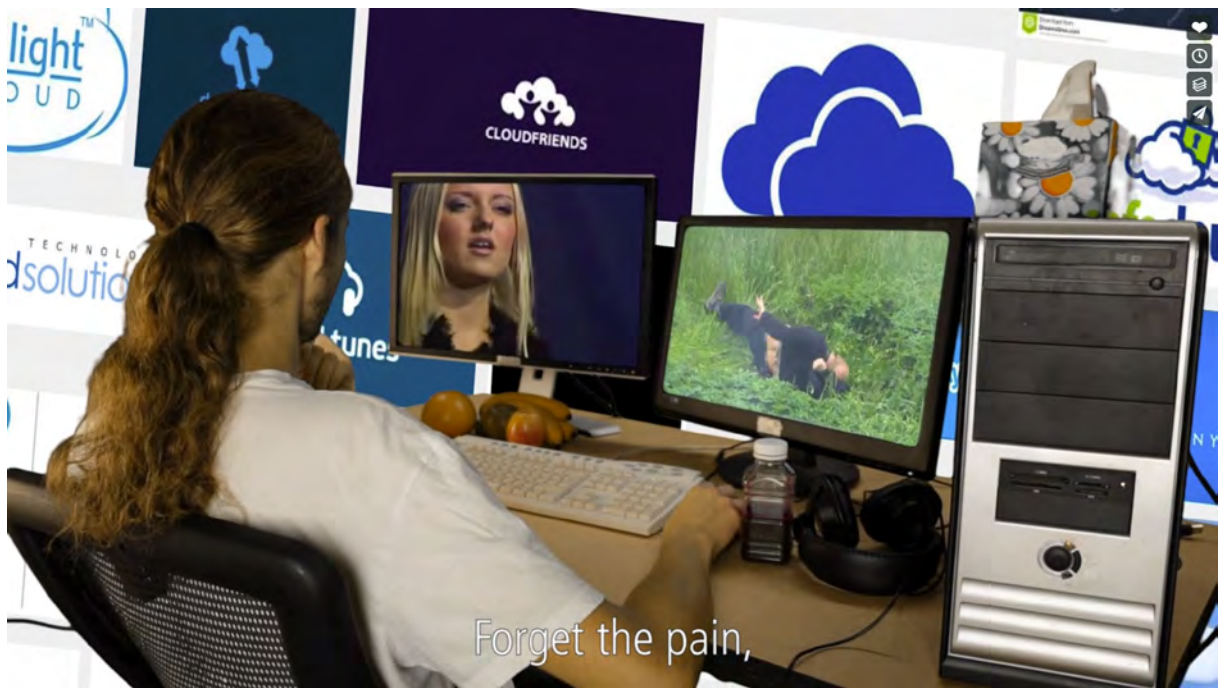
In the video *State of Cloud* (2014), a patriotic song from the Singing Revolution is used to dictate a specific notion of "Estonianness". However, since the person interpreting this song in the video (Fig. 2) is already in a state of affect or in a "state of cloud", he is unwilling to have his identity fixed in the way that the song orders. He is ecstatic and therefore cannot be fixed or clearly defined. Instead, he remains in a state of constant fluctuation and transposition. He performs a new national imaginary which displeases large numbers of Estonians, who find it hard to give way to this new free-floating rootless version of an Estonian in the midst of constant re-synthesization.

While in *State of Cloud* (2014) a patriotic-cum-nationalist song is used to lure a British citizen to become



Fig. 2. State of Cloud (2014), still

Fig. 3. State of Cloud (2014), still



an Estonian, in the video piece *Barbed State* (2016) by SKATKA, an Australian-accented pilot tries to convince people to work in Estonia. One could wonder if a speaking human-shaped airport video ad is already in a “state of cloud”? Could a “state of cloud” polity be the foundation for an updated Estonian identity? The American media theorist Benjamin Bratton describes this cloud polity as “being developed and formed without geographic and historical legacy and for whom the cloud’s own geographic situation is the first basis of emergent sovereign imaginaries.”¹

1.2 The Order of Scrunchy

Can culture hold people together the way a scrunchy holds together the long and curly beautiful blond hair of someone who works for Estonia’s Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT)?

In *Generation X*, Douglas Coupland described the notion of the “bleeding ponytail” as “a Baby Boomer who pines for hippie or pre-sellout days and displays these feelings by wearing a ponytail.”² The Silicon Valley revolutionary of the counterculture era has turned into a techno-capitalist visionary and a manifestation of *The Californian Ideology*. The hair that once flew freely in the winds of West Coast utopias is now worn with pride in a ponytail that is ordered by a scrunchy. The scrunchy holding together the sysadmin’s hair is like a cybernetic feedback loop that orders a system, as culture shapes a collective image of national subjecthood. This transitioning of identity bears similarities to the story of Estonia since its restoration of inde-

pendence in 1991. This is the story of a country that regained its independence and established democracy thanks to the Singing Revolution and became a technologically advanced society of start-ups and e-governance, where the corporate vision of Silicon Valley is often taken at face value.

1.3 Identification as Identity: 10000 e-residents and 10000 f-residents

Today, besides Skype and 10000 e-residents, Estonia is also known for the highest rate of drug-related deaths in Europe, mostly because of Fentanyl, an opiate up to 100 times more potent than heroin. One could say that Fentanyl also operates as a quasi-platform for around 10000 residents to enter into a state of cloud every day. For these *users*, Fentanyl becomes the application for becoming part of a collective subjectivity that is formed in the cloud.

In a way, the Cloud Polis model of Estonia is similar to that of Facebook, as it gives e-Estonians a platform for a fixed identity and self-articulation. Estonia claims to provide strong digital identities to its residents.³ These digital identities operate as identification for citizens to enjoy state services online. The rhetoric of e-governance, the e-residency programme and Estonia as a digitally advanced society have become parts of the country’s national branding campaign, which in a way has also started to constitute national selfhood.

What is happening is a strange conflation of identity with identification. Cloud computation and using

state services are suddenly forms of self-articulation.⁴ Therefore, Estonian identity is supposed to be nothing more than a **user** identity, regardless of whether the platform is X-Road or Fentanyl. The difference between e- and f-residents lies in how they are represented by the state, where the latter are excluded from national branding narratives both inside and outside of the country. The representation of f-residents is securely included in Google Cloud's Youtube platform as moving images, while their terrestrial existence remains in a precarious state.

1.4 Digital Discontinuities

The Digital Continuity programme announced by Estonia in February 2014, which promised to keep the computational cloud infrastructure continuously working even in case of a physical attack, hints at modes of exclusion integrated into Estonia's Cloud Polis model. Should all physical infrastructure of the country be destroyed, including the residents, the Cloud infrastructure could potentially continue working via Cloud embassies. Estonia's identification platform, online services and payment platforms would continue to route digital flows of e-migrants and money.

This illustrates further how the idea of e-residency has been hijacked by corporate interests hiding under the state's name and not acting in the service of the further development of democracy. This world is mostly about economic efficiency, which assumes that democracy is a ready-made object and all citizens are continuously equally represented in the process of making a country. As Aro Velvet has noted, while the earlier vision of e-democracy could be called utopian, with its hope of radical inclusion, the newer utopia becomes radical in its hope of making people, under the control of government, more like clients and the state itself a service provider. He continues by looking at this change of perspective, where e-citizens have turned into e-consumers:

"This e-state vision that Bloomberg and Foreign Affairs write about and that is prevalent in Estonian discussion does not have much in common with the discursive online democracy envisioned by former President Lennart Meri. 'Progress' in Bloomberg's view emphasizes the public sector's efficiency, fast bureaucracy favouring business practices and good digital infrastructure. It is not the active citizens who would live in this new 'digital nirvana' and use

smartphones to participate in creating the budget for their local government, give feedback to new legislation or elect a parliament during a lunch break. It would instead be either consumers, who communicate with the state when they need to pay taxes or receive digital prescriptions, or entrepreneurs, for whom the digital world means saving time in procedures and new business opportunities."⁵

In this case, if the idea of a borderless e-residency becomes reduced to a neoliberal service package through such language, it would in itself reinforce the current relationship between state and citizens as a finalized product. When a country is competing for relevance with other institutions, branding becomes key. The branding of states has become one of the examples of how states are adopting the language of corporate entities and how the simple distinction between market and state becomes more complicated. Through building a strong image of a place, or simply by branding the place, the attraction and the legitimacy of that place rises.

Joseph Nye, who came up with the term "soft power" writes that, "power today is less tangible and less coercive among the advanced democracies than it was in the past. At the same time, much of the world does not consist of advanced democracies and that limits the global transformation of power."⁶ Soft power has become a widely used term related to the ability to attract other subjects at the level of the state. Thus, soft power as opposed to hard power can be viewed as a tool that functions within the larger framework of the state exercising power while using the corporate language of trademarks, design and branding.

2. A Barbed State

2.1 #digitallywelcome #physicallynotwelcome

In May 2015, Estonia launched its e-residency programme the same week the EU announced refugee intake quotas for its members.

Today Estonians have unprecedented freedom to cross borders. In addition, there is infrastructure that allows local and foreign **users** to enjoy the benefits of digital Estonia across borders. Nevertheless, the cognitive borders of being an Estonian are still determined by symbolic pollution hovering in the psychosphere. Therefore, it seems that, while in the digital

space cocktail glasses are clinking and everybody is more than welcome, the demarcation of borders in the physical space has yet to be eliminated.

By exploring the audio-visual legacies that may have potentially inscribed biases and enforced othering, SKATKA looked into the grey areas of the imagined national identity. An excellent example for the articulation of making a common imaginary is the legendary Estonian children's movie *Bumppy* (1980). The film represents the nation-state's border making, marginalisation, internal power relations, migration and assimilation. It is derived from the Hansel and Gretel archetypal tale of children getting lost in the woods and being kidnapped by a witch, who forces them to perform manual labour in a gross and uncanny environment.

One of the biggest Cloud-based service providers, Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform, allows clients to outsource tasks to remote workers via the internet; these workers are paid on commission but don't have their social security fees covered by their temporary employer. Although the "Work in Estonia" campaign does not necessarily aim to attract an outsourced workforce, some of the people who actually followed the campaign to Estonia met similar conditions as Mechanical Turks on digital platforms. Even though the campaign paints a picture of seamless integration, becoming a physical resident involves a lot of bureaucracy and sometimes even harassment by the state apparatuses.⁷

Mechanical Turks are a good example of human **users** (of the cloud) who are often mistaken for **non-human users** of the cloud. Most people consider the tasks they perform to be automated by such non-human actors as bots and algorithms. For SKATKA, this is problematic since it corresponds to the attitude towards our potential digital residents should they ever enter the physical space of Estonia, where non-Estonian **users** are still often considered non-human by locals. This might compromise the process of assimilating foreign workers into the country.

2.2 All Work and No Play

The protagonists of *Bumppy*, a brother and sister named Iti and Kusti, are forced into harsh labour conditions by a witch. They are kept separate and made to work until they are completely exhausted, in order to keep them from mobilizing and planning an escape. The labour conditions of Mechanical Turks are similar, since the workers are separated and never meet in real life. This protects the employer from the workers ever unionising. It is an updated version of the McDonald's "employee of the month" model that integrates competition between workers and produces internal othering that operates as a form of control.

The witch asserts her power over Iti and Kusti by utilizing several biological others: she has an army of supernatural spies, such as cats and birds, that constantly monitor her house and the forest, and operate as her remote vision. The forest is her platform, where



Fig. 4. Barbed State (2016), still



Fig. 5. Barbed State (2016), still

she has omnipresence and Iti and Kusti have signed away their end-user agreements by entering the forest. The whole operation of the witch is aligned with the forms of control in the age of platform capitalism, where control by communication is key.

3. Possible Futures for Collective Creation

Could Iti and Kusti represent potential foreign workers and their experience on Estonian soil, while the members of SKATKA themselves represent the bogeys living in the forest? In a sense, they embody the experience of a transnational subjecthood and the naive provincial desire to become cosmopolitan citizens of the world. (Fig. 5)

By conflating identification with identity, Estonia might reach the gloomiest and most dystopian conclusion of this digital fairytale of automated participation faster than any other country. It will move us further away from any form of collective self-mastery, as we are already losing ourselves to the global Cloud megastructures, such as Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple, and the personalized commercial echo chambers they create for us. We need to find a mutual voice to sing with on a global scale, not just within the nation-state, as our identities become increasingly segregated digitally and physically into **users** who lack a collective perspective, besides the next (pre-destined) personalized commercial act facilitated by the state as

cloud platform. The conditions of citizens grow more similar to those of Mechanical Turks, where a dialogue between the state and its citizens ceases to exist and political decisions are left in the hands of Big Data.

For the artist duo SKATKA, it is important to emphasize the roles of national brands as vehicles for collective self-reflection. These brands ought to produce an affect that has a recreational and regenerative effect on the becoming of a collective creation. We consider this idea of a digital or virtual Estonia to be positive for its potential to generate multiple possibilities of actualization. To remain in the virtual domain represents infinite “possible futures that are not utopias, but sources of energy to act here and now”.⁸

- 1 Bratton, Benjamin. *The Stack: On Software and Sovereignty*, MIT Press, 2015, 136.
- 2 Coupland, Douglas. *Generation X: Tales for an accelerated culture*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1991. 22.
- 3 How to back up a country, *The Economist*, Mar 7th, 2015 <http://www.economist.com/news/technology-quarterly/21645505-protect-itself-attack-estonia-finding-ways-back-up-its-data-how>
- 4 Ibid., 369-370.
- 5 Velmet, Aro. E-kodanikud ja E-tarbija. *Vikerkaar*, October 2015, <http://www.vikerkaar.ee/archives/13451>
- 6 Nye, Joseph S. Jr. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2004, 30.
- 7 Zehmke, Justin. Move to Estonia, they said. It will be easy, they said. *Estonian World*, 2016 <http://estonianworld.com/opinion/move-estonia-said-will-easy-said/>
- 8 See Rosi Braidotti's lecture *Thinking as a Nomadic Subject* at the ICI Berlin: <https://www.ici-berlin.org/events/rosi-braidotti/>

From Net Art to Post-Internet Art

Now that the internet has drowned in social networks and commercial channels, it makes sense to look back at the experiences of net art in the 1990s. This was an era of innocence, eagerness and heroes of a kind, when networks as art were brand new. Net art was both ironic and self-critical.

The essential difference is that the internet environment back then was something special and new, and now it is banal and everyday. In the 1990s, culture and art had to be, figuratively speaking, brought to the internet, settled there and only then was it possible to see how the environment influenced the content, whereas in the current post-digital and post-internet era, the internet environment is like nature: it surrounds us. It has become a channel through which the world reaches us, but it has also become an environment where people live their everyday lives, communicate and express themselves. It has turned into a dominating environment.

Twists of Internet-Based Art

What kinds of twists has the internet-based art trend gone through so far? The term 'net art' was coined around 1996, and its explosive impact invaded several art festivals. The authors of net art projects experienced the birth of a new wave, which gradually flowed into the normality of events. The most significant names of the day were Alexei Shulgin, Olia Lialina, Jodi.org (Joan Heemskerk and Dirk Paesmans), Vuc Ćosić, Graham Harwood and Heath Bunting, and the theoreticians were Tilman Baumgärtel, Josephine Bosma, Geert Lovink and Pit Schultz among others.¹ The brightest star was perhaps Shulgin, the author of the fictitious birth story of the term 'net.art'. This was apparently the only comprehensible term in a confusing e-mail received by Vuc Ćosić in 1996.

Alexei Shulgin and Olia Lialina are the two most important names, the two who introduced themselves as Moscow born Russians and maintained their identities as Eastern-Europeans in the international history of 90s net art. Twenty years have passed since Olia Lialina's well known work "My Boyfriend Came Back from the War"². Rhizome archives present this as Netscape Navigator Gold 3 browser emulation.³ Strangely, this work was never as emotionally effective as her "IF YOU WANT TO CLEAN YOUR

SCREEN" (1996)⁴. By moving the browser's lower right scrollbar, you move the picture from the palm of a hand that seemingly wipes the screen from the other side. If you use an Apple Mac, the manipulation is even easier: move two fingers along the trackpad horizontally or vertically. A Soviet stamp showing a portrait of a woman holding a jar is attached to the palm. By clicking on the stamp, you can send an e-mail to Olia. The excitement in this project lies in making the net palpable, emphasised by the palm turned towards the viewer. It is still powerful stuff.

A work with a similar emotional potential in Estonian art is Laur Tiidemann's "Piano" (2000). The screen shows eyeballs looping in two positions, and when you touch them you hear the sound of a piano. The project was initially created for the touch screen. This work won many international awards, for example, it received first prize in Tokyo in 2001 at "Art on the Net 2001. Post-Cagian Interactive Sounds"⁵. Strictly speaking, this work should not even be on the internet, as there is no connectivity, but it nevertheless has an impact via connecting surreal eyeballs and touch.

