

*estonian*

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**Back cover:** Jaan Koort. *Prayer*. 1921. Palisander. Art Museum of Estonia

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# People, art and the human environment

Laura Kuusk

The current article aims to map the projects in Estonia that are somehow connected with art practice and which do not, *a priori*, take place in an institutionalised art space. Such projects focus on social practice, emerge on the grass-roots level, are connected with people of a certain community and tackle certain problems in the life of that community. As many projects are carried out by artists, they have also reached galleries, video screens, books or other formalised cultural experiences, although they are more like documentation of the real work that took place on-site between people. The practices described in the current article are often either actionist or social, and could, with some reservations, be seen as expressions of aesthetics in everyday practices, because they focus on the relations between people.<sup>1</sup>

Such a tradition of culture which involves daily practices and public space goes back to the activities of the Fluxus artists of the 1960s. From there, via the theories of Michel de Certeau and Nicolas Bourriaud, they have arrived at the present, so that artists still work with relational and everyday (art) practice. In 1992 the artist Rirkrit Tiravanija caused a furore in New York's 303 Gallery by offering free Thai curry to visitors.<sup>2</sup> In 2004 Otto von Busch and Sirja-Liisa Vahtra produced a stencil on the door of the Tallinn restaurant Curry House. At the annual painting exhibition *Ich Bin Ein Maler* (2004) at the Tallinn Art Hall, the curator Jaan Elken wanted the works to be painted straight on the Art Hall walls. In order to avoid 'violence' towards the white cube, as a preparation for stenciling, Sirja-Liisa Vahtra and Otto von Busch taped up an image of Mahatma Gandhi, an advocate of non-violence. If the stencil was painted over, there would hypothetically be a portrait of Gandhi on the Art Hall wall. White paper tape on the white wall in the Art Hall was supplemented by a map of Tallinn, which indicated the real occasion of the work – Mahatma Gandhi's stencil-portrait on the door of the Indian

restaurant Curry House in the Kadriorg neighbourhood. The taped stencil thus acted as a satellite which invited people to look at the 'real' work in urban space and also visit the restaurant run by Indian immigrants. Connections between the gallery and urban space, which partly act as an advertisement, were therefore created by means of a stencil which was never actually carried out. This indicated our society's fear of the Other and pointed out the fact that, in the era of the aggressive market economy, an artist could promote a restaurant run by immigrants whose marketing position was fairly weak (the restaurant has since closed). In addition to this stencil-painting, Sirja-Liisa Vahtra has produced figures of babies, angels, housewives of the 1950s etc in urban space. Their speech balloons present banal utterances about primary values and needs (e.g. "Are you happy?", "More is less", "I did not ask for this!", "Dinner is served!", "The fat dig a grave for themselves" etc). The stencil-baby, who has turned its back on the viewer, seems to sulk, showing an unwillingness to relate to others, or fit into the roles or art institution offered by society (during the exhibition *Ich Bin Ein Maler*, the image was stencilled on the gallery wall; it was an invitation to go out of the gallery and find the image somewhere in town – on rubbish bins, walls, staircases and doors).<sup>3</sup> In 2008, posters declaring independence appeared in Tallinn streets. The authors used urban space to draw attention to the issues of erecting a freedom monument, a topic that was extensively discussed in the media and among the public. Overnight, empty white posters appeared in Tallinn, bearing only the text "Freedom – we declare a competition for the best solution". At the same time there was an active public debate about the planned freedom monument [opening in June 2009 – Ed]. Estonians, who normally avoid getting involved in art projects, were this time quite active – the posters filled up with messages and drawings. Even the posters that remained bare still carried a

Sirja-Liisa Vahtra and Otto von Busch. Stencilled image of Mahatma Gandhi on the door of Curry House and at the Tallinn Art Hall. 2004



Sirja-Liisa Vahtra.  
*Happy Activism*

message. As most poster spaces in Tallinn have to be paid for, the freedom posters also referred to the fact that the space for free expression and the principle of a democratic society in Tallinn are surrendered to the laws of capitalism. The freedom posters thus became not only a space for conveying a message, but also its sharp and clever expression.<sup>4</sup>

Several groups of artists have cooperated with the inhabitants of mental health care institutions, offering them a chance to communicate within the framework of certain social or artistic therapies.

Ave Teeääre and Kertu Ehala helped the inhabitants of Ravila's nursing home establish a club of social interaction. Ehala and Teeääre, who had been involved in the project since 2005, initiated a process through which the inhabitants of the nursing home finally established a club for themselves in spring 2007. This undertaking was open to all. The walls of the room allocated to the club were painted and then the club was declared open. The result of the name competition was the 'Painting Club'. It was a significant event for the inhabitants, especially as they were involved in the whole process. After that, the initiators Ave and Kertu stepped aside, as the aim of the project was to activate the inhabitants of the nursing home, enable them to make decisions and act to change their environment.

The artist duo Johnson and Johnson worked in a completely different environment,

Ave Teeääre and Kertu Ehala. 'Painting Club' at Ravila Nursing Home. 2007



Martin Pääsuke. Posters of Freedom action. 2008



Johnson and Johnson. Paldiski Project. 2006-2008



Johnson and Johnson. Orchestra Rehearsal. Still from video. 2007



although the background was conceptually similar. Between 2006 and 2008 they initiated a communication project in the town of Paldiski, which focused on a copy of Amandus Adamson's [1855–1929, the first professional Estonian sculptor, had close contacts with Paldiski – Ed] maritime sculpture. An opinion poll was organised about what kind of sculpture the inhabitants would like to see in their town – it became a significant cultural event. The aim of the democratic 'model process' was to raise the self-awareness of society and encourage decision-making.<sup>5</sup> Although there is a difference between the isolation of the nursing home and Paldiski, a parallel nevertheless emerges between these two environments, and also between the two (art) practices. Communication is a prerequisite for a functioning system. With his freedom poster action, Martin Pääsuke also referred to the unilateralism of communication as a shortcoming. In the decision-making processes of a democratic society, potentially everyone should have a say. What is the role of an artist here? As Ave Teeääre and Kertu Ehala said about their work in the Ravila nursing home: "A unit was created where previously unknown elements met. There is no profit."<sup>6</sup>

The above-mentioned works created real communication between people<sup>7</sup>,



whereas Riin Kranna-Rõõs and Eve Arpo's *A Day Without A Mobile* drew attention to the mobile phone as a means of communication that has become indispensable within a short period of time. But does it really help unite people or not, and how did people manage before? *A Day Without*

Riin Kranna-Rõõs and Eve Arpo. *A Day Without a Mobile*, São Paulo



*A Mobile* constituted a sound and light installation of mobile phones hanging on a tree in a public space. Everyone could take part, either by hanging his phone on the tree or by ringing a given number, thus contributing to the sound effect. The first mobile phone tree appeared in Tallinn in September 2007, and the project was later repeated in Edmonton and São Paulo.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to artists who have initiated a new process inside a certain community, there are also those who have documented actions organised by citizens' associations on a grass-roots level (or emerging spontaneously). Kristina Norman, for example, has documented communities involved in the conflict between Estonians and Russians. Both Johnson and Johnson and Tõnis Kenkmaa have documented the activities of Prussakov's bicycle club. In the course of several years, this club has organised actions which point out the (ab)use of public space. One of their actions was parking bicycles on the Tallinn Freedom Square, then a huge paid parking lot (extensive renovation work is going on there at the moment). This action is recorded in Kenkmaa's video film *Action* (2006). Another action of the Prussakovs (as the bicycle club members are called) – sabotaging the opening ceremony of the Tartu Road extension – is recorded in Johnson and Johnson's video film *Orchestra Rehearsal* (2007).

Among the institutions initiated by a few people and aiming to unite art and social practices, mention should be made of the culture factory Polymer<sup>9</sup>, the New World Society<sup>10</sup>, the Culture Cauldron, the Urban Lab<sup>11</sup> and the Tartu Yeast Factory<sup>12</sup>. Culture factories and various societies have the same aims – improving the environment in their area and offering people a platform for communication and for making art. The culture factory Polymer, which has been around the longest, is located in the building of a former toy factory in Madara Street in Tallinn. These buildings house various associations (Non Grata, Media Artists' Union, Live Action Role Players' Association and Garage Photo Studio), as well as individual artists and informal coteries of friends who have established studios-digs there. These different associations are united by the non-profit organisation Culture Factory Polymer, initiated by Madis Mikkor. Most of the inhabitants (currently 34) now belong to its board. In addition to jointly managing the running the building, various groups organise events, either independently or together, which are to some extent meant for the

public (e.g an annual festival). Polymer thus constitutes a roof for art practices [regarding the factory's inside practices and the open gallery programme of Art Container, see Estonian Art 1–2/2008 – Ed], and for work with young people through workshops. The Polymer inhabitants function as a village community: mutual assistance (exchange of materials and services) is a necessity as well as creating a communal environment in the factory building, where people would otherwise be isolated in their rooms. The culture factory sets an example for other institutions in Estonian factory buildings – the Culture Cauldron in Tallinn and the Yeast Factory in Tartu. Unlike Polymer and the Yeast Factory, the Cauldron has no permanent inhabitants or internal life of its own: the events are organised by the public. The Polymer festival and the undertakings of the New World Society aim to bring the inhabitants of their urban district together. The culture factory is more art-centred, whereas the New World Society focuses on creating a sense of community and adding



cultural and environmental value to their neighbourhood.

When the main emphasis of art falls on collective work and the social environment, the results can emerge outside art as well – in someone's daily life.

1 The term 'relational aesthetics' (*esthétique relationnelle*) was invented by Nicolas Bourriaud. According to him, relational art is

a set of art practices that rely on the context of human relations and social communication, rather than on a separate and individual space. The starting points of relational art are human relations and social context, as opposed to exclusive and autonomous art. Relational aesthetics is thus a theory that evaluates works of art according to which human relations they depict, produce or create. Deleuze, Anna. *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. Variant. Spring. 2005, see: [www.variant.randomstate.org/issue22.html](http://www.variant.randomstate.org/issue22.html); Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*. France, Dijon: Les Presses du Reel, 2002

2 Rirkrit Tiravanija. *Untitled*. 1992 (Free)

3 Sirja-Liisa Vahtra. *Happy Activism*. 2004

4 [www.vabadusplakat.planet.ee](http://www.vabadusplakat.planet.ee)

5 This is a sculpture by a 19th century artist who represented the academic trend. Thus, the sculpture is essentially backward, but what mattered here was the change that occurs when there is an opportunity to make your own decisions. The town of Paldiski, on the northwestern shore of Estonia, was primarily known during the Soviet era as a closed town with a military base. After Estonia regained independence, the town lost its former identity but did not acquire a new one.

Indrek Köster, Taavi Talve. *Paldiski Project*. A Will To Decide: MA thesis (supervisor Marco Laimre): Estonian Academy of Arts, 2008

6 Ravila's nursing home is located in a former manor house in Harju County and accommodates about 150 mentally disabled people.

Ave Teeääre & Kertu Ehala. *Painting Club*: MA thesis (supervisor Marco Laimre). Tallinn, Estonian Academy of Arts, 2007

7 In addition to Ehala and Teeääre, the social

environment in a rehabilitation centre has been tackled by Sirja-Liisa Vahtra, Otto von Busch and Diana Lui, who worked in the Merimetsa Support Centre. This project of fashion and social therapy was carried out in May 2006 with the help of the Merimetsa Support Centre. The Centre offers work opportunities for people with slight mental disabilities and disorders. These people helped make 'ritual items of clothing'. Making clothes for the purpose of production was not important. What mattered was the process itself and the contribution of each person. The clothes and their wearers were photographed by Diana Lui. The project thus acted as a connecting link between fashion, photography and social therapy. The aim was not an enforced social experiment, but an intimate local gesture. The exhibition put together on the basis of the *Merimetsa Alchemy* project was shown in the HOP gallery in spring 2007. The exhibition and its catalogue acted as the documentation of the process but, in addition, visitors could try on all the displayed clothes and/or get a tracing pattern to make their own 'ritual item of clothing'. Cooperation with the Merimetsa Centre had started in 2004 within the project *Re-TALLiation*, which also dealt with fashion and social therapy. Sirja-Liisa Vahtra had run an art course at Merimetsa before.

8 [mobiilipaev.blogspot.com](http://mobiilipaev.blogspot.com)

9 [www.kultuuritehas.ee](http://www.kultuuritehas.ee)

10 [www.uusmaailm.ee](http://www.uusmaailm.ee)

11 [www.linnalabor.ee](http://www.linnalabor.ee)

12 [www.hot.ee/ferrodrum/konsept.html](http://www.hot.ee/ferrodrum/konsept.html)

## Laura Kuusk

(1982), artist, photographer and freelance curator

# Emancipation(s)

Airi Triisberg

I would like to discuss the exhibition *Happy Together\** in the light of Mika Hannula's talk presented at the Art Academy in Tallinn prior to the exhibition opening. In this lecture, Hannula discussed the recent history of emancipatory movements and identity politics in relation to contemporary art and public space, focusing on the period 1967–2009. In line with Hannula's lecture, the question that interests me is how the notion of emancipation is addressed in the *Happy Together* exhibition.

There are a couple of implications that come with Hannula's timeframe. First of all, by choosing the year 1967 as his starting point, Hannula indicated an important link between the emancipatory movements in the West and the Third World that has largely gone unrecognized. This is exactly the point taken up by Petra Bauer in her performance-lecture *Deleted Swedish Stories*, examining the strategies of how information has been omitted from the realm of visibility in the specific context of Sweden. In her performance Bauer discussed two case studies that both relate back to the mid-sixties: a missing episode from the Swedish edition of the film *Battle of Algiers* and missing images (in the Swedish media) of the Black Power salute by Tommy Smith and John Carlos at the medals ceremony of the Mexico City Olympic Games in 1968. As Bauer explained in her performance, even though the reasons for excluding a six-minute episode from the Swedish print of *Battle of Algiers* might have been commercial, the choice of the scene that was left out was ultimately ideological, since it featured one of the few moments in the film that included a deeper reflection on FLN's political programme. What I am driving at is an attempt to revisit Irit Rogoff's argument that the archives of the Western Radical Left are to a large extent actually located outside the Left. In her essay *Engendering Terror*, Rogoff states that it was primarily the resistance movements across Africa in the middle of the 20th century that paved the way for the student movements, the anti-Vietnam War movement and various social movements that emerged in the West almost a decade later. From this statement, Rogoff envisions the possibility of constructing counter-geographies that would be based on transversal lines of revolutionary insurgencies and generational loyalties that cross boundaries, histories and languages. As Rogoff suggests, these counter-geographies would be constructed out of ephemeral links between various social struggles, perhaps more influenced by random café talks and inspirations derived from literature and music, rather than resting on a unitary ideological agenda. A historical investigation of *Deleted*

Petra Bauer. Black Power salute by Tommy Smith and John Carlos at the medals ceremony of the Mexico City Olympic Games in 1968 (left) and Swedish print of *Battle of Algiers*



*Swedish Stories* in Rogoff's sense would thus enable us to trace a sequence of links including Frantz Fanon's engagement in the Algerian War of Independence, the profound influence that the Black Panther Party derived from Fanon's book *The Wretched of the Earth*, written in Algeria, and the wide dissemination of Black Power slogans and iconography throughout the 1960s, leading to manifestations such as the Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympics, not least importantly, with the Australian athlete Peter Norman wearing a human rights badge at the podium to show his solidarity with Tommy Smith and John Carlos. Therefore, Bauer's analysis of how various political struggles have been denied representation in Sweden supports Rogoff's argument that the histories of the Western Radical Left have largely been disconnected from their global socio-political context. *Deleted Swedish Stories* could thus be seen as an attempt to write one of those counter-geographies that Rogoff proposes.

Coming back to Mika Hannula's lecture – the main part of it focused on the plurality of subject positions from which numerous social struggles emerged around 1968 in the Western world, largely replacing the Left's preoccupation with the working class struggle (an aspect that is, perhaps symptomatically, virtually not addressed in the exhibition). However, in the post-socialist countries, a number of emancipatory movements mentioned by Hannula, such as the ecological movement, the gay movement, certain aspects of the feminist movement etc didn't enter the public discourse until quite recently. It is therefore a more difficult task to assess the historical legacy of the Western Radical Left in the context of the post-socialist East, an aspect that Igor Grubic points out in his video *East Side Story* (2009), documenting the violent conflicts at the Gay Pride parades in Belgrade and Zagreb, and showing how – some 40 years after the Stonewall riots – the notion of gendered difference is still being publicly constructed through images of blood and violence in liberal democratic societies. From this perspective, I would also like to discuss Kristina Norman's work *Community* (2009), which takes as its starting point the mass protests against the Estonian government's decision to remove a Soviet World War II monument, known as the Bronze Soldier, from its original location in the city centre of Tallinn in April 2007. *Community* is part of a work-in-progress that started on Victory Day 2008, when Norman distributed miniature figures of the Bronze Soldier at the military cemetery where the original monument is now located. *Community* is a follow-up to this intervention, which, by the way, proved highly polemical. By presenting a collection of Bronze Soldier figurines clad in the costumes of various pop-idols known from the mainstream media (Superman, Mickey Mouse, Elvis etc), Norman proposed to introduce the image of the Bronze Soldier as a figure of positive identification for the Russian-speaking population in Estonia, perhaps somewhat similarly to the way the black-and-orange colored Georgian ribbons were adopted as a symbol of resistance at the Victory Day celebrations in Tallinn and Riga in 2008, one year after the removal of the Bronze Soldier. Though I am highly sympathetic to Norman's intention, which in my interpretation is precisely an attempt to create a symbol for emancipation, her decision to associate the Bronze Soldier with various commercial super-heroes can be criticized as reproducing commodity fetishism, and possibly even of introducing a degree of cynicism. However, in defense of Norman's strategy, it should be noted that even though the April 2007 protests

constituted an unprecedented collective manifestation on the part of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia, marking a new quality of identity politics, the protests also consolidated a variety of subject positions from which very few were affiliated with the Radical Left. From this perspective, *Community* points precisely to the difficulty of transmitting the legacy of the Western Radical Left into the post-socialist context, where minority groups fighting for social inclusion are as likely to share the prevailing anti-communist consensus as the dominant publics.

