

# Estonian Art

# The Photo- graphy Issue

2/2019





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# Estonian Art

## The Photography Issue

PHOTOGRAPHY IS ENIGMATIC. The first photographs ever developed seemed like pure magic, causing bewilderment and in some cases even suspicion for their intricate relation to reality and time. Since then, photography has taken many forms, and not only has it become one of the most popular art mediums, but it has also found its way into almost every corner of our daily lives. We depend on photography as a medium of memory and also use it as a tool for constructing our (social) identity.

PHOTOGRAPHY IS EVERYWHERE. This issue of Estonian Art analyses the current state of photographic art, and with that photography's role in contemporary visual culture in general, involving discussions on experimental films and books. According to some, we live in the post-photography era in which everything is photographic and photography as a distinct discipline no longer exists. Yet, at the same time, there are still very strong and powerful classical photography movements. This issue, which focuses on photography in Estonia, aims to highlight these different views on the current state of photography by looking at the Tallinn Photomonth contemporary art biennial and the recently established world-renowned Fotografiska museum in Tallinn, among others.

PHOTOGRAPHY IS THERAPEUTIC. This issue will also examine the role of photographic art as a means of therapy. There are many different ways in which photography and therapy are interrelated. For example, photographs from family albums can be used in therapy sessions to evoke suppressed feelings and memories. The flat surface of an image has the power to move us, ignite and frustrate us, bridge the past and the future. In addition, the act of photographing can be therapeutic – capturing and archiving images can give us the satisfaction of organizing, taking control, materializing the fleeting, or working through some traumatic events in our lives.

The therapeutic properties of photography reveal themselves between these pages in several different forms. The visual essay by Aap Tepper is a pilgrimage into childhood terrains, an obeisance to his grandparents and also an attempt to capture something that is lost forever. The therapeutic qualities of photography appear in Tanja Muravskaja's work about the garden of Elo and Friedebert Tuglas, in which the artist draws attention to the garden as a refuge for the married couple during their forced exile. The strong connection between photographic art and therapy also reveals itself in some of the exhibitions that make up Tallinn Photomonth, which, among other issues, focus on the relationship between ourselves and the environment around us, our bodies and methods of recovery. In a visually overabundant world, photography can still have a soothing effect and has the ability to create A SPACE FOR HEALING.



# The Forgotten Garden

*This patch of land near the city of Suure-Jaani might look empty but this is a very special place. To me it is a ruin, which, along with its artefacts, reminds me of my childhood and the lives of my grandparents. This strip of land in the precise shape of a rectangle is part of Soviet heritage, since it was a section of a gardening cooperative which was given to my grandparents when they worked in a Kolhoz. There they could grow their own food and spend their free time tending to the garden. These gardens are not unique in post-Soviet states, but they are starting to disappear. After the Soviet Union collapsed my grandparents were able to keep this land. In my childhood I spent whole summers in that garden working with my grandparents. This land helped me earn my first income by collecting and selling ripe berries. The working process was a way of bonding for us and I have many happy memories from that time. As the years went on, I started to spend my summers at home, 200 km away from Suure-Jaani and in the late 00's and in early 2010's my grandparents spent less time tending to the garden as they were older and weaker. When grandmother passed away in 2011, grandfather continued to spend time in the garden and it seemed like the work kept him in good spirits but as time went on and he started to fade, the garden started to overgrow with weeds. In 2018, he passed away and the garden became state property.*

Aap Tepper  
is an Estonian visual artist who is  
interested in subjectivity within visual culture.















## Making Pies

*When my grandmother passed away, I started to think about their lives and how I could record their memories for future generations. It seemed like a good idea, but it made me very uncomfortable. The thought of approaching my grandfather with the idea that he should record his memories before he dies made me anxious. It did not feel very natural and I did not want the task of a biographer. I just wanted to spend time with him and see what comes from it. So in 2015, my brother and I drove to Suure-Jaani to visit him. I came up with an idea that he should make his signature mini pies and my brother and I should be the ones to inherit the recipe. When we usually visited or went to family gatherings, he always made his mini pies and they were delicious but the story behind them was something to be told for generations. When my grandmother suffered a stroke in her forties, he had to take over all the household tasks and he had to learn how to cook and work in the kitchen. So to me, the smell of these pies does not only remind me of the time he put into perfecting that recipe but also the love between them. My earliest memories of my grandparents are of them talking in the kitchen while preparing a meal. I did not just want to write down the recipe, so I filmed us making the pies together – me, him and my brother. As we made the pies we talked about our lives, about the past, present and future and in the end I edited it all together into a 1.5 hour home video. To me this process felt organic and I came to terms with the impossibility of remembrance. Whichever way I edit, curate or represent his memories they will be filtered through my own memories of him.*





# *The Walk*

*In the summer of 2018, I made the pilgrimage back to the now state-owned garden. I wanted to walk through it one last time like I did so many times before. The walk through the garden always went from one bush to another to taste a berry or vegetable. So I tried to remember the old routes and while I walked I found familiar artefacts like tools that my grandfather had made. This brought back a lot of memories. What fascinated me was the overgrown garden as a landscape and as a metaphor for remembrance. Be it nostalgic or not, it is covered in layers influenced by the present. As they have passed away, their memories have passed with them, all we can do is walk through the weed-filled garden, trying to filter out the most important objects and put together our own narratives of their lives.*

*In loving memory of  
Aime and Jaan.*

*Aap Tepper  
2019*







Exhibition view. Kumu Art Museum, 2019. Photo: Tanja Muravskaja

# Garden Exile.

## A Study of the Sense of Nature

Anneli Porri

Tanja Muravskaja is an Estonian photographer, she is mainly working in portraiture and dealing with the issues of nationalism and identity.

Anneli Porri is an Estonian art historian, curator and critic, as well as a lecturer at the Estonian Academy of Arts.



The exhibition “Garden Exile: The Tuglas’ Home Garden Through Tanja Muravskaja’s Camera Lens” in the Cabinet of Prints and Drawings at Kumu Art Museum brings together three parties: photographer Paul Horma, who documented the garden belonging to writers Elo and Friedebert Tuglas in the suburb of Nõmme in Tallinn, the strong and charismatic photographic artist Tanja Muravskaja and the curator of the exhibition Elnara Taidre.

The starting point for the exhibition was three albums of black and white photographs compiled by the Tuglases themselves of their garden taken by Paul Horma between 1959 and 1961 at the request of the owners. The albums stood out as they focused solely on the garden and it could be seen that the arrangement of the photos was also well thought through, being carefully matched side by side. The pictures varied between general views and portraits of both the plants and the writers in the middle of nature, from close-ups of the few rare species to images of randomly growing semi-weeds. The classical documentary language, use of a standard lens and a viewpoint natural to the human eye all refer to a natural way of seeing, the aspiration of delivering a detailed and objective overview. One can distinguish a good balance between light and shadow, a good selection of the polychrome frame that preserves the grayscale dynamics in black and white photographs. The arrangement of the photographs in the albums was mostly based on aesthetic judgement, so, for example, there is also a picture of a young maple tree positioned upside down – it probably looked better this way. The photos present a diligently composed natural and abundant garden with walkways, arbors and a rock garden under the pine trees of Nõmme. Influenced by a romantic and impressionist concept of nature, the garden architecture follows an organic model rather than strict geometry.

And yet, why black and white photographs of garden plants and lush colourful summer flowers? What was the aim behind this rich collection of images; why were they taken? And how do they differ from contemporary vernacular photography and the digital images happy amateur gardeners share on social media platforms and turn into greeting cards and backgrounds for inspirational quotes using simple design programs? It was probably with similar questions in mind that in 2016 Tanja Muravskaja entered the Tuglas’ garden with her camera, taking these images as the starting point.

The title of the exhibition, “Garden Exile”, is a play on words. We know what exile means and we can imagine what it might be like to be ostracized from one’s country and acquaintances. The writer, editor and translator Friedebert Tuglas was not driven out of the country, he simply lived in exile here, in his homeland. The active left-wing writer, public figure in the Republic of Estonia and public speaker, suddenly became the target of controversial opinions in the early stages of Soviet-era Estonia: although, in 1946, he had been appointed an academic of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic and received the honorary title of national writer, only a few years later the tide had turned. He was expelled

from the Writers’ Union of the Estonian SSR, his earlier work was removed from circulation and his name as a translator on the title pages of books was covered with ink. On the 16th of July 1950, by the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR, he was deprived of the honorary title of national writer, which he regained in 1956 after Stalin’s death. During that same period, sculptor Paul Horma, the artist who took the photos, was also in a form of exile, having been expelled from the Artists’ Union from 1950 to 1963. During that time, he worked as a restorer. Before and after that period, he created many sculptural portraits of Estonian writers, among others the portraits of Elo and Friedebert Tuglas.



Exhibition view. Kumu Art Museum, 2019. Photo: Tanja Muravskaja

Gardening, photographing the garden (or arranging someone to do it) and creating albums of photographs is a therapeutic and creative endeavour: “It started over a year and a half ago, when our living conditions improved significantly. To keep our spirits up, we started to take care of the garden with a special zest” writes Friedebert Tuglas on the 26th of December 1970 to Marie Under and Artur Adson, the Estonian literary classics who had emigrated to Sweden. (It is also important to keep in mind that Tuglas’ house and garden were originally owned by Under and Adson who fled to Sweden in 1944.) At a time when they could not publish, their friends were too afraid to visit them and they did not have any correspondence, the writers turned to their garden, creating their own world out of it. They physically channelled their energy and attention to the only place that neither condemned nor abandoned them. In this way, the Tuglases were all at once the rulers, masters and prisoners of their own garden.

The garden as a symbol makes one think of oases and paradise – a safe confined area, familiar and personal, where strangers can enter only by permission. The garden is cultivated and offers an aesthetic experience, relief from stress, it does not wear one out with work. The garden is a possibility, while the field is an obligation. The garden also refers to monastery gardens, alluding to culture and cultivation, sustainability, care, as well as science and creation as viable values in the midst of a wild and barbaric world. At the same time, danger also lurks in the garden, harbouring a fruit that cannot be eaten and a snake that might want to tempt you. The oasis is also a fertile area in



the desert. I believe that the Tuglases did not think in terms of such semiotic simplifications but lived and witnessed the multi-layered metaphoric qualities of the garden and nature in their everyday lives.



Exhibition view. Kumu Art Museum, 2019. Photo: Tanja Muravskaja

To talk about Tanja Muravskaja's "Garden Exile", I start with what is most surprising: the work is a black and white installation of nature photography, consisting of semi-transparent partly overlapping curtains or panes with large black and white photographic prints hanging from ceiling to floor. This is surprising, as the formal characteristics of the work are very different from Muravskaja's practice to date. Black and white nature prints can be associated with Arne Maasik, the gardens with Eve Kiiler, and the use of a semi-transparent net makes one think of a conceptual photographic installation by Marge Monko. The artist has also used a light box in "Garden Exile", there is a reflective pane on the floor of the exhibition space referring to the garden's watery eye glancing light reflections onto the walls. The exhibition continues in Kumu's garden where a large-scale black and white photograph of a garden stands out from the lush greenery, and where, by the rock garden, one can find and dig out Paul Horma's photographs from the sand.

The exceptional character of the work makes me think of an earlier collaboration between Muravskaja and the curator Elnara Taidre, which was also almost monochrome and consisted of a dialogue with another work of art. In the photographic pair "Untitled / Self-portrait I, II" (2015) Muravskaja presents herself as the black square on both a white and black studio background, wearing a black cape or cloth, emerging as a threatening figure on a white background, and blending in and becoming invisible against the black background. Muravskaja's "I as Malevich's Black Square" is a clever composition that reveals itself, like most good art works tend to do, in a simple, albeit not straightforward but rather a twisting and turning manner. It is a portrait in the studio – Muravskaja's most common working method – but also an unexpected allegory. The nose and cheekbones emerging from the black hooded cape turn the black square into an Islamic burka covering the entire female body, which also appeared in one of her earlier works – the poster "Positions, Self-Portrait" (2007), where

the artist stands in a black burka on a blue and white background. The dialogue with Malevich points to the Ukrainian origin of both artists and a positioning of oneself in the context of another nation. This brings us to the important political and interventionist element common to Muravskaja's work. A black square on a black background evokes thoughts of merging, conforming and assimilating, while the artist embodying a black square on a white background appears intimidating and authoritative, which is again nullified by the submission involved in covering herself up, hiding the physical body behind a veil. As in "Garden Exile", the varieties of the black square are contemplative and inward-looking.