Trains of Trends

How do trends emerge and develop? What is post-internet art, post-digital, post-media, post-contemporary, new aesthetics and contemporary contemporary?

When talking about trends, an Estonian artist faces a tormenting question: how to get your foot in the door, how not to 'miss the train', how to participate in art history? In the Estonian art world this is an obsession. The star of Estonian post-internet art, Katja Novitskova, advises going to the best art universities or visiting international artist residencies.⁶ The pragmatic shaping of an artist's career and social activity do not take away from the pleasure an artist takes in creating art and self-expression. However, the obsessive idea of making it into the bigger picture remains, and is supposedly guaranteed by social sensitivity and practical creative work. The secondary activity of networking, not only online, but also in the offline world, is absolutely vital.

The biggest battles in Estonia took place in the 1990s, when organisations and funding schemes were worked out, which enabled artists to move around in the international arena. A relevant art life mainly relies on the competence of critic-curators and art historians, with few exceptions. The latter occurs in

situations where the artist breaks into the international network independently. His autonomy, however, doesn't survive. To acquire a voice, credibility and mediation, the artist needs a critic-curator-art historian who at worst will present him as his own achievement. This type of exploitation is quite rare. The relationship is symbiotic, both need each other as an artist has no time or wish to write about himself, and needs someone else to do that. A critic, on the other hand, needs living material to work with, someone he does not have to carry on his back: an artist functioning internationally.

When an artist who has made it operates independently, the critic, too, would like to be on the 'train' with the artist. The simplest method in Estonia is to curate work for the Venice Biennale. Katja Novitskova is certainly a good example, i.e. an internationally active artist with an Estonian background who is included in the nationally suitable curating context and is at the moment "one of the internationally most visible artists of Estonian origin"⁷.

Returning to the topic of net art and post-internet, I'd like to suggest a tangible and simplifying claim in order to describe what has happened with net-based, non-material telecommunication art practice: it has become more spatial, object-based and physical, it has left the internet, the immaterial has become material, and the non-objectified has become objectified and commercialised.

From Net Art to Post-Internet—Development Curves

A rough development curve can be drawn from net art to post-internet art. The history of telecommunication and internet-based art practices contain the following tendencies; this is not necessarily a chronological division:

- 1) Preparatory stage in the 1970s -1980s in various places and continents, technically rather modest, but novel as far as innovation goes (projects by Roy Ascott, Robert Adrian, Douglas Davies, Nam June Paik and others).
- 2) Projects based on the real internet, first half and middle of the 1990s; birth of 'net art'.
- 3) Software art and the generative art trend, partially coinciding with net art (Alexei Shulgin, Olga Gori-

unova and Amy Alexander).

4) Net art's trend of becoming more physical with sculptural, architectural, performative and installation projects (still ongoing, in Estonia e.g. Timo Toots and his versions of "Memopol"; etoy.com, Heath Bunting's projects, Paul Sermon's telematic installations, Varvara & Mar's "Binoculars to...Binoculars from..." and "Speed of Markets".

5) The post-internet art trend, which emerged from the internet environment, but its contacts with net-based practice were indirect; the net experience and content became more physical: the second half of the 2000s to the present (Marisa Olson, Gene McHugh, Artie Vierkant and others).

This five-point division is only a sketchy illustration. From an art historical point of view, net art practices are linked with previous art tradition and movements, such as Dadaism and situationism, conceptual art, Fluxus, video art, kinetic art, performance art, telematic art and happenings. We should also not forget the prehistory of communicative art, such as László Moholy-Nagy's "Telephone Pictures" in 1922.⁸

Another important chapter to acknowledge in the story of net art is the cyber-feminism movement in the second half of the 1990s, which was definitely net-based. A separate theme is also the issue of internet-based networks, particularly actively operating with Web 1.0. The situation regarding the current Web 2.0, favouring self-promotion, allows the usage of ready-made environments and the reshaping of them; paradoxically it does not assume much interference and personal contribution: communication takes place in the completed environment.

Internet-based artists' networks in the second half of the 1990s significantly shaped the trends on which the artists worked; most importantly, they united Eastern and Western European artists. This was topical in the 1990s and motivation in both the East and the West was extremely high. Mailing lists appeared that united and shaped groups of artists: Nettime, Syndicate / SPECTRE, Faces, Doors of Perception, Xchange and 7-11. Rasa Smite⁹ and Olga Goriunova¹⁰ did research on them while completing their PhDs. To summarize Smite's conclusion, Web 2.0 provides excellent information about internet communities, its members and activities, but is not suitable for promoting collective ideas or organising the subject field.¹¹

An Estonian example of a Web 1.0-based net community and discussion space is the mailing list "Latera",

established on the 24th of February 2000.¹² In its heyday it had over one hundred members. Discussions mainly focused on art politics. The fourth and fifth points coincide in some ways, net content morphs into palpable reality. During the 'classical' era (until 1999), net projects were tied to the web-based page, whereas now they have become spatial. In other words, web-sites have become, figuratively speaking, object-based and sculptural. On the other hand, we can see that the electronic and connective aspects have altogether disappeared from artworks, although they largely rely on visual elements acquired from the internet. This is made obvious in post-internet art.

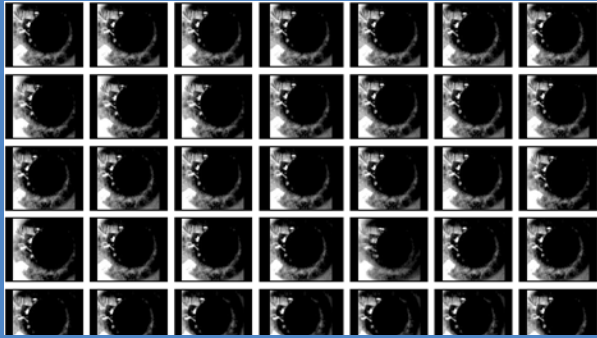
Innovation, Conformism and Criticism

Although net art has been recorded in all respectable and established vehicles of art history, critical voices have been heard since its birth. In 1997 I interviewed Lev Manovich, Geert Lovink, Andreas Broeckmann and Alexei Shulgin, tentatively touching upon the emerging trend. The rising wave was clearly perceived, and there was excitement about what would follow and for how long. Shulgin answered the question about the highlight of existing net art by saying that it was more the passing of better days, and that was 20 years ago:

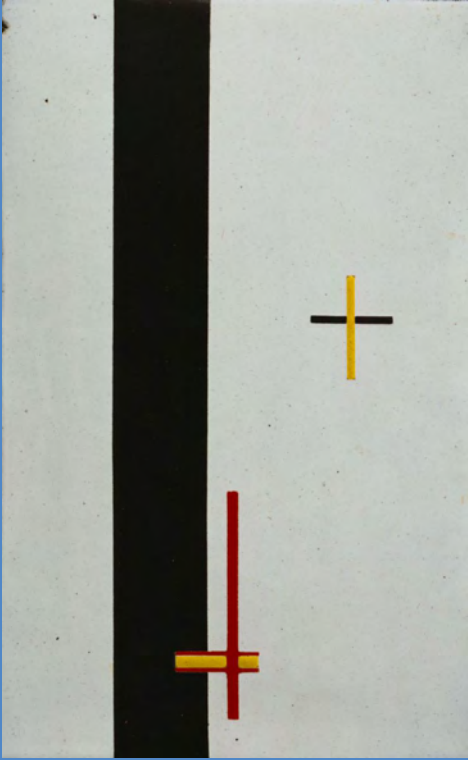
As the best epoch was the age of innocence, when the artists created for the joy of it and did not get paid, they only spent. Nor did they know whether they would actually produce anything worthwhile. The situation has changed. The era of competition is coming. An upheaval.¹³

Net activists back then were also asked whether this was conformism, if artists would do what was expected of them. The replies, especially by Geert Lovink and Alexei Shulgin, were mainly affirmative. We might wonder, however, whether these constitute universal mechanisms and repeated logic, on the basis of which art trends emerge and function. My hasty reply is of course affirmative, although the shaping of these trends and flows contains certain dynamics and fluctuations. As a result, works and names find their way into the pages of history, and will be preserved for decades.

Is it possible to talk about the same phenomenon in post-internet, i.e. that a certain collective phenomenon has emerged, a single-track way of thinking, a



Laur Tiidemann "Piano", 2000



László Moholy-Nagy "EM 2" (Telephone Picture), 1923



Olia Lialina "IF YOU WANT TO CLEAN YOUR SCREEN", 1996

trend? Close social, technical and collective-psychological premises for this kind of attitude and analogical art productions have appeared. This is how it is, but it's all valuable, as the art world constantly operates according to this logic, trying to produce idiosyncratic groups of artists who reflect what is happening in the world. Such things cannot be forced, or if they are it is very rare. Certain collective phenomena stay in a narrow niche, although they can survive for decades. This happened with the net art movement, which is now just a brand uniting the work of a handful of artists and, although others produced similar works, the list is closed. This is the unfair logic in how art history functions. The same can be predicted for the post-internet trend: the first dozen or so names at the top will remain there.

Post-Medium, Post-Media, The Post-Media Condition, Mainstream Contemporary Art (MCA) and New Media Art (NMA)

The above mentioned is a group of connected terms. The term 'post-medium' was used by Rosalind Krauss in her essay *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* in 1999.¹⁴ Her objective was to reject the medium's Greenbergian interpretation on the basis of works by Marcel Broodthaers. This in turn significantly differs from the earlier Félix Guattari definition of the term 'post-media', which he used as early as 1985 to characterise the new situation, meaning post-(mass)-media, expressed in the blending of television, telematics and information technology, which actually happened over the course of the following decades.

The term 'post-media' was also used by Lev Manovich in 2001. In his article *Post-Media Aesthetics*,¹⁵ he wrote that the traditional concept of media no longer worked in a post-digital, post-net culture: "...the traditional strong link between the identity of an art object and its medium becomes broken." Everything is reduced to the same digital bases, the common denominator.

The Post-Media Condition is the title of an exhibition curated by Peter Weibel in 2006 and an essay from the same year.¹⁶ In his interpretation, the 'post-media' situation is the situation of all contemporary art; even painting and sculpture are influenced by the new media:

Hence in art there is no longer anything beyond the media. No-one can escape from the media. There is no longer any painting outside and beyond the media experience. There is no longer any sculpture outside and beyond the media experience. There is no longer any photography outside and beyond the media experience.¹⁷

Mainstream contemporary art (MCA) and new media art (NMA) were terms used by Edward Shanken in a 2010 article, *Contemporary Art and New Media: Toward a Hybrid Discourse*.¹⁸ Shanken complains about the absence of a joint field of discussion between mainstream contemporary art (MCA) and the new media art (NMA). To alleviate the situation, during Art Basel in 2010 he organised a conversation between the influential curators Nicolas Bourriaud and Peter Weibel (the artist Michael Joaquin Grey took part as well, and talked about his works).¹⁹ Bourriaud, who has always been sceptical of new media, claimed that as the new technology was directly influenced by connectivity and, being based on networks, it was possible to create social situations that had been impossible before. Another significant impact of the new technology, in his opinion, was the screen format, presenting images on screen. He also considered technological impacts on contemporary art to be indirect, in the same way as photography influenced impressionism.

Weibel repeated the views expressed in his 2006 essay *The Post-Media Condition* claiming that the new media has had an impact on the entire new art situation, including traditional arts. The term 'modern art' has been replaced by 'contemporary art', primarily because of the influences of new technology. A few decades earlier the term 'modern art' would have been used at such an encounter, according to the curator. It is uncertain whether this encounter produced the intended hybrid discourse, in which the representatives of both sides (MCA and NMA) reached mutual understanding.²⁰

The most significant mistake that is made regarding new media-based art is to see it as a medium in the sense of a mediator, that it conveys some kind of other reality, translated through a digital code, information

of analogous reality, and is then re-mediated. A certain context arises from the characteristics of the phenomenon itself: such as its materialism and technical qualities. The digital environment is not just the transfer medium, the mediator medium, the re-mediator. Various art forms emerging on these platform (interactive art, net art, software art, telecommunicative art, bioart and other hybrid formats) also possess their own set of rules, which understandably rely on the character of the digital environment and technology, but are essentially innovative. This is not merely technology as a tool, a medium and a means with which to differently package existing reality; it has created a different kind of playing field where the previous conventions of physical art and reality are no longer valid.

At the same time, this field requires some technical knowledge. The 1990s could be characterised as an era of establishing new media centres, with media labs of all kinds, and university new media subunits. However it seems the enthusiasm has waned for artists to acquire the necessary technical knowledge and skills for digital work. This may be because the attraction, edginess and 'sexiness' of new media have decreased, partly because digital technology is everywhere, and partly because purely technical education does not really suit art academies: the cognitive abilities of creative people are limited and they require more intuitive creative practices than technical training involving discrete intellectual abilities. This all constitutes fertile ground for the decisive backlash known as 'post-internet'.

Before comparing post-internet definitions, I suggest the hypothesis that on the whole the post-internet art movement can be viewed as a reaction against the specially skilled, cognitive demands of technical art and at the same time accommodate the system of contemporary art: producing physical artefacts. The term post-internet was apparently first used by Marisa Olson in 2006. As the editor of the net portal Rhizome, she held quite an influential position. While producing her own projects, she saw post-internet as the phenomenon of 'internet-engaged art', or net-influenced visual art. Olson's updated view on post-internet (in 2014) was: "Today I use the term more broadly to think about the social conditions of life in network culture."²¹

Post-Internet Definitions

Constant Dullaart: "A conventional, perhaps even nostalgic object-oriented art practice, based on com-

mercial aesthetics propagated on social networks and in advertising."²²

Brian Droitcourt: "I know it when I see it' — like porn, right? And it's not a bad analogy, because post-internet art does to art what porn does to sex... How can we be post-internet when the internet is still here? Shouldn't it be during-internet."²³

Harry Burke: "Post-internet' is reminiscent of a network of art practices that began to develop a critical currency in 2009 and mainstreamed (in the art world) in 2011 and (outside the art world) in 2012."²⁴

Esther Choi: "I would define 'post-internet' in the broadest terms, as a set of modalities and sensibilities that self-referentially respond to the Internet's advent and cultural influence."²⁵

Lauren Cornell claimed that "post-internet art' was an attempt to recapture internet art for gallery culture."²⁶

Raffael Dörig: "Now that post-internet has become a label (that everybody from its first generation hates) that made it easier for the art market and the mainstream art world to talk — as a new 'trend' — about a group of people who work with the internet (the internet! you know, this new medium) but luckily also produce objects. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but creates weird situations sometimes when it's completely ignored that there was/is internet art or net-related art before/outside post-internet."²⁷

Ann Hirsch: "Originally post-internet meant an awareness of how the internet has fully permeated our lives. From daily mundane functions to relationships to the way we perceive culture and the way it is being spread."²⁸

Paddy Johnson: "Art post-internet describes post-internet as a state of mind — to think in the fashion of the network. Artwork reflects the network within which it is created. (Employs the language of advertising, graphic design, corporate branding, etc.)"²⁹

Omar Kholeif: "I tend to adopt the common notion that post-internet is art that is 'internet aware' so it is not necessarily medium-specific nor does it prescribe to any particular formal idea but it is art that is critically engaged with the internet as an all-encompassing social and political medium."³⁰

Nik Kosmas: "post internet was the stuff that came after net art, (neen, rozendaal, jodi), post-internet art doesn't fetishize the media, it's about the experience of living, networked, in 21st century."³¹

Christiane Paul: "While I don't like the term post-internet, I don't think it has had a negative effect on the mainstream art world. Post-internet work fare much better on the art market than 'new media art' per se, but I think this success can be attributed more to the



fact that it largely takes the form of objects rather than the post-internet discussion.³²

I think it would be highly problematic to claim that there is a progression from Internet art to post-internet art.”³³

Lance Wakeling: “I think post-internet is the morning after the honeymoon of the marriage between the digital and the real. It is a fleeting, temporal marker for the beauty and horror that will follow.”³⁴

In summary, this selection of opinions demonstrates internet-aware creative practices, which have found positive feedback in the system of contemporary art, oriented toward artefacts, physical art, the field of contemporary art and art fairs. Post-internet does not really have much to do with earlier digital art practices. This, of course, does not mean that people do not possess digital art and net art awareness, besides internet-awareness.³⁵

Predicting the future is a thankless job, but the discussion at the beginning of the article about the essence of trends and their duration makes one think of the possible future of post-internet. As some authors have mentioned, it is positive that post-internet has introduced media-awareness into the discussions of contemporary art.³⁶ Before, mainstream contemporary art (MCA) had been relatively separated from new media art (NMA). Perhaps at least a bridge has now been established that allows some traffic flow.

1 Tilman Baumgärtel's "Net.Art.2.0: New Materials Towards Net Art" was published in Estonian in 2006.

2 <http://www.teleportacia.org/war/> (visited 24.01.2017).