The example of Norman's practice also leads me to my main point of criticism regarding the *Happy Together* exhibition: apart from Norman and the artist collective YKON, who invited the audience to participate in a collective attempt to imagine a different world in the framework of *YKON Game v.0.3.*, there seemed to be little interest on the part of the participating artists in playing an active role in the formation of new types of cultural, social or political practices, even though most artworks shown in the exhibition point to important socio-political conflicts from an (relatively) outside viewpoint. If we were to take seriously the curators' statement that collective identities are important and necessary, it would have been interesting to see

Kristina Norman. *Community* at the *Happy Together* exhibition. 2009





more proposals on how artists can actually contribute to negotiating those identities and how they can effect social change – either at the level of direct interventions or of imagination, in or outside the exhibition hall.



\* The exhibition *Happy Together* took place at the Tallinn Art Hall from 29 January to 1 March 2009. It was curated by Mika Hannula and Minna Henriksson. The exhibition brought together artists from southeastern Europe, Baltic and Nordic countries. Its aim was to explore different situations in contemporary societies that have their roots in constructive or deconstructive conflict situations, which have emerged from actions, where the collective mind is stronger than the individual.



### Airi Triisberg

(1982), cultural theoretician

YKON. YKON Game v.0.3. at the *Happy Together* exhibition. 2009



# The code-breaking artist Kristina Norman

Andreas Trossek

## Prologue

Once upon a time, during World War II, Allied cryptologists were able to decrypt a vast number of coded messages and signals that had been enciphered on the 'Enigma machine' by Nazi Germany. These decrypted bits of radio communication were a substantial aid in the war effort. It was even stated that this code-breaking operation was decisive to Allied victory in World War II. An oft-quoted assessment is that decryption of German ciphers hastened the end of the war by no less than two years.

One of the main brains working on this code-breaking task was Alan Turing. Today he is considered to be the father of modern computer science. After the war, among other things, he worked on the Manchester Mark 1, which was one of the world's earliest electronic computers. His death in 1954 was cloaked in ambiguous circumstances, as he had apparently bitten into a cyanide-laced apple. This half-eaten apple has led to the popular myth, or 'Mac rumor', that the Apple Inc logo originated from the story of Turing's death. However, according to the official history of the corporation, the logo of an apple was designed in order to allude, first and foremost, to a certain legend describing Isaac Newton getting new ideas under an apple tree.

Nevertheless, one of the women who worked in the team that developed the Manchester Mark 1, together with Alan Turing, was Mary Lee Woods. She married Conway Berners-Lee, who was also in the team. Their son, Tim Berners-Lee, became a second-generation computer scientist and is credited today with inventing the World Wide Web. On 25 December 1990 he implemented the first successful communication between an HTTP client and server via the Internet. In the meantime, computers were being sold commercially worldwide. Today people get new ideas mostly from various web sources and read remarkably fewer books than earlier generations did. Since 1995 the richest man in the world has been Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft Corporation, which manufactures various software products for computing devices.

## First Act

In 2003 a young artist with *Kinderstube* in a Russian language school graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts. Her diploma work was a pseudo-documentary film entitled *The Field of Genius* [see also *Estonian Art 2/2006* – Ed]. Following the ideas derived from the Russian translation of Paul Davies's *Superforce: The Search for a Grand Unified Theory of Nature* (a book found in a second-hand book store and bought because of the funny title *Суперсила*), she argued that Albert Einstein was emitting a certain 'field of geniality' that stretched beyond the limits of time – both into the future and past. Therefore, Einstein also affected 'dead scientists' with his personal genius, so that they could form the theoretical basis for his own later achievements and particularly the Theory of Relativity. Isaac Newton, too, was a subject of this radiation of ideas, as if he had been connected to some invisible World Wide Web of Knowledge without knowing it. Five years later the curatorial team of the 5th Berlin biennial for contemporary art got to know about this work and decided to screen it in Archenhold Observatory, where Einstein held his first public lecture on the Theory of Relativity.

In 2004 that same artist made a series of drawings entitled *Mysterious Radio*, which tackled the invention of the radio – a transmitter of signals by modulation of electromagnetic waves with frequencies below those of visible light, i.e. the invisible emission of information. The artist later commented that the common denominator in these two projects was the phenomenon of parallel realities. The next stage was supposed to tackle the artist's *alter ego* living in a parallel universe, and that would have continued the line of artistic research in the field of parallel realities, only on a more personal level. In a way – a very twisted way – this is exactly what happened.



Kristina Norman's work-in-progress

THE THREE PICTURES REPEATEDLY CHANGED  
BY THE MECHANICAL OBJECT  
"THE KINETICS OF POWER"



①

For smärre-bill  
with the  
monument  
(2006)



②

For smärre-bill  
without the  
monument  
(2007)



③

The monument  
on the military  
cemetery  
(2008)

## Second Act

In 2005 this young artist, Kristina Norman, completed a video entitled *Contact*, dedicated to politics, social double standards and parallel cultural realities. It is no secret that many Russian-speaking people in the former member states or 'satellites' of the Soviet Union feel as if they are living in a parallel reality. After the collapse of the Soviet empire, many newly independent states, including Estonia, were busy trying to enter NATO and the European Union, and occupied with 'renovating' their own national identities and cultural narratives, which meant that their Russian-speaking 'minorities' were left drifting along on their own. As a result, most of them haven't developed any other identification codes beyond their essential 'being-Russian' identity. The video shows a young Russian man in Estonia as he emerges from the Citizenship and Migration Board building, a 'grey passport', or 'alien's passport', in his hand. This document is issued in Estonia for those citizens who haven't learnt the Estonian language or have failed other exams. They can travel relatively freely (to Russia even without a visa, while 'true' Estonian citizens need a visa) but they cannot vote in parliamentary elections (however, in municipal elections these 'aliens' can vote).

Next, in 2006 the documentary *Pribalts* was completed. Kristina Norman travelled to Moscow with a film camera in order to interview her former schoolmate who had left Estonia for his ethnic motherland. In the process, and among other things, she survived a train accident in the underground, sold some footage to a powerful Russian TV channel and also captured on film some common stereotypes about Estonia – for example, that in Russia Estonia is mostly known as a 'fascist' country, although Moscow right-wing extremists, who do not exactly hide their Nazi attitudes, hold meetings in the streets quite regularly.

Then the 'Bronze Night' took place in Tallinn, which was tackled in *Monolith*, her next film – started as a documentary project but finalized in the genre of 'mockumentary'. In April 2007 the government of Estonia decided to relocate a Soviet-era World War II monument from the centre of the capital to the military cemetery nearby and all hell broke loose – for two succeeding warm spring nights the streets of central Tallinn were full of rioting youths, mostly from Russian-speaking families. The exact cost of the Bronze Night is not known, media speculation estimating it at 6.8 million Estonian crowns. Estonia also claimed that it had encountered powerful cyber attacks, as different computers in the country's infrastructure were shut down by electronic signals. Many web sites of Estonian governmental organs were not accessible from abroad, due to massive cyber attacks. At first no one knew where these attacks were coming from, but soon enough Estonia was blaming Russia for orchestrating all this. As a result, NATO promised to set up a cyber defence centre in Estonia.

Before the global financial crisis reached the Baltic region in 2008–2009, those political powers that organized the relocation of the monument enjoyed remarkable popularity among the electorate. It seemed as if Estonia had re-established its independence once again and as if the country had won the war against the Soviet Union (i.e not Russia) – of course, in a parallel reality, in a parallel time scale. Everyone in the world thought that World War II was over a long time ago (1945), but in fact for some it was not.

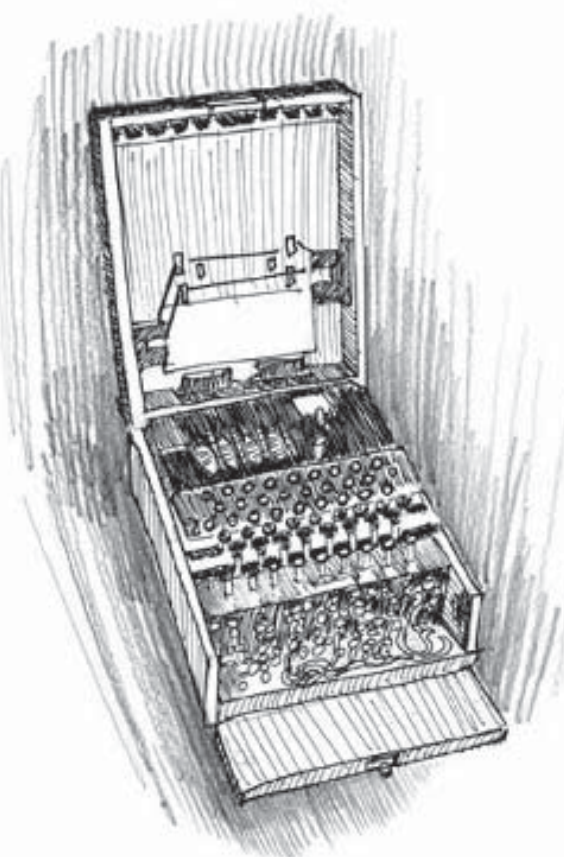
This is exactly where Kristina Norman's *After-War* project starts. This project is representing Estonia at the 53rd International Art Exhibition – *la Biennale di Venezia*. We see documents, icons, kinetics of power, histories of different communities and artists' proposals on how to proceed in all of these parallel systems. The wounds are healing quickly, yet they still fester. Here, figuratively speaking, the artist is not talking about the end of a certain war but about the 'after-war' period more generally, just as any decent 'after-party' can only begin when the actual party is over.

## Third Act

Drawing by Kristina Norman  
from the catalogue *After-War*

*After-War* by Kristina Norman  
53rd International Art Exhibition -  
La Biennale di Venezia  
Estonian pavilion  
Palazzo Malipiero, S. Marco 3079, Venice  
7 June-22 November 2009  
Opening of the exhibition 6 June, 6 pm  
Curator Marco Laimre  
The catalogue *After-War*  
accompanies the exhibition

See also:  
Center for Contemporary Arts,  
Estonia  
[www.cca.ee](http://www.cca.ee)  
Kristina Norman  
[www.kristinanorman.com](http://www.kristinanorman.com)



In 2008 Slavoj Žižek wrote an article for *Die Zeit*, where he argued that during contemporary tests of international politics, instead of the superpowers (e.g USA and Russia), only small nations (e.g Georgia and Iraq) get wounded, as they are treated like mice in a laboratory. The same argument applies also on a much smaller scale. In Estonia, too, people get treated like mice in a laboratory. In that sense, the Estonian government's behaviour was very archaic in its iconoclastic nature: in order to declare to the world that Estonia had left its Soviet past completely behind (15 year after the demise of the Soviet Union), the government removed an eight-foot-long sculpture as if its mere physical presence in the city could threaten the country's independence. What the local Russian community would think about it was apparently not open to debate. During the Soviet years, there had also been quite conciliatory attempts on the Estonian side to accept the war monument *as it is* (e.g the popular myth that the statue was modelled after an Estonian wrestler and pre-war Olympic medallist, or by pointing out that the soldier figure had a mournful, instead of victorious, expression) but, at the time, these memories were simply ignored.

Yet it's never about public statues; it's about the collective memory they embody. The positive post-Soviet 'being-Russian' identity is largely based on the historic victory over the Nazis in World War II, which is significantly known as the 'Great Patriotic War' in Russia. However, in Estonia the end of World War II also marked the beginning of Soviet occupation, mass deportations, deprivatisation etc. It goes without saying that these layers of different histories and identities come nowhere near overlapping each other, and that they are far from the possibility of dialogue. That's true right now, at least, in the aftermath.

In recent years Russia has expressed the view that some of its neighbouring countries are trying to 're-write history'. They are not. They are writing their own parallel histories. They have the right to do this and they will. This doesn't mean that they are *against* Russia, just as *After-War* is not against Russia or against Estonia for that matter. If *After-War* is targeted

against anything at all, it's against all those code-generating machines in today's world, which construct populism, homogenised nation-states, self-righteous politicians, apologetic histories and ignorance – a fatal lack of respect towards other human beings. So really it's about decrypting and breaking those codes. It's about getting new ideas by sharing information and experiences. *The war is over if you want it to be.*

### Kristina Norman

(1979), artist. Often tackled the issues of the Russian minority in Estonia. Her project *After-War* represents Estonia at the Venice Biennial. See also *Estonian Art* 1-2/2008

### Andreas Trossek

(1980), art historian, works at the Estonian Center for Contemporary Arts, editor in chief of the magazine *kunst.ee*



Drawing by Kristina Norman from the catalogue *After-War*

Tõnismägi where the Bronze Soldier stood was also the place where a dozen Soviet soldiers had been buried. Their remains were dug up and reburied or sent to Russia - Ed.

# Reality strikes back

Oudekki Loone

Having seen only fragments of Kristina Norman's installation for the Venice biennial, *After-War*, it initially looked like one of those recent installations in Estonia that wants to be a bit political but does not express any clear political views – perhaps because the artist is afraid of being called Soviet or a communist, or maybe out of the habit of avoiding conflict with the authorities. After all, social scientists in Estonia are called 'red professors' not only in web comments, as Peeter Selg pointed out in the weekly cultural paper *Sirp*,<sup>1</sup> but in newspaper editorials and by persons titled *Director of the Institute of the Estonian Language* or *member of the Council of the Public Understanding Foundation*.

My scepticism might have been strengthened by Norman's earlier film *Monolith*, which left an empty feeling at first viewing. This short film shrewdly mixes the overtures of the anti-communist films of the 1950s, and demonstrates how the 'Tõnismägi problem' [The Bronze Soldier was located in Tõnismägi – Ed] was initially just a battle between radical nationalists, which made the soldiers killed in WW II turn over in their graves. By radical nationalists I mean both those extremist Estonians who clobbered the sculpture of the soldier on its head and called it an occupier, as well as the much calmer Russian extremists who claimed, with absolute confidence, that Russia had always ruled over all the small nations on its borders. The dead soldiers certainly had not fought for this kind of future. But, importantly, the opinion of the artist herself seemed to be missing in the film. *Why on earth she made this film*, even I asked myself at first. I, who had tried to influence the whole rigmarole around the Bronze Soldier politically, these events mattered to me and I had seen everything with my own eyes.

But I hadn't seen all of *After-War*. When I re-read the description of the installation containing various visual documentations of Bronze Soldier history and reached the last aspect – the golden replica of the bronze soldier being driven around Tallinn in an open lorry on 9 May 2009\* – everything fell into place and I also realised the frightening political significance of Norman's film *Monolith*.

## Words

In today's Estonia, the word 'history' is increasingly acquiring the meaning of 'political propaganda', thus paradoxically hailing back to the Stalinist way of thinking, which allowed history to be rewritten to please the authorities (now, in a democratic society, also pleasing some voters). Impartial history, with impersonal and structural explanations, which makes clear distinctions between facts and values and occasionally questions its own assumptions, is gradually being forced outside the Estonian public discourse.

Politicians in all countries naturally pick out aspects of history that suit their own purpose. As long as there is no claim to completeness, this is not in itself a serious matter, just a representation of one (opinionated) world-view. And as long as there exists a study of history as a whole, anyone interested can always find opposing opinions or a different interpretation. However, if the public discourse prefers 'our history', which is essentially different from 'their' history, if the incompatible histories of 'men and women', of 'Estonians and Russians' emerge, we actually enter the sphere of mythology, political programmes detached from memory. The aim of such activity is not discussion, establishing the truth or competition between various state projects, but creating a 'warm and meaningful' sphere of action – a situation where solutions are predetermined (and usually by those in power).

The mass media revolution obviously turned the construction of events and selective memory into general problems of mankind; this is no longer a specific issue in post-Soviet Union societies. Television and the press legitimise information; by repeating any bit of information on several channels long enough, it becomes truth for many. Using

his own media, the Italian prime minister Berlusconi reiterates that the garbage collection problems in Naples have been sorted out, although the garbage has merely been taken further from the city centre. However, many automatically accept this as true, even inhabitants of areas around Naples.

For two years, the representatives of the ruling coalition in Estonia and their supporters have been repeating, with Berlusconi tenacity, that "if we hadn't interfered, something much worse could have happened on 9 May"<sup>2</sup>. On 4 July 2007 [Estonian] Prime Minister Ansip said in the parliament: "It is clear to anyone who really wants to understand that the flames around the Tõnismägi monument-grave were not only fanned here in the Republic of Estonia but also the situation was made tense from outside our country and there were no expectations that the tensions could ease up soon."<sup>3</sup>

What's more, the prime minister added that if people did not perceive the world as he did, they were in the wrong.

"After the 9 May event last year, I met various representatives of non-profit organisations, the Church, and veterans' organisations. /.../ At least some among the veterans of the Rifle Corps did not want this kind of split in society. Others, including some from the above-mentioned institutions, felt that everything should have been left as it was. They denied that the Bronze Soldier contained other meanings besides mourning, which certainly is not true."