What is Muravskaja doing that Horma hasn't already done? Muravskaja has taken upon herself the difficult task of attempting to create and present the supposable experience of the Tuglas' garden 60 years later, after the death of the writer, after the political conditions have completely changed. She has tried to capture the feelings the writer might have had while sitting in his office, looking out on the garden through the curtains fluttering in the wind. Compared to Horma's objective and documentary approach, Muravskaja has taken over his monochrome style, but sought a much more natural vision with her camera – instead of surrendering to the modernist aim of objective photography, she has tried to find ways to put photography at the service of a subjective point of view. The main stylistic approach has been to distinguish the foreground from the background, using a shallow depth of field, using the gaze into the distance so that, for example, a tree branch hanging in the foreground becomes slightly blurred. This is yet another way to emphasize looking through, being in the moment, drifting, having perspective and moving towards something. The motif of translucent curtains or drapes invites us to experience nature as a whole, not conceiving it as a separate tree trunk, staircase or rose bush, but rather recognizing it as an intertwined and blended phenomenological process.

The whole setup creates a pleasant environment in the gallery, well balanced between poetic and informative content. The atmosphere is well supported by Elo and Friedebert Tuglas' journals, letters and quotes from literary work, clearly communicating the writers' relationship with their garden and attitude to nature in general. Yet, the gallery remains a gallery, it does not transform into an oasis, nor does the viewer feel as if in exile. Without doubt, "Garden Exile" is a nice study of nature, a great attempt to reconstruct a sense of nature by means of contemporary photography, and a step closer in contemplating how and why we need gardens also during politically calmer times. ●





Exhibition view. Kumu Art Museum, 2019. Photo: Tanja Muravskaja

Garden Exile. A Study of the Sense of Nature







The curators of Tallinn Photomonth 2019 main programme: Ingel Vaikla, Hanna Laura Kaljo, Post Brothers, Heidi Ballet. Photo: Helen Melesk

# The “Photographic” as the Lingua Franca

Piret Karro

In early September, Tallinn will become overrun with exhibitions and events revolving around the theme of photography, visuality, and its relationship with the body, the enfleshed. There are three international curator projects in Tallinn Photomonth’s main programme: curator Heidi Ballet navigates questions surrounding environmental change in the group exhibition *When You Say We Belong to the Light We Belong to the Thunder* at the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (EKKM). Hanna Laura Kaljo focuses on the body and its presence in the tides and shifts of the surroundings in *Let the field of your attention.... soften and spread out* at the newly opened Kai Art Center. And Post Brothers has taken a more direct approach to the materiality of photography in the group project at Tallinn Art Hall, *Mercury*, a visual essay created in collaboration with the artist Simon Dybbroe Møller. Joined here by the curators, we will open up the thought processes behind the exhibitions by discussing the phenomenon of visuality in the face of the current climate urgency.

Hanna Laura Kaljo  
is an independent curator  
with a base in London and Tallinn.

Heidi Ballet  
is an independent curator based  
in Berlin and Brussels.

Post Brothers  
has curated numerous  
exhibitions and projects around the world  
and lives in Kolonia Koplany, a village near  
Bialystok, Poland.

Piret Karro  
is an Estonian cultural critic and  
author.



Tallinn Photomonth is a contemporary art biennial dealing with visuality in a broader sense than just through photography. How did you conceptualise the criteria of visuality and visual mediation for your curatorial projects in Photomonth? Departing from your previous work, which avenues did it open up, and which restrictions did you find?

Hanna Laura Kaljo: The weaving of *Let the field of your attention.... soften and spread out* began from considering the neoliberal compulsion to perform and publicise – to be perpetually visible – and the subsequent states of disorientation and alienation that this may produce within an individual or a whole society. I resonate with feminist cultural theorist and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray when she points to western culture as favouring brightness and visible productions, whilst not valuing, or even fearing the hidden.

Looking further into creative cycles in nature, in plants for example, we see how dormancy, unfolding quietly within the depths of the Earth, is a crucial phase in the process of creative life. I wondered what this means from the point of view of the arts and could we embody this through an exhibition? As the show takes place at the interval between the autumn equinox and winter solstice, with the gradual decrease in daylight, I perceived an opportunity to frame the project as recovery from this pressure to be perpetually visible, moving through different registers of tangibility instead. The design of the exhibition, created by Tõnu Narro, and the programme of events, is in one way or another in dialogue with the shifting sunlight. The choreography of screenings, objects, workshops, performances and so on, does not allow the project to be accessed as a whole at once but experienced over time. Hopefully, this evokes a sense of something always remaining hidden, whilst maintaining its relationship to the whole.

Post Brothers: In many ways, our exhibition literally takes the claim by Photomonth to look “more broadly at developments in art and society in a world mediated by cameras, screens, and images.” But rather than just address how photography as a specific material practice has disappeared, or how it has become omnipresent, we are looking at

how the very criteria of visuality has become photographic, no matter if we are talking about a painting, a bus ride, or a conversation. The epistemology of photography has been interpolated into everything. We even encounter the past through this logic, when we see a slab of black marble, we marvel at its photographic qualities, its affinity with a degraded negative, even if it is an object that’s been around long before any of us. The “photographic” has become the very terms in which all information is now mediated and organized.

Heidi Ballet, your project is situated in the context of the current realization of human influence on climate warming. Is there a specific burden the artists operating with visuality carry in terms of perspectives available to us in realising our own impact on environmental change?

Heidi Ballet: I think that the existential crisis that we are experiencing, the fact that our

Jonathas de Andrade, still from the video *O Peixe (The Fish)*, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo



generation will decide whether livelihood on the planet will be sustained in the long term, is influencing all fields of humanities and non-humanities today, not only art. For me it is hard to define how it should be influencing art, and what art’s responsibility is in this. There is the idea in the scientific community that art can be used as a tool for raising awareness. While I support that view, I think art should be able to stay art in and by itself, without having to fulfil the role of being a communications office, its evaluation based solely on the dissemination of information.

According to Amitav Ghosh, an Indian writer who wrote a book on the climate emergency, we lack the imagination of catastrophe when we think about natural disasters, since we think about nature in the way it has been portrayed in art, as peaceful and quaint. He says artists have a role to play in creating images so that we can at least imagine what the catastrophe that is ahead of us looks like. I think that these images don’t

need to be only dystopian but can also be positive images of new ways of living together, with other species and with other forms of nature.

Personally, I am very interested in the psychology of the climate emergency. You see for example, denial, people who hold on to the fact that it ‘will not be so bad’, or people who are worried but don’t adapt their lifestyle, living in some kind of hypocrisy as if their flight is an exceptional case for some reason. For this reason, this exhibition is a test case to see how it would work if I were to keep the worry about the climate catastrophe psychologically as close as possible to the practice of making the exhibition. This means that the artists are not allowed to take aeroplanes and that we use recycled materials as much as possible. This is to make the psychological alienation between what one says and what one does, as small as possible, to not allow a double consciousness. It’s not an easy exercise.



Reflecting further on the question of visual representation and situatedness – where is the body located in this equation? Hanna Laura Kaljo, you're building your curator project around the notion of *recovery*. Has being overwhelmed with visuality alienated us from our bodies, I mean the feeling that *myself* is located in the body?

HLK: Dancer, teacher of the Alexander technique and craniosacral therapist Miranda Tufnell and installation artist Chris Crickmay, whose book *A Widening Field: Journeys in Body and Imagination* was one of the key reference points for the Kai exhibition, write something I know to be true from my own experience: "the body is the ground from which all our knowing of the

world begins. (...) In the rush and pressure of our everyday lives we easily become numbed, cut off from our bodies. (...) To move out of our heads and into the sensory world of the body awakens us not only to sensation but also to a slower, deeper landscape beneath the surface of everyday awareness, a landscape of feeling, memory, impulse and dream." Connecting this with the theme of our time – ecosystem collapse and a call to recover a way of living consciously in relationship to ourselves and others – it is within this inner landscape of feeling and dreaming where new energy for conscious action may awaken. The Kai exhibition presents practitioners who work with visual art and with a focus on inner perception and the body. Danish artist Marie

The "Photographic" as the Lingua Franca



Antique Camera Dolly from Nordisk Film

Kølbæk Iversen, for example, is researching experiences of trauma, fright, and different vernacular and shamanist methods of coping or reacting to these experiences, while Sandra Kosorotova works with the theme of burnout and draws from therapeutic methods to create the conditions where difficult emotions can be shared, held and transformed through communal creative activity.

PB: I think in many ways visuality has brought us closer to our bodies, or at least to understand the body as such is contingent on its apprehension, and a fragmented collectivity of different interconnected forces. The "body" as most would perceive it, is a relatively new concept, a function of the very alienation that you are speaking about, and certainly an outcrop of photographic representation and control. Our exhibition considers how this apprehension and understanding of our bodies today is organized through this photographic logic. Our opening image is a photograph of a birth by Heji Shin, which points to certain traditions of photographic representation in sex education, and also makes visible a moment we've all experienced as bodies, but rarely consider directly. Another integral part of our show is an event programme called "Lifeblood Film Club", which, like a book club, is a chance to share video and film works and speak about them, a sort of casual form of education and fandom. Each of the videos we are presenting specifically addresses the relationship between the camera and the body and considers how the photographic has allowed us to examine the parameters and problems with the human body in particular. Simon recently did this series before in Copenhagen, where he focused on animals in photography and moving images. Now we are continuing his exploration of photographic tropes by considering the human body. For instance, we will show an iconic work by the Canadian video artist Kate Craig, where she used extreme closeups to scrutinize parts of her own body and to explore the relationship between the self and the flesh that we inhabit. As a contrast, in both the exhibition and during one of the evenings, we will screen the music video for the American RnB singer D'Angelo's song *Untitled (How does it feel)*, which is a looped single long shot of the singer's naked upper body. Apparently, the singer worked out incessantly to temporarily mould his body into the most muscular and artificially chiselled

specimen, an example of the body conforming to the standards of the photogenic. In many ways, he rendered himself into the perfect cross of a moving and still image. So here, we are addressing how the camera and the photographic have had a profound influence on how the body is seen and understood.

How important was it for you to take into account the physical, environmental and political location of the Photomonth biennial? How did this location work itself into your curator projects?

HB: I love to dive into the local context to see how the things that I am thinking about live in the place where the exhibition is taking place. With the help of the Photomonth team I managed to do quite a bit of research in collaboration with Estonian researchers (*Francisco Martínez, Marika Agu, Tanel Rander* – P.K.), and this research is an essential part of the exhibition. One such example is environmental racism, the fact that globally minorities, and not the native population, live in the most polluted areas. This is also true in Estonia where you see that in the city of Narva a Russian population is living under less than optimal conditions.

Another dynamic that I like to compare globally and locally is how the nation state mythology is built. In Estonia there seems to be an interesting link to trees based on an identification with a pagan forest religion. The question I pose myself then is whether this means that people are also more aware ecologically because of this identification. There is also the environmental movement of the end of the 1980s (*Public demonstrations against the mining of phosphorite in eastern Estonia known as The Phosphorite War* – P.K.) that is now labelled as eco-nationalism, or a covert independence movement. With the current rise of global environmental movements, I think this moment at the end of the 80s forms an interesting precedent to see how climate care has been politicized before, and maybe we could learn something from studying its dynamics.

HLK: The curatorial process for the first exhibition at Kai and this historically layered, formerly closed-off coastal part of Tallinn has been guided by listening and intuitive perceiving. How might we evoke



an atmosphere of openness to depth and dormancy, suggested by the metaphor of the submarine and the season in which the show and the biennial is taking place? I took many walks in the area and dialogued with it to understand where we meet. The design of the exhibition is one where the architecture of the space is a collaborator, whilst we pay attention to how light moves throughout the days and months. Being positioned directly by the sea also has an effect, as I referred to tidal movement in the choreography of the exhibition – the appearing and disappearing of works creates a movement where the public is invited to gather and disperse in a sort of ebb and flood.

PB: Given that the Art Hall is at “Freedom square” and has an important role in the visualization of culture within the context of the public sphere and the state, it was important for us to use a populist logic that would be familiar to everyone visiting. We also decided to parody the statues on the facade of the building (classic figures of artistic and intellectual labour) by enlisting a selection of mannequins by other artists to join them in a sort of “group photo”. Addressing the mannequin and window displays as a demonstration of capitalism and its adherence to and use of photographic desire, the single pieces can be experienced in their own right while also being part of a genre, thereby invoking thoughts about standardized bodies, identity, individuality, style and the collective.