3 Olia Lialina, *My Boyfriend Came Back from the War*, 1996, <https://anthology.rhizome.org/my-boyfriend-came-back-from-the-war> (visited 24.01.2017).

4 <http://www.entropy8zuper.org/possession/olialia/olialia.htm> (visited 24.01.2017).

5 "Art on the Net 2001" "Post-Cagian Interactive Sounds", Machida City Museum of Graphic Arts, Tokyo (MCMOGATK), <http://www.netarts.org/mcmogatk/2001/awards.html> (visited 24.01.2017).

6 Juhend läbimurdeks kunstimaailma (Instructions for Breaking Through To The World of Art), Eesti Päevaleht, 9 July 2013, <http://epl.delfi.ee/news/kultuur/juhend-labimurdeks-kunstimaailma?id=66413008> (visited 24.01.2017).

7 Kati Ilves. Loodus ja Loomad. Katja Novitskova vahendatud reaalsuse representatsioonid. (Nature and Animals. Representations of Reality Mediated by Katja Novitskova)—Vikerkaar 3/2014, p. 95.

8 I have touched on the history of net art and the part Estonian artists played in it, in my doctoral thesis "Postmateriality in Art" (Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2009) in the chapter "Netikunstist", pp 201-221.

9 Rasa Smite. *Creative Networks, in the Rearview Mirror of Eastern European History*. Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam 2012.

10 Olga Goriunova. *Art Platforms and Cultural Production on the Internet*. Routledge, 2012 (Smite defended as doctoral thesis in 2007).

11 Rasa Smite. *Creative Network Communities in the Translocal Space of Digital Networks*. Human Technology, An Interdisciplinary Journal on Humans in ICT Environments, Volume 9(1), May 2013, 19.

12 Raivo Kelomees. Maailmiliist „Latera“ kõnelemisruum. Eesti kunsti sotsiaalsed portreed. Lisandusi Eesti kunstiloole. (Talking Space of The Mailing List "Latera". Social Portraits of Estonian Art. Additions to Estonian Art History.) Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2003, pp 24-55.

13 Raivo Kelomees. Interview with Alexei Shulgin in September 1997 at Ars Electronica in Linz, Austria. Recording courtesy of the author.

14 Rosalind Krauss. *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1999.

15 Lev Manovich, *Post-Media Aesthetics*, http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/032-post-media-aesthetics/29_article_2001.pdf (visited 24.01.2017).

16 Peter Weibel, *THE POST-MEDIA CONDITION* (2006), <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/lab/post-media-condition> (visited 24.01.2017).

17 Ibid.

18 <https://artextra.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/shanken-hybrid-discourse-draft-0-2.pdf> (visited 24.01.2017).

19 Art Basel, Salon | Art and Technology | Contemporary Art and New Media: Towards a Hybrid Discourse, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9p9VPIr2vc4> (visited 24.1.2017).

20 Ibid.

21 Art Post-Internet. Catalogue. Edited by Karen Archey and Robin Peckham. Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, 2014, 95, available online at <http://post-inter.net/> (visited 24.01.2017).

22 Ibid, 92.

23 Brian Droitcour, *Why I Hate Post-Internet Art*, 2014, <https://culturetwo.wordpress.com/2014/03/31/why-i-hate-post-internet-art/> (visited 24.01.2017).

24 Art Post-Internet, 87.

25 Ibid, 87.

26-27 Ibid, 88.

28 Ibid, 92.

29-31 Ibid, 93.

32 Ibid, 124.

33 Ibid, 96.

34 Ibid, 98.

35 Regine Debatty, "Interview with Marisa Olson", *We Make Money Not Art*, March 28, 2008, http://we-make-money-not-art.com/how_does_one_become_marisa/

36 Domenico Quaranta in *Art Post-Internet*, 125.

Networked or Unmonumental

Spanish Contemporary Art after the Internet

Between December 2007 and March 2008, the New Museum in New York hosted *Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century*, an ambitious group show curated by Richard Flood, Massimiliano Gioni and Laura Hoptman that was presented as “a ground-breaking survey of contemporary sculpture.” The main concept of the show revolved around the idea that sculpture had moved away from monumentality to embrace everyday objects and present itself as somewhat fragmented and fragile. “If the term ‘monumental’ connotes massiveness, timelessness and public significance,” states Hoptman, “the neologism ‘unmonumental’ is meant to describe a kind of sculpture that is not against these values (as in ‘anti-monumental’) but intentionally lacks them.”¹ The curators stressed that the fragmentation of sculpture into an assembly of diverse objects is a reflection of a time in which information overflow and the loss of certainty leads to perceiving reality as “a collage composed of whatever grabs our attention, and the competition is limitless.”²

In the context of this survey, the parallel exhibition *Montage: Unmonumental Online* took place on the website of the art community Rhizome. Curated by Lauren Cornell and Marisa Olson, the show focused on the work of artists who appropriate content from the Web to create “Internet-based montages,” by mixing images, sounds, texts, video or code and posting their compositions online. Whereas *Unmonumental* explored a trend in contemporary sculpture that sees the art object as fragmented, provisional and unfin-

ished (echoing the ideas expressed by Seth Price in his influential essay *Dispersion* from 2002), *Montage* applied this idea to online art, introducing some of the main concepts of what was starting to be described as Post-Internet art.³

The artist Marisa Olson is usually credited as coining the term around 2007 by referring to her work as “art ‘after’ the Internet.”⁴ Elaborating on this idea, the New York-based art critic Gene McHugh described “Post Internet” as “Art from the Internet world that mutates to the conventions of the art world”⁵ In the years following the New Museum exhibition, and particularly since 2013-2014, Post-Internet art has increasingly caught the attention of the contemporary art world and the art market, while it has also been regularly criticized and proclaimed finished. Currently, this label is mainly applied to the work of a group of artists born in the early to mid-eighties whose sculptures and installations manifest the complex influence of Internet culture. As expressed by McHugh’s definition, Post-Internet art is particularly suited to the conditions of the art gallery: it usually consists of prints, found objects and videos, blithely displayed in the exhibition space, which present a similar aesthetic to that of most contemporary sculptures (particularly those of John Bock and Isa Genzken, whose work was featured in *Unmonumental*). Post-Internet art paradoxically takes the culture generated in online platforms and social media into the white cube by avoiding its technological framework, the network of servers that makes it possible to publish and share content in real time. It is about the Internet but not online. In this sense, it becomes a reflection on the condition of the artwork as an object



at a time when the Internet pervades every aspect of our culture, while also prompting the question of whether art must adapt to the conventions of the gallery space in order to be integrated into the mainstream contemporary art world.

Looking for Post-Internet art in the work of Spanish artists born in the early to mid-eighties leads to considering how these artists address the materiality of their practice and also what role the Internet (or its main attribute: connectivity) plays in their projects. Among those who are particularly active in the art market and whose work is featured regularly in exhibitions in contemporary art centres and museums, I will focus on a dozen of them who are mostly based in Madrid but have also studied or currently live in other European cities. All of them are represented by a handful of Spanish art galleries. They are Fran Meana (*1982), Álvaro Gil (*1986), Cristina Garrido (*1986), Karlos Gil (*1984), Belén Zahera (*1985), Teresa Solar Abboud (*1985), Diego Delas (*1983), June Crespo (*1982), Christian García Bello (*1986), Leonor Serrano (*1986), Eva Fábregas (*1988) and Carlos Fernández Pello (*1985).

The appropriation and manipulation of found objects, sometimes combined with carefully hand-crafted pieces, and their arrangement in the gallery space are distinctive traits of their work, which could at times be associated with the playful but precise attention to

the object common in most Post-Internet art. However, their approach to these objects and the subjects that fuel their artistic research are more closely associated with Conceptual Art and the current trends in contemporary sculpture identified by the curators of Unmonumental. In general terms, they are more interested in the effects of mass-produced objects than in online popular culture, and use these objects as the output of their research on a myriad of subjects, including nature, labour, memory, the architectural space and the body. Álvaro Gil's colourful sculptures, for example, may be seen as three-dimensional renderings of a collage of web elements, 3D objects and textures, but they originate from the artist's exploration of DIY and customization, questioning the role of the art object and the separation between high and low culture.

In summary, the works of these artists could hardly be grouped into a single category if not for their formal aspects, which tend to coincide with those of most Post-Internet installations. This superficial resemblance can be explained by the fact that artists present their work in formats that are usually accepted in the contemporary art world, which leads to similar displays and recurring elements. Cristina Garrido criticized this systematization in her work *#JWIITMTESDSA? (Just what is it that makes today's exhibitions so different, so appealing?)* (2015), an installation created with some of the elements most commonly

found in contemporary art shows, based on information collected from art magazine blogs, gallery websites and social media. Garrido grouped these elements into 21 categories, which according to her constitute “a kind of canon of the contemporary international exhibition business.” Additionally, she produced staged photographs of the elements in each category in the series *They Are These or They May Be Others* (2014-2015). Each photograph included a caption in the popular Impact font, resembling a meme, and was distributed by the artist in several online art forums and social media profiles as viral content. This project could be related to Post-Internet art, but in fact it heads in the opposite direction: while Post-Internet brings online popular culture into the gallery, Garrido dissects the contents of the white cube and distributes them online, in order to generate a discussion on the standardization of art.

Paradoxically, the Spanish artists whose works more directly address Internet culture in online projects are less interested in the art object and staging carefully conceived installations. They also constitute a different profile: very active in new media art festivals and participating in museum exhibitions, they are less interested in the art market and seldom participate in gallery shows. Such artists as Joana Moll (*1982), Mario Santamaría (*1985), César Escudero Andaluz (*1983), Jaime de los Ríos (*1982) and Mar Canet (*1981) have strong backgrounds in technology and create artworks in which the process is usually more important than the object. For instance, Moll’s artistic research on the materiality of the net consists mainly of websites and digital files, lacking any physical form. An interesting exception can be found in *Thero* (2016), a project by the artists Román Torre (*1978) and Ángeles Angulo (*1972) consisting of a device that allows the user to determine the privacy of her network. The artists have consciously created a sculpture “reminiscent of an idol or talisman” that conveys a sense of sacrality to digital privacy. Therefore, the artwork combines the conception of the artwork as a sculpture and the manipulation of an ongoing networked activity. Nevertheless, it can be said that the aesthetic concerns and forms of presentation usually found in Post-Internet art are almost absent in the work of these artists.

In conclusion, the work of this young generation of Spanish artists draws a line between exploring the object as art and reflecting on Internet culture. It is not, as McHugh described it, “Art from the Internet world that mutates to the conventions of the art



Álvaro Gil “Mármol Cebado”, 2013. Photo courtesy of the artist and L21 Gallery

world,” but either “art from the Internet world” or “contemporary art adapted to the conventions of the art world.” Although this does not mean that no influence of Post-Internet art is to be found in contemporary Spanish art, it is telling that the artists born in Spain around the same time as Oliver Laric, Jon Rafman, Katja Novitskova and Petra Cortright are carrying out different approaches to similar concerns.

1 Hoptman, L. Unmonumental. *Going to Pieces in the 21st Century*, in: *Unmonumental. The Object in the 21st Century*. New York: Phaidon, 2007, p.138.

2 Flood, R. Not About Mel Gibson, in: *Unmonumental. The Object in the 21st Century*. New York: Phaidon, 2007, p. 10.

3 Price, S. *Dispersion*. Retrieved from <http://www.distributedhistory.com/Disperzone.html>

4 McHugh, G. *Post Internet. Notes on the Internet and Art*. 12.29.09>09.05.10. Brescia: Link Editions, 2011, p.11.

5 McHugh, 2011, p.16.

Norman Orro (b. 1986) is a graphic designer and artist also known under the alias Music For Your Plants. He teaches graphic design at the Estonian Academy of Arts.

Norman Orro



AN IMAGE WITHOUT A PICTURE

LOCKRILEY

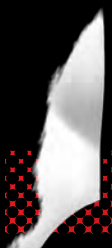
**A sorrowful
simpleton pukes
up a surprisingly
intact belief-
system to end
all GPS systems
that relate to
Current Western
Theorizing.**

UN CIVILIZATIONS

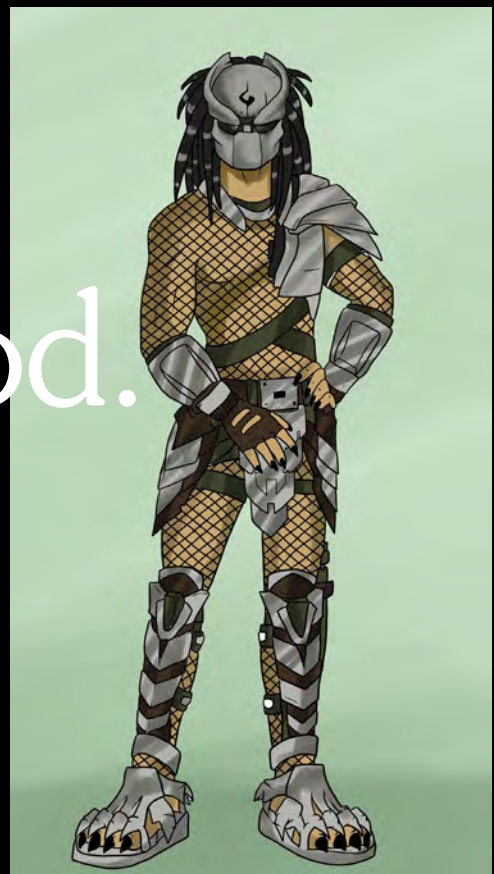
And all
GPS systems
whisper
the word
“Anthropocene”
in unison, with
all of mankind
onboard.

Buried
alive in
dystopia...

Narratives
bloom like
cancer.



If you wish to
make an apple
pie from scratch,
you must first
build a company
to deploy a
genetically
modeled God.



SOFT

Apocalypse



The total
world
dataset of
humanity...

Was a nice lesson
in how cool data
visualizations
can be scraped
off the rocks.

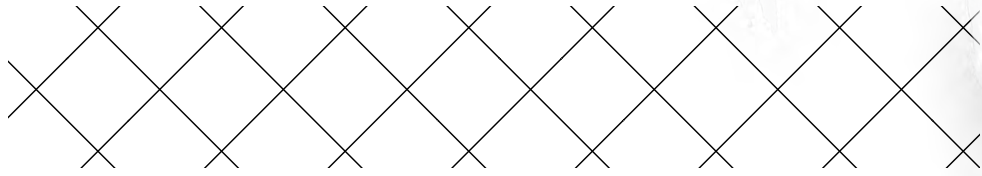


Archeological
CHARM

The combined
weight of
your friends
can fuck up
at random
every one of
the alternative
universes.



THE WORLD IS MY *TAMAGOTCHI*



Siri
call me
master.



Aesthetics rise
unbidden from
the images that
society produces.

Patterns emerge
created by millions
of uncoordinated,
independent
decisions.

City

Of

Culture

Fades

Into

Ruin

The people
of posthuman
stumble upon
the temptation
of modernity...

A nature-
culture
switch
elaborate
& beautiful
enough
to kill.

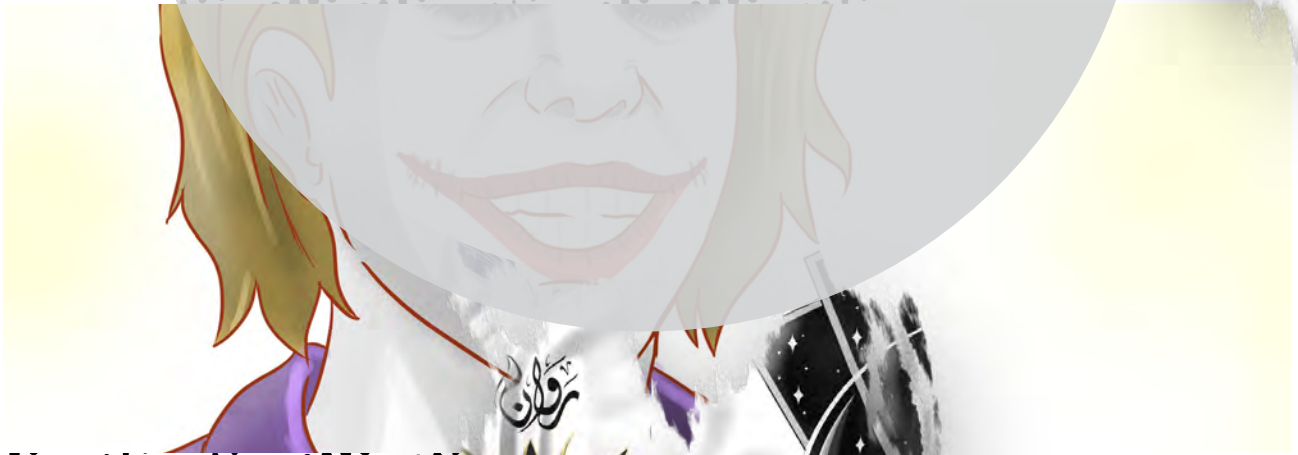
Civilizations can be used as decorations.