The media coverage of the trial of the four young men accused of organising the April riots is instructive. The views of the defence were missing; instead, there were headlines such as 'Organisers of the April riots behaved as a foursome'<sup>4</sup>, or 'The Bronze Riot organising committee – Klenski, Linter, Sirök, Reva – to court'<sup>5</sup>, to say nothing of the *Postimees* crime reporter Tiiu Põllu's shamelessly biased overviews of the trial sessions.<sup>6</sup> [The two first trials acquitted Klenski, Linter and other accused of organising the riots –



Kristina Norman's work-in-progress

Ed]

Our thinking is connected with our language use, and by distorting the language we also distort our thinking, introducing 'convincing definitions'<sup>7</sup> into the discussion where the actual descriptive meanings of words are changed, but not the original emotional meaning, thus making counterarguments impossible. Expressions such as 'something worse', a 'Russian hooligan' or 'their opinions are not true', convey a reality of good guys and bad guys that justifies someone's political standpoint (and any actions). People who do not use the approved words and fields of meaning are automatically accused of being 'enemies', even 'traitors to the nation'. In order to avoid that, people employ self-censorship: it is better not to think or talk in a certain manner. By not talking, however, people distance

themselves from the public space, without which, alas, democracy cannot function.

Through indirect references over the course of two years, a picture has been created that the April events were certainly planned and organised in and by Russia; it involved Russians in general, had nothing to do with Estonian extremists or decisive interference by the government. Or, as Marje Aksli summarised Estonian political thinking in the book *My Moldova*: “Estonia is good and Russia is bad”.<sup>8</sup>

## Memory

Protesting against this absurd picture, Kristina Norman discards words as useless (or marginal). Her several projects focused on remembering, the film *Monolith*, which clearly opposes the conspiracy theories of a *coup d'état*, and the installation *After-War*, which gives an overview of how the meaning of the bronze monument, originally set up as a memorial to Estonians who fought in the Red Army, has changed. It also shows how the ambivalence of meaning of the old inscription on the monument (*Eternal glory to the heroes who died for the liberation and independence of our country*) was forgotten and it was only read as soviet political boilerplate speech. All of her work challenges a situation in which some memories and beliefs are officially not ‘correct’. It is an artist’s opposition to a situation where someone constantly seems to try to erase people’s personal memories. Not the distant memories of WW II, but the memories of a few years back, the reality of the current generation, the fact that the government instead of making politics decided to participate in the quarrels of the extremists – and thus failing to avoid the riots.

Kristina Norman’s project points to signs of the Matrix in our public life<sup>9</sup>, not only limited to Estonia, where the means that could offer information about reality are instead used to create a pleasant illusion of reality. In this “Matrix-world” it is no longer possible to make adequate informed decisions about one’s own life. Thus, it is not possible to be truly free, and processes dangerous to democracy are easily ignited (e.g attempts to restrict the right to demonstrate in Ansip’s Estonia or the immunity guaranteed by *lodo Alfano* to the four highest-ranking posts in Berlusconi’s Italy).

Because of this deeply human meaning that crosses the borders and because of the pain that stabs one’s heart, Kristina Norman’s *After-War* is certainly art and not a mere exercise; it is an intelligent argument and not a mere claim that “the world is what it is, sometimes terrible, but I don’t have any views”. Estonian political art has certainly gained a strong supporting pillar.

## Oudekki Loone,

(1979), PhD student in political science at Tallinn and Bologna Universities



- 1 Peeter Selg. Pronksiunustusest ühiskondlikus mõtlemises. Sirp, 01.08.2008
- 2 See also: A. Kivirähk. Pronksmees ja kristallöö. Eesti Päevaleht, 28.04.2007, or Kurjategija koht on türmis. Postimees, 30.04.2007; additionally Mr Ansip’s speech in the Riigikogu 04.06.07: “Yes, the government had enough information about the planned disorders, about the planned escalating tension, primarily designed for 9 and 10 May. Our estimations of danger - which I am not going to comment here in front of the TV cameras - compelled us to fence in the area surrounding Tõnismägi on 9 May. Had we not done it, it would have led to much more serious conflicts as actually took place in the nights of 26 and 27 April.”
- 3 XI parliament session. Monday, 4 June 2007, 15.00
- 4 EPL Online, 18 October 2007 (seenekas.epl.ee/uudised/404497)
- 5 Askur Alas. Eesti Ekspress, 18.10.2007
- 6 See e.g Tiiu Põld. Pronksööli juhtunule eelnes aktiivne ässitustöö. Postimees, 28.01.2008
- 7 C. L. Stevenson. Ethics and language. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1994, p 210.
- 8 Marje Aksli. Minu Moldova. Petrone Print, 2008, p 149.
- 9 See also Eric Arends. Berlusconi komt overall mee weg. Der Volkskrant, 28.03.2009

\* Actually the 2 m tall replica was not driven around Tallinn but placed in the former location of the Bronze Soldier at Tõnismägi on 9 May amongst the Russians who were celebrating their Victory Day. The police took the replica away a few minutes later but the scandal had erupted. During the week after the event the press and web portals discussed whether the artist had overstepped the limits of ethics and whether this had been a provocation. Some found, that their feelings ‘as Estonians’ had been offended. Norman denies that her act was any kind of provocation, but a start to a discussion - Ed.



# Deceptive pictures and revealing sounds

Anu Allas

I have written a few times about Mark Raidpere's photographs and videos and have always thought them fascinating, largely because of the reflective level that often emerges from the works themselves. Like the artist's unexpected wink, it then invites viewers, carried away by dramatic visions, to reconsider everything they have just seen. However, I have an occasional annoying feeling that, by emphasising and appreciating the multilevel nature of Raidpere's work, I keep missing something and am left oscillating between describing the traumatic and the theatrical levels, without being able to determine the point where they meet. A few moments after leaving the exhibition of artists nominated for the *Ars Fennica* awards at the Kumu Art Museum, I suddenly understood the mechanism of my mistake. At least it seemed then that Raidpere has been doing this on purpose all along: misleading viewers, distracting them, and tempting them with small interesting details have been his main strategies in order to keep the same viewers and lure them back.

I watched the video *Dedication* (2008) in the last room of the *Ars Fennica* exhibition several times. The video was produced within the framework of the Estonian Music Days and is in dialogue with Erkki-Sven Tüür's music. This particular work at once seemed meaningful in many ways. Only a year ago it seemed that Raidpere had left his previously dominant personal and family dramas behind, and begun simultaneously moving in several directions, all leading as far away from himself as possible. This was evident in *5 Guards* (2006), interviews with old women working as guards at the Latvian Art Museum. It was further proved by *Wailing Woman* (2007), filmed at a dance rehearsal, *Majestoso Mystico* (2007), using shots of the April unrest in Tallinn, and by *Vekovka* (2008), which recorded the conversations in the Moskva-Iževsk train. *Dedication*, however, again shows the artist's mother

and father, whom we remember from several previous videos, although here they are together for the first time. We also recognise the somewhat sentimental and haunting personal world, where even the smallest detail is meaningful, a recollection of something. Mother and father sit against the background of a wardrobe and listen to contemporary classical music. Between them on the wardrobe reflection (this played a significant role in the teenage Raidpere's impressions of music), we can see their son with a camera. I watched it all carefully, the expressions on the parents' faces, their reactions, sitting side by side, the alternation of the familiar traumatic and theatrical – 'naked' vulnerable faces, forced to be silent, seen on the big screen, and their son's kindergarten-style instructions that frame their silence ('let us now listen together', and 'you must not talk'). Leaving the room, I was pretty certain that nothing had escaped me, until I suddenly realised that I had not listened to the music, although I was constantly reminded to do so on the screen.

Not wishing to over-romanticise my not listening to the music, I decided to watch all of Raidpere's works again. I hoped that this would enable me to break away from the usual watching and listening mode. It was, of course, no surprise that there was music in most of Raidpere's videos, and if there wasn't, there was a lot of talk instead or people were meaningfully silent. I had noticed before that music played an important role in these works, being in dialogue with the picture, and largely determined its viewing regime; in addition to content, the words also had rhythm and sound, which created a separate level of sounds. However, I had never dared put the sounds before the picture or afforded them any individual existence. It now seems that if we want to find a place in Raidpere's videos where all these different levels – traumatic, theatrical, direct and reflexive – exist together, it occurs



Mark Raidpere. *Pühendus/Dedication*. 2008. 9'10".  
Stills from the video



in sounds, in music, and in the rhythm of speaking. The separation of the points of view takes place in pictures, whether via the artist's winking, as it were, introductions and epilogues, change in tone or using several screens (*Voiceover*, 2005; and *Majestoso Mystico*). The picture used by Raidpere always seems misleading, a medium open to doubt, whereas music and sounds are more revealing. Naturally this does not mean that we can separate the sound and picture in Raidpere's works or regard them as doubles. This kind of separation only makes sense in a process of analysis. After all, these two belong together, and just as sound influences viewing, the picture enhances the process of listening.

So what is the music in Raidpere's works like? A cover of Laurie Anderson's *Bright Red* (by Mark Raidpere and Rainer Jancis) accompanies the slightly swaying shots, the dim views of the messy and solitary flat of the artist's father (*Father*, video 2001, sound 2005). The posturing of the inmates of the Tartu prison is supplemented by screeching, sentimental music-box tinny sounds (*10 Men*, 2003). The melancholic and solemn music (Michael Nyman's soundtrack for Michael Winterbottom's film *Wonderland*) gives an almost epic background to the abstract and hopeless expectations of a sad grey figure standing in front of an apartment house (*Work in Progress*, 2005). The dreams of a young man in a T-shirt performing an erotic dance in a Riga bar after closing time are naturally fuelled

by *New York, New York* (Andrey/Andris, 2006). The disrupted dance movements at a rehearsal that are then tried again and again, are accompanied by a fragmentary, sad and continually restarting song with a repetitive phrase, and a record player that keeps getting stuck (*Wailing Woman*). And finally of course *Majestoso Mystico*, where Howard Shore's music for *The Silence of the Lambs* unites the quiet performance of the Stockholm street musicians Björn and Ivan, and the looting and rioting youth gangs during the Tallinn Bronze Night of April 2007 into a weird musical-choreographic drama.

As already mentioned, the rhythm and sound of speaking in several of Raidpere's videos seem just as essential as what is actually being said; the longer the talk, the more the content tends to disintegrate and the sound dominate. It is also evident in the father's hectic monologue in the video *Voiceover*, and also in the quiet conversation in *Vekovka* and in the video *1:1:1*, made in Greece (2008). The protagonist of the latter, an old man living with pigeons and dogs, talks a lot and very intensely, although his talk does not seem to have any specific subject. It is a flow of his experiences, various ideas, often contradictory, recollections and fantasy, and in the end it seems more interesting to just perceive them rather than carefully listen. This is perhaps the way to receive other Raidpere works as well, although we can never be sure what happens next or what these works will look like a year later.

### Mark Raidpere

(1975), photographer and video artist. This year he received the *Ars Fennica* award. See also [www.arsfennica.fi](http://www.arsfennica.fi) and *Estonian Art* 1/2005

### Anu Allas

(1977), art historian, teaches at the Estonian Academy of Arts

Mark Raidpere. *1:1:1*. 2008. 42'. Stills from the video



Mark Raidpere. *Majestoso Mystico*. Stockholm (above) – Tallinn (below) 26.04.2007. 2007. 2-channel video installation. 25'18". Stills from the video



# Fluxus East in Estonia

## Eha Komissarov interviewed by Eero Epner

**Eero Epner (EE):** Eha Komissarov, the art writing focusing on the 1960s and 1970s in Estonia is characterised by an archetypal dilemma: some claim that even here contemporary and Western-style art was produced; others find that Estonia was, inevitably, a province and all modern trends were only imitated. What is your opinion - were local artists on the same wavelength with what was happening elsewhere?

**Eha Komissarov (EK):** Partly they were. There were certain periods - for example the late 1960s and early 1970s - when the wavelengths were pretty similar. Arvo Pärt and others organised performances, then there was the group ANK'64, followed by Ando Keskküla, Leonhard Lapin, Andres Tolts and others. In the context of new art, performance is a very radical gesture, because it completely denies the old media and naturalist language of art.

However, in addition to swaying in the same rhythm - and it was true also for Fluxus - there was also some backwardness. Peeter Volkonski and the art club operating at the University of Tartu had their first performances only in the 1980s, although they did quite charismatic things and were known already in 1961. They performed with great enthusiasm and animation. Elsewhere in the world, performances by that time had become pretty much body affairs (this reached us in the 1990s). In the meantime, Estonians undertook old modernist actions, e.g. wheeling a paper roll around town or setting a table in the middle of a wasteland - absolute clichés, performed here as if for the first time in the world.

So naturally we were a dreadful province, but we have always had talented people. I have no idea, for example, how to formulate the relations between Arvo Pärt and Estonia as a province. At some point, he just left and realised himself elsewhere.

**EE:** This kind of departure was not only geographical. There are examples in Estonian art history of avant-garde artists, e.g. Ado Vabbe, Kaljo Põllu and Olav Maran, for whom the avant-garde was temporary, something playful, a frivolity of youth, which was later neglected or even denied.

**EK:** Maran [b 1933, Estonian painter. He is considered one of the most significant art innovators in the 1960s, who took up classical landscape and still-life in 1968 - Ed] is an exception here; he has been wrongly tackled in Estonian art history. He has always had anti-modernist views. When the 'rough style', modernism of the 'thaw' period, and utopia prevailed in Estonia, Maran produced grim slum pictures and melancholy portraits - his world-view was completely different from the avant-garde modernists who were keen on utopia. Maran has said all along that he made his surrealist attempts because he wished to criticise modernism. Besides, he was not against the Soviet power; his series of collages *Grimaces of Civilisation* (1965) clearly criticised capitalist society, without trying to appease Soviet officials,

because the work was realised in radical collage technique. By that time, he had already adopted a religious world-view, which made him a citizen of the world, and he criticised modern utopian society. Having done his criticising, he returned to still-lives, to old times.

**EE:** The exception of Maran proves the rule that several avant-garde artists were avant-garde only for a very short period of time.

**EK:** We were too provincial in every sense of the word. The playful discourse quickly moved on to theatre, to serious work, a salaried way of life. People who dealt with the performative discourse in theatre did not keep to it for long either. Incidentally, things were not much better in Finland. Maybe we are not able to think playfully because of some sort of Arctic hysteria.

Fluxus was marginal in the West as well, and reached bigger exhibitions only much later - it was essentially a company of young lawless artists.

I have realised that you cannot expect a small country to participate in destructive



Olav Maran. *Angular City View*. 1964. Oil on cardboard. 62 x 50 cm. Art Museum of Estonia



Olav Maran.  
*Grimaces of Civilisation.*  
1965. Collage.  
40 x 44 cm.  
Art Museum of Estonia

art dialogues and in the deconstruction of ruling art paradigms, because such countries must make a mighty effort to transport these paradigms of modernism into their society and culture. It is not an easy task. I remember how a Finnish critic wrote years ago that the writers of world art history should take into consideration the efforts that small countries make in order to import new art. For artists of a small country - for example Lapin - it can be a life's work to break down the borders, and live a life of opposition, in order to realise ideals. This is true for small countries, and Estonia is not even a small country. I don't know what it is. A clan? A clan that recently obtained written proof of its existence as a state?

I have never understood the advantage of negative aesthetics in the Estonian context. Why do we need it? Why is it necessary that we here in Estonia should be instantly able to criticise some trends and conventions in art?

We might actually witness a Fluxus renaissance in twenty or so years, when the art market has totally disgraced itself and artists have no wish to serve this kind of market. This means that the country must be rich enough to support an artist of ideas. I have always thought it is wonderful to be in the European Union, with the whole world open to us: people can travel, take part in various projects, lecture... I was quite surprised to see that this opportunity was hardly ever used. And then an artist asked me in return: what is the benefit of going somewhere and identifying yourself with a migrant labourer? He saw no charm in intellectual contacts or the emerging synergy.

**EE: Did Fluxus-East have something that Fluxus-West did not?**

**EK:** I think it did. Fluxus in the West was quite harmless, which it wasn't in Eastern Europe, where people were occasionally even exiled. Fluxus was later

united also with theatre, where in my opinion it acquired a degree of hysterical theatricality. They knew that the militia would turn up sooner or later, and they would be arrested and jailed - as happened in Poland and Hungary. In Eastern Europe, Fluxus became political and this was really tragic because, in the West, Fluxus was left-wing, interested in communism; Maciunas for example wrote letters to Khrushchev - completely idiotic, wasn't it? Especially since he was a Lithuanian immigrant. So yes, Western Fluxus was rather left-wing and this seemed political in New York in 1961. Compared with Eastern Europe, however, I don't think it was all that political.

**Eha Komissarov**

(1947), art historian, curator of contemporary art at the Kumu Art Museum

**Eero Epner**

(1978), art critic, dramaturge at Theatre NO99



Andres Tolts. *Hermelin*. 1967. Collage. 23 x 28 cm. Art Museum of Estonia

# Happenings and action art in Estonia

Petra Stegmann

Estonian art since the 1960s has demonstrated an astonishing openness towards experimental and experiential practices and, thus, there are obvious parallels between happenings and Fluxus as they have developed in international art, especially in the US and Western Europe.

The background for this was an interest in art that did not confine itself to just one discipline, but was open to interaction between music, the visual arts, theatre, poetry and the like. This development was facilitated through the musical actions that were presented during the Warsaw Autumn, the annual festival of contemporary music in Warsaw. A number of Estonian musicians and artists visited the festival in 1964, when John Cage performed together with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. This led to the organization of happenings called 'instrumental theatre'.

There are striking analogies between some happenings that took place in Estonia and Fluxus actions. These include the spectacular use or destruction of musical instruments, the use of everyday materials in new contexts (for example paper played a great role in some Fluxus actions, such Ben Patterson's *Paper Piece*), often a playfulness and a sense of the absurdity of everyday actions.



Happening *Papers in the Air* on Pirita beach in 1969. Participants: Leonhard Lapin, Vilen Künnapu, Toomas Pakri, Andres Tolts, Ando Keskküla, Konstantin Kuzmin. The arrival of the militia put an end to the happening.