We’ve also used this exhibition as a chance to do research on certain traditions and experiences here. For example, we learned at the Museum of Photography that there was a regular clandestine exchange of photographic technology through Tallinn. We are hoping they will lend us a pair of cameras that are almost exactly morphologically and technologically the same but were produced in the East and West respectively, which has a nice reference to the logic of the copy in the photographic, but also shows this type of trading across the Iron Curtain and is somehow emblematic for Estonia and similar countries and their histories.

What would be your golden rules in your professional work as curators – in terms of making choices about with whom, how, and where to work? Are there principles you stay true to in the field

of contemporary art; is it possible to stay true to any principles?

HLK: A golden rule would be to not rush, rather to take time and be attentive to how an idea or a collaboration wants to grow or change. It’s about relationships. Over the past eight years that I’ve worked curatorially, I have tended to dive deep and really get to know someone, be it an artist or a place. These days, as is true for *Let the field of your attention.... soften and spread out*, I’m drawn to practitioners and projects where we move beyond critique or survey into embodiment and transformation. I think it’s important to have inner principles, whilst also remaining open to what serves in the moment.

PB: Curating above all is a form of ideological critique and an assertion of different forms of knowledge within the public sphere. I also feel that political or aesthetic engagement should always have a certain humour or absurdity to it, as that allows for defamiliarization and a shock to previous terms of engagement. My golden rule has always been about assisting artists to

do things they could or would not do otherwise, in places or contexts where they haven’t done such things before, to provide them support as a collaborator, and to critically consider the secondary information that mediates between the artist, objects, and the public. Over the years, my projects have moved from simply trying to illustrate a concept or theme, to taking the logic of an artist’s work or motivations and exaggerating that to the extreme, so that every decision made within the project is part of this language. In this exhibition, I am messing with standardized curator/artist roles by following Simon’s research and collaborating with him directly, thereby emphasizing the unique knowledge production artists provide. We are also doing something I’ve always avoided curatorially, which is to instrumentalize artworks within a contrived overriding frame. But by playing with this cliché in such an outrageous way, we hope to make it clear that this only one way to read the works and inspire new readings into the artists’ practices.

HB: I think as a curator you should stay true to the idea that art is a field to test borders, and

that there are no rules, with this I mean that I think in terms of choosing artists and themes there should be no limitations at all. What I think is important as a principle for everyone is to respect the people you invite, and to be professional. I take my role as a facilitator very seriously and I think it is my responsibility to create the best possible circumstances for the artists to create the work, within the possibilities of the budget. Apart from this, I think everyone makes their own set of rules. I personally have a hard time making a thematic exhibition and talking about something that interests me without thoroughly understanding it, and understand how the issue that I talk about works in the local context. But I don’t think everyone should do that and I also don’t recommend it; it creates a lot of extra work. I also try to work with a balanced mix of artists when it comes to gender and nationality. And often I try to add one element that is performative or humorous to break the seriousness a bit, but let me tell you honestly that I am not sure whether this time I managed this part so well, I hope the exhibition doesn’t turn out to be too heavy. ●



Sam Smith, still from the video *Lithic Choreographies*, 2018





Krista Mölder. *Salix II, Twilight*, 2019

Sanni Seppo. Martin Tiigiaed. Tartu, 2017



# Everything is Photographic



Laura Toots and Kadri Laas. Photo: Kulla Laas

This interview took place during the record-breaking heat in Tallinn this June. In the context of these brain-numbing temperatures, I sat down with the team of the upcoming Tallinn Photomonth: artistic director Laura Toots and managing director Kadri Laas. We talked about the legacy of the event, the need to constantly re-evaluate its focus as well as to slow down and reflect, fluid identities, and other questions pertaining to thinking about the global conditions of image-making today.

## Discussing the Complexities of Tallinn Photomonth with Laura Toots and Kadri Laas

Paulius Petraitis

Laura Toots and Kadri Laas are the directors of Tallinn Photomonth biennial of contemporary art in 2019.

Paulius Petraitis is a curator and a photographer (after photography) who lives and works in Vilnius, London and online.



Paulius Petraitis: I would like to start with a long-winded question. As artist and director of the first Tallinn Photomonth biennial, Marge Monko referred in our recent interview to the fact that Photomonth, first organized in 2011, has had a strenuous relationship with the word “Photo” in its title since its inception. The tension seems to come from what the word defines, which avenues it opens, and closes. I think for someone from outside, quite a normal reaction on visiting one of Photomonth’s exhibitions is that of a surprise – seeing how little of what was traditionally defined as photography is shown. Could you speak to this relationship, and why it is important to have an open definition of photography?

Laura Toots: The Union of Photography Artists (Foku), which is behind Tallinn Photomonth, was founded in 2007 by ten members who were mainly linked to the Department of Photography at the Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA). It was a like-minded group of colleagues, and their idea was to promote photographic art next to printmaking, painting, and sculpture – more acknowledged ways of art-making. Tallinn being one of the upcoming European Capitals of Culture then, the idea was to join energies and minds for an international event in 2011. This is its pedigree. The name has also been retained to reflect that. At that time promoting photography so that it would be more widely recognised as art was still necessary.



Hans Jakob Väär. *In the Sun*, 2018

Kadri Laas: It was also related to discussions that Western Europe had already decades ago, that photography is a form of visual arts. All Tallinn Photomonth biennials have promoted this attitude. The first main exhibition in 2011 at Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn was an international contemporary art show that brought forth artistic positions concerned with the use(s) of photography, but also blurred the lines between forms of expression. Visitors could see photography in a way that was new for local audiences: works in new formations, placed in an experimental and spatial way in the space, and maybe most importantly – made to escape the set categories. Not having only framed photographs on the wall, we had an exemplary situation providing us with food for thought regarding these definitions.

LT: The members of Foku also incorporated film, video, sculpture and spatial interventions into their work – an interest that was also passed on from this organising body to the Tallinn Photomonth biennial. Therefore, since the first edition of the biennial in 2011, the artists and curators behind it have felt the need to broaden the boundaries and rules of photographic art. The need to think more broadly about the term “photography” has become more inevitable in the world we live in, which is mediated by screens and cameras. Everything is photographic.

KL: For visitors hoping to see something else – you are right, that is there. Sometimes it’s a more clearly expressed reaction, sometimes more a discussion formed by an

Everything is Photographic



Dénes Farkas. *Baalbek #0002*, 2017

understanding of why it is like this. When we approach international curators and invite them to propose projects for the biennial, this is something we ask them to consider. The received proposals have been very interesting – what is photography nowadays when we are talking about screens in the wider sense, cameras and scanners with unimaginable capabilities, or jpegs as an integral part of society?

PP: This is perhaps symptomatic to the global shift in how photography is understood and functions. We acknowledge that photography has changed, but it is also changing and will continue to change. We need to constantly update the idea of what photography is, what it entails, where its limits and boundaries stand. What’s interesting for me, and what I find valuable, is that Tallinn Photomonth tries to tackle these rather difficult questions. The “Photo” in the name feels a bit like an anchor, but it is important to ask what photography’s legacy is in 2019 and what ways we have to talk about it, to open it up. For us in Lithuania the situation is slightly different, since we have a strong tradition of a humanistic photography school. It still forms our thinking. I think, compared to Estonia, the idea of classical photography is more strongly ingrained in our cultural fabric.

LT: I agree. Artist Eve Kiiler, who was one of the people behind the photography curriculum at EAA, has said the similar

Georgs Avetisjans, from the series *Homeland*, 2016







Kai Kaljo. *Invisible*, 2018

Everything is Photographic

thing. The move towards a more critical and conceptual photography in the early 1990s was possible due to the adventurous attitude of not having traditional teachers. Applied photography education existed before, but as a degree – at Tartu Art College and at the Estonian Academy of Arts – it's only 20 years old.

KL: When we discussed whether to keep the word "Photo", we added "Contemporary art biennial" as a subtitle for clarity. But we also kept the main title so the discussion could still be present.

PP: Tallinn Photomonth is a special photography event in the Baltic context, not only in its expanded approach to the photographic discourse and image-making, but also that it is consciously reflecting and positioning itself within the field of contemporary art.

LT: The Department of Photography at EAA has trained a lot of people currently active in the contemporary art field. Not only as artists, but also as curators, programme directors, project managers, etc. Marco Laimre, who ran this department through 2005–2017, has said that having "photography" in the name was mainly to distinguish it from other departments in the academy, otherwise he would have called it the "Department of Contemporary Art". As I studied in the same department, I'm also keen to continue working with this interconnectedness and feel comfortable in this relationship.

KL: It is triggering to think about artists graduating from the photography department without making any photographs at all, or in that regard sculptureless sculptors and painters with no paintings to show. The need to expand one's world and practice is very present. It also seems to be a wave of discarding labels like "photography" artist and "installation" artist as well as the specific divisions in the art academies where the trend seems to be to open more general visual art programmes.

PP: Twenty or even ten years ago the focus of critical discussion around photography was its malleability and manipulation. A few years ago a prominent strand was the unprecedented influx and abundance of images, which was also reflected in your opening exhibition in 2017 called "Image Drain". Working with this year's programme, what do you sense is the focus? Do you feel that we have to an extent accepted the situation that we live in a world full of images and are moving on to other issues?

LT: We seem to have accepted the situation and are now thinking about navigating and surviving in this abundance, as well as related policy making on various levels. This year's programme brings forth some of these strategies. For Heidi Ballet, who is the curator of the opening exhibition at EKKM, the focus is on environmental issues. Matthew Post together with Simon Dybbroe Møller work with the development of technology discussing

images and objects and routines that are not photography but are photography-like.

KL: The latter exhibition, for example, also talks about photos being sleeping data on phones that are continuously taken but never looked at. The abundance of images and other data are still important topics – information existing and not existing at the same time. The third main exhibition at the new Kai Art Center, curated by Hanna Laura Kaljo, offers a recovery from that intense world by presenting artists whose practices span visual art, meditation, contemporary dance, writing, and traditional medicinal knowledge. As our lives are so busy, winters are dark, information so abundant, and everyone expects us to do so much, the question is what to do with that? How to navigate, to cope and survive?

LT: Maybe we should slow down or even hibernate during the winters to be more in connection with the natural processes around us, to be more us. I have started to pay attention to this much more since working with Kaljo and analysing her focus on receptivity, to our bodies and our surroundings. The flood of information has alienated us from each other for such a long time and to such a degree, that now we are looking for closeness with each other. And for the ground under our feet. If nature and our bodies tell us to take a break or slow down, we should listen.

PP: That's an important point. You are running the biennial together for the second time in a row. How are you approaching this Photomonth and its programme?

LT: This year, we aim to be more compact in order to have thorough discussions with artists and curators, as well as collaborate more closely with institutions we work with. The goal is to have more dialogue. With the curators' first site-visit in January we hoped that they would already cross-pollinate each other – be aware what others are working on and propose events for each other's exhibitions.

KL: In 2019, we have three international exhibitions at three different venues in Tallinn by the abovementioned curators. The main programme of this Photomonth opens gradually on consecutive Fridays throughout September. The last week of the month is the Professional Week, when all the shows will be open, art fair Foto Tallinn and specially programmed networking events take place. A series of three screenings of artist's films, curated by Ingel Vaikla and Jesse Cumming, takes place at Sõprus cinema in Tallinn's Old Town. In October, the public and educational programme will be emphasized. On top of that we have a satellite programme, with 18 independent events, varying in size and duration, taking place in Tallinn.

LT: Also, this year, for the opening exhibition at EKKM curated by Heidi Ballet we are planning engagement with local community to a greater extent. We have provided her with three researchers based in Tallinn – Linda Kaljundi, Francisco Martínez and Tanel Rander – who are dealing with economic, social and geographical aspects of Estonia in different historical periods. The goal is that this local knowledge would come out more in the exhibition and its



Arne Maasik. *Architectonics XII*, 2019

Paulius Petraitis

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Failure / Afterlife. Sigrid Viir. Tallinn Photomonth 2017. Photo: Helen Melesk

publication, as well as on the level of research for all involved. The curator has highlighted the multiplicity of perspectives and the importance of working with advisors to not only know the local art scene but also learn about the wider processes that have shaped the art field, among other areas of life.

PP: What is interesting about Photomonth is that not only is it artist-initiated and led, but also that its leaders change. After Marge Monko was the director in 2011, Kristel Raesaar led the biennial in 2013 and 2015, it was you for 2017 and also for the upcoming 2019 edition, stopping there. What do you think this rotation does and how this process affects the programme?

KL: The rotation is not an established principle in itself. But until now it has happened that no director(s) have taken on more than two Photomonths. I think organising any big event repeatedly has pros and cons; but it definitely needs fresh ideas at some point. At the moment we have ideas for the next Photomonth but I consider it a healthy decision to pass it on now when everything is still stimulating.

