

# Estonian Art

1/2 2012



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**Back cover:** Margus Tamm. *House of the 27 Rising Suns*. 2012. Installation at the exhibition *Nominees for the Kõler Prize 2012*, EKKM, Tallinn.  
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# About big picture and small picture

## Video lecture

Kai Kaljo

### Video Time (2005)

<https://vimeo.com/14216480>

I graduated from the painting department of the Estonian Academy of Arts in 1990 and my diploma work was 30-square-metre frescos for the Abja Community Centre.

Thirty square metres is quite a large picture. I have noticed that in Estonian art a bigger picture is always considered better than a smaller one. Even the same video with a bigger projection (which simply means bigger costs for renting an expensive projector) always attracts more attention.

I remember that in the Soviet era paintings were priced according to the USSR norms; it was possible to check in a chart how many roubles had to be paid for one square metre of figural composition.

What does a big picture of Estonian art look like?

The composition is static; I see several groups of different people, who only consider important their own narrow speciality or their friends, people of their own age who share their views, or a specific period in history, or people for whom nothing exists except today.

People stand with their backs turned towards other groups.

The result is a number of small disgusting pictures.

A large number of the small pictures that were set as examples for us in the 1980s have been turned upside down today, or have temporarily/forever been forgotten.

I myself did not study a single subject at school that I am teaching now, such as conceptual art or video.

In many interviews, Martin Creed has said (and repeated it word for word last year in Tallinn) about his school days: "I was trying to paint because I was in the painting department...because painting equals art."

Today's applicant student could equally well think: 'photography equals art' or 'video equals art', and that is perfectly normal for a

beginner, because you can only start with one thing at a time.

Still, what can school provide that will not change?

Firstly, the realisation that culture is a thick, many-layered soil, from which we all grow and where we leave our imprint.

An artist's dignity, which I consider highly significant: to know why you matter to society and be able to express it too. Only artists themselves can do this, and a small picture is not convincing enough.

### Video Training (2011)

<https://vimeo.com/26206689>

Showing this video to various people, I have received different reactions. Not only engineers, prop masters and teachers, but occasionally also those artists (for example interior designers or applied artists) who are used to getting paid for their work, think that I, a cheeky woman, want to be *given* money for nothing, whereas they *earn* money with their work.

They take out their disgusting little pictures and stare at them. It does not help when I say that I, too, have had commissions and know that there is no difference between one job and another, just that it has somehow become a custom to pay for some work and not for other work, but nobody is prepared to develop this thought, and it fades away.

Hence another crucial thing that can be practised at school: **to think things through**. Further than 'what everybody thinks'... and further still, as far as you can go. It seems to me that this particular ability could be more widespread than it is in Estonian art, and perhaps in the whole Estonian society, and it should be more appreciated, developed and realised.

In 2008 I spent a few weeks in Chicago, which boasts one of the most impressive art collections in public space in the world, including Anish Kapoor's famous *Cloud Gate*.



Kai Kaljo. *Talin*. 2012

At that time, the subject of the Freedom Monument was topical in Estonia and, perhaps because of that, this work of art, its impact on people, the way in which it encouraged different creative impulses in different people, made me dream about what a true freedom monument could be like, the kind that would make people freer and happier.

**Video *Seventeen Acts of Freedom* (2009)**

<https://vimeo.com/14540357>

If our politicians had received some instruction in contemporary art at school – or even after school – or any kind of art education, central Tallinn would probably look quite different today.

In the last few years, I have occasionally played the game of being a tourist and seeing the Old Town of Tallinn for the first time. As a result, I have acquired a large number of photographs which I turned into postcards and displayed last spring at the exhibition *The Exotic* in the Tallinn Art Hall.

**Video *Kai Goes To Work...* (2011)**

<https://vimeo.com/31323104>

Have you ever thought about the fact that someone has actually **made** all these things? S/he exists! S/he earns a living this way, whereas you cannot buy work by professional artists or designers in many places in the city centre... S/he has obviously learned the craft somewhere! Or, if not, s/he has for some reason become convinced that there is no need to learn, because everyone can make things anyway.