It is not easy to reconstruct how the artistic (or rather anti-artistic) ideas spread internationally. In the case of Estonia it was not so much personal contact as information obtained through international art magazines, as well as broadcasts on Finnish Television. Interestingly, the term Fluxus, which was widely used by artists in Central Eastern European countries, such as the former Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and Lithuania, did not play a role in Estonia and was unknown to most artists.

The happenings and actions represented in this part of the exhibition show merely a small part of the many actions that took place in Estonia from the second half of the 1960s onwards. The aim of this presentation is to focus on actions that seem to demonstrate distinct parallels to Fluxus actions, without calling them Fluxus.

Also, it should be noted that for most artists these actions were an experimental phase in their activities and not a general departure from art in a more traditional sense.

## Petra Stegmann

art historian and curator. Curator of the exhibition *Fluxus East. Fluxus Networks in Central Eastern Europe* (in Berlin, Vilnius, Kraków, Budapest and Tallinn).

# Comment on a performance

## Toomas Velmet

I wouldn't say it was a musical experiment; there wasn't that much music. It was more like a happening. We called these things theatre of the absurd, or instrumental theatre when musical instruments were involved.

The ideological impetus came directly from the performance of John Cage and Merce Cunningham that we had a chance to see in 1964 in Warsaw, at the Warsaw Autumn. We had tickets to all the concerts – except for Cage and Cunningham – and we were part of a Lithuanian tourist group that consisted of 30 people. I was terribly lucky because we had one ticket for 37 people – we drew lots and I won. To my great delight, I met the whole Estonian group at the concert, and not a single Lithuanian...

Cage and Cunningham – they were astonishing and changed my whole way of thinking. We should remember the times back then: information from abroad was minimal – we simply knew that the Warsaw Autumn was a central event in avant-garde music. We had no idea what exactly to expect.

It is logical that in autumn 1965, about one year later, we organised the first event here, with the participation of students from the Art Institute and Tallinn Conservatory. A wordless piece by Beckett was performed there – hence we called it theatre of the absurd. Later we started talking about instrumental theatre.

Whatever took place there it was enthusiastically received – at least something was happening. I remember during a performance, in the second part – I did not take part but watched from the audience – there was a sort of 'culminating' ball of human beings, where all the participants were in one bundle and twisting around.

In May 1966, five Soviet fraternal republics (Moldavia, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) organised a chamber music contest in a fairly new location, the Tõravere Observatory near Tartu. It was remarkable mostly because it was not organised by an educational institution, but by young people themselves. We also decided to arrange an instrumental theatre performance. Any instruments could be used, but it wasn't allowed to play a single sound or note where the pitch could be determined. The sounds had to be produced in a different manner and the instruments had to be played differently as well.

I remember that a Russian military aircraft had crashed in a forest near the observatory. It was a wreck. We decided to use some bits and pieces as instruments.

It was probably in 1968, when another event took place, in the big hall of the Writers' Union – the scandal was such that it is still remembered today. Namely a violin caught fire, but I can swear that it happened by accident. It wasn't planned. The whole performance was, however, quite well thought through; the actions were more or less planned beforehand. Some of them were a success and some not, as always happens in improvisations. The unfortunate violin was made in a Leningrad furniture factory, cost 25 roubles and would never have produced any proper musical sounds, even if we had tried. The violin was a prop.

The action around the violin, the 'Cremona Dance', was of course planned, but there was also improvisation. The focus was to be on the violin and the violinist and the attributes around them. Cremona is a county in Italy where all the masters of stringed instruments have come from: Stradivari, Amati (the elder), Galliano and Guarneri.

As a cellist, I played the violin as if it were a cello. I did not stick it under my chin. I tried to play Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations*. However, someone – can't remember who – tried to prevent me from playing by winding audiotape around me. This originated from a little script by Kuldar Sink, which I had performed at school, called *A Cellist's Afternoon*. If pushed, one might have found something in it, allusions – e.g to censorship – but mostly it was just absurd humour.

Some things failed dismally. We had for example planned that two groups play the same thing right at the beginning – it was, if I'm not mistaken, a Georg Telemann trio sonata. One group had rehearsed so that the performance would be perfect. The other group saw the score for the first time only when they were to play it. The goal was to make it as funny as possible. Some played like the best in the world and others just stumbled along. We had no idea the ones playing from sight were so good. So the audience did not get the idea at all. The same piece was performed twice – people naturally wondered why twice, what was going on. It was a complete flop.

A white mouse was indeed there – this is a direct association, a reference to an experiment. After all, what do you do with white mice but experiments.

We let about 50 balloons loose in the room, hoping that someone at least had a needle or something sharp. And indeed – nearly all the balloons burst at the same time.

The finale contained a lot of magnetic tape so that everything was hung out to dry on it. During this process, it so happened that a violin was suddenly between two sparklers. When the sparklers were lit, the varnish on the violin caught fire as well. The finale thus acquired a totally new solution. The person who reacted most quickly was Kuldar Sink – I didn't even notice him leaving the stage, but I did notice him coming back and sticking the violin into a washbasin.

Because of this finale the performance turned out to be the last. Nobody actually said anything, the KGB was not involved, and nothing prevented the next happening, but the unfortunate violin somehow killed the whole thing. Maybe it didn't; maybe this type of thing had exhausted itself. None of us, after all, was John Cage or Merce Cunningham, and we were not as motivated...

We had never even heard of Fluxus. Maybe some knew, but I certainly didn't.



We were pathetically ignorant. On the other hand, we were eager to try things out, and apparently it did not come out so badly, or you wouldn't be asking me all these questions.

**Toomas Velmet**

(1942), Professor at the Estonian Academy of Music and Drama, teaches the cello.

**Arvo Pärt**

(1935), composer

Arvo Pärt (left) and Toomas Velmet in a performance in 1967



# Paintings of Ando Keskküla

## Leonhard Lapin

It might seem that after an artist has gone and his life work is done it is easier to write about his output in general. However, this is not the case – the temporal distance from Ando Keskküla's art is too short. Besides, changes in social and cultural paradigms can shift the meaning and place of an artist's works into totally new relations. The work of our departed friend, nevertheless, has already yielded new aspects that could influence our art in the future.

It is well known that Ando Keskküla was one of the great innovators of Estonian art: he was a pioneer of our pop art, more precisely Soviet pop, and hyperrealism, and therefore a leading avant-garde artist, in the late 1960s and the first half of the 1970s. After that, from the early 1990s onwards, he was one of the first to produce a video installation, eagerly embracing the sphere of virtual technologies, and developing the E-Media centre at the Academy of Arts, both as an artist and as rector of the Academy.

Ando Keskküla was a social artist, and his circle of contacts both at home and abroad was extensive. Even during the Soviet period, when the borders were closed, he was active in Moscow, designing several exhibitions there and occasionally abroad as well. When Estonia became independent, he established more excellent contacts in the West, which culminated, in the late 1990s, in exhibitions and international conferences of new media in Tallinn. His work as the rector of the Academy of Arts was highly innovative. Various problems of the artist in the new century, probably arising from the opposition between his social workload, his high-flying art projects – realised and unrealised – and his private creative aspirations, led him in the end not to any solutions but to self-destruction. However, his work as a whole is by no means forgotten and has had a strong impact on younger Estonian artists.

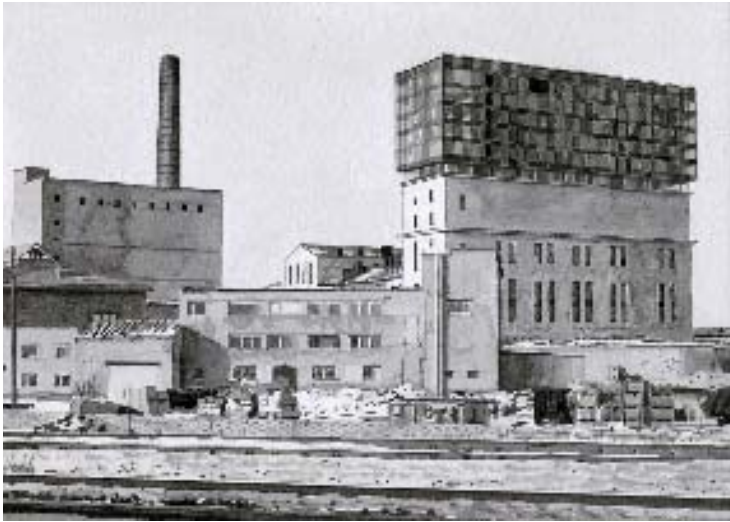
Talking about Ando Keskküla's paintings, we cannot ignore the fact that the artist himself always regarded his paintings as a process rather than as finished products. His paintings were not planned: he had an idea and made a start on it, not only in his paintings but also in his intensely lived life. He kept working on a painting, as much as the material and the time limit permitted. I can well imagine that, had Keskküla only painted, he would have – like some masters well known in art history – kept working on his paintings even when they were already in the exhibition hall, repainting them or even destroying them. I remember from our younger years that he did not much care for his finished works: he used to give or loan them to people, so that quite a few of his significant paintings have been lost. In the late 1960s, for example, all the works of our SOUP group displayed at the Rakvere exhibition vanished. [SOUP'69 – an avant-garde art group which introduced pop art. Members of the group were Leonhard Lapin (1947), Andres Tolts (1949), Ando Keskküla (1950–2008), Jüri Okas (1950) etc – Ed]

Even in his first paintings, such as *Head in a Bowl* (1969, not surviving), *Self-portrait* (1970) and *Coat-rack* (1970, lost), he used methods and colours that were not typical of Estonian art. On surfaces covered with oil paints, he poured freely flowing nitro-based paints; in assembly technique, he used an aluminium washbasin and clothes-peg, or his own jacket soaked in paint.

At the pop-evenings held at his home in Tallinn in the late 1960s, he built, together with Andres Tolts, all sorts of installations from found items and rubbish, and with other SOUP'69 artists he organised the first happenings in Estonia. There are very few documents recording all these activities, so the ideas floating back then are now remembered by his friends or carried further in our work and that of our students. It must seem incredible to today's young artists, who tend to document their every move, sound or even body liquids, why we did not photograph, film or record our ideas. One reason was the really low level



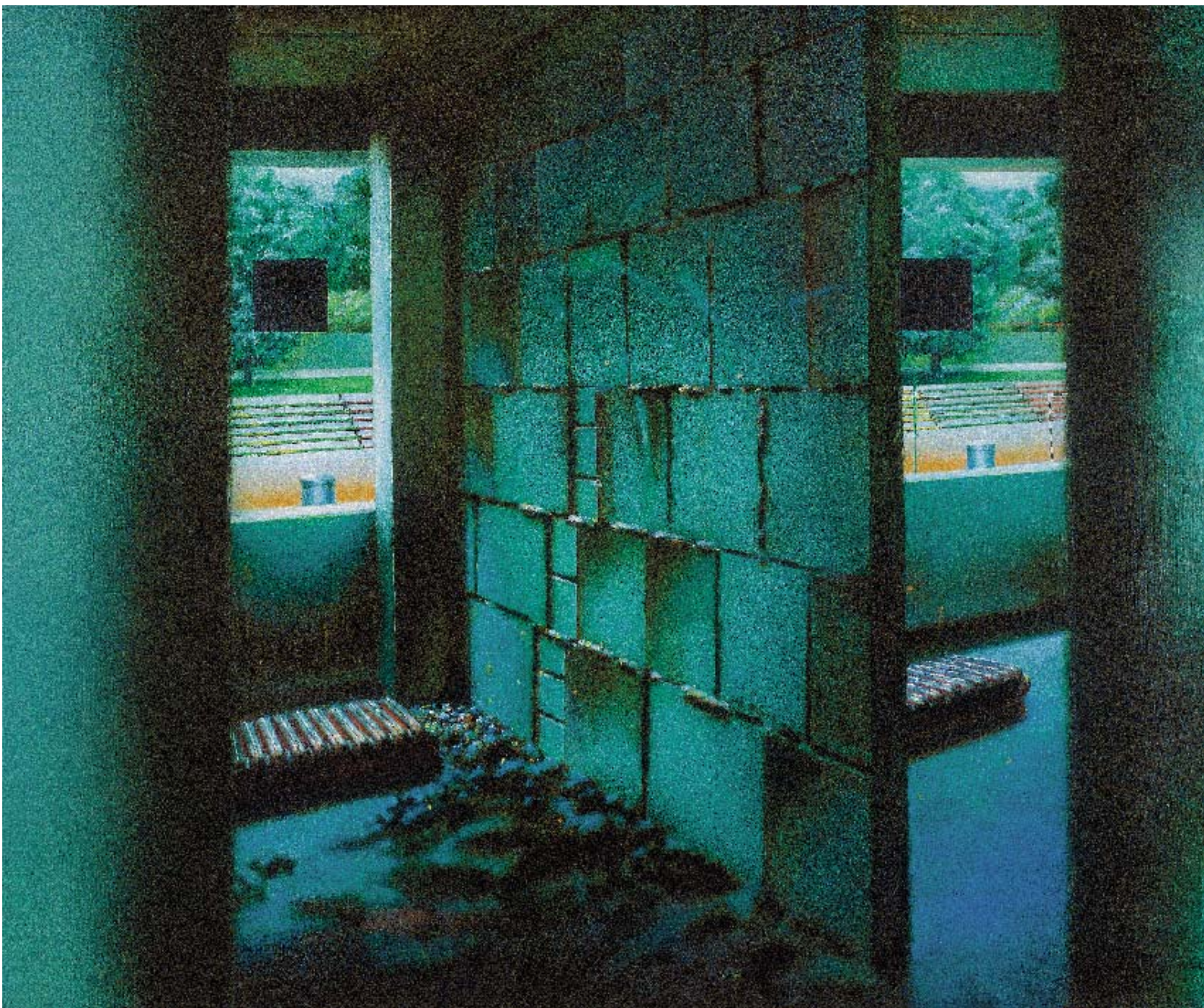
Tõnis Saadoja. *Hometown Tallinn*.  
Watercolours on paper. 30 x 40 cm. 2007-2008.  
See also: [www.saadoja.ee](http://www.saadoja.ee)







of recording technology. The other might be the fact that at that time the art historical tradition did not really value an artist's actions 'outside art'. Besides, the constant control of the authorities, censorship and persecution did not exactly favour leaving traces of what you were up to. Many ideas were never realised at all, because the involved artists might have ended up in a prison camp or, if they were lucky, might have been arrested for 10 days and had their heads shaved. The latter happened to us in September 1969,



Ando Keskküla. *Evening*. 1975. Oil on canvas.  
130 x 160 cm. Art Museum of Estonia

when we performed the famous happening *Papers in the Air* [see also p 21]. Luckily, this was not regarded as a political action because what were flying in the air were, after all, the leading Russian-language communist newspapers.

Ando Keskküla's most fruitful years as a painter were the 1970s and 1980s, when he developed from the declarative style of pop-art towards hyperrealism. However, he did not remain long in the illusory, and slightly one-dimensional, 'liquid' world painted with an aerograph. From then on he was keen on space, for example in his paintings *Evening* (1975) and *Construction* (1976). The space was not a specific urban picture or an interior, but metaphysical space, which is not simply read and viewed; it was a blend of different

physical spaces, times, realities and scales. Within that trend, I find Ando Keskküla's painting from 1973 titled *Late Summer* a landmark which shows liberation from the chains of motif that had shackled the earlier generations of Estonian artists.

In his paintings of the late 1970s and 1980s, Keskküla synthesised various painting techniques and textures. Besides pictorial illusoriness, he emphasised purely painting-related values and often made the reality of what had been depicted in the painting questionable. We should not forget that the Soviet reality where we lived was totally absurd, because there was a huge chasm between the bright communist future and the life we had to lead; another chasm was between forced internationalism, which aimed to smother any national feelings, and the inner wish for independence. This situation was brilliantly described in the theatre texts of Heino Mikiver, the father of the Estonian absurd. SOUP'69, including Keskküla and myself, often performed these texts at Art Institute parties.

However, there was another layer between the avant-garde and official art politics – the 'national-conservative' art trend, formulated by Jaak Kangilaski [art historian, see *Estonian Art 1–2/2008* – Ed]. This trend relied on both 19–20th century European, as well as on old 'national', myths, although to the younger generation the latter already seemed somewhat stale and ridiculous. This only added spice to the absurd life and culture where Ando Keskküla had to work.

No wonder then that his works from that time contain various images and symbols from different eras and arts: *concrete brut* architecture together with refined action painting (*Studio*, 1977); national romanticism and modern technology (*Kuiv St 6a*, 1978); the black square of Malevich and a pair of tights, which was hard to get at that time (*Still-life XI*); and the true amphitheatre of different images à la Salvador Dali (*Big Still-life I*). The often used title 'Still-life' alludes to the beleaguered era, general oppression and cautious silence, which by no means indicated the decline of the entire culture: at least some of us had firm ideals and hopes, and all communist ideals had been firmly discarded long before.

Ando Keskküla. *Big Still-life I*. 1984. Oil on canvas





Similar ‘performances of the absurd’ were also in Keskküla’s video installations in the early 1990s: *Nameless* (1993) and *Opus Petra* (1993). Analogous installations were produced at that time by another leading figure of the Estonian new avant-garde, Jüri Okas. Unlike Okas, however, Ando Keskküla aspired to move from living and tactile material towards the virtual and the invisible. He got there in the end. The artist’s last video installations indeed no longer contained any real matter, if we exclude screens, projections and invisible detectors. In that sense, Keskküla differed from Jaan Toomik [b 1961, painter, video and performance artist – Ed], who uses specially constructed space to display and create his video installations.