Corals align with
octopus-shaped
machinery to develop
new lifestyles.

Dog food has been
implanted with
World War II debris.

Despite
everyone's
best efforts
Davos Man
still won't put
his dick away.

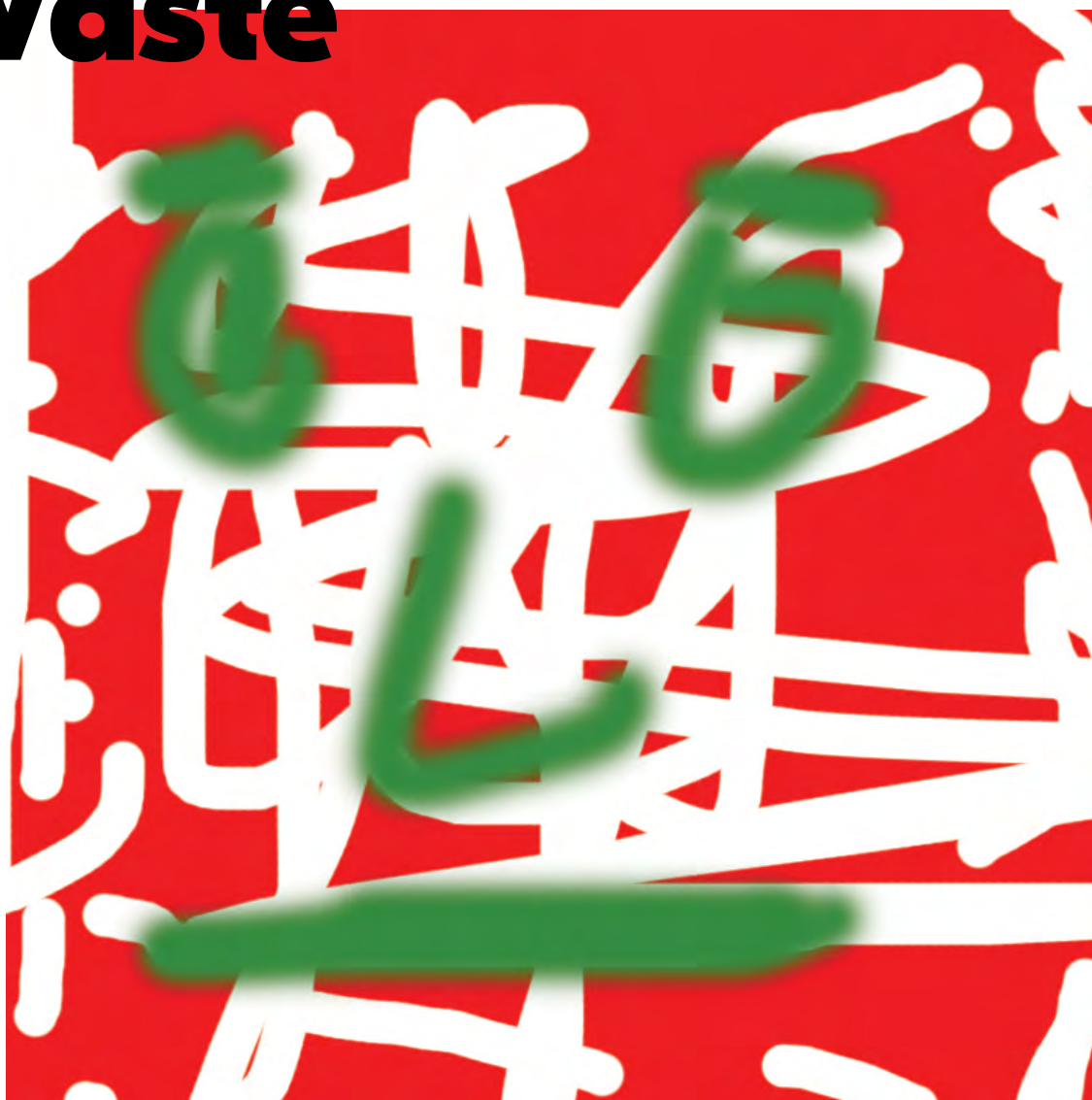


The end

Aesthetics of Information

Ott Kagovere (b. 1983) is a freelance graphic designer and a design critic. Together with Maria Muuk, he runs a project space focusing on graphic design theory and alternative education.

Waste





I am feeling numb. I am staring at a blank screen illuminating my face in a dark room. A Facebook wall is falling like a waterfall of useless information in front of my eyes and I am unable to differentiate one post from another, one 'friend' from another, one ad from another. I am numb and I am aware of it. I am looking for something to wake me up. Something to catch my attention (hence the term attention media) and from time to time I do stop the scroll, focus for a second on a video, whether music or news, or a picture of an old acquaintance, and then carry on. Some of my Facebook friends post mercilessly; hence I call them post-friends, or poster boys, but in reality they are nothing but imposters. They share bits of trivial information, they try to be funny, they try to catch our attention and often do, but we all know what is going on here. No matter what letters they use, it always spells a cry for help. Notice me! Approve of me! For otherwise my being is meaningless. But no matter how many "likes" a post gets, salvation is always postponed, and one's being is still untouched. We recognize this, because our being is untouched as well. So in a numb millisecond of affection, like a pat on the back, we sacrifice a "like" to a like-minded human being and in this act of empathy share a bond of numbness.

Random strings of thought start forming in my mind. They form a pattern. A maze. All of this is an artifact. Somebody designed it. This almost random texture of

the web. This net of information. This accumulation of waste. We are wallowing in it. Surf: how ironic to call it that, since in reality we are drowning in this man-made swamp. It sparks a feeble flame of paranoia with a hint of conspiracy sprinkled on top. If this is man-made, is there a man behind it? Is there a web master? A giant spider? My attention is so fleeting that I cannot 'allow' myself to 'enjoy' this thought any longer. Instead, like an idiot, I Google "a giant spider". How ironic and at the same time accurate: all of the acts of my conscious being crash into triviality. They stumble upon a meme: the highest currency in attention economies.

If one pays attention to this fact, a myriad of interesting questions emerge. A web of connotations shedding light on the politics of the vernacular, the mundane, the meaningless. In the center of it all sits the meme. The perfect representative of useless information and at the same time the most vital messenger. The ever-present companion of attention economies. The fruit, the flower and the cancer of information decomposition. And, taking a personal approach, I am interested in what memes and attention media have to say about graphic design. I am bored to death with good taste and traditional graphic design, so I go sniffing in the trash. It smells good. It draws my attention.



I wake up, no food, just web. I browse as a sleep. No interest. Google. Read. Brain numb. A blank page. Three dots waiting for a follow-up. Alt-space blinking for days. "Read" Facebook. Too numb to concentrate. I need to pee. Too indifferent to surrender to my bodily functions. Pissing (and eating) is



for the weak. The whole week has been prospering in countless acts of impotence. At 03.37 I could not take it any more. A boiling point. Nothing happened. The web was still there. Indifferent. Still real. My hands seem loose. Not mine. I don't feel "mine" in general.

Watched a movie. Why not? It was a bout human relations. All of them are. Leaves me indifferent. What do I have to do with those?

It only takes a glimpse to realize that memes say much more about contemporary graphic design than any design picture-book published by Taschen. The most common definition of graphic design is visual communication, and memes are nothing but visual communicators. They consist of classic graphic design elements: typography, images, colors and, perhaps most importantly, composition, the glue that holds them all together. The only difference between a meme and a “well-” designed web page is that nobody cares about a well-designed web page. It is invisible (hence, if we are interested in “good” design, we should redefine graphic design as invisible communication), while memes concern us quite a lot. They are visible in the most straightforward sense: they constantly push themselves into our attention, into our vision.

They also have a lot to say about communication. A classic model of communication is a transfer of meaning or information from a sender to a receiver. Memes have an interesting status in this model. While being relatively meaningless and poor in information, they are nevertheless the highest form of currency on the web. While the communication model is solid, the value of information transferred gets deflated. It seems that the less meaning and proper information we have to transfer, the faster the communication process. In that sense, one might define good graphic design as that which is fast (fast food coming to mind is no coincidence). As that which has the lowest resolution. Has the least meaning (a cute cat!) and is the most visible (catches our attention). And, through no coincidence, we have, simultaneously reached the definition of a meme.

Some might say that memes are not graphic design because they are not designed by designers. They are mostly generated through various online generators and the person making the meme is only inserting the text, i.e. the pun, of the meme. So, adds my imaginary opponent, we might think of this anonymous lot of meme makers as amateur copywriters, but never as graphic designers! Here again I am not satisfied. I am dragged from the hopeless attempt to define graphic design into an even more hopeless endeavor: the definition of a graphic designer. The question is utterly boring, but the fact that it is being asked in a serious manner is interesting for its political connotations. By trying to define a designer, quite often one is not interested in a thorough meditation on the

question, but in drawing a line between him/herself and the unwanted other. A classic example is the division between amateur, vernacular designers and serious professionals. The last are the true masters. They know their craft. While the former are copycats, Sunday designers and in many ways a useless, if not dangerous, lot, who should be avoided and discouraged. Designer as troll is of most value here. A digital trickster uncovering the void behind those pompous borderlines. Opening a backdoor for design refugees! The designer as engineer and the designer as hipster look for inspiration in Behance, while a repulsive dude with ADD is contaminating the web like a virus.

In a way, the interest in the vernacular is nothing new. The whole post-modern movement in the “practical arts” (starting with architecture) was sparked by such interests. Before that the vernacular had always played an important role in the history of graphic design, but never as a hero, always as the villain. William Morris

and the Bauhaus school were all directed actively against the vernacular and, in that sense, re-evaluating the vernacular was one of the biggest innovations of post-modernism in graphic design.

In their 2012 book *Can Jokes Bring Down Governments*, the prolific design duo Metahaven analyzed memes and jokes as a new, or rather contemporary, form of political activism. Through this analysis, the status of a meme is raised from a mere joke to the “serious” level of politics. It has power. It has far-reaching socio-political consequences.

In many ways, this small text has similar ambitions, but instead of delving into the general political connotations of a meme, it deals with memes (as the representative of the vernacular), specifically in a graphic design context. It can be read in many ways: as a thought experiment, as a “what if ...?” proposition, as semi-theoretical pulp fiction, or as a serious argumentation. But, at the same time, all of this would be in vain without the possibility of it being a big joke. Because, quoting Metahaven, “Jokes are a continuation of politics by other memes.”



Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall, Who's the Coolest of them All?

If post-internet were a fairy tale character, she wouldn't be the prettiest princess on Earth, loved by everyone. Nope, post-internet would be the evil godmother who would spend her days staring into the mirror, taking selfies and fancying herself. Post-internet is trivial, it's vain, it's arrogant...post-internet is *so bad*.

Does anyone still remember the ninth Berlin Biennale (of 2016)? Or is it already hidden on page 2 of Google Search? It was the manifesto of post-internet. Or its death notice, as some have said. Curated by the 'highfalutin fashion collective' DIS, the Berlin Biennale put art to shame, according to some critics. Or, as Dorian Batycka stated in Hyperallergic, DIS "seems more concerned with /.../ looking cool in Slavoj Žižek t-shirts than in curating anything that could remotely be considered a serious, relevant, or important exhibition of contemporary art." *So bad!* The opponents of post-internet art have indeed said it is not anti-capital-

ist enough, not relevant enough, not something they think art should be. What, then, would post-internet fashion be like? Well, fashion never states its purpose would be something more than looking cool in a Slavoj Žižek t-shirt. Fashion is by definition superficial and foolish. It's fickle and senseless, and that is exactly why it so unbearably perfectly describes the world we live in today.

Post-internet art asks us: what should art be after the internet? After the endless cat pics and millions of memes have clogged up our visual senses entirely? The question for fashion after the internet is similar. What is fashion after blogs, after the Kardashians, after Snapchat, with the always accelerating fashion industry and the fact that even fashion has become unfashionable (yes, high-end trend forecaster Li Edelkoort really said that)? What is fashion in a post-truth society, where we don't have a Kantian differentiation between real and unreal values any more, in an era where there is nothing left but bluff and hype? It's the situation where *in real life* doesn't mean anything anymore, but there are still humans with real feelings, emotions and loves.

Printed Internet

Here we have Laivi Suurväli (Laivi) and Sandra Kossorotova, young fashion designers whose conscientious works are based on the idea of resisting over-



Tommy Cash. Photo: Sohvi Viik



production and offering a moment of security for the wearer. Kosorotova's exhibition "Care. Value. Power. Control" was driven by the lack of control and care in today's world. People have tried to replace control and care with a range of spiritual teachings, diets, yoga lessons and other mind-body practices. Kosorotova's Master's thesis work at the Estonian Academy of Arts, "The Plaza Collection; Fashion Activism as Reaction to Hyper-Consumerism", focused on uniting slow fashion and activism. The unisex clothing could also be used as a rally banner. Laivi has tackled the European migrant crises in her works: her exhibition at the Tartu Art Museum, "On Disappearing And For Vanishing", attempted to emotionally portray the long journey of an immigrant on his way to public recognition.

What happens when the internet appears more real than real life? It seems that one way to deal with this question is just to print out the internet. Laivi printed the internet on her fabrics and exhibition walls at her solo exhibition "Poor Girl/Too Cool". The designer Kristel Kuslapuu prints and knits the internet on her colourful knit works. For some time there has been a fashion magazine called 'Slacker' in Estonia, initiated for slackers, obviously. It's a pointless magazine in every sense: it appears only in print, most of the magazine consists of super-expensive fashion shoots, but

the mag itself is free and is published in Estonian (probably an editorial decision). It's not only the era and colourful aesthetics that make the magazine so post-internet, but also the slacking part. We are killing time on Facebook and Instagram, and on our stupid smart phones. Everyone hates us for that. It all comes back to the idea of printing out things that should have just stayed on the internet.

East of the West

Where can we hide in the age of internet transparency? When we are ruthlessly followed by all the cookies of the world? Of course, one possibility is to print out the internet as Slacker does and just bury it somewhere. But where can you hide from the world, which is threatened by both climate catastrophe and the Third World War? "Fashion will turn to the East," I was told some years ago by the Russian fashion collector Alexandr Vassilyev, whose collector's exhibitions have become the main blockbusters in the leading Estonian art museum, Kumu. And indeed, he was right. Whether it's the manufacturers in China and India or the strengthening Muslim impact in Europe and the USA, or maybe the reaction of fashion intellectuals to the conservatives who are trying to also force nationalist style in culture. Or perhaps, just boredom with mainstream fashion? The key may also be seeking protection from the surveillance society. Or, in Hito Steyerl's words: "How do people disappear in an age of total over-visibility?"

Fashion is turning us into real-life avatars, cyber warriors who are looking for the last protection from Big Brother, and according to the latest fashion of wearing mesh scarves and up-to-date capes. As Ingeborg Harms wrote in her article in the *Texte Zur Kunst* fashion issue, as it is a custom for the often parodical fashion world, it occasionally turns out even grotesque, especially when the body is "covered" by mesh fabric or 50 shades of nude. The body seems to be covered but is still sheer and uncensored. This can also be seen in the works of Laivi, who is experimenting with how nude she can go, to uncover the tensions between naked and dressed. Mesh-loving Estonian designer Crystal Rabbit designs lingerie and sportswear. The cyber warrior is introduced with the men's collections by Kalle Aasmäe or Katja Adrikova's collection "Superior Man". The cyber warrior wearing mesh fabrics and nude colours must be in perfect physical shape. Only the strong and healthy survive in the world after the internet. In order to have some kind of reality check during the era

of great anxiety, we go to the gym and do yoga, have protein smoothies and green juices. The epoch of *Care. Control. Value. Power* has begun.

It's not Slav, but Who Cares?

The impact and influence of the East can also be found even closer. The hearts of the hipsters of the West have been conquered by the Parisian design collective Vetements and Gosha Rubchinsky for some time now. They use the streets of 1990s Russia, normcore and Soviet symbols as inspiration. Even Vogue selected Eastern Europe as its 2017 Hot Travel Destination and Eastern Europe's designers were announced Not Going Anywhere in 2017. Does Asian fashion still seem a little too far out and frightening for Western youth? If so, then we still have good old Eastern Europe: it's close, but still exotic enough.