LT: I also think rotation of people and ideas makes it simpler to react to current times. These revisions have helped the Photomonth

biennial in many ways. It adds flexibility, intimacy – it is an organization, but then again it isn't.

PP: Yes, I'm thinking if that also contributes to the expanded approach to the notion of photography. As people are changing maybe there is less of a habit for a certain thinking pattern to set in, as each person or team brings a different background with them. Photography as a traditional medium is still an important part of Marge's artistic toolbox, while Kristel has her own different profile. And you have your own background and other jobs – Laura you are working as a curator at EKKM and Kadri at the Estonian Contemporary Art Development Center. Therefore, perhaps each person or team adds something to this understanding of the definition of photography that Photomonth, making it pluralist and more like a dialogue. So the approach becomes polyphonic, which for me is a strength of the Tallinn Photomonth biennial.

KL: Yes. And in addition to the team's understanding and approaches constantly changing, Photomonth has always invited guest curators with fresh blood and ideas. In 2011, Adam Budak and Vytautas Michelkevičius curated the main exhibitions (at Kumu Art Museum and Tallinn Art Hall respectively), in 2013 it was

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Niekolaas Johannes Lekkerkerk (Tallinn Art Hall), in 2015 David Raymond Conroy (EKKM), in 2017 Anthea Buys (Tallinn Art Hall) and Stefanie Hessler (EKKM).

LT: For us it is like a playground, where we are constantly inviting new "playmates" – curators and other collaborators – to enter the dialogue. Enjoying ourselves in the constructive process has been important. We are currently thinking about finding new candidates to pass on the biennial to. We are also excited to see which approaches the next biennial in 2021 will take.

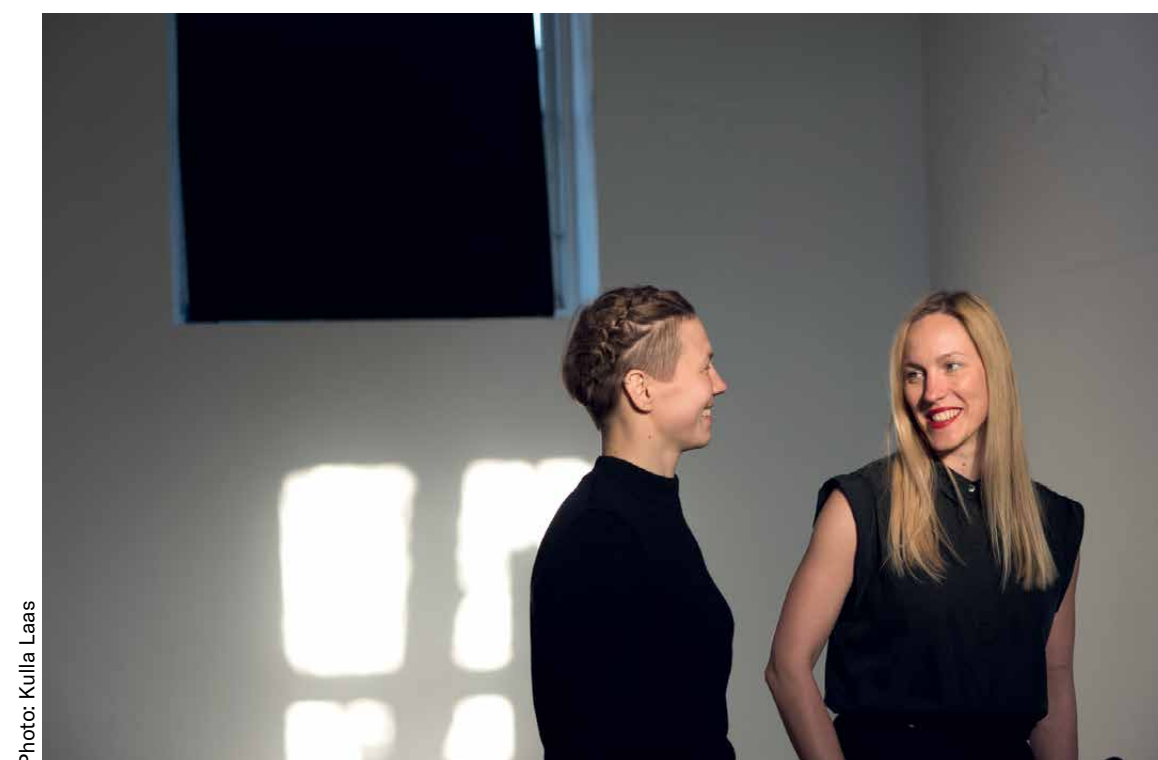


Photo: Kulla Laas

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Paul Kuimet

Artist Paul Kuimet spoke with filmmaker Ingel Vaikla and researcher Jesse Cumming, curators of the Tallinn Photo-month 2019 film programme taking place 25 September to 16 October 2019 at Sõprus cinema. Among other topics they discussed the definition of artist's films, the question of funding for experimental cinema and what constitutes an ethical approach to distributing artist's films.

# A Space for Experimental Film

Ingel Vaikla  
is a visual artist and a filmmaker  
from Estonia.

Jesse Cumming  
is a film curator and author  
from Toronto, Canada.

Paul Kuimet  
is an Estonian artist who works  
with photography, 16mm film and spatial  
installations.



Paul Kuimet: The first question I have is basic – what do you think is artist’s film? If we were forced to create such a classification how would we do it? Obviously, there are two main kinds of criteria – one is as distinct from mainstream cinema, feature films and classic documentaries. And the other would be the dividing line between video and film installations, or moving image works that are meant to be shown primarily in exhibition spaces as opposed to a classic cinema setting.

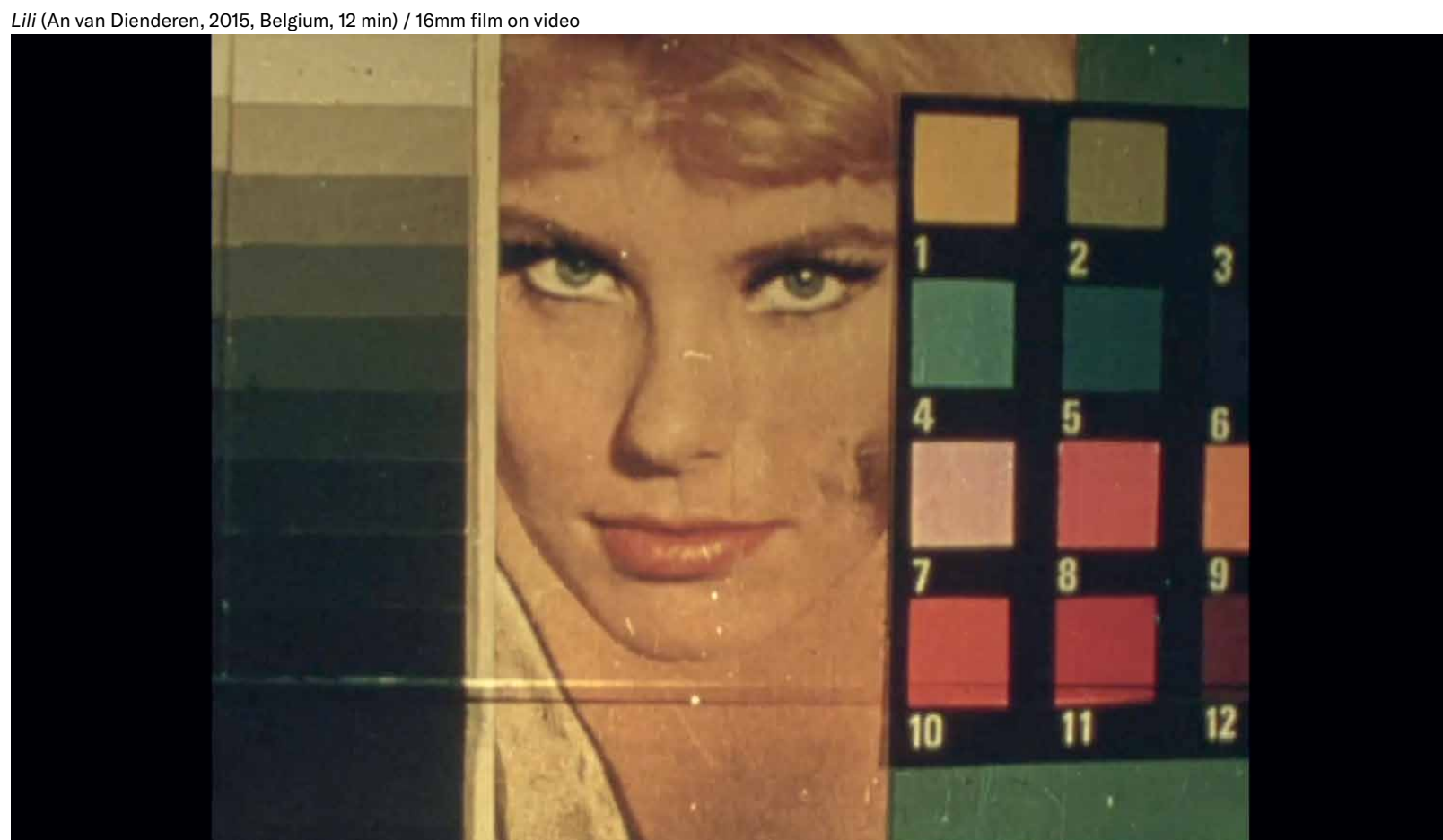
Jesse Cumming: I have a mixed relationship with the term “artist’s film”. It’s more common in the UK and Europe than it is in North America. And I think I’ve always pushed back against it to some degree because it seems to suggest that there is nothing artistic about mainstream or narrative cinema, which in several cases is considered as artistic as work produced and exhibited in galleries or museums. That said, it is a handy term, and in the past several years it has kind of taken on its own distinct identity; I’ve grown to embrace it as a way to talk about moving image work that is very fluid and can exist in different places and different contexts, while being produced by artists from across disciplines.

Ingel Vaikla: I think it is interesting how you say that you have a bit of a problem with the term “artist’s film”, and I do agree with the way you elaborate on it. I, on the other hand, have a problem with the term “experimental film” – I feel that it’s such an open term that everything can be pushed under this one somehow. I think it’s a good question, Paul, but at the same time, I think we are living at a time when everything is kind of blending into one, but we still have the urgent need to label everything so we are constantly trying to define things that maybe are not necessarily definable. And in the end, we are making judgements based too much on these classifications and not on the works themselves.

During the 2017 Tallinn Photomonth film programme, there was a Q&A with artists and filmmakers Christina Stuhlberger and Rebecca Jane Arthur and there was a very interesting discussion on how they define themselves – as artists or as filmmakers. And I feel this is also a question about the terms artist film and experimental film. Christina was saying that she



*Horizon* (Sid Iandovka, Anya Tsyrlina, 2019, Russia, 7 min) / Film on video



*Lili* (An van Dienderen, 2015, Belgium, 12 min) / 16mm film on video

would never call herself an artist because the term is somehow too grand, and she is purely a filmmaker. And Rebecca was saying the exact opposite. And I think it often comes down to the space the works are being shown in – either a white cube or a “black box”. Nevertheless, there are festivals dedicated to artist’s films (IFFR, Courtisane, even our Photomonth film programme), which often bring works out of their initial context of an exhibition, for example, giving the audience a chance to experience the work in a completely different way.

JC: Earlier, we were speaking about the challenges that exist around funding in this type of work, that maybe isn’t exactly cinema and isn’t fine art in the traditional sense. And I think the embrace of the term artist’s film and the continued use of it in different contexts can be beneficial in a way to establish this type of work as a real, valid practice.

PK: Yes, because in Estonia, and probably it’s the same in many countries, there doesn’t seem to be an overlap between the art community and the film community. And I feel that this could be an area in which a more experimental approach to filmmaking could happen and could find some funding for itself. And then there is the question of distribution. In her 2011 essay “Indelible video” Chris Kraus writes how there is no longer a distribution system in place for non-narrative film and that “museums and galleries have become venues for works that two decades ago would have been screened as experimental cinema”.

IV: That’s a good point. Nowadays, you cannot just go to a cinema to see an experimental film programme at any random moment you want. Experimental films are always shown in the context of a festival. And then it has a very specific audience and very specific target. In Estonia, I think the art scene is more interested than the film scene, in having a space where experimental and/or artist’s films could be shown, discussed and so on.

PK: I’m not sure exactly what Kraus meant by a distribution system, but even if she was talking about New York or some other large city, I’m sure these screenings would have still taken place in smaller







possible now. I feel artists are also letting go of the ownership – of wanting to own the making of these images. So, people often work with found footage, and archival images. It's not so important to be the person who produced the actual images, it's more a question of what you do with them.