It seemed that Ando Keskküla’s language of painting occasionally became too fragmented: enjoying the shape and fact of individual forms or symbols, metaphysical space could lose its status as a sphere where a painting happens, and become merely its background. Just like Leonardo’s *New Nature*, a landscape was created by the artist himself, which constituted only the conceptual background to the spectacle taking place in the foreground of a painting. In his bigger compositions, Keskküla nevertheless achieved a remarkably multilayered blend of details, metaphysical space and various art topics and trends of the time. A splendid example of such a composition is currently in the permanent exhibition at the Kumu Art Museum – the triptych *Tallinn Harbour with an Unfinished Seascape* (1980–1981). In my opinion, this painting is one of his masterpieces, in terms of both the achieved metaphysical space as well as the term used by the artist himself – the new documentalism.

Ando Keskküla’s paintings constitute a remarkable set of documents of a confusing era, inviting continued analysis in constantly changing paradigms – both from the point of view of life and of art culture.



Ando Keskküla. *Tallinn Harbour with an Unfinished Seascape*. 1980–1981. Oil on canvas. 130 x 180 cm. Art Museum of Estonia

### Ando Keskküla

(1950–2008) began exhibiting as a member of the avant-garde group SOUP’69. He was a painter and, beginning in the 1990s, a video artist, participating for example in the Venice biennial. He was an active organiser of Estonian art life, e.g. Rector of the Estonian Academy of Arts. In autumn 2009 a comprehensive retrospective exhibition took place in the Tallinn Art Hall (curator Harry Liivrand).

### Leonhard Lapin

(1947), is a major Estonian avant-garde artist, an active painter, architect, graphic artist, performance artist, installation artist, architectural historian, writer etc.

# Postmodern diversity in Estonian architecture in the 70s and 80s

## Review of the exhibition and catalogue:

### ‘Environment, Projects, Concepts.

### Architects of the Tallinn School 1972–1985’

Marieke van Rooy

#### Modernism in crisis

At the end of the sixties, the modern project started to fall apart all over the Western world. Taking over the streets, people demanded democratization and criticized the technocratization of society that dominated the post-war decades. One of the main fields where this paradigm shift could be seen was in urban planning and architecture. Post-war modern architecture and urban planning were accused of having destroyed original urban patterns and dynamic city life, with the needs of the city inhabitants being subordinated to efficiency. The architectural debate of the seventies in Western Europe and the United States was inevitably infected by this socio-cultural change and a number of architects took a position against the functionalist approach of modern architecture. Literally, this meant a re-introduction in architectural design of elements that were fundamental to city life since the early urban settlements, such as small-scale architecture, variation in typology and urban plan, reintroduction of semi-public space, a mix of functions and traditional architectural language. This trend in architecture, where romantic and nostalgic features predominated, was referred to as ‘postmodernism’. The Western European and American elaboration of postmodernism differed to a great extent. In most of Western Europe, the focus lay, primarily, on the re-introduction of regional historical characteristics, also described as ‘vernacular’, while in the United States a more universal language that tried to connect architectural design with the popular culture of the masses was introduced.

The exhibition and catalogue *Environment, Projects, Concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972–1985*, which is build

around two major exhibitions organized by the Tallinn School in 1978 and 1982, provides insight into the particular position of a group of young and critical Estonian architects who seemed to be influenced by both versions of postmodernism at the same time, making it clear that there was an important international orientation within the architectural avant-garde of that period in Estonia.<sup>1</sup>

#### Art and architecture

The Tallinn Ten School consisted of a group of Estonian architects who, by means of critical viewpoints and artistic interventions, criticized the modernistic Soviet architecture applied in Estonian building projects and urbanism during the post-war occupation.

In their first manifesto in 1972, entitled ‘Program for an exhibition of new architecture’, the architects proclaimed that the aims of this exhibition (which was never realised) were ‘to free architecture from local dogma and to cultivate the formal possibilities of architecture.’<sup>2</sup> They ended by saying: ‘Let contemporary architecture represent a new democracy!’<sup>3</sup>

This critical approach to the modernist project wasn’t restricted to the architectural discipline. Art was intertwined with architecture in the projects of the Tallinn School from the beginning. The architect Leonhard Lapin wrote in 1971: ‘The artist of today ... is an architect or a city constructor. Not by profession, but by an attitude towards the world,’<sup>4</sup> and in an article by the poet Juhan Viiding and architect Vilen Künnapu they criticized ‘one-sided solutions to the process of urbanisation and drew attention to the diversity of anonymous and everyday architecture and

environment’, referring to the interests of Pop artists at the time.<sup>5</sup> The two artists proposed playful interventions in the city through the painting of ordinary objects. One of the happenings was ‘Colouring the Elephant’ (1971). The video on display in the exhibition showed how the architects and students covered a playground with bright colors.

In the text that accompanies the work ‘A New Environment of Tallinn’ (1975), the architect Sirje Lapin explained why art was a necessary element for the design of the contemporary city: ‘Contemporary town is a very complicated system that functions according to its own inherent rules and that is created by man. We must use all the media of art and technical devices to form the town environment into the multimedial that is accomplished and then makes possible the best contacts between people and town. These interrelations must be creative. We do not achieve it in the industrial town without involving any irrational details. In my work, I was looking for the possibilities of spiritual and creative contacts between man and town’.<sup>6</sup>

The architects used art to break open the rigid approach towards urban planning and the city in their (paper) projects, but they also used the communication tools of art in the presentation of their projects. The exhibitions that were reconstructed in the exhibition of the Tallinn School demonstrate this particular way of presenting architectural ideas.

#### Hybrid architectural styles

The first exhibition that included projects by the Tallinn School was *Architecture Exhibition 78*. The exhibition was officially or-

ganized by the Youth section of the Union of Estonian Architects, but differed from the common approach, since the projects on display weren't just a representation of built projects. On the contrary, the projects shown in this exhibition were a manifesto for a new architecture that criticized, in an ironic way, the establishment of the moment, as for example in the 'The City of the Living – the City of the Dead' by Leonhard Lapin, through which he proposed to build

cemeteries in prefabricated housing areas.

Although the approaches of the architects referred to many different influences, from Team Ten, Archigram to Art Nouveau (this stylistic hybridization was represented by the wedding pictures of four architects, provided with stylistic etiquettes: art nouveau, functionalism, art deco and bourgeois), the works of this group of architects have, in the past, often been associated with neo-functionalism.

The reason for this lies in projects that were realised or meant to be realised, such as the housing complex *Golden Home* for the Pärnu KEK construction company, two sanatoriums in Pärnu and the entry for the Tallinn Olympic Yachting Centre, also presented in this exhibition. Because of the neo-functional architectural style, these projects have been interpreted as a part of building up a national identity, since this was the national Estonian style



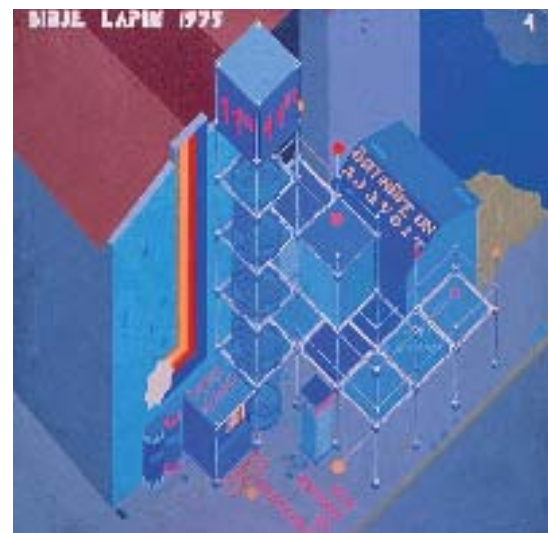
Tallinn School. From left: Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik, Leonhard Lapin, Ülevi Eljand, Jüri Okas, Toomas Rein, Tiit Kaljundi, Jaan Ollik, Tõnis Vint, Harry Šein, Avo-Himm Looveer. In front of the Academy of Sciences library. 1978



introduced after independence in 1918 by the cultural elite. Seen in this context, this approach fits into the vernacular trend in postmodernism, mostly visible in Western Europe, where the international style of modernism was replaced by a rediscovery of local and regional architectural features. An ironic twist is provided by the fact that modernist post-war architecture was criticized through the proposal for projects again in a modern style, and then through an early approach that referred to the international style. Because of this fact, the Estonian architecture of the seventies represents quite an interesting case when seen in the European context.

Four years later, with *Exhibition 82*, it became clear, however, that the young architects had established more distance from the social critics on modernism and were influenced by the international postmodernist movement, which focused more on the internal debate of architecture. As described by the curator of the *Tallinn School 2008* exhibition and architectural historian Andres Kurg: “Kahn, Stirling and Archigram, who had featured as examples throughout the decade, were now replaced by Rossi, Krier and Graves. With the exhibition in the Tallinn Art Salon in 1982, the group of architects was now established as the Tallinn Ten, and an emphasis was placed on the multiple means of architectural representation, with careful pencil drawings, watercolors and prints.”<sup>7</sup>

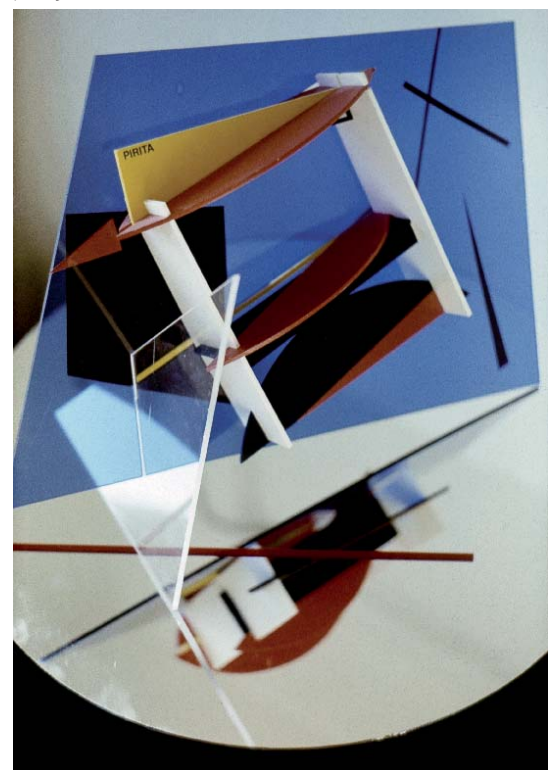
The difference between the two exhibitions is interesting and shows how architects could become sensitive to international collective change within their field in a very short time. The early works that consisted of sharp critics in which social standpoints played an important role, were in the second exhibition replaced by projects that reflected in a more abstract way on the role of architecture. But the contrasting approaches of the architects remained intact. The most important message of contributions in the catalogue is therefore the fact that the stylistic languages of this group of young architects weren't that unequivocal and were highly influenced by architectural styles from all over the world, including constructivism from the Soviet Union, functionalism from Finland and popular culture from the

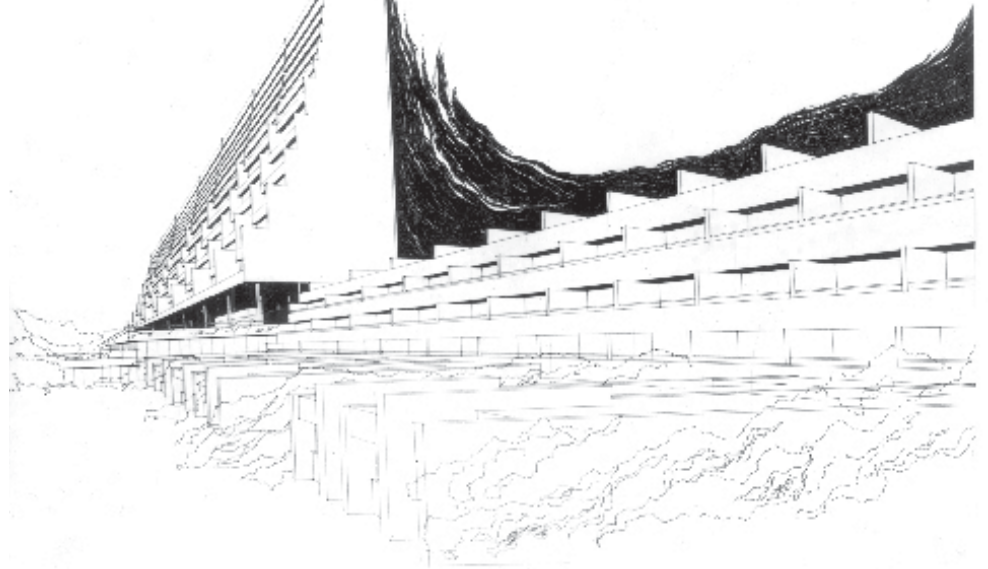


Sirje Lapin. *Design project for areas in central Tallinn*. Part of diploma work. 1975. Gouache on cardboard. 100 x 100 cm. Museum of Estonian Architecture

Jüri Okas. *Elephant*. 1971. 8 mm colour-film. 15'. An intervention of “Colours the Elephant”, at a children’s playground on the corner of Heina and Telliskivi Street in Tallinn. Organised by Andres Toits

Marika Lööke, Jüri Okas. *Suprematist Flower Stand to Pirita, Tallinn*. Model. 1985. Coloured polystyrene, plexiglass, mirror. 24 x 43 x 31 cm





United States.

### Conclusion

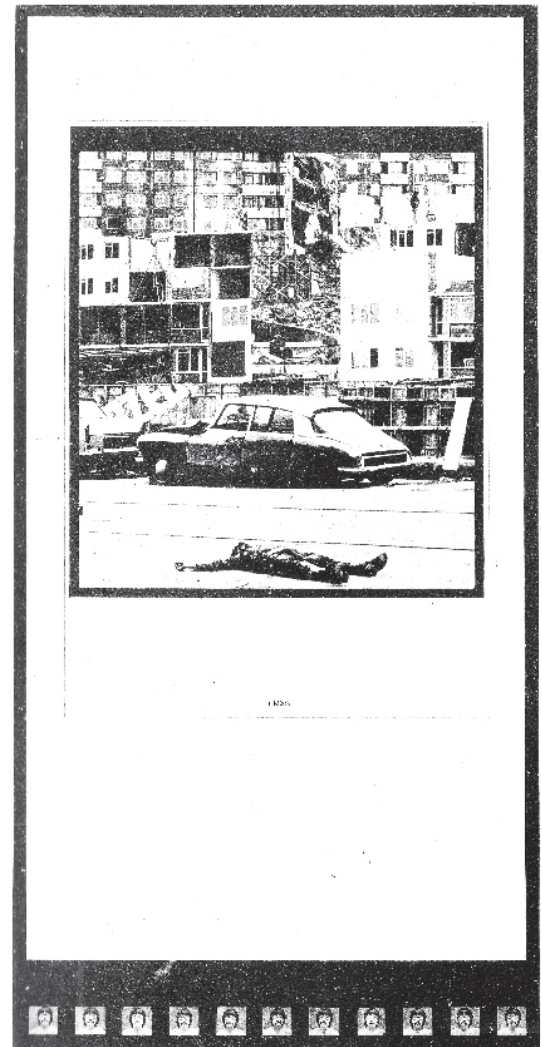
The catalogue that accompanies the exhibition is a beautifully illustrated publication in English and Estonian. A part from several interesting articles and interviews most projects are documented in colorful pictures. Furthermore there is included an 'ABC' that explains the background and context of the architects of the Tallinn School. Therefore the manifestation can be seen as an important historical document that explains this paradigm shift within an international context. However, the curators of the exhibition and catalogue did not want to stick to the event as only an historical account. Although the projects and interventions by the architects of the Tallinn School seem nowadays rather naive and far from reality, the curators of the exhibition did see the conceptual basis of importance for the actual architectural debate in Tallinn: "The experimental interventions of the Tallinn architects, leading to both a broadening of the conceptual and aesthetic possibilities of architecture, but also criticism of architectural practice and themselves, is relevant again today, when the building boom of the past 10 years in Tallinn has once again brought architecture to the forefront of public debate. Reviewing the Tallinn School's work – their utopian concepts, their radical urban critique that challenged architecture and city planning discourses, and their attempts to re-invent the city as a site for adventure in their own designs and appropriations of space – could act to revitalize conceptual discussions about architecture today."<sup>8</sup> If

this manifestation will really change the debate that is dominated by project developers with an economical goal, is still to be seen. Nowadays maybe a more radical critical engagement not only restricted to the cultural elite would be more effective, but the first attempt of opening up the discussion has been made!

- 1 The exhibition took place in 2008 in the Museum of Estonian Architecture in Tallinn. The exhibition was curated by Andres Kurg and Mari Laanemets, who are also the editors of the accompanying catalogue: *Environment, Projects, Concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972-1985*. Tallinn, 2008
- 2 Andres Kurg, Mari Laanemets (eds). *Environment, Projects, Concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972-1985*. 2008, p 216.
- 3 *Ibid*
- 4 Mari Laanemets. Before the spaces are constructed: concerning the relationship between architecture and art in the practice of the Tallinn School architects. In: *Architects of the Tallinn School 1972-1985*. 2008, p 86.
- 5 *Ibid*, p 87.
- 6 Andres Kurg, Mari Laanemets (eds). *Environment, Projects, Concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972-1985*. 2008, p 137.
- 7 Andres Kurg. Modernism's endgame, Tallinn 1978. In: *Architects of the Tallinn School 1972-1985*. 2008, p 58.
- 8 *Ibid*, p 38.

### Marieke van Rooy

(1974), is an architectural historian. Currently PhD candidate at the faculty of architecture, Technical University in Eindhoven. Her research is focused on the relationship between the socio-cultural transformation of the sixties and the changes in the architecture of Dutch social housing of that period.