Such problems are essential for me at the moment, as things are never just things: they reflect processes in society.

There is something that these items certainly reflect: the poor state of consumer-art education. For most people, school art education is the only art education they ever get; its level determines their taste preferences, and influences their thinking, lifestyle and consumption – much more than they can ever imagine.

**Kai Kaljo**

(1959), artist. Graduated as a painter from the Tallinn Art University (now Academy of Arts) in 1990. Lecturer at the Tallinn University and the Academy of Arts.





Tõnis Vint in 2010

## The phenomenon of Tõnis Vint

Elnara Taidre

The artist and thinker Tõnis Vint is a living legend in Estonian art of the second half of the 20th century. In the 1960s he became the intellectual leader of the innovative aesthetic wave in post-war Estonian modernism, and a mentor who established his own school, which lasted for decades. Relying on his erudition in (art) traditions in different cultures and eras, Vint created a conceptual platform for interpreting and synthesising various visual phenomena which have been, directly or indirectly, the starting points for many representatives of various fields of art: different generations of artists, architects, designers, applied artists and others.

Under Soviet domination, when information about contemporary, and also some earlier Western art phenomena was severely restricted, and excessive curiosity could bring about harsh consequences, Tõnis Vint nevertheless managed to keep track of art processes on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The hunger for the smallest bits of knowledge was so great that people had enough patience

to seek them out: in art magazines of more liberal Eastern bloc countries, in information exchanges with unofficial artists in Moscow and Leningrad, in the special collection of the State Hermitage Library, in antique shops and, from the beginning of the 1970s, in books passed on by friends in the West. On the basis of the abovementioned, Vint 'reconstructed' new Western art developments and world art history into one meta-system, which lacks analogues in the West.

In the centre of Tõnis Vint's work are visual images – from highly acclaimed artworks or a folk ornament on an everyday item, from a painting or a film, from ancient times or today, Europe or other continents. In all of these images, Vint seeks a regularity that would posit them as elements of the ancient common world-view and shared means of signification, as universal cosmogonic symbols. Vint's aesthetic universalism is revealed, amongst other things, in constantly researching and introducing sign systems in articles and indirectly in graphic design, as well as in

the film *The Lielvārde Belt* (1980), which shows the conceptual compatibility of visual images of the world through the Livonian folk art. The non-hierarchical treatment of visual objects by Vint was ahead of its time: such an approach later became topical in visual culture studies and in *Bildwissenschaft*.

However, besides theoretical analysis, Tõnis Vint is also interested in the practical realisation of images, to which he ascribes a positive psychological effect, with the aim of achieving a harmonious environment. This reveals the pathos of 20th century avant-garde: an aspiration to create a total aesthetic environment (a total work of art), which would positively transform whoever relates to it, thus making society better. From graphic series, book, poster, interior and stage designs to visions of reshaping the urban space in Tallinn, Vint has suggested such a totality, testing his aesthetic model both inside and outside pictorial space. In order to generate contemporary aesthetics, the synthesis of different art forms has been supplemented by a synthesis of past traditions and new phenomena.

Thus, at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, Tõnis Vint was fascinated with pop art, although for him it was not a means of criticising Western consumer culture, but of trying to make the Soviet everyday reality more pleasant and humane. In his ink drawings and graphic designs, Vint has organically combined pop art with the aesthetics of Rococo, symbolism, Art Nouveau, Art Deco and the Orient. The Oriental aesthetics and philosophy soaked in mysticism – the world of conceptual geometric signs, the Chinese Book of Changes, Japanese minimalism, Indian and Tibetan mandalas – became for Vint dialogue partners, to which he strove to find parallels in Western (visual) culture and develop in his own work.