PK: Jesse, you mentioned the revival of Hi8 and other lo-fi video formats and I feel like the revival of this aesthetic is a generational thing and that is also present now in street fashion for example. You see a lot of the 90s rave-look in clothing. And maybe it's because I just saw a trailer for a Jeremy Deller documentary about rave culture in England between 1984 and 1992, and I've been thinking about this, but I find it interesting how we've come full circle from miniDV and Hi8, the kinds of video formats that earlier were just the cheapest means to make images, but are now being used for aesthetic reasons. I suppose the same thing happened to 16mm film in the 1990s. People were "over" video and started to look back for something and found a medium that 20 years earlier was used more as a cheaper way to record moving images than for its aesthetic quality.

JC: Absolutely. And also one that for the past 20 plus years has been considered ugly as the

desire has always been for something cleaner and sharper. The lo-fi, low resolution – it's a "poor image" – to do a crude job citing Hito Steyerl. I imagine she would be in praise of Hi8 video.

PK: Ingel, how do you balance your activities between curating film programmes and making actual work of your own.

IV: Creating these film programmes runs completely in parallel with my own creative processes of making films. Curating the programmes is somehow a continuation of research on the topics I deal with in my own practice. The creative process of making films can be extremely lonely, as I like to work on my films alone. It's not so much a principle to do this – but often it's the only possible way in terms of time, money, flexibility and the sensitivity of the topic. Curating the programmes is basically the opposite – a lot of communication, constant dialogue with the filmmakers and finally with the audience. I really enjoy that. It's not really about curating these film programmes for myself, but I feel that there is also a need for that in Estonia. It all comes together when the filmmakers have had a chance to come over to Tallinn and the dialogue has continued here and with the audience. That is the most rewarding part of the whole process. Another important



*I hope I'm Loud When I'm Dead* (Beatrice Gibson, 2018, UK, 20 min) / HD video

motivation lies in a need to contribute to an ethical distribution of artist's films. As a filmmaker myself who shows her work quite a lot at film festivals, it makes me extremely sad how filmmakers are being treated. Often your work gets shown on the other side of the world and you never hear how it went – was there any audience, you don't get much feedback. Not to mention the non-existing artist fees. You're lucky if you have a chance to attend the festival, if you are invited, but more and more there is a tendency of not really caring from the festival side. They focus more on the visibles for the public – "the show" which is provided at the festival, but unfortunately the filmmaker is often completely left out.

PK: Well said. Jesse, a similar question to you. As I understand, you are not an artist or filmmaker yourself?

JC: I'm just an enthusiast.

PK: Do you have a specific ethos or what influences you in the choices that you make? And this would also be relevant in the context of the upcoming programme – how did you approach curating a programme that will be presented in Tallinn?

JC: Sure. I mean I always bring my own biases, unfortunately, but try to rectify any of those

biases in the cinema programmes I curate. I try to be very conscious of my personal morals and principles in programming, which includes an awareness of the spaces that I occupy, in this position of privilege and power, as a gatekeeper, as someone who is able to make choices of what is shown and what circulates, and that's something I take very seriously. When it comes to developing an individual programme, it's nice to have a space – as is the case with Tallinn Photomonth – which is quite open, and there is room to start from an idea, from things I've been reading, or from particular films that have inspired me, and build from there. I think this is something that both Ingel and I have done. Having come from an experimental film background, where conversations can still circle back to questions of medium specificity or other dialogues that I don't think are very relevant or very urgent, it's nice to work in an interdisciplinary context. I find that in the contemporary art world, where artists move between mediums and formats and the conversations are really much more grounded in questions of politics, and when the questions of aesthetics do come up they are grounded in very real-world concerns, including meaningful discussions about representation and ethics. Working in a contemporary art context, something like Tallinn Photomonth, is really enriching and a good challenge. ●



*Recital* (Stephanie Beroes, 1978, USA, 20 min) / 16mm film on video





Photo: Tõnu Tunnel

Triin Metsla interviews  
members of the Foto Tallinn  
team: Kadi-Eli Tähiste and  
Helen Melesk

# Foto Tallinn – the Only (Contemporary) Art Fair in Estonia

Triin Metsla

Helen Melesk and Kadi-Eli Tähiste  
are the  
organisers of Art Fair Foto Tallinn in 2019.

Triin Metsla  
is an Estonian art historian.



Triin Metsla: How did you start organizing the Estonian Photographic Art Fair? What was the initial impulse behind it?

Foto Tallinn: Since 2010, the Estonian Photographic Art Fair, now called Foto Tallinn, has been organized by the Estonian Union of Photography Artists (Foku). The initial aim of the fair was to provide members of the Union with an alternative outlet besides the more typical exhibition making and organizing – and we decided in favour of the art fair format.

TM: Why a fair focusing on photographic art? Is the fair curated?

FT: The fair's focus on photography is primarily due to the fact that it was born as an initiative of the Estonian Union of Photography Artists. At the same time, it is also worth remembering that contemporary photography and photographic artists are no longer strictly confined to the medium – therefore, the fair can be considered a contemporary art fair in the wider sense. The fair is not curated as such, but the participants are selected by a professional international jury which this year also includes several curators.

TM: Which fairs have you participated in yourself?

FT: The Estonian Union of Photography Artists has taken part in international fairs since 2017. Foku has introduced the work of the Union's artists at the ArtVilnius fair in 2017 and 2018, we participated at the POPPOSITIONS alternative art fair in Brussels in 2017, and at The Others art fair in Turin in the fall of 2018.

TM: How do you choose what to show (both when organizing the fair and attending one)?

FT: For Foto Tallinn there is an open call and the participants are selected by an international jury. When we take part in fairs ourselves, the artist to be presented will be selected from among the members of Foku considering the profile and focus of the particular fair. The artists participating in foreign fairs will be selected by Foku's board members who are also actively involved with other projects in the field of contemporary art. Considering foreign art fairs, priority will be

given to Foku members who are not actively represented by a gallery.

TM: Have you noticed which displays have been more successful?

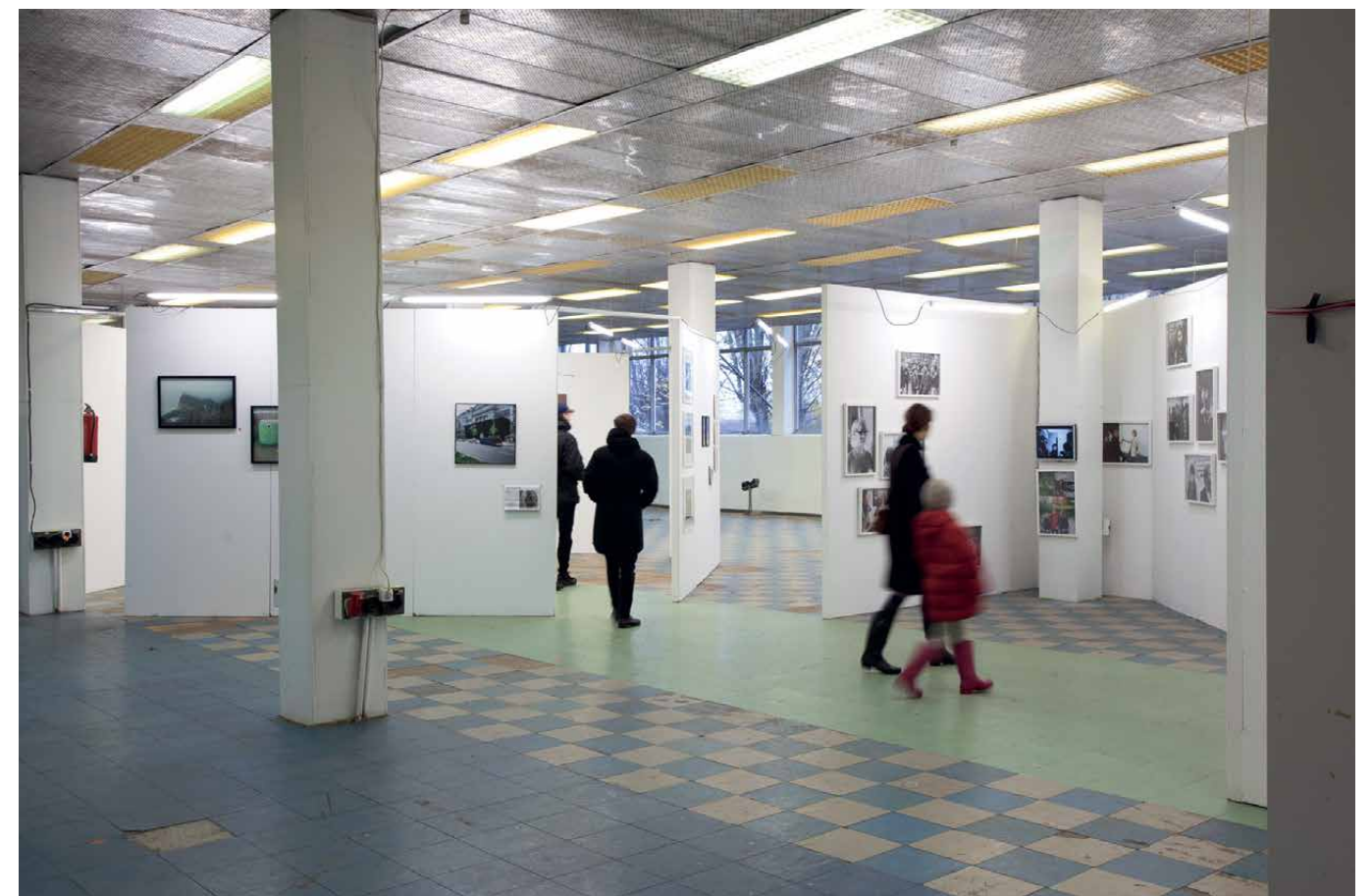
FT: As a rule, Foku has done well at international fairs. The displays have mostly caught the attention of professional audiences. For example, the exhibition jury selected Foku's presentations at ArtVilnius among the best displays in both years, and Laura Kuusk, who was represented by Foku, also received the title of Best Female Artist in 2018. At The Others art fair, Foku's booth with Mari-Leen Kiipli's works was selected the best in the "Expanded Screen" section in 2018.

TM: What do you think of the art fair format and representing artists and selling their works on a relatively commercial platform? Or is it more about aiming to popularize the buying of art?

FT: The sales aspect is of course an important part of the format, but one must not over-emphasize this (at least in the Estonian context). When thinking about the fair, we consider three major target groups and trends: art lovers, art professionals and art buyers/collectors. The fair could serve as a meeting place for all of them in the broadest sense, useful and informative for all parties, even without emphasizing the commercial aspect. Of course, the fair also introduces the option of buying and collecting art. For example, in 2017, for the first time, we offered a personalized advisory service to people interested in buying and people made quite extensive use of this option – several visitors to the fair found a suitable work to buy or left the event with new ideas. People like to have someone to discuss their ideas and thoughts with and ask for advice. In an ideal case, of course, this role is managed by the gallerist, even at fairs, but as long as the tradition of gallery representation is still in its developmental phase in Estonia, our fair will try to fill this gap in the best possible way and introduce art lovers to local artists.

It is also important to provide a platform for professionals to exchange contacts and ideas. We can see that the art fair format is also going through rapid change internationally, as there are very commercial, but also more alternative fairs, where in the case of the latter the focus is mostly on professional exchange.