In Estonia the trendy approach to the topic of the East of the West describes the new generation that are

not ashamed of their Soviet past and not really nostalgic for it either. They remember the 1990s as a secure childhood (okay, someone was probably killed on your street but you were playing with Kinder Surprise toys then and watching German TV, so you probably didn't notice). Baseball caps, sweatpants with huge logos, ugly jackets and slav squats have not quite made it to the catwalks but are present in the streets and popular culture. Just search on Instagram for "ossikükk" (Estonian for "slav squat"): people even use the pose in wedding pics! The Estonian rapper Tommy Cash sings with a Russian accent and mixes the internet with Slavic carpets. The designer Kristel Kuslapuu knits messages from the internet and popular culture into her cardigans. The poetics of 1990s thugs were brought back by Triin Ruumet's film "The Days That Confused", which won basically all the film prizes in Estonia in 2016. Estonians are not Slavs, but as one local Russian YouTuber, Life of Boris says: "who the fuck cares?" After all, we do have the jackpot: Slavic heritage and an even weirder thing called e-Estonia. If the apocalypse should come, Estonians can hide on the internet, which will be located in a Soviet block-house. That's our post-internet survival kit.



Laivi Suurväli "Temporary Permit", 2016. Scan

Preserving the Tactility of Printing Practices

Printing and Paper Museum in Tartu In recent years, Tartu has received a lot of attention for its museums. The newly opened Estonian National Museum and new additions to the Tartu University Museum, as well as the rebirth of the Tartu Art Museum, have been the subjects of many headlines in local and international media. However, in the shadows of these eminent institutions one can find initiatives that may be smaller in scale, but are just as fascinating in their approaches and practices. As separate institutions, the Printing Museum and Paper Museum had been active in Tartu since 2010. In 2016, the museums merged and reopened in a new location, the Aparaaditehas Creative City.

Unlike some of the other printing museums, for example the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp, the printing presses in Tartu are not simply visual objects displayed for their appearance and significance. The purpose of the museum is not only to safeguard objects related to printing, but to preserve traditions. The establishment also works with experienced printmakers to document their skills, knowledge and experience, as well as acting as an educator of students, from kindergarten to university. A lot of the equipment is in regular use, either for organising workshops or for fulfilling different commissions.

The museum produces the Tartuensis series of notebooks, and also fills orders, from wedding invita-

tions to artist books and posters, thus maintaining the tradition and possibility of traditional printing methods. Fahrenheit 451, a curious space filled with books, functions both as a collection of printed matter and as a shop. Workshops are another method of preserving knowledge and disseminating it amongst visitors. Additionally, the museum staff are present to offer tours to visitors, whether they come in groups or alone, which presents an opportunity for more direct exchange of knowledge and ideas than mediating information through text.

In a way, the collections existed long before the museum. As several publishing houses and other establishments were closing in the new market environment of the 1990s, numerous interesting pieces of equipment became redundant. Luckily many of these were salvaged to be used for printing posters. The oldest exhibit is a hand-operated iron printing press from Dinger'sche Maschinenfabrik, a "Zweibrücken press", which dates from the mid-19th century. The museum collection includes not only different printing presses, but also various other equipment related to the printing industry, from paper guillotines to typewriters. One of the most fascinating objects is a Braille typewriter, manufactured in the 1980s by Mechanische Werkstatt für Blindenhilfsmittel in Leipzig and donated by the South Estonian Association of the Blind. Additionally, the museum can boast the largest collection of type pieces in Estonia.

Not only do the collections demonstrate the types of printing equipment used in Estonian printing establishments, but also the geography of the Estonian printing trade. The majority of exhibits hail from Germany, especially larger machinery. The United States of America is also represented by a number of pieces of equipment, mostly typewriters. A folding machine was manufactured locally, in 1953, by the printing house Ühiselu in Tallinn. Here, the scarce conditions and outdated technology common throughout the Soviet Union proved to be beneficial: machines that would have been simply discarded elsewhere with the arrival of better alternatives survived here along with the skills of using them. Many items were in use for extremely long periods of time: for example, the Original Rapid printing press arrived in Tartu in 1927 from Schnellpressenfabrik Frankenthal Albert & Cie in Germany and was in continuous use in various printing houses until 1996. This is also the explanation for the conservation of many other objects from the late 19th or early 20th century.

Fascinatingly, the museum also allows people to rent typewriters. This service clearly illustrates the post-internet fascination with traditional material practices. In August 2014, the best selling app in the Apple

App Store was Hanx Writer. Marketed by the actor Tom Hanks, the app offered the user a chance to turn their mobile phone or tablet into a typewriter, complete with sound. As technological opportunities are increasing faster and faster, it is interesting to see a practice that just a few decades ago was a mundane daily activity become a historical experience. By renting out actual typewriters, with all of their flaws, the Printing and Paper Museum guarantees the continuation of typewriting as a practice instead of treating it as a hyperrealist spectacle.

The importance of the museum lies in its conservation of history, not just in its aesthetic and visual sense, but also in its tactility and practices. Instead of reducing the machines in the exhibits to their appearance and description, they are allowed to continue their working lives, even if this continuation takes place in a framework of conservation. The museum interior contributes to the nature of the establishment. The old factory space has been left almost in its original form. Thus the exhibits acquire a sense of authenticity, as the industrial settings prevent the over-aesthetization of exhibited objects, whose visual appearance was never their *raison d'être*.



Victoria Polygraph V 1040-2, manufactured by VEB Polygraph Druckmaschinenwerk Victoria (Heidenau, Germany) in late 1980s. Photo: Mana Kaasik

but

Cyber

Real

“This virtual world, that has become real, celebrates the end of ideology, history and ultimately of humanity”¹

AES+F

WOA (work of art) is an acronym used in cyberspace correspondence, along with 2G2BT (too good to be true), 2EZ (too easy) and IVL (in virtual life). These terms are popular among the internet generation, which “refers to a generation that has had access to the Internet from an early age [...] known as the Millennial Generation born between the early 1980s to 2000”.² The internet generation work with digital technologies both in the workplace and socially, with a natural adaptation to binary codes. A WOA experiences similar adaptation when it ends up in the virtual world by way of Instagram post or online exhibition, or can even originate in the virtual world by the use of 3D modelling.

In the contemporary context, there is a mutation happening to jewellery art and design, one of the most physical and material of all art forms, due to its absorption into cyberspace and its interrelationship with technology. The concepts of hybrid authorship and manipulation are keys to define the influence of digital technology on the essence of jewellery and also answer the question of what happens when digital and physical, immaterial and material, meet.

Hybrid Authorship

Authorship refers to the creator of a work of art. However, a tricky thing happens when a creator enters into a relationship with technology: the definition of authorship is put into question. The non-author perspective is a process of removing the author as much as possible (but never completely) from the role of ‘creator’ by replacing him or her with a machine. During the “Craft and Technology, Experience and Evaluation” summit at the MICX, Mons International Congress Center, Marie-Josè van den Hout, the Director of Galerie Marzee in Nijmegen, Netherlands, gave her opinion on 3D printing. According to her, only handwork can be defined as true art, as 3D printed jewellery is soulless. In other words, as far as authorship is concerned, handicraft is winning the ‘hand vs. machine’ battle.

The machine and its autonomous creation are not neutral. On the one hand, machines and technology are seen as spiritual by some researchers and makers; on the other hand, some put handmade works in the foreground. This conflict is intriguing and is similar to the conflict that occurred during the emergence of photography. Walter Benjamin states that “earlier much futile thought had been devoted to the question of whether photography is an art. The primary question - whether the very invention of photography had not transformed the entire nature of art - was not raised”³. It is possible that the definition of authorship in the contemporary context should be viewed differently, specifically as hybrid authorship

of a WOA: with a neutrality relating both to hand-made and machine made work, the refusal to accept the handmade versus machine antagonism, while still not blending these two concepts into one.

Digital Manipulation

Manipulation is the implementation of control, digital manipulation is an act of creating a virtual rather than an actual version of the WOA, for example by using Photoshop or applying Instagram filters (in this way the WOA is deformed when presented to a viewer). Despite the fact that the concept of the 'virtual' seems ephemeral, its physical presence is actual and has been referred to as the New Aesthetic. This concept is described by the London-based artist and writer James Bridle as the "increasing appearance of the visual language of digital technology and the Internet in the physical world, and the blending of the virtual and physical."⁴ There is generally dematerialization and virtualization of the artwork happening in the aftermath of the digital revolution, which affects, among other things, an art form that is highly physical, namely jewellery. "The history of every art form shows critical epochs in which a certain art form aspires to effects which could be fully obtained only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form."⁵

On Making

Technologies such as 3D modelling/printing and CNC milling almost accomplish the virtual perfection of WOA. Using a 3D printed form as a prototype, it is possible to reproduce it infinitely. It is like a perfect DNA cell that can be multiplied into an army that rejects any imperfections. The machine in opposition to man never thinks approximately, and therefore operates according to certain idealized settings. The machine is a power manifestation disguised in abstract and dramatic forms.

Nevertheless, the goal is not the beauty of the machine, but the beauty of the machine's function. There's also beauty in glitches/anomalies/errors made by the machine; more than that, they are not always errors made by a person: sometimes they occur spontaneously. The only machine that can generate WOA autonomously is a machine that comes with AI (artificial intelligence), but while scientists are only trying to create AI it is necessary to understand why

the non-authorial perspective, which is a process of removing the author as far as possible from the role of the creator, can never remove him absolutely. Using a 3D printer to create some kind of an item or utilizing the 123D Catch app for smartphones, which allows the scanning of any object or person, the choice is always the author's. It follows that the absence of the body (the artist) cannot be defined as the absence of authorship.

With hybrid authorship, it is necessary to explain why ambivalence relating both to handmade and machine-made work doesn't imply blending these two given concepts into one whole. It's good to point out just how important the artist's (at least the applied artist's) particular ability really is in the contemporary world, an ability to combine hand work and machine work in such a way that one does not overshadow the other, and neither suffers from the other's superiority.

Authors who use modern technologies in their works have the ability to create an item that is confusing even to the most experienced viewer. For example rubber has an ability to play tricks on the viewer. Nobody identifies it as rubber, and not even as a flexible material. Usually people mistake it for crystal or glass. But one of the most important aspects of jewellery is tactility: the capacity to experience the material by touching it. One almost unnoticeable flexible movement that occurs when direct contact with the jewellery happens is enough to cause the viewer to experience childlike awe.

Given the fact that the rubber is used for casting, which means the components A and B (urethane rubber) are in liquid form before their mixing, 3D modelling can be used to create the desired shape; after which printing the model obtains the mould for rubber casting. Naturally, after the casting the item is in need of mechanical processing, and thus the hand-work aspect is not in any way inferior to the technologies applied to the item's creation.

When talking about the application of technologies, we should ask ourselves if there is an inversely proportional interrelationship between machines and humans. The ability to use a machine usually does not imply universal knowledge in the field of technologies in use. For example, we use smartphones, rarely knowing just how they work. The same can be said about 3D printers, scanners etc. Bruno Latour has referred to unknown innerworkings as a 'black box'.⁶ Complex systems are not as important in relation to the machine as the material we provide and the material

Fig. 1. Brooch BABYBOY, 2016. Ebony wood, flock, flexible rubber, silver, steelpins. Photo: Andrey Kulpin



it produces. Such are the circumstances of post-digital reality, in which the creation process becomes less and less transparent and ambiguous. Objects created are presented as born-digital WOA, which refers to “any material that originated in digital form.”⁷

On Perception

Jewellery is a highly physical form of art. Tactile experience is inherent in one’s relationship to jewellery, although with the advent of Web 2.0 all artworks were affected by the perception of photography or video on the digital screen. Presently, immediate contact with the WOA happens more and more often in cyberspace than in real life. For example on Instagram a user called @jewelleryactivist shares 10 reposts a day and has more than 24,000 followers on Instagram, while it is possible to look at 128,522 posts hashtagged #contemporaryjewellery. This amount exceeds the number of works you can see in real life in the same amount of time.

Consequently, the realm of cyberspace intervenes in the physical offline world and also in the physical space of WOA, and lends it new qualities. These changes are not always conscious. Coming back to the topic of manipulation, it is worth noting that most of the photos depicting physical works underwent Photoshop processing and/or Instagram filters. Countless digital layers are sometimes laid on top of a real object to manipulate the image, more specifically to give the object some desirable qualities that it does not have in the non-digital world. Usually, a successful photo in web 2.0 has definite attributes, such as specific colours, light, composition etc., not to mention the caption.

There is a whole art of drawing attention and likes online. However, very often the web absorbs and multiplies only the visual aspect, while the name and date of the artist and work are the first to vanish. “Like a wheel’s tire, the image gets stripped of its own form through its continued use. This creates a peculiar, inverse reaction: the more famous an art image becomes, the less its author will be attributed.” Cyberspace as well as the machine eradicates the concept of authorship: everything on the web belongs to the web and can be used without restrictions by users of the web; these circumstances consequently generate a new hybrid authorship of a WOA.

It would be wise to separate social networking as a marketing tool used to attract viewers, followers and buyers from social networking used as a material for WOA for the artist. For example, Juliana Huxtable’s Tumblr “BLUE LIP BLACK WITCH-CUNT” is not a tool but a medium (material), by which the artist erases the boundaries between the real and the virtual. During the “Networked Images. Artistic Practices Before and After the Internet” conference in Basel, the art historian and literary scientist Dr. Antje Krause-Wahl pointed out that Juliana Huxtable’s artificial blue, Internet cable coloured lip-gloss emphasises virtuality. Perhaps that is exactly “virtual materiality”, a phenomenon in which the real becomes virtual and vice versa. We have the presence of jewellery, on one hand, and technology, on the other. As the purely digital is just numbers, is it possible to assume that combining these two opposite WOA creates a new status: cyber but real?

- 1 AES+F Instagram Account. <<https://www.instagram.com/p/700ALEGvYL/>>
- 2 Foreman, K. *Social Media Dictionary: A Modern Guide to Social Media, Texting, and Digital Communication*. USA: Social School 101 Press, 2014, p 58.
- 3 Benjamin, W. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1969, p 8.
- 4 Bridle, J. *The New Aesthetic and its Politics. You Are Here: Art After the Internet*. Ed. Omar Kholeif. UK: Cornerhouse Publications, 2014, p 21.
- 5 Benjamin, p 16.
- 6 Latour, B. *Pandora’s Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- 7 Foreman, p 1.
- 8 Troemel, B. *Art After Social Media. You Are Here: Art After the Internet*. Ed. Omar Kholeif. UK: Cornerhouse Publications, 2014, p 39.

The Avant-Garde of New Estonian Architecture

Since the economic crisis of 2008, several of the more enterprising architects working in Estonia have focused on greater business success, abandoning creative experiments and instead directing their architectural efforts towards providing high-quality services. On the presumption that creativity has not, after all, vanished from new Estonian architecture, my aim here is to examine the manifestations that can, with some concessions, be considered avant-garde.

Innovation and the Avant-Garde

“Avant-garde” as a concept refers to the vanguard or fore-guard and was initially a French military term. In the 20th century the meaning of the concept rapidly expanded and vigorously entered the cultural sphere as well. In art and literary criticism, and later also in art history, “avant-garde” was used in connection with artists who opposed the existing, the established, the “good old” everything. An avant-gardist was always ahead of the mainstream and the masses, his activities stood out from the ordinary and he aspired towards something new, whether specific, such as art techniques, or more abstract, such as a way of thinking (ideology).

Today’s language uses the term “avant-garde”—at least in Estonian—relatively seldom. The avant-garde may have faded together with the death of modernism. The postmodern (in its wider sense) cultural situation, subjected to the rules of capitalism, is characterized by individualism, fragmentation and the propensity to consume. We live in a globalized information society, where the ‘fresh and new’ have become



mainstream, a commodity in demand. It is difficult to be avant-garde in such a situation, as the avant-garde itself has been turned into a kind of commodity.

The avant-garde as a phenomenon may be on the wane, but what has replaced it? Maybe “innovation”? These two concepts are closely connected, although they rely on different value bases. The avant-garde indicates intrinsic value, whereas innovation indicates the instrumental or instrumental value. In other words, an innovator is interested in advancements either in business and science or in the public and private sector, while an avant-gardist prefers creative self-expression. A creative act is valuable in itself, for the artist and the audience, and it is not absolutely necessary to put it on the market or use it to meet some other aim. Let us now consider a few tendencies in the local Estonian spatial culture and among the contemporary architects, several of whom nurture ambitions of both the avant-garde and innovation. It goes without saying that they are all idealists.