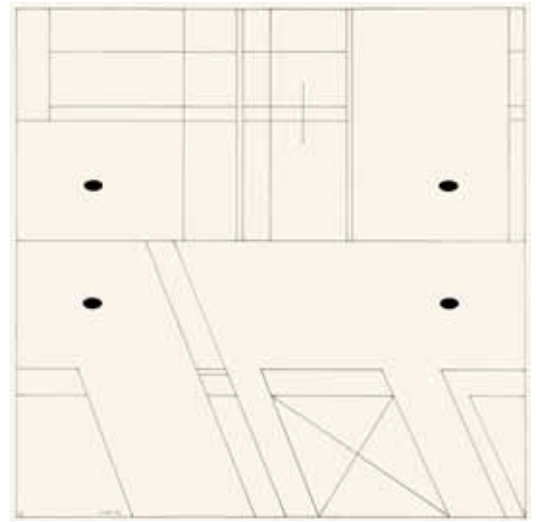
The design of the flat of Tõnis and Mare Vint in a high-rise block in the Mustamäe residential district in the late 1960s became exemplary of modern minimalist interior in Soviet Estonia. Besides its fascinating formal solutions, a great deal of attention was paid to the philosophical grounds, the concept of the Japanese traditional living space: an ordered room free of redundant objects, where one could feel good and at ease. Uniting aesthetic and psychological aspects with function, Vint aspired to create a positive influence both on the room and on the people in it. His graphic works of this period also depict

similar interiors, even some abstract compositions resemble the interior views of the author's home.

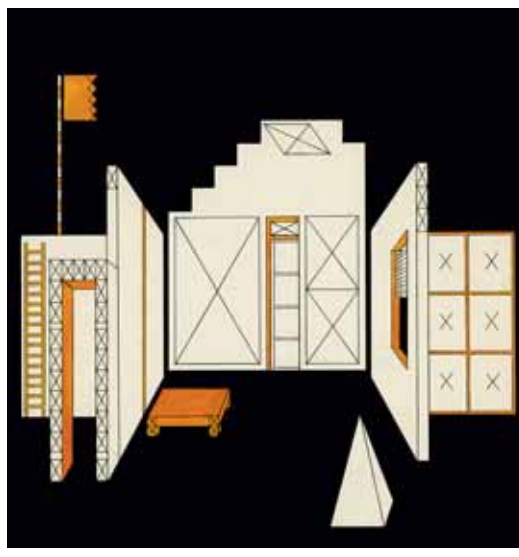
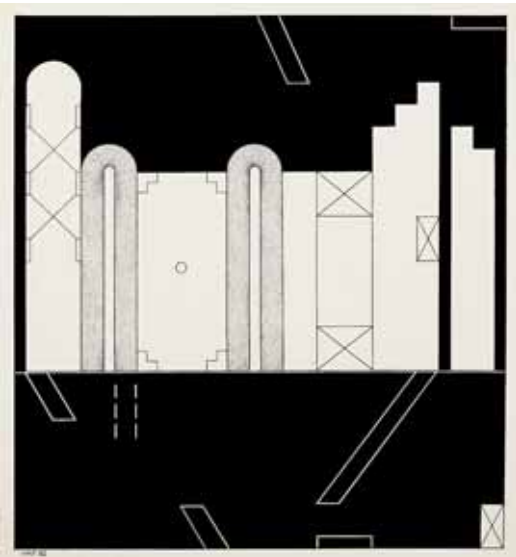
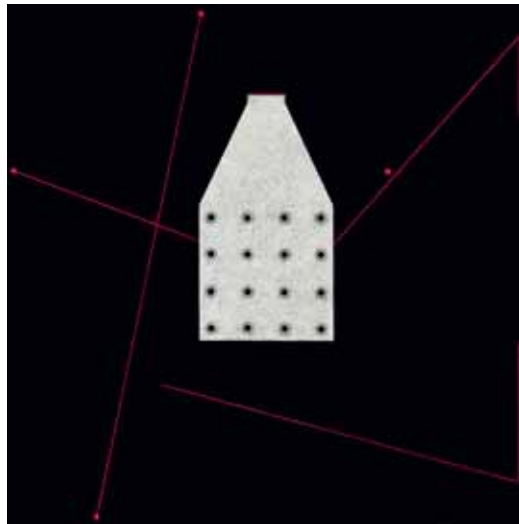
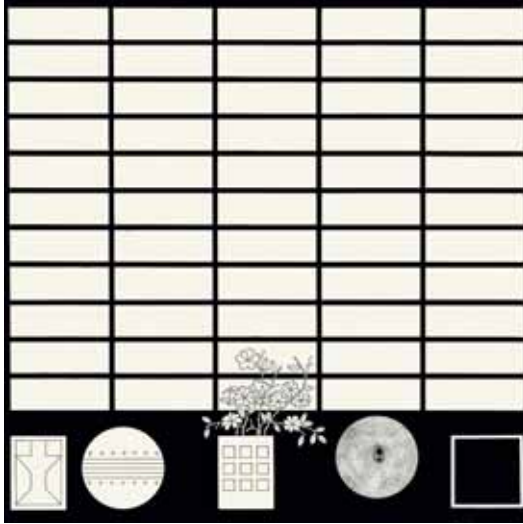
Tõnis Vint's aim is therefore to create universal space-ordering structures, which would function both inside and outside a picture, as a principle of formal order and symbolic balance. This is evident in the conceptual project *Mandala House* (1978) and the stage design for Rabindranath Tagore's *The Post Office* (1982), where the lattice construction was supposed to help structure the viewer's perception and the warm colours 'feed' energy to the audience. Vint's 'psycho-geometrical' art is indeed dedicated to creating visual structures with the mandalic potential, expressing ideas of concentration, balance and activeness. In the 1990s and 2000s Vint suggested a number of scenarios for the Tallinn urban space, which combined the aesthetics of the new metropolises' skyscrapers and historical Hanseatic architecture with the symbolism of Chinese geomancy. These projects-visions are, still not, realised.