Harry Šein. *Hills I* (Keldrimäe, Lasnamäe). 1978. Exhibition display, photomontage. 100 x 100 cm. Item lost

# Architects Urmas Muru and Peeter Pere

## Interviewed by Margit Mutso

Anyone who is even slightly interested in contemporary Estonian architecture cannot ignore one of our most prominent architectural duos, Urmas Muru and Peeter Pere. The names Muru and Pere go together just as well in the similarity of their sound as their owners do in their daily work. Although quite different in nature, it is nevertheless impossible to distinguish in their joint work where one ends and the other starts. Their houses are thus called by a common term: 'muruandperehouses'.

**Peeter Pere (PP):** Sometimes we work together on a house, while at other times I might, for example, take an earlier idea of Urmas and develop it in a radically different direction. I have no idea who is the author then. Working together certainly has a mutual impact.

**Urmas Muru (UM):** Yes, we are like Buñuel and Dali, who read their work out to each other and then one always said 'yes'.

**There are architects who have known from an early age what they want to do in the future. Both Urmas Muru and Peeter Pere claim that they came to architecture almost by accident.**

**UM:** A family friend, a fine lady, made a recommendation. It later transpired that it was a conspiracy of my family. They were afraid that I'd want to be an artist and my life would be difficult. Without any outside influence, I would have become an engineer.

**PP:** The same here, only the fine lady wasn't a family friend. I cannot remember any clear role models, and I knew precious little about architecture. The word itself is promising and decorative. It comes down to names, after all. I don't think I even knew that an architect had to draw houses.

**Architects gather inspiration from various environments. Some head for a forest, while others prefer a walk among skyscrapers. Peeter Pere is one of the forest people, whereas Urmas Muru's reply to the question about his favourite environment, without hesitation: nightclubs!**

**UM:** There was a year when I went to



Peeter Pere and Urmas Muru  
photographed by Margit Mutso

Kadriorg Park every single morning. One of the most striking things here was the birds' fight for survival in the spring. It seemed to me that something similar might happen in nightclubs.

**In the Soviet era, nearly all graduates of architecture found themselves in a huge design office or in some place that they could not choose. The more popular institutions were EKE Projekt (the Estonian Construction Project), Kommunaalprojekt (the Communal Project) or Eesti Projekt (the Estonian Project). Tööstusprojekt (the Industrial Project), where Peeter Pere and later Urmas Muru ended up, was considered to be one of the least appealing places for an architect.**

**PP:** The Industrial Project seemed a kind of punishment. For students it was like a labour camp, where the work was supposed to be rational, dull and without any creative moments. Using catalogues was, in fact, quite instructive. They regulated and generalised architecture, and made the solutions of buildings 'harsh'. The 'industrial period' provided us with a very strong foundation. The rationality required by industrial buildings

excluded, for us, the post-modernism which was all the rage back then. During the Soviet era we could design a lot; for example, some of my projects of that time were a margarine factory, a huge technologically elaborate complex in Lasnamäe, an ice-hall in Narva, and an enormous sports complex in Russia for a car factory that had an unlimited budget. Still, all that remained on paper.

**UM:** You worked for two years, and then it was all dumped into the dustbin.

**PP:** The most creative projects during that time were the boiler plants - abstract big halls for machinery. We could use Majakovski-style architectural language. The houses designed at that time were influenced by the available tools and means. Any kind of creative activity is a fascinating mixture of artistic innovation and practical restrictions constantly in conflict and cooperation. Thus the experience from that period has perhaps played a significant role in somewhat non-standardised solutions in our current projects.

**Before Urmas Muru and Peeter Pere became known as architects, they were known in art circles. Studying at the Art Institute (now Academy of Arts),**



Urmas Muru, Peete Pere, Reet Viigipuu.  
Summer kitchen in Korvamäe. 1999-2008

**the architects came into contact with much more attractive fields of art, such as painting and graphic art. Active art groups were popular and offered quicker and more effective opportunities to express creative ideas than the slower field of architecture, which depends on numerous factors and is restricted by many regulations.**

**PP:** Paintings, installations, architectural drawings and performances provided a plethora of ideas that could not have been downloaded into the architecture of that period. However, this surplus energy could have been, for example, used to repair cars. At least something palpable and real.

**The architectural office of Muru and Pere has been remarkably successful. They have produced various public buildings, numerous apartment buildings and smaller one-family homes. Whether there is something common in these buildings is debatable. Still, in the bigger buildings we might point out three main features: an extremely simple form, rational planning and innovative solutions in façades and materials. The architects seem to have their most creative moments in façades, exhibiting here**



Urmas Muru, Peete Pere, Janek Maat. *Private house Aluminium House.* 2004-2007



Urmas Muru, Peete Pere, Janek Maat. *Private house Copper House.* 2002-2004/2008



Urmas Muru, Peete Pere,  
Janek Maat. *Haabersti*  
(Õismäe) Recreational Centre.  
2000-2007

Urmas Muru, Peete Pere,  
Janek Maat. *Dwelling houses*  
in Tartu, Kalda St. 2004-2008



**the ideas and aspirations of their former art projects. For instance, the concrete walls of the Lasnamäe social buildings are covered with an uneven expressionist colour gamma, which required various chemical tests. The façade of the Õismäe social building is covered with metal panels, seemingly hit by a shower of bullets; the simple residential houses in Tartu are adorned with optically deceptive balconies etc.**

**PP:** We have had many works where a significant task has been saving money. We wished these cost-effective houses to look decent but not ostentatious. The obvious presence of money will not make a home out of a house, but on the other hand there is no need to advertise modest resources. Intelligent language of form and proportion do not always suit the format of the budget; aesthetics is, rather, a topic

of thinking along the same lines, and often gets stuck in red tape. If some of our houses seem to have too many widgets attached to them, this is probably the result of a strong side-effect, whether from a developer or because, perhaps, various agencies have demanded more 'beauty'.

**UM:** I am particularly fond of post-war American minimalist art and its purposeful low profile. It stressed that creative work was not a refined activity but essentially the same as factory work. A worker places his objects on a factory floor, and an artist does the same, only in a gallery. Estonia is a poor country. Keeping a low profile sounds like just the thing here. It could of course happen that, hearing this, the client is advised to change his architect. Architecture is a social effort and there is no way around that. As an architect, I naturally think that our role could be bigger.

**PP:** I used to be convinced that if a house was a failure the architect must be hopelessly incompetent. Now that I have gone through the process of designing and building many times, I can claim that there are several other factors in completing a house, and they are more powerful than the house and the architect put together.

**The private residence is something that many architects try to avoid. This**





Urmas Muru, Peete Pere, Janek Maat. *Municipal Housing in Tallinn, Loometsa and Alvari St.* 2001-2003

Urmas Muru, Peete Pere. *Private residences in Suurupi.* 2009



**involves too much personal contact, and you have to delve deep into other people's private lives. Muru and Pere, on the other hand, seem to have focused on small buildings; there is quite an impressive number of residential structures attributed to them. The architects themselves also admit that in the past they let off steam by making art, whereas now this function is fulfilled by private residences.**

**PP:** Designing single-family homes started with the Suurupi 'wooden boxes', which in fact formed a significant link for understanding our big buildings. These residences are like flats that have been taken out of a block. When the Suurupi people came to us, they practically already had a working concrete mixer outside our office, and we had to produce the fundamental drawings without delay. This is how the low-budget, simple functional boxes were born. Many subsequent clients have wanted identical houses. Gradually these ideas of the boxes have developed and changed into something totally different. With the exception of aluminium houses, the mother of all our later private houses were our first wooden houses. However, as it often happens, children turn out differently from their parents.

The influence of Suurupi houses lies in the fact that the young people in that residential commune have tried to create a compact environment, and they have succeeded. They managed without the strict architectural regulations of detailed planning or any outside pressure.

**Today the financial crisis has wiped out the building boom. People are sobering up, and architecture is doing the same. At times like this, the same question arises: what next? What will the future architecture be like that will create our future environments?**

**PP:** We should decide for certain who we actually are and what we want. Then, hopefully, the architecture of the new era will be born. Or in other words – I do not know the answer.

**UM:** According to Roland Barthes, energy is born out of renaming. You give something a new name, and it attracts attention, causes some animation, and from that comes the energy. Perhaps innovation in architecture happens in the same way. Changes create energy. What needs to be changed is each person's own decision. It would be better if the decisions were different. The more varied ideas we have, the richer we are. Isn't that true?

### AB Muru & Pere Architects

is operating from 1997, mostly designing social buildings, residential houses and private houses. Their entries at architectural competitions have often been successful and their houses have won a number of annual awards. See also [www.vamp.ee](http://www.vamp.ee)

### Urmas Muru

(1961), architect and artist. Studied architecture at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Worked at *Tööstusprojekt* 1986-1990, then as a freelance architect and artist. Since 1997 architect and partner at *Muru & Pere Architects*. Has exhibited at the Nordic & Baltic Architectural Triennial in 1990, 1996 and 1999.

### Peeter Pere

(1957), architect and artist. Studied architecture at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Worked as architect at *Tööstusprojekt* (Industrial Project) 1980-1997, since 1997 architect and partner at *Muru & Pere Architects*. Participated in Venice Art Biennial (1999) and Rauma Biennial (2001). Has received art awards in Estonia and abroad.

### Margit Mutso

(1966), studied architecture at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Since 1995 architect at the architectural company *Eek & Mutso*. She was the first female chairperson of the Union of Estonian Architects (2004-2006). Has published extensively.

# LOCATOR. Pakri Peninsula

Siiri Vallner, Indrek Peil

This building is inseparable from its location. It stands in the town of Paldiski. To convey the right mood, we should explain that it is behind a nuclear object closed down in 1994. No use looking for it between the Soviet-era grimy high-rise blocks. No need either to imagine it against the background of the oil barrels which determine the modern spatial reality of Paldiski. It is, instead, rather quiet here: the rumble of the sea, and the forest that slowly crumbles the abandoned military objects.

The nature of the abandoned military test sites, quarries or burnt woodlands is often especially beautiful, although somewhat different. The trend here is the opposite of cultivating landscape – these are landscapes where nature is obviously regaining its role as a more active shaper. You can even feel especially secure in a deserted test site.

We do not precisely know what force connects this place and these people. It is something to do with family lore, but the charm of this weird landscape certainly plays a role here. Paldiski is pretty but, even more, it is brutal. The architecture of the object of discussion is largely inspired by this contradictory fact.

The house was rebuilt from a silicate-brick barracks. There used to be three such barracks by the sea. Today, one has become a log house and the other stands in ruins. It is impossible to say now what the outcome would have been had it been commissioned by a different client. Keeping the inside brick walls and the robust, slightly awkward general appearance is the wish of the client. The silicate-brick walls are exposed on three sides.

The northern wall is of glass, offering a view of the sea. The Estonian geographical location is such that the sea-view and sunshine seldom coincide. It goes without saying that people prefer the view, although it would be a pity to abandon sunshine altogether. The sun gets into the big open living area through the two projecting dormer windows over the roof. In nice weather, the room is filled with glowing light. Light plays a different role in architecture at every latitude. In Estonia, the architect cannot employ sharp light-shadow borders. Our light is soft, and the border between light and shadow is nearly non-existent. Our personal favourite is a situation where the indirect light makes the room glow internally, enlivened by a few occasional rays of sun. An additional feature here is the relief brick-wall surface, which amplifies the qualities of light. We talk so much about light because home is the place where people have the time and opportunity to relax and enjoy the light.

The building itself is small rather than big, with a relatively open plan for a private house. We have just finished the design for the Occupations Museum. In an architectural sense, we explore the possibilities of designing clearly distinguishable spatial parts that would also be private, while retaining visual openness. For that purpose, we use the different height of the room and locations on various levels. The entrance is a bit higher than the living room. Upon entering, you have a view across the living room of the sea, visible through trees in the distance. The view is framed by the cantilever rooms above the living room terrace. The kitchen area, with a lower ceiling, is part of the higher living area.

Architecture is characterised by a scale where the dimensions of man and landscape meet. More fascinating than its form is how a completed house relates to people, activities and landscape, something that is not evident in the model, but that has been quietly expected. When the universality of form and its specific content are revealed, as well as the actual size of the rooms and the views from them. Light and the general atmosphere.

The house has geothermal heating and massive external walls. These aspects some-



what balance the loss of warmth of the big glass surfaces. As the client wanted concrete as material, we decided to use its structural qualities. Two small rooms above the terrace have given the building its nickname, Villa Locator.

In order to perceive your surroundings, you can use all the known and unknown senses. Northern Estonian coastal landscapes have a 'radioactive' backdrop. Of course, not in the physical sense, but rather in a meta-pata-physical.

A private house is among the very first tasks at school for everyone studying architecture. A private house is probably thought to be perceptible and relatively straightforward,

because after all we all have to live somewhere. The lowest vocational qualification an Estonian architect can acquire allows him to design residential houses and other similar trivia. To say nothing of the fact that houses are often built without consulting an architect at all.

Despite the seeming simplicity, complicated questions persist. For example, how and where should people live in the first place and how painfully big can the differences be? It is not a matter of a person's decision and financial possibilities, but the resources commonly available. It is obvious that not all of us can have a separate house; most people must make do with flats and sometimes live in rather drab circumstances. Architects have always felt sort of responsible for the perfection of the world, and they continue to do so, even when this responsibility is clearly too onerous or ridiculous.



Former silicate-brick barrack



The locations chosen for residential purposes seem to be on the border and in the centre simultaneously. The border does not necessarily have to be a land, sea or forest border – the coast or the edge of a forest. Perhaps we are looking for places where the border between the inside and the outside vanishes. Something to this effect is certainly valid for the Locator on Pakri Peninsula.

### Siiri Vallner

(1972), architect, works at the *Kavakava* architectural bureau. In 2009 she received the award of the best young architect in Estonia. Together with Indrek Peil they were awarded The 2008 Cultural Award of Estonia for the architecture of the *Lotte* Kindergarten in Tartu.

### Indrek Peil,

(1973), architect, has won awards from the architecture competitions, mostly together with Siiri Vallner. Currently doing his PhD at the Estonian Academy of Arts.



Siiri Vallner, Indrek Peil.  
*Villa Locator*. 2008

# SEARCHING FOR AN ESTONIAN DESIGN HIT AMONG THE BRUNOS

Herke Vaarmann

When domestic design manages to capture the expectations and touch the aesthetic nerve of the public, symbols emerge that last for a very long time. Such signs are admired decades later, and people like to be surrounded with them in their daily lives. In timeless, sweetly nostalgic form and functionality, these items inspire us to undertake trips to antique shops or markets selling second-hand things, to carefully preserve dinner sets that used to inhabit grandma's sideboard, to appreciate mother's favourite armchair and to lament the loss of a lamp with a symbolic meaning that went missing during renovation work years ago.

For Estonians, such a significance of signs once belonged to furniture made in Luther's factory, to Lorup's crystal or to the dotted tin boxes for dry foods made in the Norma factory. The tin boxes are remembered not so much for their popularity but rather because there was hardly anything else available. What could then be the item produced in today's Estonia, or a completed design project, which would enjoy the same significance? It is not an easy question. We can be pretty certain that any Estonian could immediately name the design stars of our northern neighbours the Finns – Aalto, Arabia, Iittala, Marimekko, Nokia etc. Estonian quality design brands, unfortunately, are not that well known.

It seems crucial for the nation that such signs not only lived in the past, but would also live today. True, compared with Finnish design traditions, the Estonian conditions have not been exactly favourable. Still, we have had quite a few years to recover and catch up. It is good to see that there is no shortage of ideas in Estonian design, and that we are capable of producing clever, user-friendly products. Unfortunately, only a few of these ideas ever reach production and daily consumption. More often than not, there is a gap between designers' work and mass production. This gap is successfully negotiated only by a few especially ambitious design projects, which when finally produced, are not affordable to many. Design should not be elitist or beyond the reach of the majority; it should add comfort and aesthetic value to the daily lives of all of us. For design to be a natural part of people's lives again, we should bring together young inventive designers, contemporary industrialists and consumers who appreciate domestic products.

For that very purpose, the Estonian Association of Designers has been giving out the Estonian Bruno Design Award since 2006. The award is named after Professor Emeritus of the Estonian Academy of Arts Bruno Tomberg, one of the pathfinders of Estonian design. The Association aims to introduce new, innovative, high-quality products, promote design-connected product development, and encourage designers to create more exciting things and study international trends in the world. The next step would be to launch the new design products on international markets and to international acclaim.

On 26 September 2008, the Estonian Association of Designers awarded Brunos for the second time (the first time was in 2006). This time, Brunos were awarded in three categories: the best product design, the best design project and, as a new category, best

Tarmo Luisk, Margus Triibmann.  
Byroller. *Kolulamp 3*.  
Street lamp from Rotermanni area, Tallinn



Tarmo Luisk,  
Margus Triibmann.  
Byroller. *Tähtlamp*.  
Street lamp from  
Rotermanni area,  
Tallinn



Sirli Ehari.  
*Nympha*



Mare Kelpman.  
Collection of *Light and Stripes*.  
2007. Polyester metallic,  
phosphorized polyamide.  
Sizes of cushions 50 x 50 cm,  
40 x 40 cm, 30 x 30 cm



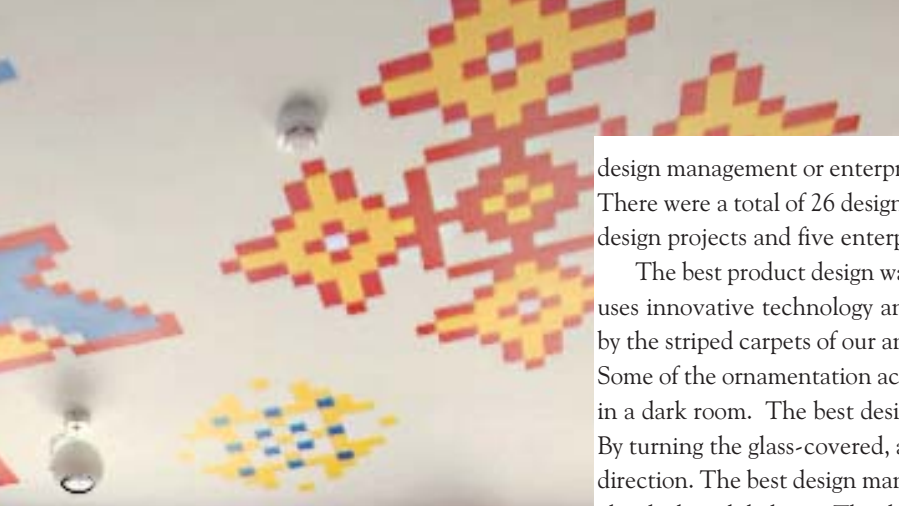
Andrus Labi,  
Janno Roos.  
Interior and furniture of  
the Estonian restaurant  
*Kaerajaan* in Tallinn



Tarmo Luisk.  
*LED-Stick*



Jaanus Orgusaar. *Solar*.  
Hanging light



design management or enterprise that constantly cooperates with professional designers. There were a total of 26 designers, 25 items competing in the product design category, 16 design projects and five enterprises in the design management category.