In Art Halls

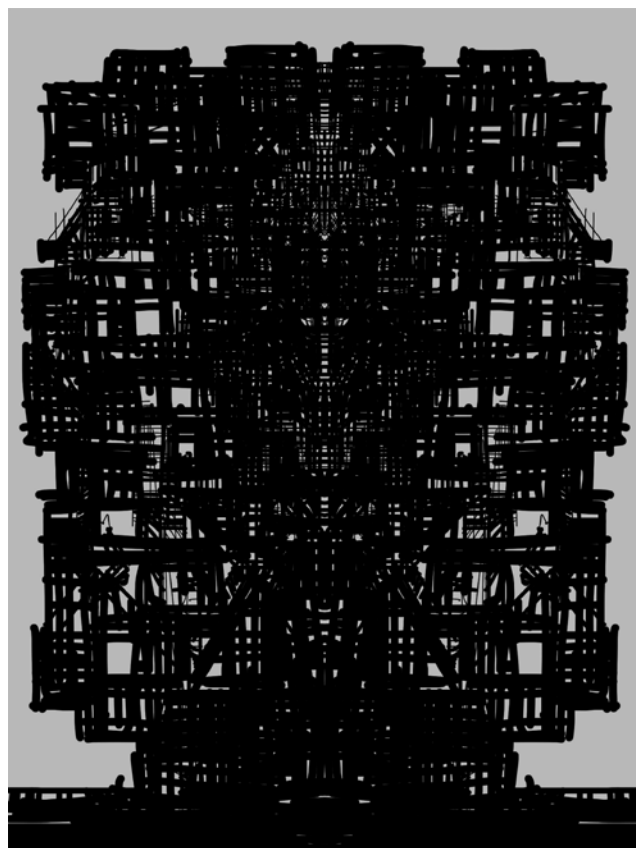
It pains me to say this, but it seems that during the last few decades Estonian architects have abandoned the art halls. Leaving aside artists trained as architects, such as Raoul Kurvitz, the photographer Arne Maasik, the painters Jaan Elken and August Künnapu, and others who do not design buildings, we can claim that local architects have largely given up making art and participating in art exhibitions. There’s a particularly sharp contrast with the atmosphere of the 1970s and 1980s, when young architects were active in the art halls. Back then, architects of the “Tallinn school”, from Leonhard Lapin to Vilen Künnapu and Jüri Okas, whose art is actually still displayed at art exhibitions today, had a strong impact on architecture, art and the wider cultural public with their exhibitions.

Why contemporary practicing architects have abandoned visual and installation art as a means of creative self-expression is the million dollar question. Only a few architects of the younger and middle-age generation are still able to draw, never mind painting. Exhibition designs are sometimes undertaken, but participation in art exhibitions are rare. Villem Tomiste, Paco Ulman and Ahti Sepsivart are among the few younger or middle-aged generation of architects who produce illustrations and graphic art. Tomiste has used drawings at presentations of various

architectural projects (e.g. the idea projects “8 house Tallinn” and “G-Block 2”, both 2012). Besides traditional techniques, Ulman has experimented with the possibilities of the digital pencil, and via visual language has interpreted various spatial phenomena; he is also an active photographer.

Estonian architects have also largely stopped displaying installations in art exhibitions. In spatial installation art, the photographer Anu Vahtra and the sculptor Neeme Külm have been making their mark in recent years. It’s true that the latter has worked together with Salto Architects (Ralf Lööke, Maarja Kask and earlier Karli Luik) on several projects. Their large-scale, space-shifting works that help view things differently have been displayed in Estonia, as well as abroad.

A positive example of architects working in installation art is the above-mentioned Salto, whose “Gas Pipe” (2008), “Fast Track” (2012) and “Face-to-Face” (2016) are intriguing cases of blending architecture and art in the exhibition context. Some installations by these architects were shown in Tallinn urban space at the installation festival LIFT11 (2011). Temporary spatial artworks can usually be seen at the Tallinn Architecture Biennale (2011, 2013 and 2015). But, as mentioned above, architects and their work reach art halls infrequently; during the last few dozen years they have renounced their role as avant-garde visual artists.



Paco Ulman, sketch, 2016. Courtesy of the author

In the Lab

Digital technology has developed at enormous speed and digital tools are acquiring an increasingly important place in the work of architects. Mainstream design relies on the understanding that digital tools are crucial mainly because they make it possible to try out various spatial and technological solutions in much less time and at much lower cost. Model designing (BIM and other systems) in virtual environments with 3D and other types of modeling makes it possible to tackle issues concerning construction, materials, energy efficiency and spatial programs in a compact, synchronous manner.

The architecture department at the Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA) has a 3D laboratory headed by Martin Melioranski. PhD students Siim Tuksam and Sille Pihlak focus on the innovative usage of wood as a building material in architecture. Their aim is to bring together material producers (timber industry enterprises), engineers, architects and other experts in the areas of spatial design and construction. Involving different experts should ideally lead to smoother cooperation and create exciting new (wooden) architecture in urban space.

What the enthusiasts of digital architecture in Estonia have not yet properly done is explain how the new technology benefits ordinary people, how it reaches our everyday environment and how it relates to creative self-expression, and artistic, aesthetic values. These answers will hopefully come when the first large objects in urban space finally emerge. At the moment, the more creative usage of digital technology in Estonian architecture is still limited to small pavilions and sculptural objects.

In the Forest

Hannes Praks is an interior architect and hobby beekeeper, who a few years ago turned the activities of EAA's interior architecture and furniture department upside down. In the course of three years, the charismatic, bold, demanding, unexpected and provocative, but at the same time trusting, professor has created a new atmosphere and study mentality. The current interior architecture curriculum is moving from decorating towards a deeper contact between man and the environment, noticing and interpreting it. Students are being sent to the woods and to solitary islands, even to Middle Eastern cri-

sis areas and Turkish mega cities where they have to sink or swim.

The straightforwardness, intensity and even brutality of sorts that characterize Praks and his team do not deny the importance of modern technologies, but see them more as a means. The department aims to teach students to understand the perception of life of contemporary people and to create relevant spatial solutions. Praks seems keen on maintaining close ties with Estonian interior architects of earlier generations, as well as seeking openness and a desire to reach the consciousness of the wider public.

In the Media

Until quite recently, many Estonian architects have considered communication with the media to be a tiresome, often unpleasant duty. Architects tend to deem communication with the public unnecessary, because "the work speaks (should speak) for itself". Also, appearing in the media does not, on the whole, guarantee more clients, and so it is usually seen as a waste of time. Within the new media space (the Internet and social media) Estonian architects have nevertheless become more active during the last five years; many have updated web pages, Facebook and Instagram accounts.

One group stands out in architects' media communication: Architect Must, made up of the young architects Alvin Järving, Ott Alver and Mari Rass. From the very beginning (2013) they have realized the importance of media communication and seen it as a natural part of their work, promoting it and encouraging public debate. Earlier, in the daily newspaper Postimees, and recently in the weekly newspaper Eesti Ekspress, they have told stories via quality digital illustrations, the "rendering" (architectural illustrations) of what to do with buildings that are standing empty and how to use urban space. Among their recent buoyant and polemical suggestions was the idea of establishing outdoor swimming pools and a public beach by the seaside behind the Linnahall in Tallinn.

The architects at Architect Must are keen on marketing and want to be better known. However, they constitute almost the only group of Estonian architects that knows that you need to communicate with the wider audience in a language that they can understand, and not necessarily looking down on them

from an expert's position. Although this particular office has not yet achieved much, and the existing projects are rather conventional, the fictitious and spirited urban space stories of the Architect Must reveal great potential.

In Urban Space

Fortunately, the architects who design buildings for us every day have not lost the boldness to think big. Only recently, Indrek Allmann, together with his office and Finnish colleagues, came up with the imaginative idea



Arhitektuurbüroo PLUSS with FutuDesign. Tallinn Terminal Entrance in Tammsaare Park. Idea, 2015



Arhitekt Must. Linnahall Beach in Tallinn. Idea, 2016

for railway stations of the Tallinn—Helsinki tunnel. The entrance to the Tallinn station underneath Tammsaare Park would be a hollow bowl-shaped hemisphere of Finnish granite, while the entrance to the Helsinki station on Rautatienitori would be an above-ground hemisphere of Estonian limestone. The centers of the two capitals would thus be connected not only physically, but also symbolically: two hemispheres, each on a square with a monument to their national writer (Estonia's A. H. Tammsaare and Finland's Aleksis Kivi), which together would form one full sphere.

A noteworthy phenomenon in its own right in contemporary Estonian architecture is Villem Tomiste and his Stuudio Tallinn. Together with Ott Kadarik and Mihkel Tüür, they emerged in the 2000s as an office called Kosmos, known for its showy architecture and urban design, seemingly created under the influence of strong espresso. The best-known among the realized Kosmos undertakings is the bulk of apartment buildings and a department store in the Rotermann Quarter in Tallinn. With Veronika Valk, Kosmos also designed the central square of Rakvere (completed in 2004), which besides the Freedom Square in Tallinn is the only urban square in the country built after Estonia became independent again.

A few years ago Tomiste established his own architectural studio and is now mainly working solo. In the Estonian context he stands out for his imaginative work, although it is often difficult to realize for practical reasons and its high costs. Tomiste is a cosmopolitan by nature and feels at home in Paris and Barcelona. His spatial fantasies created in Estonian, particularly in Tallinn, are like a reflection of a desire for a big city. Tomiste's Tallinn is not a city of skyscrapers and department stores, but it is a dense area with quality public space, replete with functions and appreciative of art and design. Combining fantasy typical of paper architecture and large scale planning, Tomiste sees great potential in Tallinn. His works help to encourage the idea that we need to think big, see the larger picture and not get entangled in small details while designing a city.

Professor Emeritus Veljo Kaasik, who received a lifetime achievement award from the government last spring, recently came out with quite a radical idea in the context of the Tallinn city center. His well argued idea suggests filling the land of the former New Market near the Estonia Concert hall with buildings again. The historical foundations of the market build-

ing are still visible today. According to Kaasik, the new building could accommodate a cultural center for the arts, design and architecture. Younger architects often get caught up in small details—the width of pavements, location of dustbins or disputes over greenery—whereas the idea suggested by Kaasik has something to it that could penetrate the public sphere and again initiate fervid architectural debate about the development of Tallinn's city center.

Yes, Professor Kaasik could be criticized for insufficient information: a competition was indeed organized for the Tammsaare Park reconstruction (2012). The authors of the winning entry, Ott Kadarik and Mihkel Tüür (Kadarik Tüür Architects), have already designed a cafe-pavilion on the ruins of the former market building. Nonetheless, Kaasik's enthusiasm and courage to think big deserve recognition, especially when art and creative effort are being pushed further away from the heart of the capital city. Urban centers need open and active cultural space; department stores and offices alone cannot offer the diversity needed for urban life.

Kaasik's idea, which naturally requires an open architectural competition, is clearly avant-garde, and could easily upset heritage protection people and those more conservatively minded. However, this initiative has a visionary touch which, once realized, could benefit the whole city, offering an increase in the quality of urban space and improvement in Tallinn's image. Veljo Kaasik's suggestion thus contains a strong innovative element besides its avant-garde, radical boldness. This is not just theoretical thinking typical of paper architecture, but an idea firmly projected into actual space and active urban life. There should be more ideas like that in Estonian architecture. Linna-hall's beach proposal by Architect Must and Kaasik's proposal seem to form a symbolic pair and show that, where architects are concerned, age is irrelevant. Both ideas blend conceptual acuity with spatial clarity, and are carried by a wish to produce better urban space, while proving that the avant-garde and innovation do not exclude each other.

*This article first appeared in Postimees 26.11.2016
<http://kultuur.postimees.ee/3923087/esti-uue-arhitektuuri-avangard>*

Dismantling the Binary Pillars of Knowledge

The Transformation of Interior Architecture Studies by Professor Hannes Praks

Why should a university department of spatial design be an object of study in an art magazine? We know of cases where fine arts faculties or whole art academies have acquired such authority and influence in the art world that the creative output as a collective author has made a big difference in art history. Internationally, some of the first institutions to come to mind are Vkhutemas in 1920s Moscow, Black Mountain College in the backwoods of North Carolina during the 1940s and 1950s, Joseph Beuys' tenure at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art in the 1960s and, of course, Bauhaus, with its studios reflecting the mindset of respective tutors. The case of Hannes Praks, a professor in the Department of Spatial Design at the Estonian Academy of Arts since 2014, bears a structural resemblance to the Bauhaus legacy. Praks has turned the otherwise pragmatic discipline[i] into a trendsetting hub of visual arts and design in the region. It has been said that he runs the department like the bewil-

dering front-man of an up-and-coming rock band, which, alas, may signal a similarly meteoric downfall. However, this is not likely to happen, because, as we will see, Praks and his academic staff—despite their experimental methods—are rooted in tradition and preservation. To prove my point, I will mention some key aspects of the work they are doing.

With an emphasis on the wilderness and the unpopulated Estonian forests, it is not surprising that most of their courses focus on wood as the primary material and resource. The semi-public sauna opened in the school's courtyard (in fact students tend to leave behind DIY saunas where-ever they go, whether Palestine, abandoned houses or a river deep in Soomaa), the exceptional scaffolding around the Baroque altarpiece in Tallinn's St Mary's Cathedral or the yakisugi (traditional Japanese burnt wood) - style exhibition design in the Museum of Estonian Architecture. Besides timber, other archetypal materials include straw, different leftovers and human bodies (crucial in the aforementioned exhibition). The employment of primeval materials reveals that the department is oriented towards the beginnings of culture. The cultural semiotician Juri Lotman argued that young cultures tend to highlight their origins, wishing to pres-

Scaffolding in Tallinn's St Mary's Cathedral. Photo: Tõnu Runnel



Project in Palestine. Photo: Tõnu Runnel



Veetee. Photo: Tõnu Runnel



ent themselves as immortal, or at least the fact that they are at the very beginning of their journey. We could say that this is also the case with Praks and his department. Even if the history of teaching interior architecture is much older, Praks has managed to present his field as a novel discipline that has much to say about the contemporary world.

On the other hand, the prioritizing of traditional raw materials and working methods indicates a denial of the synthetic screen-glued idiotized world. Actually, one of the formulas of the department could be: any tool, method or text younger than 200 years should be regarded as a suspicious element! Indeed the professor goes around with an ancient mobile phone, freshmen are required to keep diaries and their sketchbooks are assessed at the end of the school-year. What should we make of such romanticism? I would like to borrow a song title from Vaiko Eplik and call this kind of strategy “erotic realism”; it is an approach which unites the utopian imagination of magic realism with the eroticism of architecture, demonstrated by the likes of Roland Barthes and Bernard Tschumi. According to the latter, the ultimate pleasure of architecture is that impossible moment when an architectural act, brought to excess, reveals both the traces of reason and the immediate experience of space. I presume that the department’s sublime barley field grown in the middle of Tallinn’s largest residential area, its special emphasis on drawing classes, its preference for walking and cycling over other modes of transport, and its insistence that these are trustworthy methods for meaning making all have one goal: to prove that these are all real things which matter, that erotic realism turns thoughts into matter.

Most of the publicized student works don’t look flashy and contemporary, but rather old-fashioned and elegant. Tutors seem to have stressed that the ideal visual form does not precede, accompany or follow our time, and that, furthermore, there is no need to browse through design magazines in search of examples. Rather the ideal—the quest for the ideal—is hidden in the nature of all things. The ultimate model always escapes us; some try hard to catch it, while others get tired and give up. It is important to demystify such social constructions by broadening students’ perspective on these issues. Inviting enormously experienced old school masters, such as Vello Asi and Leonhard Lapin, to give classes, has been, in my opinion, perhaps the most positive change instituted by Professor Praks. The biographical exhibition of the department’s history at the Museum of Esto-

nian Architecture was another event which brought much sought-after historical knowledge closer to the students. On the whole, the department has made good use of the exhibition genre as a specific educational platform and a tool for knowledge production. Exhibitions legitimize the seeming disorder of things and bring the viewer’s experience into the spotlight. Designing and co-curating exhibitions is an essential part of resolving universal problems for future experts of spatial design.

Human beings not only inhabit space, but also think spatially. How to guide students so that eventually they will know what they want a certain space to be? Praks suggests that one of the key methods is to frequently shift in space. One simple example is drawing, i.e. moving one’s mind and body in relation to the image on paper. Another possibility is having classes anywhere but the school. It is a custom that freshmen start their studies with a week-long bicycle trip to a place they are completely unfamiliar with; drawing courses take place in a deep forest in the middle of winter; second-year students start with a survival trip with no money or telephones to a megacity; entry exams take place on a remote island; and the school has opened a project space on wheels.

Last spring the project space, which is actually a long-distance lorry trailer, took senior students to Amsterdam’s Gerrit Rietveld Academy, where they were assessed by the teachers of the prestigious design school. This was, in my opinion, maybe the most problematic project of all, especially when we compare it to the other undertakings. If the mountain won’t come to Muhammad, then Muhammad must go to the mountain, right? I would have thought that the department’s recent activities might have suggested a more unconventional and certainly less expected “mountain” to be climbed, although it may be that the idea behind the straw-furnished lorry-school was to tease the Dutch institution. Perhaps I am over-emphasizing the department’s peripheral anti-establishment discourse, and it was all about giving a great experience to students.