Tõnis Vint's practices can be seen as a total work of art created on the basis of artistic mythology. Vint's ambition of totally reshaping reality suits the modernist myth of the artist-demiurge, the creator of a new living environment, which culminated in early 20th century avant-garde utopias. There are also similarities with the predecessor of the avant-garde total work of art: Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Creating an unprecedented synthesis of arts and a new (mythical) art language on the basis of ancient myths, *Gesamtkunstwerk* also declared transforming society to be its mission. Vint's method, which synthesises different sign systems, reflects the myth of the lost perfect language described by Umberto Eco. As in Wagner's synthesis of the arts, the aim of Vint's project can be seen as the restoration of the perfect, pre-Babel artistic language, which would bring back the Golden Era that exists simultaneously in the past and in the future.

Besides the constructive, geometric works, Tõnis Vint's graphic art presents compositions



Tõnis Vint. *Composition I (Constructions 6)*. 1972. Ink. Art Museum of Estonia



focusing on the motif of the archetypal female figure. In the series *Mythological Graphic Art*, it develops into a tense and metaphysical, bizarre and dream-like atmosphere, where the verbally expressed narrative retreats in the face of a distinct, psychologically borderline state. Vint's art practices thus demonstrate both spontaneous and conscious myth-making: besides grand mythological narratives, his work contains an intentional attempt to produce an individual artistic mythology. The key role here is played by the creation of a particular atmosphere, aiming to evoke in the viewer a perception that surpasses the ordinary and enables the viewer to perceive himself as well. Which is, in fact, one of the main tasks of any mythology.

Tõnis Vint. *Japanese Room. Things*. 1975. Ink, gouache. Art Museum of Estonia

Tõnis Vint. *GM 43*. 1989. Ink, gouache. Art Museum of Estonia

Tõnis Vint. *Q 41*. 1982. Ink, gouache. Private collection

Tõnis Vint. Initial stage design for the production of Rabindranath Tagore's *The Post Office* (The Tallinn State Drama Theatre, director Juhan Viiding). 1983. Ink, gouache. Private collection

Tõnis Vint. *Alone with a Flower*. 1976. Ink, gouache. Art Museum of Estonia

### Elnara Taidre

(1983), art historian and critic, curator of the exhibition *Tõnis Vint and His Aesthetic Universe* (Kumu Art Museum, May-September 2012).