The best product design was Mare Kelpman's pillow collection *Lights & Stripes*, which uses innovative technology and national motifs in a modern way. The pillows, inspired by the striped carpets of our ancestors, are made of fabrics woven of high-tech materials. Some of the ornamentation actually gathers light energy and thus makes the pillows glow in a dark room. The best design project, *LED Stick* lighting by Tarmo Luisk, also glows. By turning the glass-covered, attached LED sticks, you can point the light in the desired direction. The best design management Bruno was given to the company Byroller, which also deals with lighting. Thanks to this company, our urban space now enjoys clever space solutions (the central square in the Rotermann area, after the project of Tarmo Luisk and Margus Triibmann), practical and stylish benches, dustbins and street lamps. The northern dusk in Estonia can now be lit up in various Bruno-awarded ways.

The Finnish design industrialists realised back in the 1930s that people expected modern, domestic design that related to the local environment. They successfully made use of the high standard of Finnish design (preferring it to modern Central European design), people's expectations for practical, daily objects and the fact that, by means of consumer goods, it was possible to introduce the modernist language of form and colours, which was not possible in the figurative Finnish art of the time. Companies producing even the most traditional items understood the necessity of contemporary design – or else they would have lost out in the race. The advantages in promoting carefully chosen design are obvious to our northern neighbours even today and, in addition to domestic popularity, Finnish design is famous nearly everywhere in the world. Estonia too deserves its own design hits.

Taking a look at the awarded products and projects, those shortlisted by the jury and other entries, can we find a work amongst them with the potential to become the new national design hit? Did Bruno 2008 offer to the Estonian audience something we would be keen to see in our surrounding environment? It seems that this time the successful entries focused on opportunities to compensate for our shortage of sunshine. And not only the successful ones – the works competing for Brunos that dealt with lighting issues included Tarmo Luisk's wall lighting *Bubble*, Luisk and Triibmann's *Kaubapall* and *Luminord*, Sirli Ehar's *Oks*, *Nympha* and *Murum* lamps, Jaanus Orgusaar's *Solar*, and Tõnis Vellamaa's *Queen*. Estonians seem to take a great interest in lighting. If it would be possible to offer some of these lamps for a price affordable for common people, this group may well contain new design hits which could become agreeably natural.



### Herke Vaarmann

(1981), MA student in art history at the Estonian Academy of Arts, research area: contemporary Estonian jewellery, conceptual jewellery

Andrus Labi,  
Janno Roos.  
Interior and furniture of  
the Estonian restaurant  
*Kaerajaan*  
in Tallinn



## From plough to stove

Jaan Koort  
one hundred  
years later  
Johannes Saar

Jaan Koort (1883–1935), one of the founders of Estonian national sculpture, is an undisputed phenomenon in Estonian art history. Arguing about his legacy has come to an end, and only his birth and death anniversaries make it into the news. Last year's retrospective in Tartu Art Museum celebrated yet another anniversary – 125 years from the sculptor's birth.

In memoirs, references to Jaan Koort tend to repeat some things. The same motifs crop up in different sources. It seems almost obligatory to those who remember him to point out, however briefly, his relations with stoves, with warmth. Perhaps when our peasant nation awakened to embrace the cultural nations in the first decade of the 20th century, it needed something familiar to hold on to, within the exquisite craze of symbolism of the time. After all, the craze encouraged the young Koort himself to scribble some lines of poetry in Paris about dim-witted cattle stomping around at a wellspring and about women with eyes full of melancholy. This explains his escape from the main models – beer tankards and woollen mittens – at the Stieglitz School of Applied Art in St Petersburg, to the European art expanse. Still, sobriety quickly set in, both in Koort himself and in memoirs. Koort came from a simple background and art literature turned this into his trademark, allowing the reader to identify with a man who managed to remain true to himself in the midst of the temptations of a big city.

So, the stoves. Parisian winters were a test of endurance for all Estonian art emigrants, who mostly lived on the brink of starvation. Koort was no exception. His memoirs contain bitter pages on playing violin in Parisian courtyards – it was too embarrassing to play in the street – and how the earned small change vanished in pubs. Still, the obligatory image of Koort emerges here as well: his room in the *La Ruche* artists' colony always had a stove burning away at all times. It was a tiny iron stove which did not work well under certain wind conditions, but it was nevertheless a source of warmth, a prerequisite of survival. The talented graphic artist Erik Obermann starved to death, the musician Rudolf Tassa died of tuberculosis, and the future literary pope Fridebert Tuglas tossed and turned in

his bed in his small Paris attic for months, tormented by high fever. In contrast, what is always emphasised about Koort are his rustic survival skills in a big city. It was true too because, unlike his mates, he was a family man whose artistic routine ended with a return home to his wife and kids every evening.

In the final throes of WW I, Estonia managed to become independent, and this was a signal to return home for many prodigal sons all over Europe and Russia. Koort came back as early as 1916. In 1918 he managed to collaborate with Soviet Russian troops and authorities, who temporarily reigned in Tartu, and thus acquired the label of a 'Bolshevik' for life. He was, nevertheless, reminded of this only when he himself stirred up a hornet's nest and publicly criticised the art policy of the young republic in the press. The art writing in Estonia also frequently paired him off with stoves, in a rather literary manner. The papers published stories about cafés in the Kadriorg district in Tallinn, into which Koort nonchalantly marched, with a sack of coal slung over his shoulder, clad in dirty overalls and sucking on his pipe – he enjoyed digressing on his way to the new ceramics furnace. This is how it developed: the work of the mature Koort in the field of ceramics was increasingly associated with the image of a stoker, with a roaring fire; his dedication culminated in the invention of new enamels, innovative use of clinker clays and the terms 'ceramics' and 'high temperatures' in the annotations about his work at that time.

Life itself added fuel: a public row with the art managers of the Cultural Endowment, an attempt to emigrate to hot Australia, and finally a bitter and defiant departure to boost the ceramics industry in Soviet Russia. All this indicates some sort of escalation, the doggedness of someone who bears a grudge forever and stokes the flames until the house catches fire. Going to Russia certainly represented an act of spite towards the Estonia of his time: "serves you right". But it was also a challenge to Koort himself, because in Russia the opportunities were in the industrial field; he was, in fact, able to take his art to the masses on a factory conveyor belt. The leap from a small fire-brick oven in Kadriorg to Russian factory furnaces – wasn't that a dream come



Jaan Koort. *Ra Koort*. 1923.  
Palisander.  
Art Museum of Estonia



Jaan Koort.  
*Head of a Woman*. 1921.  
Art Museum of Estonia



Jaan Koort with his wife and children. Estonian Literary Museum



Jaan Koort. *Head of a Woman*. 1921. Art Museum of Estonia



Jaan Koort. *Suburb of Paris*. 1909. Oil. Art Museum of Estonia

### Jaan Koort

(1883-1935), sculptor, painter and ceramic artist. Lived in Paris between 1905 and 1915, later also in Russia.

### Johannes Saar

(1965), art historian and critic, head of the Center for Contemporary Arts. See also [www.cca.ee](http://www.cca.ee)

true? Koort discovered the Estonian work ethic, which he emphasised in his obituary of another Estonian sculpture giant, August Weizenberg, at the end of his life in Bolshevist Russia. Overalls were no problem here, and no art writing mentioned coal sacks in a café, because there were no cafés.

Estonian art writing still refused to let him go, even after the Moscow train had taken him away in 1934. A year later, the sculptor died. As for the cause of his sudden death, it was suggested that he got “too close to the furnace” and equally that he moved “too far from them”. Indeed, his decision to cool off outside in chilly October winds after working hard close to the furnaces in the Gzhel porcelain factory near Moscow was probably most imprudent. Pneumonia and a quick decline seem to confirm this. However, this perhaps puts too literary a point on the narrative that describes him as a dancer around the steam boiler, a country bumpkin whose only concerns were sowing, harvesting and a warm home. And a harsh punishment for abandoning the home hearth – burning in the flames of the Moloch of the communist ceramics industry. True, the homage paid by the Estonian state and a

state funeral reduced this misfortune to temporary purgatory, before Koort was hoisted to a throne in the pantheon of national culture. However, bourgeois morality sticks out its warning finger from between the ribbons of the funeral wreaths, turning Koort into an instructive example. This is where flirting with Bolshevism takes you! Do not go far from your home hearth and always dress up nice and tidy, and you will be fine.

A wise man’s world is his back garden. Koort’s realism-based art fits this claim. Still, the opposite is true as well: what matured in Koort’s backyard was what he experienced in the wide world and not the homespun province, which tended to distrust him. Stories of stoves and chilly October winds naturally alleviate the guilty feelings of those who advised the sculptor to leave Estonia. Had it been their decision, they would also have recommended that he have been born somewhere else. Did Koort himself wish this too? Quite possibly. The master of tranquil modelling was a restless soul who always yearned to be where he was not. That’s probably still true.



The Chinese were not in the habit of copying nature, instead they conveyed the essence of things in only a few lines. This is what makes their art so great and wealthy.

The art of every nation is in itself national, because the artist has the same soul as his people; it is impossible to free yourself from the habits of your nation.

We face great difficulties, especially at the beginning, as there is nothing in our art that draws a line where everything truly Estonian starts. We only have a certain spiritual life, an inkling that there is something in the soul of our people, but how to convey that in art is a major problem.

It is therefore highly recommended that our young artists study the art of other peoples, new art trends, in order to seek the form into which they can fit the intellectual peculiarities of our nation.

Our young artists are educated abroad and the majority of them are currently in Paris, where the modern school thrives. The modern school is initially foreign and alien to our people. It is not the fault of our artists that they lack an understanding of art, except for the simplest pictures and other similar artwork.

To be able to create something in art, artists must have some sort of technique so that they can convey their ideas freely. Without technique, the artist is like someone trying to produce a novel without being able to write.

If the artist lacks originality and temperament, he will only ever be able to copy nature, reproducing something without giving it a soul.

If, besides an academic education, an artist has some additional gifts, he can seek a form that fits his inner expression. The style is up to the individual himself; an academy or great masters cannot provide it. Here, each person must look at things through his own prism and rely only on his own knowledge.

Jaan Koort. *Vase*. 1930s.  
High-fired pottery,  
lustre enamel. H 18, d 16 cm.  
Estonian Museum of Applied  
Art and Design

**Jaan Koort**

*Estonian Home*, no 3/1911

# Pictures of fear and horror

Aare Pilv



Ants Laikmaa. *Portrait of Marie Under (Mutti)*. 1904. Pastel. Under and Tuglas Literature Centre

clothes, but also probably because of her colouring – a bit too reddish, too exuberant, so that her smile seemed an emergency solution which was supposed to hide the dark-red bubbling underneath her face. At that time, I naturally knew nothing about Under at all. It is thus difficult to say how important the connection between the picture and the dream actually was. My memory has retained a child's drawing that tried to capture that dream-woman, but is this a recollection of a real drawing (did I attempt to draw it somehow? – I wasn't in fact much of a drawer – although I did draw cars and later portraits of statesmen and footballers, where the similarity with the depicted person was obvious only to myself; all my drawings were reproductions, and I cannot remember ever inventing any pictures)? Of course, the drawing could be an intermediate layer constructed by my memory. I can no longer recall the original dream picture, except that the woman wore a black hat, which was one of the main things that evoked horror (looking at the Under portrait now, it seems possible that the sinister effect might be caused by the fact that the hat is a bit too small for her; it does not sit on her head but more above her head, apart from the head, being thus a separate object). The dream-woman faced me directly, her eyes were round and fearful (whether the mouth was open as well, I cannot remember. In any case the picture was soundless), but she wasn't afraid herself. Instead, her eyes were fearful in a kind of extroverted manner: the fear was directed at me, to make me afraid. It occurs to me only now that she resembled a Munch character, whose eyes are open wide, for example like the middle woman in this picture.

I am used to calling one of my earliest nightmares 'Laikmaa's portrait Under', although the title is somewhat imprecise, relying only on a vague similarity and the fact that, in my childhood, I had a book of Ants Laikmaa's (1866–1942) paintings. Marie Under's (1883–1980) [one of the major Estonian poets of all time, was Laikmaa's intimate friend at the time the painting was completed – Ed] portrait was one of them – but back then there did not seem to be a direct connection between the dream and the picture, which I probably invented later. Or who knows – Under's picture must have appeared a bit sinister. The portrait is usually seen as an expression of youthful *joie de vivre*, mature adolescence. For me, however, it looked graceless and dark, maybe because of Under's black hat and

Edvard Munch. *Angstgefühl*. 1896. Coloured lithograph



However, I have never felt 'corporeally' that there was any sort of inner connection between Munch's characters and my dream-woman; just like Laikmaa, Munch is no more than an illustration of the similarity. At the time of the dream, I had probably not seen any pictures by Munch at all. Over the years, I managed to find a technique to get out of this nightmare without waking up – I had to flail my feet. I don't know whether I actually flailed my feet, but I knew in my sleep that, at some point, I had to start doing this, and the picture would disappear. I could thus prove that I was not a prisoner of the dream, "I know very well that you are only a dream". That picture was soon replaced by another, which denoted the arrival of a real picture in my dreams – instead of the lady with a hat, I saw a picture of the Old Devil by Jüri Arrak [b 1936, Estonian painter, graphic artist etc – Ed], which was printed on the back cover of a book of folk tales about the giant on Saaremaa Island.

Jüri Arrak. *Devil*. Illustration for the children's book *SuurTõll*. 1982



The giant called Tõll had two pupils in one eye; I might have seen an animated film where these pupils were moving. That eye with two pupils was the focus of the horror. It could occur in any other dream as well, whereas the woman with a hat and the Old Devil never took part in anything in any other dream. They ambushed me in the form of the picture (moving shot). The flailing feet helped with the Old Devil as well. Why one was replaced by the other, I have no idea. No idea either why it was Arrak's Old Devil, because when I looked at it when I was awake it was not in the least horrifying. What were horrifying (or rather, caused an uneasy feeling) were pictures that looked straight at you – the *Mona Lisa*, or the photograph of my dead grandfather on the shelf. I was afraid they might start moving, especially that the corners of their mouths might move. For me, the *Mona Lisa* mystery was not about the person depicted there or why she was smiling, but the fact that her smile was fixed a moment before the half-smile turned into a real smile; a moment of movement – and really and truly, I have seen *Mona Lisa*'s lips move. I did not like when the pictures moved. When I was at home alone, I turned them upside down on the desk. When others were at home, I was not afraid.

Leonardo da Vinci. *Mona Lisa* (fragment). Beginning of 16th century



I remember another incident, quite funny in retrospect. At some point I spent a longer than usual period of time at my grandmother's in Valga. She had the same photograph of my dead grandfather as we had at home, which I occasionally turned upside down. I did not dare do that in my grandmother's house. In the picture, my grandfather had his usual friendly face, slightly smiling. I slept in the same room with the picture. Every evening, I pulled the blanket over my head, just in case the face in the photograph decided to move during the night. After all, it was not possible to see the picture, and what was going on in it, in the dark. One night I heard a strange scrabbling noise approaching my bed. I made vague fearful noises – I cannot remember what I thought was happening, but I felt that finally it was here, the horror I had been afraid of, here in this room, and not just something menacing hiding behind the picture. Grandmother came from her own room, and stumbled over something in the dark, which turned out to be her dog – it was now clear who had made those noises. Naturally, I was ashamed to confess that I had been afraid of my grandfather's photograph (it would have sounded idiotic), so I told her I had had a nightmare. After that, I was less afraid, because I could always think that whatever I heard in the dark room was probably the dog. My train of thought was not "everything can be rationally explained – who else but the dog could make this noise?". The train of thought – or, to be honest, it was not actually a train of thought, because when I thought clearly I did not believe such things at all – the 'economics of fear' simply concluded that "even if something terrible is indeed in the room, I can always think that it's the dog"; i.e I did not think that "it was really the case", but that "I can always convince myself that this was the case". Just like flailing my feet during the nightmare – the idea wasn't, in fact, to abolish the reality of those nightmares, but to threaten that reality, set another reality against it.