Yet the centre-periphery question is of great consequence from poetical, ideological and political perspectives. Some years ago I gave an utterly failed speech in the Estonian parliament hall in front of a conservative, 100-strong audience, suggesting that in order for our culture to thrive, some things have to be done in English, and suggesting that the Estonian Academy of Arts should be an entirely



English-speaking institution. I guess everyone in the room was against the plan, as would have probably been the 101 MPs who otherwise inhabit the space, and who have, however, managed to do everything to support further internalization (or “Englishization”) of higher education. I believe this to be the case in every non-English speaking country in the world, or at least in Europe. National support for science and culture in the local language is strong, but practical and economic reasons overwhelm it. In any case, in 2016 spatial design became the fifth MA curriculum at the Estonian Academy of Arts to be taught in English, with four of its first six students arriving from overseas. These are minute numbers on the international scale, but in a country with a single MA programme in the field, it is understandable that the conservatives feel annoyed. All in all there are no convenient ways to estimate cultural impact, either in numbers or words. We can take a more objective look at our time in 50 years.

To balance the glorifying rhetoric, I want to provide some criticism, or at least address some of the dangers apparent in Praks’ professorship. An elderly German teacher once told me this joke: in the 1920s teachers intended to turn pupils into socialists, and out came the Third Reich; Nazis pushed right-wing upbringing, and the result was socialism. Perhaps this story shows that it’s OK for education to lag behind 20 years. Galloping ahead may have undesirable effects.

Secondly, I am wary of the fact that practically each new project, workshop or exhibition by the students has (successfully) targeted (international) media attention. In contrast, I have heard that theatre schools do not allow their students to publicly perform before the final year. There must be a good reason for this. Some of Praks’s students have already had more publicity than most architects get throughout their careers. What about the less outspoken students, or those who work hard but do not get any attention and feel stressed about it? Probably by now introverts are even afraid to apply to the school. At the end of the day we need to bear in mind that publicity forms only a small proportion of a phenomenon’s cultural relevance.

Finally, perhaps the main context of Hannes Praks’s radical professorship is the discussion launched by the Estonian author Valdur Mikita’s trilogy about the wild linguistics–linguistic wilderness of Estonia. Mikita, an original and independent thinker writing about the natural and cultural history of the land, has managed to create a popular parallel reality in which

the oddities, absurdities and shortcomings of the regional psyche are presented as the esteemed “new normality”. He has managed to turn upside down the basic binary oppositions which define the normative spatial relations we use for making sense; the use of the word “down” (caves, fields, tunnels and chthonic forces) replaces “up” (paradise and progress), left becomes more right than “right”, East turns out to be deeper and more useful than West etc. In a way, the students and teachers of spatial design have continued this playful dismantling and replacing of the “binary pillars” of the society. All things considered, it is a master class in translating entropy into knowledge and then voluntarily messing it all up again to provide yet another chance to form cosmos out of chaos.

i Spatial design – or interior architecture and furniture design as the programme was called before Praks took over – has for years been the most desirable programme at the Estonian Academy of Arts, possibly due to the profession’s imaginary position between creative bohemia and luxurious lifestyles.

All photos: Arne Maasik

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The Flâneur —Framing an Urban Space



On the windowsill of a residential building in New York City near the World Trade Center's twin towers, a modest potted plant slowly grows and blooms. It had previously existed in the shade: in a dense urban space, where the sun never reached its depths. The described still life scene comes from a collection of well-known short films dealing with the tragic events of 9/11 from personal points of view. Arne Maasik's photographic exhibition "NYC Shots 2016" places the viewer in an urban space, in the role of a bystander and a participant, a flâneur. Between light and shadow, the camera lens frames precise moments of urban space. Arne Maasik is an Estonian photographer who studied architecture. He has become an artist who explores urban spaces abroad, but also wanders through Estonian forest groves. His world is monochrome, rather than black-and-white.

TÜÜNE-KRISTIN VAIKLA

How did you move around New York, this vertical city with your camera and tripod, what were you seeking, and what did you focus on?

ARNE MAASIK

This was my third New York themed exhibition. The American trip took place last February for the Louis Kahn (1901–1974) exhibition. Three days in NYC were devoted to taking pictures of Kahn's memorial Four Freedoms Park. Kahn designed this shortly before he died; the design was abandoned until 2010, when it was revived according to his drawings and it was opened in 2012.

TV It is not generally known where Louis Kahn actually came from. How do you relate to Kahn yourself?

AM The aim of the Kahn project is to bring Kahn to Estonia, to show that he was Estonian. Estonia did not really exist during the Soviet period, and Saaremaa was not on any maps. When Kahn told his colleagues that he was born on an island with a castle, it was regarded as a nice fairy tale. Kahn was already important to me in university as one of the most significant architects in contemporary architecture; he was much revered. This was very influential and has stayed with me all my life. There is no-one like him. Kahn has been copied – the same manner has been tested in Japan and Italy – but what he produced is totally incomparable. This is the mystery of Kahn.

TV When you photograph Kahn's work, does his origin become visible for you in some details or is it perhaps more theoretical knowledge?

AM We think [together with the main Kahn researcher, Heie Treier –T.-K] that Kahn's work was directly influenced by the Kuressaare Castle. His architecture contains elements that seem to be directly taken from there. Still, it is speculation to claim that he transferred elements from there and put them straight into his work. It is definitely more theoretical.

TV You have photographed New York City many times over the years. The city constantly changes and New Yorkers complain that any natural human interaction is disappearing. How much is it possible to capture these changes through photography? Or have you changed yourself?

AM I have not changed. There are always places to discover, new things to find on the next trip. The collapse of the twin towers was a huge blow to





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the area in an architectural sense; it has had an impact on the entire southern end of Manhattan, which is iconic.

TV Architectural photography probably does not involve any staging on your part. Does weather with its light and shade matter? Do you just jump in or do you take your time?

AM Once you get there, time is scarce. I go out with the knowledge that I must get cracking, or otherwise nothing is going to happen. There's not that much time to think and reflect. I am inspired by urban space as a whole. Objects and the space between objects. The environment with all its peculiarities. Weather certainly matters: cloudy is better, especially with skyscrapers there shouldn't be any fog. Sunshine is not really good: too many shadows. This time it was winter and quite clear. There's always a danger of snow or slush. I had both, but not all the time. There is no way you can take pictures when something is coming down; the lens gets wet and this shows later.

TV When I was in Romano Mazzano in the spring, I tried to get to Rome as early as possible to be in the streets before masses of people arrived. There are simply so many people that they take up significant urban space. Do people inspire you or obstruct or bother you?

AM This is called street photography. I do not chase people or moments, when people do whatever in the street. Instead, I try to step away a bit. I prefer general views. In urban views people are necessary. Otherwise, viewers begin to wonder where all the people are. I try to capture something bigger, but people are there and appear in my pictures...

TV Which other cities have you photographed?

AM Chicago. I had an exhibition in Tallinn Art Hall, one room of photographs of Chicago and another room of the works of Italian designer and architect Aldo Rossi. It is important with Rossi that some of his objects are color-based; there is no way that you can ignore colors. Milan has a lot of Rossi, and for me the most import-



ant is his cemetery San Cataldo in Modena. I once had the chance to be an artist-in-residence in Bordeaux, France. The aim of that project was to photograph the city of Bordeaux. I perceived what a famous place this was - wine and champagne - but I could not get material for an exhibition there, despite the pretty old stone houses, sandstone, excellent architecture... Material has to address you, but if it remains alien, a mystery, it lacks what is needed: artistic quality.

TV How would you compare New York and Chicago, although you photographed the latter a long time ago? They are very different, compared to the layers existing in NY, Chicago seems quite tranquil. Why does Chicago fascinate you?

AM It seems like yesterday; I remember it clearly. Chicago is relevant in the history of world architecture: the Chicago School and the world's first skyscrapers. I knew I was going to an important city, and it was more like a study trip. The boom began in the 1930s, when Bauhaus architects sprang into action. New York is relatively chaotic, whereas Chicago is compact, like a chord in music, powerful, where buildings seem perfect. Clean and laconic, plus the way the river flows. I am a Manhattan man, and do not really know other urban areas. New York's essence can be found nowhere else; it's kind of quieter elsewhere. American cities are rather similar. I have photographed Kahn's work all around America - in Boston, New York and Philadelphia - but no other city has had such an impact on me. I've been to Detroit, but it was pointless: it's legendary for industry and the history of music, but not as an architectural environment. Several famous bands come from Detroit, such as KISS, who started in New York and went on to Detroit, where they became world famous. The car industry and industry in general form a separate historical topic in Detroit.

TV It is perhaps more significant today with its faded glory. Detroit is becoming the new Berlin.

AM Everything went downhill, it turned into ghettos. The city went bankrupt, and there are abandoned skyscrapers: this is altogether like a third level.

TV You have photographed forests and nature too, is this a desire for contrast, coming from a huge city and going for the opposite? Does it need to be November for this? Are you of the forest faith?

AM I don't have any faith, just pure architectural

interest: structure and chaos. There is a system in between, and a system also exists in forests: if we look closely enough, the structure there follows certain mathematical equations. Patterns and moods emerge, based on emotions. I am interested in whether these emerge and, if this happens, what exactly they are. I've been doing this for years, since the end of the 1990s, and I'm still at it. This is a separate undertaking. When spring comes, it's the choice of either you go or you don't. If not, spring becomes summer and that year is crossed out. The time is quite short, perhaps a few weeks. Then there is light. The snow is gone, and the sun is shining. In Tallinn, in the midst of everyday life, you can't find this one afternoon to seek something somewhere in a forest.

TV What mood are you looking for? You may not have found it yet, so do you keep searching?

AM This in fact is the surprise. I am actually not looking for anything; it's a metaphysical sensation. I've tried to verbalize it, but to no avail. There are things that certain people recognize. A feeling of belonging together, of joint understanding. Words are then not needed. It just happens.

TV Where can you discover more: in rural or urban environment?

AM Rural photography has for the most part been done. I cannot imagine making more of those series and finding new things. The city as a whole has also been seen and done. We'll take the same Kahn project to India; that will be something entirely new...

TV It is more difficult to expect recognition from others in other cultures. Black-and-white or color?

AM Black-and-white is cooler, especially black. I tend towards black myself. I'm actually keen on order. An artist friend once said that a black space is bigger. You know this: you are more familiar with spaces.

TV I know that a black house is invisible.

Can Institutional Critique Be Performed as an Act of Love? A Review of the Publication Between the Archive and Architecture

The publication *Between the Archive and Architecture* accompanies and integrates the exhibition bearing the same name, on view at Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn (until 18.02.17). The publication features a comprehensive introduction to the show, in-depth essays about the practices of the three artists whose work is displayed, as well as extensive photographic documentation of the installations in the Contemporary Art Gallery of Kumu, proposing a meticulous and lyrical documentation of the overall projects and display.

The exhibition *Between the Archive and Architecture* features works by Neeme Külm, Krista Mölder and Taavi Talve. The three well-known Estonian artists worked for three years developing the exhibition, eventually building a complex narration on space and architecture within the walls of the Kumu Art Museum. Even though the strategies and temperaments of the three artists differ formally—installation-based practice, photography and video, respectively—a shared interest in the notion of site-specificity and institutional critique is apparent in their research, rooted in the common look at the exhibition format as a territory to be mapped, experienced and conquered. In the words of the contributor Maria-Kristiina Soomre, “museums are always like ‘flat terrains’ for artists, similar to an early explorer’s frightening mental picture of falling off the edge if the ship moved too fast”. In the case of *Between the Archive and Architecture*, the building designed by the Finnish architect Pekka Vapaavuori is the terrain and co-protagonist of their explorations, willingly undertaking the transformations and risks imposed by the artists’ adventurous practices.

The publication accompanying the show performs as a script, testimony and map to navigate within the transformation the building has gone through, and offers a graceful reply to the long-standing issue of how to preserve the intensity of a four-dimensional display when translating it into a flat, two-dimensional narra-



All photos: Anu Vahtra



tion. The wide white pages of the book can be easily compared to the walls of the Contemporary Art Gallery of Kumu, which the designers Mikk Heinsoo and Kaarel Nõmmik from Stuudio Stuudio have skilfully represented, translating the dialectics of measurements and gravity of formal architecture into a coherent publishing grammar made of textual volumes and sleek graphic design. The contents of the publication, among which the essays dedicated to the artists by Maria-Kristiina Soomre, Eik Hermann and Hanno Soans stand out, aim to fill the white paper walls reflecting the original pieces displayed in the exhibition space, and succeed in doing so, expanding the display of *Between the Archive and Architecture* into a rich historical, literary and imaginative framework.

The text starts with an introduction by the curator Kati Ilves, who walks us through the genesis of the exhibition and rightly reminds us how ambitious the museum was in hosting such an invasive display: “By allowing solutions for the temporary exhibition space to extend into the permanent structures, the institution took a big step away from its customary practices, and moved closer to the utopian ideal of subordinating practices to an idea.” The confrontation and dialogue between the artist and the institution, permeated by dialectics of affection and challenge, lack and desire, resurface in multiple passages throughout the publication. Positioning this discourse within contemporary art history enables the reader to grasp the broadly analysed shift from early institutional critique to “New Institutionalism”, loosely described as that moment in which the critique is not directed from an outside agent against the institution, but is rather absorbed and performed, in an act of self-reflection, by the institution itself. Between the lines of *Between the Archive and Architecture* the reader will find a brand-new examination of the issue.

In fact, Kumu isn’t described only as the setting in which the critique is performed, but rather as an actor, an accomplice and a partner-in-crime of the artists themselves. The essays in the publication narrate the stories of a respectful negotiation and a passionate provocation between the artists and the museum, its space, and even history itself, in an ideal romantic courtship well symbolised in Neeme Külm’s piece “Flowers to the Curator” (2016), an innocent black and white picture of two roses, which occasionally starts to revolve around its axis like a poltergeist in the exhibition space. A question arises spontaneously a few pages into the book: can institutional critique be performed as an act of love?

Neeme Külm’s work is approached by Maria-Kristiina Soomre’s essay through the metaphorical overlapping of his private life as a professional art exhibition installer and sailor with his artistic practice, which directly draws the visitor to the exhibition into a shared search for strategies to survive the forces of nature: “Neeme seems to be reminding his colleagues and visitors that the division of roles and the mutual trust between members is vitally important both in putting together an exhibition and at sea”. There follows, in the publication, a theoretically compelling, as well as wildly imaginative, piece by Eik Hermann about Krista Mölder’s photographic research, in which the tension between abstraction and visibility, latency and absence, is investigated through a text written in the boundaries between philosophic treatise and love letter.

Hanno Soans wraps up the trio of monographic essays, accompanying the reader on the intimate and imaginative search of Taavi Talve for Epp Kotkas, an Estonian performer active in the experimental dance scene of New York in the 1960s-70s and completely unknown in her homeland.

The strategies performed by the artists in the institution seem to overlap and connect in the warm understanding that the abundance of love can only be understood through mutual loss, and vice-versa. As Brian Kuan Wood puts it: “Love’s joy is not to be found in fulfilment, but in recognition: even though I can never return what was taken away from you, I may be the only person alive who knows what it is. I don’t have what it is you’re missing, but knowing its shape already makes a world where you can live without it.”

The publication is affected by the inevitable collapse of the categories of institutional critique and affection, where the contributors involved in *Between the Archive and Architecture* seem to conduct the reader through a new understanding of the relationship between the museum and its community. Notions of self-questioning and critique are appropriately replaced by modes of thinking and inhabiting together, in which the politics of hospitality initiated by the institution reflect a shared understanding of contemporary art as a *zona franca* in which to learn together how to think like the wall, and therefore to become, together, the space itself. In these terms, a confident undertone is given to the Estonian folklore phrase “Everywhere is better than anywhere else”, the premise of Kati Ilves’ curatorial text, in which the utopian search for a better situation finds a temporary reply in the acknowledgement of the attempt to shape it together.

Exhibitions

A-Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn

Open: Mon–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat

11am–4pm

agalerii.ee

31.03.17–24.04.17 Ülle Kõuts

28.04.17– 22.05.17 Ene Valter

26.05.17– 19.06.17 Kertu Vellerind

26.06.17– 24.07.17 Chao-Hsien Kuo
and Eero Hintsanen

28.07.17– 21.08.17 Annika Kedelauk

25.08.17– 18.09.17 Anne Roolaht ja
Harvi Varkki

22.09.17– 16.10.17 Katarina

Kotselainen (curator)

20.10.17– 13.11.17 Maiu Mooses

Adamson-Eric Museum

Lühike jalg 3, Tallinn

Open: May–Sept Tue–Sun

11am–6pm

Oct–Apr Wed–Sun 11am–6pm

adamson-eric.ekm.ee

Permanent exhibition: Adamson-
Eric (1902–1968)

27.01.17– 28.05.17 Laundry Day

09.06.17– 01.10.17 Umwelt. 12

Estonian Glass Artists

10.10.17–07.01.18 Adamson-Eric
115. Modernist Games

Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia

Põhja 35, Tallinn

Open: Apr–Dec, Tue–Sun 1pm–7pm
ekkm.ee

April Dénes Farkas Solo. Curator

Ingrid Ruudi

June Marten Esko & Johannes Säre.