Foto Tallinn – the Only (Contemporary) Art Fair in Estonia



Estonian Photographic Art Fair 2013. Photos: Tõnu Tunnel

Triin Metsla

Estonian Art 2019/2

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Foto Tallinn – the Only (Contemporary) Art Fair in Estonia



Triin Metsla



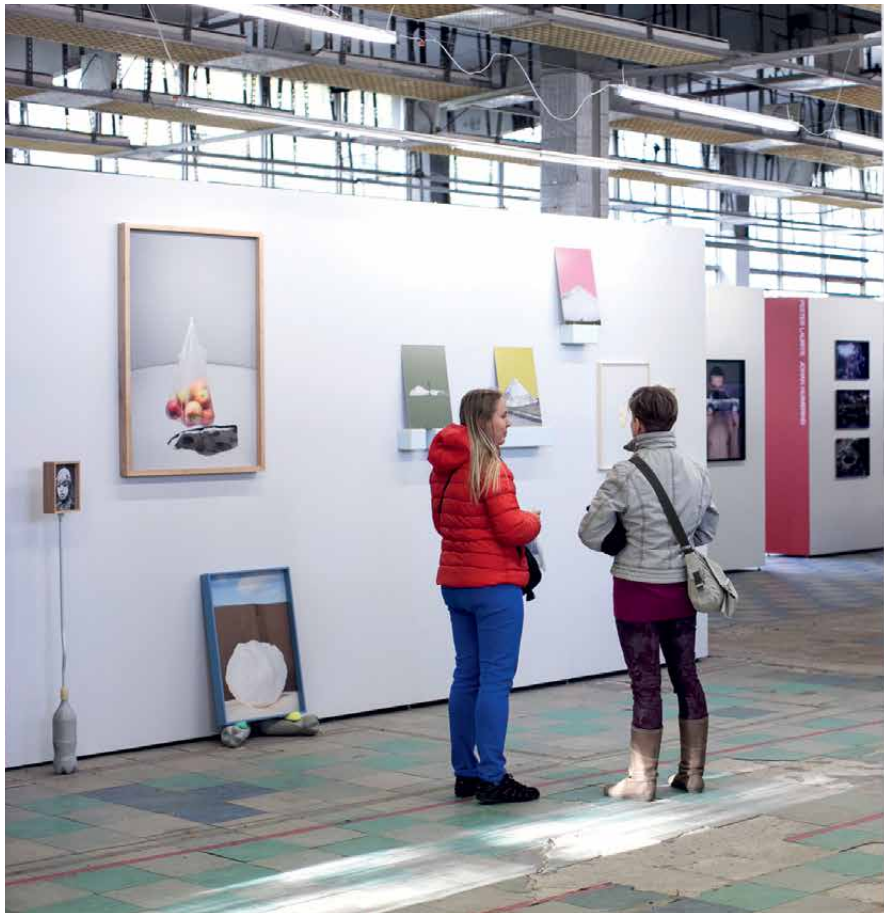
Estonian Photographic Art Fair 2014. Photos: Tõnu Tunnel



Estonian Photographic Art Fair 2015. Photos: Tõnu Tunnel

Estonian Art 2019/2





**EESTI FOTOKUNSTIMESS '16**  
**PHOTOGRAPHIC ART FAIR**

Kunstnikud / Artists  
ALISSA NIRGI, ANNIKA HAAS, EVE KIILER,  
HEIKKI LEIS, JOHAN HUIMERIND, KAI KALJO  
KAREL KOPLIMETS, KIRILL TULIN, KRISTA MÖLDER  
LIINA SIIB, LILLI-KRÖÖT REPNAU, MARGE MONKO  
MARI VOLENS, MARI-LEEN KIIPLI, PACO ULMAN  
PEETER LAURITS, STEN ELTERMAA  
TANJA MURAVSKAJA, TARVO HANNO VARRES

Galerid / Galleries  
JOHANNA HEIKKILÄ, HANNA PIKSARV  
ART JA HELENA, CAMILLE LAURELLI  
ANNA MARI LIIVRAND, JOHNSON & JOHNSON  
ROSA-VIOLETTA GRÖTSCH (galerii galerii)  
HERKKI-ERICH MERILA (Haus galerii)  
PHILIP SOLOVJOV, VIVIAN AINSALU (galerii Positiv)  
SIGRID VIIR (Temnikova & Kasela galerii)

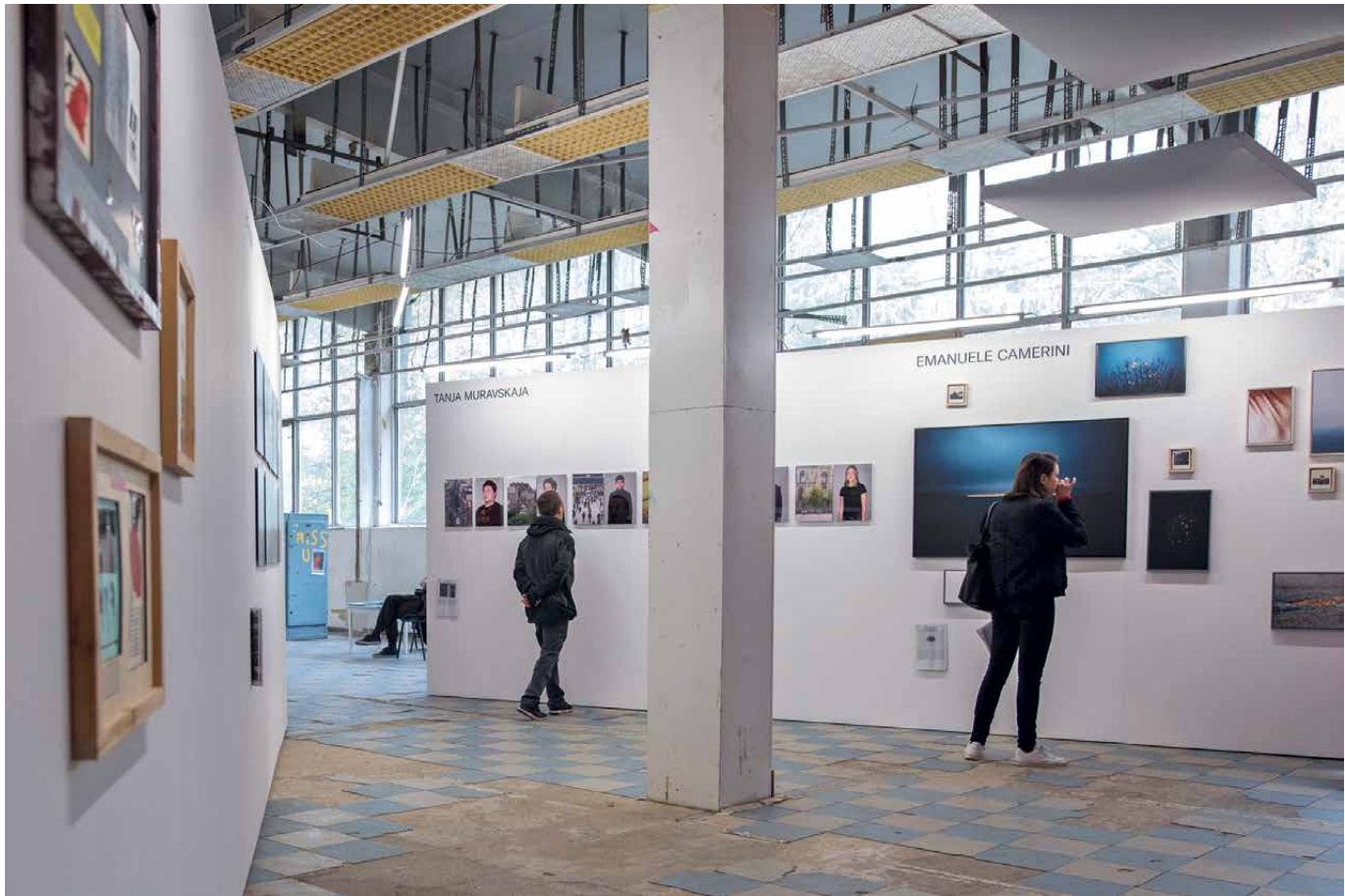
Külastajakunstnikud / Visiting artists  
HERTTA KIISKI <sup>FI</sup>, ANDREY BOGUSH <sup>RU</sup>  
LIGA SPUNDE <sup>LV</sup>, MIKS MITREVICŠ &  
KRISTINE KURSIŠA <sup>LV</sup>

Kuraatorid / Curators  
KULLA LAAS & KRISTINA ÕLLEK

Narva Kunstiresidentuur / Narva Art Residency  
CAMILLE LAURELLI <sup>FR</sup>  
LOUISA MARIE SUMMER <sup>DE</sup>

**30.9.–2.10.2016**

Foto Tallinn – the Only (Contemporary) Art Fair in Estonia



Triin Metsla



Estonian Photographic Art Fair 2016. Photos: Kristina Õllek



Estonian Photographic Art Fair 2017. Photos: Mari Armei

Estonian Art 2019/2



TM: What makes organizing and following through with an art fair in Estonia difficult? And what makes it easy?

FT: In Estonia, the biggest challenge might be that the fair as a format is not so familiar to artists, gallerists or art audiences. So, for us, one of the main tasks is definitely to work hard at pointing out, for example, how a fair is different from an exhibition. It is important to highlight the fair as an opportunity to actively and intensively (contrary to the more typical “passive” format) present one’s work and to manage multiple (professional) contacts during a single weekend.

What makes it easy is the substantial interest in the fair from gallerists and artists and their willingness to present exciting solutions in the context of the fair, which in turn opens up the many possibilities of photography as a medium.

TM: How ready is Estonia for an art fair? How do you estimate the relationship between selling-buying/collecting art in Estonia? How can you encourage this?

FT: In our opinion, Estonia is becoming more ready for an art fair with each year. Of course, there is still a lot of work to be done to help people feel more familiar with the format, but general awareness has grown a lot since stories about the participation of Estonian galleries in international fairs have been published in newspapers and the general awareness of the topic among journalists has risen.

Of course, there is still room for improvement regarding the issue of buying and collecting art. When it comes to enlivening the scene, we think it is important to dispel some of the myths associated with the art market. For example, it is important to spread the idea that you don’t need to be loaded with money to buy art, and that there are many art works on the market that are also affordable for people on average salaries. This is backed by the statistics – the Art Index Database<sup>1</sup>, launched by the Estonian Contemporary Art Development Center, mapping the Estonian art market, shows that the price of most art related transactions in Estonia is around 1,000 euros or less. Another myth that is also quite actively reproduced is that there is no art market in

Estonia. Yet again, according to the statistics, in 2018 alone, over 700 transactions worth 1.7 million euros were registered in the Art Index. And this is only a portion of all the art transactions made in Estonia.

TM: One can read on your webpage that Foto Tallinn will take place for the ninth time this year. What have been the biggest changes since the early years of the Estonian Photographic Art Fair?

FT: For example, the profile of the participants has changed compared to earlier years. At the beginning, the fair was exclusively aimed at the members of the Estonian Union of Photography Artists; since 2012, it opened its doors to all Estonian photographers and since 2015, we have also targeted international participants. Also, compared to the early years, we now have galleries and project spaces participating in addition to artists. In terms of the selection of works, this year we decided to focus on showing newer works by the participating artists, so the criteria was added that only works from the last three years will be exhibited.

TM: What are the future plans, perspectives, biggest challenges for Foto Tallinn in the coming years? How do you mean to bring the fair format (and buying art) closer to people and make it more popular?

FT: For this year’s Foto Tallinn we went through a thorough internal renewal process – we changed the fair’s name, redesigned the visual identity, created a new separate webpage and Facebook page for the fair, updated the application documents and thoroughly reformed the processes of the fair behind the scenes. We hope that thanks to this, this time, as well as in the future, there is less need to start rebuilding things from scratch every time, and this will enable us to concentrate even more on developing the content and communications concerning the fair.

We would be happy to see the fair become even more international in the future and for Foto Tallinn to diversify the local art scene, and boost cooperation and meaningful professional discussions. The context of the fair has brought about new arrangements for

representation and collaboration in the past few years, as well as this year – new galleries or other art institutions (for example this year the Narva Art Residency and the Juhan Kuus Documentary Photo Centre) will take on the role of representing artists. We certainly hope this positive development will continue.

When it comes to the audience, we believe that the key is really communication – the fair indeed presents a wonderful opportunity to familiarize oneself with what is happening in the contemporary (photographic) art scene all in one take. Considering the relative popularity of photographic art and the accessibility of the media, the fair might be of interest to many people and it is our job to inform the audience of this event. ●

## SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE FAIR

As the only art fair in Estonia, Foto Tallinn offers professional photographic artists a platform for collaboration, meetings and discussions, along with the opportunity to present their work to a diverse audience. Art audiences are presented with an overview of the latest contemporary photographic art in an environment that is different from the usual exhibition format. The fair includes meetings with artists, panel discussions, lectures, seminars, book presentations, guided tours and curated excursions. Foto Tallinn is also a good opportunity to get acquainted with the options for buying and collecting (photographic) art: the art fair team offers special events and a personalized advisory service to those interested.

Foto Tallinn presents works from over 30 different artists, the range of displays varies from traditional photographic art to more experimental works using video or spatial installations. The art fair will introduce works from artists, galleries and project spaces from Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Singapore and the United Kingdom, selected by an international jury consisting of Bruno Barsanti (IT), Evita Goze (LT), Kati Ilves (EE), Karin Laansoo (EE) and Niekolaas Johannes Lekkerkerk (NL).