The article was first published in Aare Pilv's blog [aaree.blogspot.com](http://aaree.blogspot.com)

### Aare Pilv

(1976), literary historian, poet, versatile critic

## Kumu Art Museum

Weizenbergi 34 / Valge 1, Tallinn  
[www.ekm.ee/eng/kumu.php](http://www.ekm.ee/eng/kumu.php)  
 Open: May–Sept Tue–Sun 11 am–6 pm;  
 Oct–April Wed–Sun 11 am–6 pm

- until 4 Oct Eduard Wiiralt.  
Gift from the Estonian  
Committee
- until 27 Sep *It's Getting Harder.*  
Mindaugas Navakas
- until 23 Aug *Quilting Sessions.*  
Drawings by Paul McCarthy &  
Benjamin Weissman
- until 23 Aug *State of Affairs*
- 19 June–1 Nov Ülo Õun.  
*Sculptor Interrupted*
- until 20 Sep *Activities of the Foksal  
Gallery in 1966–1989*
- 11 Sep–10 Jan 2010 *I Love Malmö*
- 2 Oct–7 Feb 2010 *HARRO!*  
*A Classic of Finnish Pop Art*
- 16 Oct–10 Jan 2010 Painters of Normandy
- 27 Nov–March 2010 *POPkunst Forever!*

## Museum of Estonian Architecture

Ahtri 2, Tallinn  
[www.arhitektuurimuuseum.ee](http://www.arhitektuurimuuseum.ee)  
 Open: 19 May–30 Sept Wed–Fri 12 am–8 pm;  
 Sat–Sun 11 am–6 pm  
 1 Oct–18 May Wed–Sun 11 am–6 pm

- In the cellar hall Shanghai Expo
- until 28 June *Manu Propria.*  
Drawing Triennial

## Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design

Lai 17, Tallinn  
[www.etdm.ee](http://www.etdm.ee)  
 Open: Wed–Sun 11 am–6 pm

Permanent exhibition: *Patterns of Time 2*  
 Survey of Estonian applied art and the  
 development of design

- until 7 June *Blumenflirt*
- until 30 Aug Ede Kurrel
- until 28 June Gerhard Ribka
- 20 June–30 Aug *Classics.* Evi Mardna
- 12 Sep–11 Oct Austrian design
- 14 Nov–21 Feb 2010 *KnowHow.* 5th Tallinn  
Applied Art Triennial

## Adamson-Eric Museum

Lühike jalg 3, Tallinn  
[www.ekm.ee/eng/adamson.php](http://www.ekm.ee/eng/adamson.php)  
 Open: Wed–Sun 11 am–6 pm

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

- until 23 Aug 2+2=5
- 28 Aug–1 Nov Kokyo Hatanaka.  
Japanese classical  
*nihonga* painting

## Niguliste Museum

Niguliste 3, Tallinn  
[www.ekm.ee/eng/niguliste.php](http://www.ekm.ee/eng/niguliste.php)  
 Open: Wed–Sun 10 am–5 pm

Permanent exhibitions:  
 Ecclesiastical Art from the 14th–20th  
 centuries  
 The Silver Chamber

- 5 June–10 Jan 2010 Bernt Notke -  
*Between Innovation and  
Tradition*

## Kadriorg Art Museum

Kadriorg Palace, Weizenbergi 37, Tallinn  
 Mikkel Museum, Weizenbergi 28, Tallinn  
[www.ekm.ee/eng/kadriorg.php](http://www.ekm.ee/eng/kadriorg.php)  
 Open: May–Sept Tue–Sun 10 am–5 pm  
 Oct–April Wed–Sun 10 am–5 pm

Permanent exhibitions:

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

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

- until 30 Aug *Joys of Life*
- 19 Sep–March 2010 *Baltic Biedermeier*
- until 31 Dec *Treasures of Lost Times.*  
Egyptian, Greek and  
Near-East Antiquities  
in the Museums and  
Private Collections of  
Estonia (Mikkel Museum)

## Tallinn Art Hall

Vabaduse Sq 8, Tallinn  
[www.kunstihoone.ee](http://www.kunstihoone.ee)  
 Open: Wed–Sun 12 am–6 pm

- until 5 July Annual exhibition of the  
Estonian Artists'  
Association
- 15 July–16 Aug On-Group
- 26 Aug–20 Sep Kunsthalle Tallinn 75:  
*Hits from the collection*
- 26 Sep–25 Oct Andres Tolts
- 4 Nov–13 Dec *Prologue*
- 21 Dec–31 Jan 2010 *Work at the Age of Capital  
Failure*

## Tallinn Art Hall Gallery

Vabaduse Sq 6, Tallinn  
[www.kunstihoone.ee](http://www.kunstihoone.ee)  
 Open: Wed–Sun 12 am–6 pm

- 2 June–21 June Benjamin Vasserman
- 26 June–12 July Sven Saag
- 17 July–2 Aug Jaanus Orgusaar
- 7 Aug–23 Aug Kai Kaljo
- 28 Aug–13 Sep Nikolai Kormašov
- 18 Sep–4 Oct Sarje (Finland),  
Lapin (Estonia),  
Ganikovski (Russia)
- 9 Oct–25 Oct Terje Ojaver
- 30 Oct–22 Nov Mimmo Catania (Italy)
- 25 Nov–13 Dec Valeri Vinogradov
- 21 Dec–31 Jan 2010 *Work at the Age of Capital  
Failure*
- 4 Feb–21 Feb 2010 Anu Tuominen (Finland)

## Tallinn City Gallery

Harju 13, Tallinn  
[www.kunstihoone.ee](http://www.kunstihoone.ee)  
 Open: Wed–Sun 12 am–6 pm

- 10 June–28 June Eleriin Ello &  
Marje Murusalu
- 2 July–12 July Kirke Kangro &  
Andrus Lauringson
- 16 July–2 Aug *Sanatorium.* Murbach,  
Tauriainen (Finland)
- 6 Aug–23 Aug Christian Vagt (Germany)
- 27 Aug–13 Sep Sasha Pepelyayev  
(Russia)
- 17 Sep–4 Oct Stuart Brisley (UK)
- 8 Oct–18 Oct Liina Siib
- 22 Oct–1 Nov Eleonore de Montesquiou
- 5 Nov–22 Nov Blue Noses (Russia)
- 26 Nov–13 Dec Ilya Sundelevitsh
- 17 Dec–3 Jan 2010 Olga Temnikova
- 6 Jan–24 Jan 2010 Kristin Kalamees
- 28 Jan–14 Feb 2010 Laura Toots

## Hobusepea Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn  
[www.eaa.ee/hobusepea/english/](http://www.eaa.ee/hobusepea/english/)  
 Open: Wed-Mon 10 am-6 pm

10 June-22 June	Maido Juss & Helen Melesk
25 June-6 July	Liina Guiter
8 July-20 July	Lilli-Krõõt Repnau
22 July-3 Aug	Kristring
5 Aug-17 Aug	Eve Kiiler
19 Aug-31 Aug	Kirke Kangro
2 Sep-14 Sep	Tõnis Saadoja
16 Sep-28 Sep	Riho Kall & Marje Murusalu
30 Sep-12 Oct	Andres Tolts
14 Oct-26 Oct	Sirli Hein
28 Oct-9 Nov	Paul Rodgers
11 Nov-23 Nov	5th Tallinn Applied Art Triennial
25 Nov-7 Dec	Jass Kaselaan
9 Dec-21 Dec	Rait Rosin
23 Dec-11 Jan 2010	Edith Karlson

## ArtDepoo Gallery

Jahu 12, Tallinn  
[www.artdepoo.com](http://www.artdepoo.com)  
 Open: Tue-Fri 10 am-6 pm  
 Sat 11 am-4 pm

3 June-4 July	Annual exhibition of the Estonian Artists' Association
5 Aug-29 Aug	Harry Pye/Mat Humphrey
3 Sep-26 Sep	Mall Nukke, Marge Monko, Vano Allsalu etc
30 Sep-24 Oct	UFO. Kiwa's curatorial project
28 Oct-21 Nov	Mari Roosvalt
25 Nov-19 Dec	Agur Kruusing

## Haus Gallery

Uus 17, Tallinn  
[www.haus.ee](http://www.haus.ee)  
 Open: Mon-Fri 10 am-6 pm  
 Sat 11 am-4 pm

until 12 June	Sven Saag
16 June-24 July	Arno Arrak
28 July-4 Sep	Tiit Jaanson and Illimar Paul
8 Sep-5 Oct	Nikolai Kormašov
8 Oct-13 Nov	Andres Tolts
17 Nov-22 Dec	Leonhard Lapin

## Draakon Gallery

Pikk 18, Tallinn  
[www.eaa.ee/draakon/eindex.htm](http://www.eaa.ee/draakon/eindex.htm)  
 Open: Mon-Fri 10 am-6 pm, Sat 10 am-5 pm

until 13 June	Laurentsius
15 June-4 July	Jaen Elken
6 July-18 July	Erki Kasemets
20 July-1 Aug	Andres Koort
3 Aug-15 Aug	Sirje Protsin
17 Aug-29 Aug	Peeter Allik & Rolandas Rimunkas
31 Aug-12 Sep	Mari Roosvalt
14 Sep-26 Sep	Fideelia-Signe Roots
28 Sep-10 Oct	Tiina Tammetalu
12 Oct-24 Oct	Saskia Järve
26 Oct-7 Nov	Urmas Viik
9 Nov-21 Nov	Jüri Ojaver
23 Nov-5 Dec	Mara
7 Dec-19 Dec	Tanja Muravskaja
21 Dec-9 Jan	Krista Mölder

## Tartu Art Museum

Raekoja Sq 18, Tartu  
[www.tartmus.ee](http://www.tartmus.ee)  
 Open: Wed-Sun 11 am-6 pm

10 June-28 June	Students Degree Show
7 Aug-13 Sep	<i>Future Will Be Born Today.</i> Progressive Art from the Soviet Estonia 1956-1968
18 Sep-25 Oct	Urmas Viik
1 Oct-31 Dec	Pallas Art School
30 Oct-11 Jan 2010	Kaarel Kurismaa

## Art sites

[www.cca.ee/?lang=en](http://www.cca.ee/?lang=en)  
*True Guardian* - The official blog of the Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia  
[ekkm-came.blogspot.com](http://ekkm-came.blogspot.com)  
 The Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia



## Toomik's Movie / Toomiku film

Director: Marko Raat  
 Country: Estonia  
 Year: 2008  
 Length: 78'  
 Language: Estonian  
 Producer: Ivo Felt  
 Screenplay: Marko Raat  
 Cinematography: Marko Raat, Heilika Võsu  
 Editor: Madli Lääne  
 Producer: Allfilm

In 2007, Estonian artist Jaan Toomik decided that he would try to direct a feature film. Toomik's Film documents the artist during this period. It is a moving portrait framed by the relationships which have inspired his work - with the family, friends, and eccentric individuals he has encountered, painted and filmed on his journey from nightmare to creativity. Director Marko Raat received The 2008 Cultural Award of Estonia for the *Toomik's Movie*.



**Set of architectural programmes  
HOUSE/MAJA**

Script: Margit Mutso

Director: Peeter Brambat

Producer: AD Oculus Film

The films were commissioned by the Union of Estonian Architects

The aim of the series of architectural programmes 'House' is to introduce and record the best buildings of the past years. The choices were made from among the buildings shortlisted for the award of best architectural objects which is issued by the Architecture Foundation of the Estonian Cultural Endowment. The programmes offer a pictorial overview of the entries; each programme focuses on ten buildings.

The set contains the following programmes: House 2002, House 2003, House 2004 and House 2005. These are the only audiovisual overviews of contemporary Estonian architecture, where professional content is united with pictorial language.

The 4-DVD set HOUSE is on sale at the office of the Union of Estonian Architects ([www.arhliit.ee/en/kontakt](http://www.arhliit.ee/en/kontakt)).



**Keskkonnad, projektid, kontseptsioonid. Tallinna kooli arhitektid 1972–1985**

**Environment, Projects, Concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972–1985**

Editors: Andres Kurg, Mari Laanemets

Texts: Andres Kurg, Mari Laanemets, Georg Schöllhammer, Juhani Pallasmaa

Translation: Livia Dione et al

Designer: Indrek Sirkel

In Estonian and English

335 pp

Published by the Museum of Estonian Architecture, 2008

This book looks at the architectural group active in Tallinn throughout the 1970s and early 1980s that aimed to widen the conceptual and aesthetic means of architecture and rethink the practice of architects. Against the background of Soviet modernisation, these architects presented their version of the criticism of mass housing, the reduction of the architect's impact in standardised design practices and bureaucratic institutional structures. Their works that included photographs, paintings and collages, presented an ironic comment on the changed cityscape and proposed occasionally utopian projects for their reconstruction.

The book looks at the exhibitions of the group, their writings and projects from this period. In a recent wave in Western Europe of rediscovering the radical practices of the 1960s and 70s, this book adds to it a unique phenomenon from the Soviet block.



**Tallinn (Reval) in the Middle Ages: Town Building in the 13th–14th Centuries**

Author: Rein Zobel

Translation into English: Vappu Thurlow

Design: Ivar Sakk

In English

192 pages

Published by the Estonian Academy of Arts, 2008

The book deals with the earliest history of the formation of Tallinn (Reval) on the historical-topographical background. The conquest of the town in 1219 by the King of Denmark Valdemar II, and the building of the castle of Lyndanise, I and II Danish castle, the castle of the Brotherhood of the Sword as well as the castle of the Livonian Order are discussed in more detail. Special attention is paid to the fortifications of the town, built by the order of King Erik V and Dowager Queen Margrethe and improved at the order of King Erik VII. The knowledge gathered in this book is important on two levels. Firstly, it explains the history of urban development of Tallinn in a fluent and comprehensive way. Secondly it describes a medieval city and its surroundings as a powerful case study, which will advance the theory of urban development in the region.

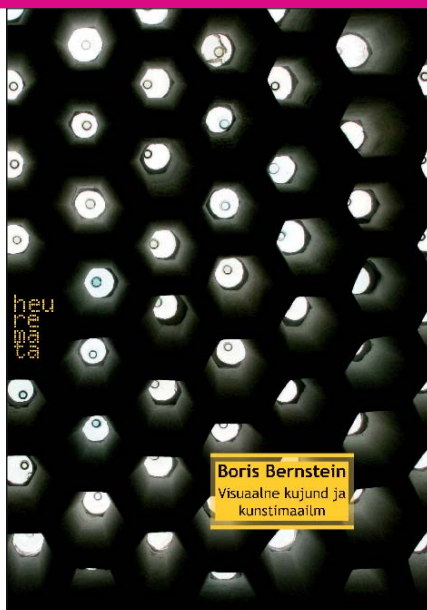
Professor Emeritus Rein Zobel is the Grand Old Man of Estonian history of architecture. He has taught the majority of Estonian architects now active in the profession.



**Via Transversa: Lost Cinema of the Former Eastern Bloc**  
**Koht ja paik / Place and Location: Studies in Environmental Aesthetics and Semiotics 7**

Editors: Eva Näripea and Andreas Trossek  
 Design: Jaan Evert  
 In English  
 272 pages  
 Published by the Estonian Academy of Arts, 2008

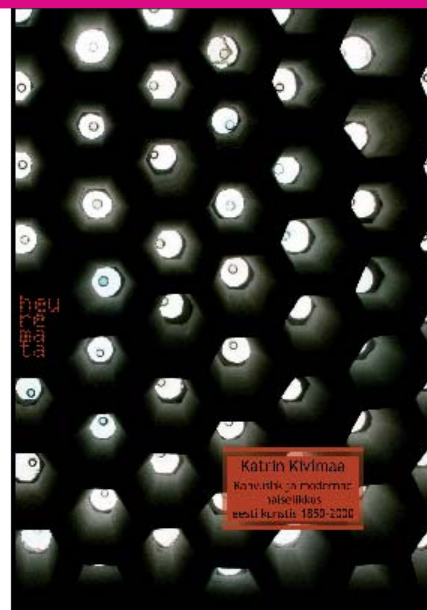
The volume, published as a special issue of *Koht ja paik / Place and Location: Studies in Environmental Aesthetics and Semiotics*, assembles sixteen essays by film scholars of international renown as well as young specialist of the field whose work concentrates on East European, Baltic and Soviet film. The core of the writings is based on the papers given during the international film conference *Via Transversa: Lost Cinema of the Former Eastern Bloc*, in 2007 at Kumu Art Museum (Tallinn). The articles concentrate on the cinema of the former Eastern Bloc in the era between the end of the World War II and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The studies are focussed on the issue of 'lost cinema', by which everything that has been often excluded from the writings on the cinema of Eastern Bloc and Soviet Union is meant: e.g. mainstream films (as opposed to the works of so-called great masters), the productions of small republican studios, especially those in the Baltic States, etc. The authors are Katarzyna Marciniak, Andreas Trossek, Mari Laaniste, Maruta Z. Vitols, Natalia Zlydneva, Kristel Kotta, Katie Trumpener, Petra Hanakova, Aniko Imre, Bjorn Ingvaldstad, Lilla Töke, Lauri Kärk, Eva Näripea, Brinton Tench Coxé, Ewa Mazierska and Irina Novikova.



**Visual Image and Art World**

Author: Boris Bernstein  
 Design: Piia Ruber  
 In Estonian, with summary in English  
 535 pages  
 Published by the Tartu University Press, 2009

The monograph series *Heuremata* publishes original research in the history of literature, cultural theory and semiotics, visual arts and theatre. The author of the first book is Boris Bernstein, professor emeritus of the Estonian Academy of Arts, doctor honoris causa. His book *Visual Image and the Art World* tackles various theoretical issues connected with artistic images and the art world, from antiquity to the modern world. The book is in Estonian with an English summary. The author writes: "This book intentionally turns theoretical discourse into historic narrative. It follows how, where and when visual images, usually grouped together with the plastic (or fine) arts, take on artistic functions."



**National and Modern Femininity in Estonian Art in 1850-2000**

Author: Katrin Kivimaa  
 Design: Piia Ruber  
 In Estonian, with summary in English  
 215 pages  
 Published by the Tartu University Press, 2009

Katrin Kivimaa's *National and Modern Femininity in Estonian Art in 1850-2000* examines the history of Estonian art in the last one hundred and fifty years from a feminist point of view. The author is fascinated with national and gender identity in the art of the 19th century, as well as of the 1990s; the identity of female artists in the 1930s; depiction of women in Soviet art and other topics. The book is in Estonian with an English summary.