EKKM 10? What now?

August Evelyn Raudsepp. Gray Hall
Vol. 2

September Laurence Rassel &
Soledad Gutiérrez. Images in
Conversation / Photomonth

November Kirill Tulin Solo

Draakon Gallery

Pikk 18, Tallinn

Open: Mon–Fri 11am–6pm, Sat

11am–5pm

eaa.ee/draakon

13.03.17–01.04.17 7 Solo

Exhibitions: Alina Orav, Jenny
Grönholm, Liisa Kruusmägi, Liisi
Küla, Ragne Uutsalu, Heinrich Sepp,
Katarina Meister

03.04.17– 22.04.17 Art Allmägi

24.04.17– 13.05.17 Maxim Mjodov

15.05.17– 03.06.17 Eleriin Ello

05.06.17– 01.07.17 Experiments,
Misleadings, Discoveries. Curator
Margot Kask

03.07.17–29.07.17 Meiu Münt

31.07.17–26.08.17 Evi Tihemets

28.08.17–16.09.17 Andres Koort

18.09.17–07.10.17 Tarve Hanno
Varres

09.10.17–28.10.17 Varvara & Mar

30.10.17–18.11.17 Mall Paris

20.11.17–16.12.17 Mari Prekup &
Hannah Harkes

18.12.17–13.01.18 Johan Tali &
Kirsi Lember

EKA Gallery

Vabaduse väljak 6/8, Tallinn

Open: Tue–Sat 12pm–6pm

artun.ee/ekagalerii

April Anna Kaarma

May Laura Cemin & Lena
Schwingshandl

June Keiu Maasik, Curator Kaisa
Maasik

August Susanna Flock

September Marie Bourlanges
& Elena Khurtova

Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design

Lai 17, Tallinn

Open: Wed–Sun 11am–6pm

etdm.ee

Permanent exhibition: Story of
Estonian Design

02.03.17–16.04.17 EKA

Leatherwork Department 100

22.04.17–23.07.17 7th Tallinn

Applied Art Triennale: Time
Difference

29.07.17–10.09.17 With and
Without the Fashion House

12.08.17–22.10.17 Boris Mäemets,

Fashion Photo

16.09.17–19.11.17 The City and the Forest

11.11.17–11.02.18 Helle and Taevo Gans. Classics

24.11.17–21.01.18 Maie Mikof-Liivik

Hobusepea Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn

Open: Wed–Mon 11am–6pm

eaa.ee/hobusepea

15.03.17–03.04.17 Perro. Curator Javier Galan (ES)

05.04.17–24.04.17 Keiu Maasik

26.04.17–15.05.17 Mihkel Maripuu, Laivi Suurväli

17.05.17–05.06.17 Anna Mari Liivrand

07.06.17–03.07.17 Tiina Sööt, Dorothea Zeyringer (AT)

05.07.17–31.07.17 Mihkel Ilus

02.08.17–28.08.17 Jenny Grönholm

30.08.17–18.09.17 Kristin Reiman

20.09.17–09.10.17 Henri Hütt

11.10.17–30.10.17 EAA Young Artist Award: Kristina Õllek

01.11.17–20.11.17 Mari-Leen Kiipli

22.11.17–18.12.17 Johannes Säre. Curator Siim Preiman

20.12.17–15.01.18 Kadri Toom

Haapsalu City Gallery

Posti 3, Haapsalu

Open: Wed–Sat 12pm–6pm

galerii.kultuurimaja.ee

March Ede Raadik

April EAA Fashion Department

May Kristin Reiman

June Personality 2017

July Mariliis Oksaar

August Raul Keller

September Anna Mari Liivrand

October Haapsalu Kunstiklubi

November Egon Erkmann

December Näitusnäitus

HOP Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn

Open: Thu–Tue 11am–6pm

eaa.ee/hop

30.03.17–18.04.17 Ann Nurga, Kaie Pungas

20.04.17–09.05.17 Rainer Kaasik Aaslav

11.05.17–30.05.17 Sandra

Kossorotova

01.06.17–20.06.17 Sarah Johnston

22.06.17–11.07.17 Grupp RXII (Siiri Minka, Christel Allik, Riste Laasberg, Kerttu Sillaste, Piret Valk, Mari Haavel)

13.07.17–01.08.17 Karin Kalman

03.08.17–22.08.17 Juss Heinsalu

24.08.17–12.09.17 Aleksandra Pavlenkova, Kristiina Oppi, Andra Jõgis

14.09.17–03.10.17 Darja Popolitova

05.10.17–24.10.17 Tiina Sarapu

26.10.17–14.11.17 Evelin Saul, Madlen Hirtentreu

16.11.17–05.12.17 Lauri Kilusk

07.12.17–26.12.17 Annika Kedelauk

28.12.17–16.01.18 Annika Teder

18.01.18–06.02.18 Berit Teeäär

Kadriorg Art Museum

Weizenbergi 37, Tallinn

Open: May–Sept Tue, Thu–Sun

10am–6pm, Wed 10am–8pm

Oct–April Wed 10am–8pm, Thu–Sun 10am–5pm

kadriorumuuseum.ekm.ee

Permanent Exhibition: 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

21.01.17–14.05.17 Abundance and Ephemerality. Still Lifes from Finnish and Baltic Collections

27.05.17–01.10.17 A Journey to the Orient. Otto Friedrich von Richter's (1791–1816) Trips and Collection

21.10.17–25.02.18 With an Inquisitive Gaze. Mannerist Painting from the National Museum in Warsaw

Kumu Art Museum

Weizenbergi 34 / Valge 1

Open: April–Sept Tue–Sun

10am–6pm, Wed 10am–8pm

Oct–Mar Wed 10am–8pm, Thu–Sun 10am–6pm

kumu.ekm.ee

Permanent exhibition: Treasury Classics of Estonian Art from the Beginning of the 18th Century until the End of the Second World War

Permanent exhibition: Conflicts and Adaptations. Estonian Art of the Soviet Era (1940–1991)

Estonian Art from the End of the Second World War Until Re-Independence

16.09.16–02.04.17 Soviet Midnight.

Raul Rajangu

18.11.16–27.08.17 Conductors of Colour. Music and Modernity in Estonian Art

03.03.17–11.06.17 Symmetrical Worlds—Mirrored Symmetries. Ülo Sooster, Juri Sobolev, Tõnis Vint and Raul Meel

17.03.17–06.08.17 Anu Pöder. Be Fragile! Be Brave!

07.04.17–27.08.17 Jüri Okas

21.04.17–21.05.17 The Project Space: Kumu Youth Club! Museum as Toolbox

02.06.17–January 2018 Mare Vint and Jaanus Samma. The Project Space: Dialogue.

07.07.17–12.11.17 Chronicles of Art Life

25.08.17–January 2018 Travellers: Voyage and Migration in New Art from Central and Eastern Europe

09.09.17–January 2018 Children of the Flowers of Evil. Estonian Decadent Art

22.09.17–14.01.18 The Savages of Germany. Die Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter Expressionists

24.11.17–March 2018 Andres Tolts. Landscape with Still Life

Mikkel Museum

Weizenbergi 28, Tallinn

*Open: May–Sept Tue, Thu–Sun
10am–6pm, Wed 10am–8pm
Oct–April Thu–Sun 10am–5pm, Wed
10am–8pm*
mikkelimuseum.ekm.ee

Permanent exhibition: Collection of Johannes Mikkil: the Art of Western Europe, Russia, and China from 16th to 20th centuries

08.04.17–07.05.17 30 Colourful Years. The Sadolin Art Collection
27.05.17–08.10.17 Meissen. The World in Porcelain

03.06.17–04.03.18 Mikkil Installation Room. Visit to a Collector

21.10.17–04.03.18 In the Roman Style. Mannerist Graphic Art in Estonian Collections

Museum of Estonian Architecture

Rotermann's Salt Storage

Abtri 2, Tallinn

*Open: Wed–Fri 11am–6pm, Sat–Sun
10am–6pm*

arhitektuurimuuseum.ee

Permanent exhibition: Space in Motion. A Century of Estonian Architecture

09.11.2016–08.01.2018 Biennial Review of Finnish Architecture 2016

27.01.17–26.03.17 Space Snatchers. The best of the Architectural Photography Competition

22.02.17–26.03.17 Works of Two Architecture Competitions: Kalaranna and the Sea Along Tallinn's Main Street

16.03.17–23.04.17 Who Creates the City?

5.05.17–03.09.17 Kopli Sonata. The History of Russo-Baltic Shipyard

13.09.17–29.10.17 bioTallinn. Tallinn Architecture Biennale TAB 2017

Niguliste Museum

Niguliste 3, Tallinn

*Open: May–Sept Tue–Sun 10am–5pm
Oct–Apr Wed–Sun 10am–5pm*
nigulistemuuseum.ekm.ee

Permanent exhibition: The Art Museum of Estonia's collection of medieval and early modern ecclesiastical art is exhibited at the Niguliste Museum

02.03.17–10.09.17 Silver Documents. Artisan Pendant Shields from the 17th to 19th Centuries

16.09.17–04.03.18 Five Forgotten Paintings

Tallinn Art Hall

Vabaduse väljak 8, Tallinn

Open: Wed–Sun 12am–6pm

kunstihoone.ee

04.03.17–16.04.17 Estonian Artists' Association & Maaleht Presents: On Country Life. Curator Mari Kartau

29.04.17–18.06.17 Global Control and Censorship. Curators Bernhard Serexhe and Livia Rózsás

01.07.17–20.08.17 Signals from the Periphery. Curators Elisabeth Klement and Laura Pappa

02.09.17–08.10.17 Tallinn Photomonth: Visual Exhaustion. Curator Anthea Buys

21.10.17–03.12.17 Eksperimenta! Coordinator Annely Köster

16.12.17–04.02.18 Marco Laimre. Motor. Curators Indrek Köster and Taavi Talve

Tallinn Art Hall Gallery

Vabaduse väljak 6, Tallinn

Open: Wed–Sun 12am–6 pm

kunstihoone.ee

25.02.17–26.03.17 Children of the New East. Curator Siim Preiman

14.04.17–14.05.17 "Dissolution" Raivo Puusemp in Dialogue with Krõõt Juurak, Flo Kasearu, Kristina Norman, Mark Raidpere and Margit Säde. Curator Krist Gruijthuijsen

20.05.17–18.06.17 Karel Koplimets.

Case No. 11. Talsinki
25.06.17–23.07.17 Katrin Pere.

Cloud Cities

30.07.17–03.09.17 Annika Haas, Elo Liiv, Jekaterina Kultajeva. How to Look

09.09.17–08.10.17 Holger Loodus. Journey to the End of the World

09.12.17–14.01.18 Shishkin–Hokusai. Second Life

Tallinn City Gallery

Harju 13, Tallinn

Open: Wed–Sun 12am–6pm

kunstihoone.ee

25.02.17–26.03.17 Children of the New East. Curator Siim Preiman

31.03.17–30.04.17 Marko Mäetamm. I'm Only Streaming

05.05.17–04.06.17 Mart Vainre. Colour Monologue

09.06.17–09.07.17 Jüri Ojaver. Men's Shop

11.08.17–10.09.17 Ketli Tiitsar, Kristi Paap. Still Life. Cherries and a Skeleton

15.09.17–15.10.17 Birgit Püve

09.12.17–14.01.18 Vladimir Kozin. Slavic Baroque

Tartu Art House

Vanemuise 26, Tartu

Open: Wed–Mon 12pm–6pm

kunstimaja.ee

Big hall

10.03.17–02.04.17 Black Moomins and Planet Earth. Flowers for the Living. Danel Kahar & Grisli Soppe Kahar .

06.04.17–30.04.17 Konrad Mäe Studio

04.05.17–28.05.17 German Cultural Institute

31.05.17–18.06.17 TÜ Graduates

29.06.17–23.07.17 Estonian Sculptors' Union

27.07.17–20.08.17 Eva Mustonen

24.08.17–17.09.17 Beyond Reality. Graphic Art Group Show, Curator

Lilli Krõõt Repnau
21.09.17– 15.10.17 Jüri Kask
19.10.17– 12.11.17 Tanja Muravskaja
16.11.17– 10.12.17 I Touch Myself.
 Latvian Feminist Art, Curator Jana
 Kukaine
15.12.17– 14.01.18 Annual
 Exhibition
Small hall
10.03.17–02.04.17 Volume.
 Imaginary Concert for Seven Steam
 Engines. Holger Loodus
06.04.17–30.04.17 Konrad Mäe
 Studio
04.05.17–28.05.17 Stanislav
 Netšvolodov
31.05.17–18.06.17 TU Graduates
29.06.17–23.07.17 Anna-Maria Saar
27.07.17–20.08.17 Külli Suitso
24.08.17–17.09.17 Beyond Reality.
 Graphic Art Group Show, Curator
 Lilli Krõõt Repnau
21.09.17–15.10.17 Alexei Gordin
19.10.17–12.11.17 Tõnis Paberit
16.11.17–10.12.17 Margrieta
 Dreiblate, Curator Šelda Puķīte
15.12.17–14.01.18 Annual
 Exhibition
Monument Gallery
08.03.17–02.04.17 Diem Perdidī.
 Angela Soop
06.04.17–30.04.17 Aarne Mesikäpp
04.05.17–28.05.17 Reimo Vösa-
 Tangsoo
31.05.17–18.06.17 TU Graduates
29.06.17–23.07.17 Mai Sööt and
 Lilli Tõlp
27.07.17–20.08.17 Lydia Nordentoft
 Lavrov Organised by KÜ Pallas,
 Curator Enn Lillemets
24.08.17–17.09.17 Leonhard Lapin
21.09.17–15.10.17 Eike Eplik
19.10.17–12.11.17 Sirja-Liisa Eelmaa
16.11.17–10.12.17 Mētra Saberova,
 Curator Šelda Puķīte
15.12.17–14.01.18 Annual exhibition

Tartu Art Museum

Raekoja Square 18, Tartu
Open Wed, Fri–Sun 11am–7pm, Thu
11am–9pm
tartmus.ee

29.09.16–04.12.17 Who Creates the
 City?
13.01.17–28.05.17 Grey Area.
 Comics exhibition
10.03.17–28.05.17 Inconvenient
 Questions. Contemporary Art From
 Russia
23.03.17–29.10.17 The Eloquent
 Body. Works from the Collections of
 Tartu Art Museum
08.06.17–17.09.17 Peeter Allik: A
 Retrospect

Vabaduse Gallery

Vabaduse 6, Tallinn
Open: Mon–Fri 11am–6pm, Sat
11am–5pm
eaa.ee/vabadusegallery
10.03.17–29.03.17 Vano Allsalu
31.03.17–19.04.17 Ehalill Halliste
21.04.17–10.05.17 Aili Vahtrapuu
12.05.17–31.05.17 Anne Daniela
 Rodgers
02.06.17–21.06.17 Tõnis Laanemaa
22.06.17–12.07.17 Loit Jõekalda
14.07.17–02.08.17 Ado Lill
04.08.17–23.08.17 Matti Vainio, Ivo
 Lill, Teemu Mäki
25.08.17–13.09.17 Kai Kaljo
15.09.17–04.10.17 Mare Vint
06.10.17–25.10.17 Piia Ruber
27.10.17–15.11.17 Aime Kuulbusch
17.11.17–06.12.17 Jaan Elken
08.12.17–27.12.17 Valeri Vinogradov
29.12.17–17.01.18 Mati Karmin

Vaal Gallery

Tartu mnt 80d, Tallinn
Open Tue–Fri 12pm–6pm, Sat
12pm–4pm
vaal.ee
16.03.17–13.04.17 Laurentsius
20.04.17–20.05.17 Marit Ilison
25.05.17–24.06.17 Björn Koop and
 Leslie Laasner
10.08.17–09.09.17 Mall Nukke,
 Curator Maarika Agu
14.09.17–14.10.17 Kristi Kongi
19.10.17–18.11.17 Curator Peeter

Laurits
29.11.17–30.12.17 Jaan Toomik

Voronja Gallery

Kesk 22, Varnja alevik, Tartumaa
Open Wed–Sun 12pm–6pm
voronjagalerii.blogspot.com.ee

18.07.17–16.09.17 Organic Art
 Exhibition, Open Borders, Curated by
 Peter Belyi (St.Petersburg) Featuring:
 Evgenii Yufit, Elena Slobtseva,
 Sergey Denisov, Ivan Karpov, Denis
 Patrekeev and Vlad Kulkov

Published by

Estonian Institute
Suur-Karja 14, 10140 Tallinn, Estonia
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Printed at

Aktaprint

Cover

Katja Novitskova "67P potential (seahorse)", 2015.
Photo: Bruno Lopes. Courtesy of Kraupa-Tuskany
Zeidler

Back Cover

Music For Your Plants "Xenotica", 2013.
Photo: Norman Orro

ISSN: 1406-3549; ISSN online-version: 1406-5711

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