# Test-tube capitalists at the memorial service of an industrial complex

Hanno Soans



Visible Solutions LLC.  
Product Presentation Performance.  
Hansatori shopping mall, Turku,  
Finland, 2012

I am taking a peep, afterwards and from a distance, into the files of the last *Manifesta*, for which purpose I have the splendid digital catalogue of the exhibition, articles by Anneli Porri and Reet Varblane, and pictures by Visible Solutions LLC of their performance. It now seems to me that never before have Estonian works selected for an international exhibition, this time by Marge Monko and Visible Solutions LLC, captured the general programmatic jugular of a huge international display quite so precisely and overwhelmingly as this time in Belgium. *Manifesta 9* took place in the former Waterschei mine in the town of Genk in the Limbourg industrial region, and it was divided into three parts. The first was an exhibition that constituted an anthropological overview of the miners' life, interspersed with amateur art by the miners, the second was an exhibition on reflections of modernism on the theme of industrialism, and the last part was a display of contemporary art presenting 35 artists and groups. Moving along a mental dotted line from Marge Monko's works on the disappearance of the Kreenholm Factory to the simulations and criticism of the neo-liberal utopia by Visible Solutions LLC, we find ourselves in the very heart of the set of problems formulated by the main curator of the exhibition, Cuauhtémoc Medina, as Anneli Porri wrote in the cultural weekly: "the exhibition's clearly Marxist focus was, after all, on economy and production"<sup>1</sup>.

As the *Manifesta 2012* display by a group of three young artists, Karel Koplímets, Taaniel Raudsepp and Sigrid Viir of Visible Solutions LLC, presented pretty well their whole output so far, it makes sense to draw some conclusions, especially since a catalogue has been published for *Manifesta*, where Armin Kõomägi's excellent essay describes the group's inner turmoil and paradoxes, being forced by shareholders to operate mainly in the field of art, where it is difficult to talk about real profits. Visible Solutions LLC is

not so much an artistic group as an artwork enterprise; in 2010 it was officially included in a business register and thus possesses a legal 'self'. Such an operation can hardly be called a parody, especially since, in interviews, the artists-shareholders have repeatedly declared their thoroughly serious attitude towards the undertaking, which they consider a kind of condenser, a gathering point of symbolic and real capital that moves between the worlds of business and art. According to the artists-shareholders, the starting point of this artwork company is as follows: "Visible Solutions LLC is an art project, an artwork enterprise, which operates in the field of both economics and art, joining the operational logic present in both and constantly seeking new methods in order to create symbolic and real capital and carry out mutual converting operations."<sup>2</sup> The artists-entrepreneurs' attitude and self-representation 'closed' and a temporary office with product promotion was opened. This was not the usual ironic gesture, but rather something more complicated: a simulation, mimicry, mutual interpretation and self-colonisation of art and business contexts.

In order to get a better idea of the whole thing, we should briefly return to the context in which Visible Solutions LLC was born. It started with a school task a long time ago, in which a group of students supervised by Indrek Grigor decided to analyse the work and rhetoric of the Ministry of Culture.<sup>3</sup> The students were truly amazed at how vaguely the ministry's development plans mentioned fine art, and how grandly and with what rhetoric was presented a project full of rosy-pink promises for the future of the creative industry as the true engine for developing culture. Looking back in time at the cultural policy of the Republic of Estonia, we should point out that as early as the 1990s, when the rhetoric of a successful system of self-employed persons emerged around art, there was a creeping tendency towards separating the cultural field from the state. In an issue of the magazine *Kunst* in 1996, which turned out to be the last, Marko Laimre said: "The artist in the Republic of Estonia is defined as a small business – so the professional name 'artist' belongs to people who produce something (art!) or offer some service (artistic!). Thus there is strong pressure on artists and a dangerously effective role definition provided by the 'right'". A few years later, perhaps in 1998, the self-employment rhetoric was supplemented, at





first slowly and then more vigorously, by a new foreign decoy with colourful feathers called the ‘creative industry’. During the following decade, this became one of the most used keywords in the plans made by the Ministry of Culture, proclaimed as a universal solution to eliminate problems, past and present. The question is how art people should react to this. The unconventional reaction of Visible Solutions LLC, their seeming literal acceptance of the official rhetoric, and practical testing in their activities bordering on the absurd, makes their authorial position quite special.