Foto Tallinn 2019 will take place from 27 to 29 September and is one of the events associated with the opening of the Kai Art Center located in the Port Noblessner area, as well as being part of the main programme of the Tallinn Photomonth contemporary art biennial. The fair, formerly known as the Estonian Photographic Art Fair, will be held this year for the ninth time.



Photos: Kristina Õllek

1 Online database listing art transactions in the Estonian art market since 1998. [kunstiindeks.ee](http://kunstiindeks.ee)



Brigita Reinert

Interview with  
the founders of  
Fotografiska Tallinn:  
Maarja Loorents  
and Margit Aasmäe



# Fotografiska – Home for World Photography

Margit Aasmäe and Maarja Loorents  
are  
Estonian entrepreneurs and co-founders of  
Fotografiska Tallinn.

Brigita Reinert  
is an Estonian art historian  
and critic, and works at Kumu Art Museum  
as a curator of public programmes.



Brigita Reinert: The field of photography is quite active in Estonia. There is the international biennial Tallinn Photomonth, which has been held since 2011, the Museum of Photography in the old town, the Juhan Kuus Documentary Photo Centre in the Telliskivi Creative City, Gallery Positiiv in Pelgulinn, and photography has become a natural part of the field of contemporary art in Estonia. How was the idea of bringing Fotografiska to Tallinn born? And what is its role or what gap does it fill in the local cultural and art field?

Margit Aasmäe: Fotografiska is not a typical museum. It is a meeting place where world-class photography, sustainable cooking and consumption, music, design and open-minded and engaging attitudes towards the world come together. We are open practically all



the time: seven days a week, from 9am to 11pm and sometimes also until 1am. Our aim is to be inclusive and open, to address as many people as possible and to create an environment where visitors feel comfortable. We think that photography is a good medium for telling stories in an engaging and understandable way.

Since the opening, the first months have already shown that the audience has embraced Fotografiska – some of the visitors have described our exhibitions as soul-stirring experiences. The way that photography is presented here – the special lighting solutions, music and context – turn the exhibition into a special experience.

Maarja Loorents: I have visited many art museums and exhibitions around the world and I was saddened by the thought of not being able to see the work of world-class artists in our own little country. That's where the idea of bringing Fotografiska to Tallinn stemmed from – we wanted to make the work of the world's best photographic artists available to the local audience.

BR: You mentioned that Fotografiska aims to engage with wider audiences. But who would you consider your target audience? How do you envision the ratio between the local audience and foreign visitors?

MA: We want to be intelligible and engaging for both local and foreign visitors. Our ambition is to become a regionally significant centre. There will be no Fotografiska in Riga and probably neither in Helsinki – so, we would like to be the number one place for photography for these cities as well. It is important for us that everybody feels good and comfortable in our building, whether they have come to see an exhibition or to spend time in the restaurant or at a music event.

ML: The exhibition programme has been conceived following the idea that people with different interests can find something appealing and inspiring for them. We want to engage the widest range of audiences and also to offer attractive content to professional art audiences.

For example, Pentti Sammallahti's exhibition was our initiative, mostly targeted at Finnish visitors, but it also addresses the local audience in a special way.

Fotografiska – Home for World Photography

BR: How important is it for you to engage with your audience and what kind of public programmes do you plan to offer?

MA: Building a local community is definitely one of our key activities. Along with the exhibition programme, we plan to provide educational programmes aimed at different target groups.

ML: We also have regular exhibition tours and different formats for meeting and engaging with the artists. In addition, there is also a weekly music club.

BR: What is the criteria for deciding on your exhibition programme? To what extent is the selection determined from Stockholm and to what extent do you have a say in it?

ML: Our exhibition programme has a two-year cycle and most of the exhibitions for the next two years have been decided upon already. We make the selection with our Stockholm colleagues, but the local team has the final say in what we feel is best suited to our market. There are exhibitions that we initiate locally and bring to Tallinn ourselves, but there are



also imported exhibitions that arrive in Tallinn through the Fotografiska network.

Fotografiska's principle is to exhibit big names, either historic or contemporary, alongside emerging talent and artists who are not yet so well known.

BR: When you decide upon exhibitions, do you take photography as a medium as your basis or is it more like a starting point that can also lead to spatial installations, moving images and the wider field of visual culture?

ML: For example video art is also very important to us, and in the autumn, we will have one especially exciting video art project taking place – however, the main focus will remain on photography.

BR: What is your approach to presenting local art? For example, will you always have one local artist on show?

MA: Our main mission is to bring world photography to Tallinn, but also to keep an eye out for Estonian or other regional artists to exhibit at Fotografiska.

ML: There is no plan to always have one local artist on show. The most important thing for us is the combination of exhibitions and the synergy they create taking into account the wide spectrum of our audience. We definitely wanted to have one local artist among the opening round of exhibitions, therefore we are very grateful that Anna-Stina Treumund's exhibition took place in our house.

BR: Fotografiska Stockholm calls itself a museum, despite the fact that it does not have a collection. What is your vision of the institutional model for Fotografiska Tallinn?

ML: We are indeed a photographic art centre, not a museum. A museum stores, collects and conducts scientific research. Our ambition is to be a vibrant and organic meeting place where world-class photography, music, food and design come together.

BR: You have described Fotografiska as a modern cultural and leisure centre where "art, good food, music, design and open-minded visions come together". This kind



of a modern lifestyle centre has become a widespread model for cultural centres in global cities. It seems that one of Fotografiska's main ambitions is to reach the widest audience possible. How will you maintain a certain balance between the higher artistic value and the commercial and entertaining side of your venture?

MA: We do not see a distinct line between "higher art" and everything else. The main question is about reaching people. We want to exhibit world-class photography and emotionally moving stories that touch people. Fotografiska's role is to be inclusive, but also stimulating, thought and discussion provoking. For example, we have an exhibition series called Fotografiska for Life, which deliberately addresses difficult social issues.

ML: Fotografiska is not simply a stunning exhibition space, we also want it to play an important role in society, where it is expected of us to raise important subjects and to stir things up, to shed light on sometimes beautiful, but sometimes painful topics.

BR: How is the centre funded? Do you operate entirely on private capital or do you also seek support from public sources? And is it possible to buy the works on display?

ML: The centre was initiated solely with the support of private Estonian entrepreneurs, without any additional support from the Swedes nor the state. It is based on a franchise model: Fotografiska's brand gives us the opportunity to host this exciting hub and to showcase international exhibitions. It is indeed possible to buy the works on display, but we have not yet fully developed this service.

BR: Why did you choose Telliskivi as your location? Did you have any other alternatives?

ML: We also considered the Noblessner and the Rotermann quarters, but we finally decided on this location for the atmosphere of the Telliskivi Creative City. This is the kind of atmosphere that suits Fotografiska. When the owner from Sweden came to see the locations, it was a kind of mutual recognition, like pieces

of the puzzle falling into the right place at the right moment. What also played a role was that the Telliskivi Creative City themselves were also interested in bringing Fotografiska to the Red House which had almost been waiting for this kind of tenant.

BR: The renovation of the building was designed by Salto Architects and the interior by Toomas Korb. What was your vision for the architectural outcome and atmosphere at Fotografiska?

MA: A great inspiration for the Salto Architects was Brooklyn, where a fascinating creative environment has also been built in a similar industrial environment. The inspiration for the rooftop restaurant also stemmed from there. The main goal was to renovate the building as authentically as possible, preserving the



Fotografiska – Home for World Photography

existing materials and construction and the industrial image. Finding a good solution for the interior design was quite a challenge, as the surrounding environment is very eclectic. Fotografiska's brand itself is also a symbiosis – on one hand, it represents the world photography and quality, and on the other hand sustainability – the reuse of materials and a sustainable attitude. We wanted to bring these ideas into the space and therefore the restaurant features many products made from recycled materials. Toomas Korb thus sought to reconcile the Telliskivi Creative City atmosphere with a world-class vibe while retaining the retro touch typical to the industrial architecture of the Soviet era.

BR: Maarja, you have a lot of experience working in the field of communications. What are the advantages of your background in managing this kind of institution in Estonian society, where one could say that contemporary art plays a secondary role in people's lives?

ML: I do not know if this is an advantage or not, but having worked in the field of communication for a while, I could probably sense that there was something in the Fotografiska model that was missing from the Tallinn leisure industry field.

BR: What do you consider your greatest challenges in managing this kind of institution? And how do Estonian audiences feel about contemporary photography in your opinion?

MA: Our main challenge is to create a centre that engages people and provides value to their daily lives throughout the year. One question is indeed the attitude of the audience towards photography and another is that Fotografiska as a brand has been relatively unknown in Estonia until now. For example, at first the news of the arrival of Fotografiska in Tallinn was much bigger in Finland than in Estonia, because Fotografiska in Stockholm was so well known there. Yet, the reception has been a rather positive surprise: the locals have accepted us quickly, as most visitors during the summer and the holiday season have been locals, which is an indication that Fotografiska engages with them and that this kind of a centre was really missing from the local field.



BR: To sum up, I would like to ask what kind of a cultural impact do you imagine Fotografiska to have on local audiences? What change in attitude might emerge among Estonian audiences towards photographic art as such?

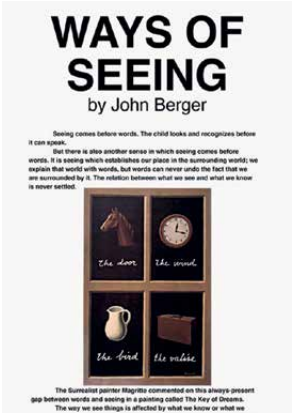
MA: We do not expect people to have much prior knowledge of photography nor an understanding of why an artist was or was not selected to be part of our programme. It is our task to guarantee a world-class exhibition programme. But considering the large number of visitors we are having, we will definitely raise local awareness of photography as an art form, introducing the artists and the power of photography. Hopefully, we will also contribute to changing people's behavioural and lifestyle habits. When it becomes a habit that people consider visiting an exhibition as part of their leisure activities – in addition to theatre, cinema or sports – then that is already a great achievement. ●



Marge Monko's Picks

I feel like there are multiple Top 10 book lists that I could put together, as I have many favourites in fiction, theory and art. However, the following is a list of publications related to visual culture and photography that I leaf through and read time and time again.

Top Ten Books



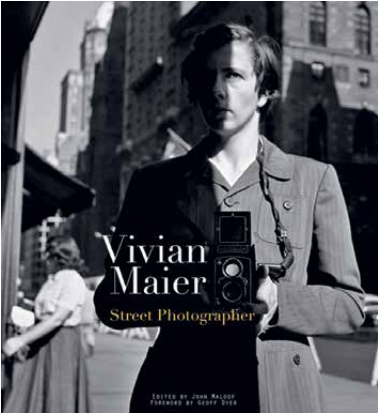
Ways of Seeing by John Berger (1972)

The book of the BBC series by Berger is almost like the bible of visual culture for me. Berger’s analysis of the social aspects of representation and seeing is an eye-opening experience. This book should be part of the mandatory reading list for every art student, all the more since it has now been translated into Estonian.



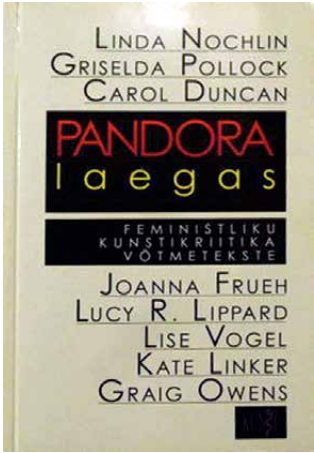
Invention of Hysteria by George Didi-Huberman (2003)

One of the books that has had a significant impact on my work. I discovered it when I was working on the photo series *Studies of Bourgeoisie* (2004 –2006). The book examines the relationship between photography and psychiatry in the 19th century. It takes as its starting point the photographs made in the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris of patients diagnosed with hysteria. Backed by the collection of images, Didi-Huberman illustrates how hysteria was turned into an impressive voyeuristic spectacle predominantly “performed” by female patients.



Street Photographer by Vivian Maier (2011)

I’m not a big fan of street photography, but it is hard not to be amazed by Vivian Maier’s photos. They are just excellent! The collection of images photographed over several decades mostly in Chicago, was discovered accidentally about ten years ago. Maier was unknown to the public until her death, she did not publish a single photograph during her lifetime.



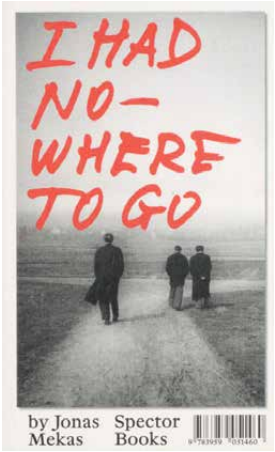
Pandora’s Box: Some Key Texts of Feminist Art History and Criticism, compiled by Katrin Kivimaa and Reet Varblane (2000)

A compilation of key feminist texts about art history put together by Katrin Kivimaa and Reet Varblane and translated into Estonian.



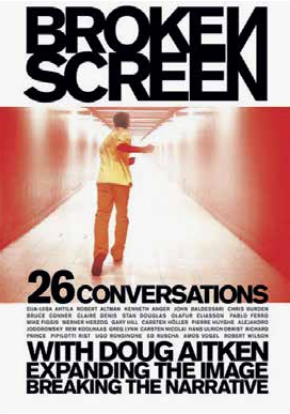
Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern by Anne Friedberg (1994)

A publication focusing on the history of visual culture that I have relied upon while conceptualizing my own work. Friedberg points out how the visual formats of the 19th century, like photography, diorama and wandering around the city, paved the way for modern forms of spectacle such as cinema, display windows, video and virtual reality. In contrast with the term *flâneur*, which refers to the male stroller, Anne Friedberg also proposes a female subject the *flâneuse* to highlight the female gaze.



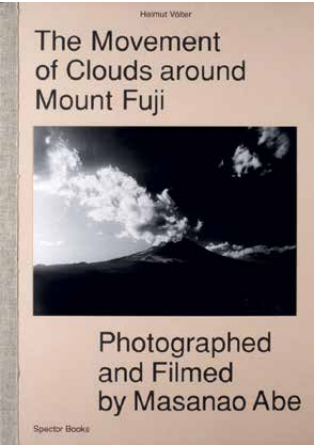
I Had Nowhere to Go by Jonas Mekas (2017)

A deeply touching memoir depicting Mekas’ life as a refugee in Germany and his first years in New York, marked by a struggle for life, as well as finding his own path.



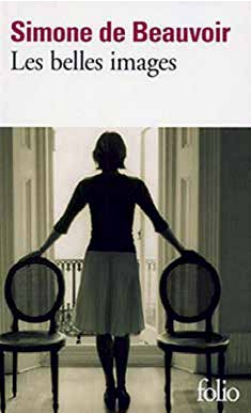
Broken Screen: Expanding the Image, Breaking the Narrative: 26 Conversations with Doug Aitken (2005)

From time to time I return to reread these conversations with film-makers, artists and architects compiled by Doug Aitken in the 1990s. The only criticism of Aitken might be the fact that there were only 3 women among the 26 interviewees.



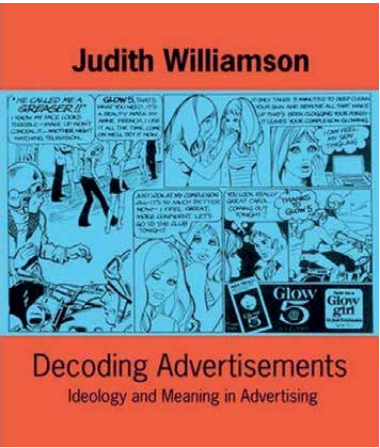
The Movement of Clouds around Mount Fuji. Photographed and Filmed by Masanao Abe by Helmut Völter (2016)

The book compiled by the graphic designer Helmut Völter is based on the material photographed and filmed by the Japanese physicist Masanao Abe near Mount Fuji from the 1920s to the 1940s. It is an astounding work where poetry and science work hand in hand.



Les Belles Images by Simone de Beauvoir (1966)

A novel, which is not explicitly about images nor visual culture, but which through the eyes of the protagonist Lauren, provides an insight into the work of an advertising agency in the 1960s. The main theme is Lauren’s existential crisis, provoked by confronting her role as a woman through motherhood and family life, the illusory nature of the advertising world and social change.



Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising by Judith Williamson (1978)

I have been interested in advertising photography for some time now, and Judith Williamson’s semiotic approach has helped me understand how the images used in advertising create meaning and target audiences.

Marge Monko is an Estonian artist and the head of the department of photography at the Estonian Academy of Arts. She uses mainly photography, video and installation in her artistic practice.



Exhibitions

Adamson-Eric Museum

Lühike jalg 3, Tallinn  
Tue–Sun 11–6pm  
adamson-eric.ekm.ee

Permanent exhibition:  
Adamson-Eric (1902–1968)

16.08.–01.12.2019 The Visit: Eero  
Järnefelt and Venny Soldan-Brofeldt  
13.12.2019–01.03.2020 The  
Transition: Siim-Tanel Annus –  
Performance and Pictures

Contemporary Art Museum  
of Estonia

Põhja 35, Tallinn  
ekkm.ee  
Tue–Sun 12–7pm

07.09.–20.10.2019 When You Say  
We Belong To The Light We Belong  
To The Thunder  
02.11.–15.12.2019 Tunnel (working  
title)

Draakon Gallery

Pikk 18, Tallinn  
eaa.ee/draakon  
Mon–Fri 11–6pm  
Sat 11–5pm

02.09.–21.09.2019 Anna Mari Liivrand  
23.09.–12.10.2019 Art Allmägi  
14.10.–02.11.2019 Tõnis Saadoja  
04.11.–23.11.2019 Karel Koplimets &  
Maido Juss  
25.11.–14.12.2019 Mari Roosvalt  
16.12.2019–11.01.2020 Jass Kaselaan

Estonian Museum of Applied Art  
and Design

Lai 17, Tallinn  
etdm.ee  
Wed–Sun 11–6pm

20.09.–20.10.2019 Kuud.  
Contemporary lighting design  
25.10.2019–05.1.2020 ROOM.  
Krista Leesi  
28.09.2019–05.01.2020  
The Weather Diaries. Curators  
Cooper&Gorfer

Hobusepea Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn  
eaa.ee/hobusepea  
Wed–Mon 11–6pm

05.09.–22.09.2019 Laura Pöld,  
Katrín Väli  
25.09.–14.10.2019 Maarja Nurk  
16.10.–04.11.2019 Silvia Sosar,  
Hanno Soans  
06.11.–25.11.2019 Angela Maasalu  
27.11.–16.12.2019 Johannes Luik,  
LAURI  
18.12.2019–13.01.2020 Helena  
Keskiküla

Haapsalu City Gallery

Posti 3, Haapsalu  
galerii.kultuurimaja.ee  
Wed–Sun 12–6pm

September – Tiit Randmann  
October – Cloe Jancis  
November – Imbi Kruuv  
December – Kristi Kongi

Kadriori Art Museum

Weizenbergi 37, Tallinn  
kadriorumuuseum.ekm.ee  
Tue, Thu–Sun 10–6pm  
Wed 10–8pm

Permanent exhibition: Paintings  
from the 16th – 18th centuries.  
Dutch, German, Italian and Russian  
masters. Western European and  
Russian applied art and sculpture  
from the 18th – 20th centuries.

16.06.–13.10.2019 Dannebrog –  
The Flag That Fell from the Sky:  
The Golden Age of Danish Art  
02.11.2019–05.04.2020 Ars  
Academica: The University of Tartu  
Art Collection

Kai Art Center

Peetri 12, Noblessner, Tallinn  
www.kai.center  
Tue–Sun 12–9pm

21.09.2019–1.12.2019 Let the field of  
your attention.... soften and spread  
out, curator Hanna Laura Kaljo

Kogo Gallery

Kastani 42, Tartu  
kogogallery.ee  
Wed–Fri 12–7pm  
Sat 12–6pm

24.08.2019–05.10.2019 Empty  
Coats. August Krogan–Roley

Kumu Art Museum

Weizenbergi 34 / Valge 1  
kumu.ekm.ee  
Tue–Wed, Fri–Sun 10–6pm  
Thu 10–8pm

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.

17.05.–27.10.2019 Garden Exile:  
The Tuglas’s Home Garden Through  
Tanja Muravskaja’s Camera Lens  
05.07.–10.11.2019 Art Museum of  
Estonia 100. Open Collections:  
The Artist Takes the Floor  
23.08.2019–05.01.2020 Maire  
Männik: Estonian Legend in Paris  
20.09.2019–26.01.2020 The  
Conqueror’s Eye: Lisa Reihana’s  
In Pursuit of Venus  
11.10.2019 – March 2020 Edith  
Karlson, Mary Reid Kelley and  
Eva Mustonen  
01.11.2019 – April 2020 Silvia Jõgever  
and Kadi Estland  
06.12.2019–26.04.2020 Creating  
the Self: Emancipating Women in  
Estonian and Finnish Art

Mikkel Museum

Weizenbergi 28, Tallinn  
mikkelimuuseum.ekm.ee  
Tue, Thu–Sun 10–6pm  
Wed 10–8pm

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

31.08.2019–01.03.2020 Alfred  
Rõude: Collector with a Mission

Museum of Estonian Architecture  
Rotermann Salt Storage

Ahtri 2, Tallinn  
arhitektuurimuuseum.ee  
Tue–Sun 11–6pm

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

12.09.2019–17.11.2019 TAB 2019  
Curatorial Exhibition “Beauty Matters”  
14.09.–17.11.2019 Individual Parts  
in Individual Units

Niguliste Museum

Niguliste 3, Tallinn  
nigulistemuuseum.ekm.ee  
Mon–Sun 10–6pm

Permanent exhibition: The Art  
Museum of Estonia’s collection  
of medieval and early modern  
ecclesiastical art.

25.10.2019–26.04.2020 The Virgin  
Mary: Woman, Mother, Queen

Tallinn Art Hall

Vabaduse väljak 8, Tallinn  
kunstihoone.ee  
Wed–Sun 12–7pm

14.09.–17.11.2019 Mercury. Tallinn  
Photomonth 2019  
27.11.–30.11.2019 Body Space(d),  
curator Evelyn Raudsepp  
14.12.2019–24.02.2020 Disarming  
Language: disability, communication,  
rupture, curators Christine Sun Kim  
and Niels Van Tomme

Art Hall Gallery

Vabaduse väljak 6, Tallinn  
kunstihoone.ee  
Wed–Sun 12–7pm

17.08.–13.10.2019 Kate Lyddon and  
Angela Maasalu. Throbwerk  
18.10.–15.12.2019 Vello Vinn. ∞ & ○  
20.12.2019–16.02.2020 Mall Paris  
and Edith Karlson. Sisters

Tallinn City Gallery

Harju 13, Tallinn  
kunstihoone.ee  
Wed–Sun 12–7pm

23.08.–20.10.2019 Jüri Arrak.  
Green Light  
25.10.–15.12.2019 Jane Remm.  
Views on a Landscape  
20.12.2019–16.02.2020 Edgar  
Tedresaar and Sten Saarits

Tartu Art House

Vanemuise 26, Tartu  
kunstimaja.ee  
Wed–Mon 12–6pm

Big Hall  
19.09.–13.10.2019 Dark Matter.  
Printmaking group exhibition  
17.10.–10.11.2019 Helle Vahersalu 80  
14.11.–15.12.2019 Marco Laimre  
19.12.2019–12.01.2020 Annual  
exhibition

Small Hall  
19.09.–13.10.2019 Andrus Peegel,  
Tõnis Kriisa  
17.10.–10.11.2019 Jass Kaselaan  
14.11.–15.12.2010 Kairo  
19.12.2019–12.01.2020 Annual  
exhibition

Monument Gallery  
19.09.–13.10.2019 Pille Johanson  
17.10.–10.11.2019 Mari-Leen Kiipli  
14.11.–15.12.2019 Taavi Suisalu  
19.12.2019–12.01.2020 Annual  
exhibition

Tartu Art Museum

Raekoja Square 18, Tartu  
tartmus.ee  
Wed, Fri–Sun 11–6pm  
Thu 11–8pm

30.08.–27.10.2019 Pallas in Estonian  
Homes  
25.05.–27.10.2019 Pallas 100.  
The Art School and Its Legend  
08.11.2019–12.04.2020 Mysticism  
and Eros

Temnikova & Kasela Gallery

Lastekodu 1, Tallinn  
temnikova.ee  
Wed–Sat 3–7pm

04.09.–09.11.2019 Dénes Farkas.  
About Dreams That Awaken You

Vabaduse Gallery

Vabaduse 6, Tallinn  
eaa.ee/vabadusegallery  
Mon–Fri 11–6pm  
Sat 11–5pm

20.09.–09.10.2019 Margot Kask  
11.10.–01.11.2019 Toomas Kuusing  
03.11.–20.11.2019 Mariann Kallas  
22.11.–11.12.2019 Andro Kööp  
13.12.2019–01.01.2020 Marje Taska  
and Reet Varblane curatorial project  
“Black Hole”



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# Estonian Art The Photography Issue