Using corporate aesthetics and creating shadow companies are nothing new in postmodernist art practices: e.g the Finnish design-ironic Bonk Business Inc., the American conceptualist General Idea, the Latvian anthropological tea mushroom shop or the Danish mercantile-idealist Superflex. In the local context, *Kunst.ee* devoted a special issue to this in 2003, *Companies and Fictions*, which gave a good overview of different art strategies flirting with corporate practices. The most interesting one is perhaps the position of Superflex. “Using business structures is a logical step for them if they want to carry out their ideas. The aim is not profit, but the fact that projects launched by them would be able to operate on the same basis as things that could actually change the world – on the same basis as production.”<sup>4</sup> The question is where in this field our own test-tube capitalists would be placed. I have the feeling that none of these earlier companies had such direct links with the official cultural policy of the context from which they emerged. Reflecting the ideological unconscious of local cultural policy, Visible Solutions LLC seem, on the level of their marketing rhetoric, to intensify Joseph Beuys’s famous maxim about art: “business as evolutionary process. Everyone is an entrepreneur.” At the same time, their specific products through which they profit from Beuys’s idea of social sculpture are characterised by image-precise metaphors. By means of installations, this exposes gaps and halts in the mainstream of neo-liberal ideology, in the very same creative-industry waffle they originally relied on. Their products appear as prototypes of peculiar machineries, which reveal their many artistic levels only upon closer inspection. Therefore, if we use the notion of criticism at all here, it would be introducing disharmonies as a virus into the enemy playing fields by means of mimicry.

One of the most essential recurrent images in the work of Visible Solutions is ‘beyond’ everything. At *Manifesta*, as at all other product presentations, members of Visible Solutions carried out a flag-hoisting ceremony with the national flag. The image of the invisible hand, the ideological dominant, was cut out of the backdrop, and the audience was told via megaphone in a typically impertinent tone: “We declare the market of *Manifesta* and Belgium ours!” Although the image of the invisible hand crops up only a few times in Adam Smith’s 800-page epic *The Wealth of Nations*, which laid the foundations for the science of economics and which recently appeared in Estonian as well, this mythologem has become the chief rhetorical argument of the neo-liberal enterprise-utopia, which successfully covers the gap between economic liberties and liberties in other social spheres. The main argument here is a vulgarised version of Smith, according to which each individual’s aspirations for profit paradoxically also secures maximum profit for society. In fact, the status of the ethics professor Smith today is a bit unfair; on closer inspection, he was not an ardent supporter of *laissez-faire* capitalism, but this point is not essential at the moment.<sup>5</sup> This image was taken into a much more intriguing short circuit by the first product prototype of Visible Solutions LLC, the installation *Adam Smith’s Pet Invisible Hand in a Cage* (2010). This convincingly unites the image of the invisible hand on a treadmill with the rat race of production and consumption. We see how, in an empty cage, in a seemingly self-powered treadmill, the ‘thermal camera’ captures the hand which turns the wheel. In typical Visible Solutions rhetoric, the advertising brochure declares: “If used correctly, the economic success of the customer is automatically converted to the common good, and the enterprise or the individual can become socially responsible without any special effort.” An observant viewer noticed the same hand image, this time as a yellow inflated rubber glove, in the video *Through technology and innovation they found ways to achieve better results with less work* (2010) at their first performance. It depicted the company’s everyday working environment against the backdrop of sounds emphasising the rhythm of the routine efficiency of a copying machine that works on automatic mode.



Product Presentation Performance. Kumu Art Museum, 3rd floor at the permanent exhibition ‘Treasury, Classics of Estonian Art from the Beginning of the 18th Century until the End of the Second World War’. Tallinn. 2011. Still from video





Let us now take a look back at the Visible Solutions display at *Manifesta*. The exhibition area, marked by special colours and light, was located in the service zone in the basement of the huge Waterschei mining building, near a rather minimalistically designed restaurant with signs reading *Trading Post* in plywood light boxes. The essential 'sales hall' in an industrial environment was dominated by a minimalist polyhedron from the installation *Exterior Space for Interiors, Clarity* (2010), a kind of dystopian mini-meadow for those who, once they have acquired this product, have no

future need to leave the office for nature. *Adam Smith's Pet Invisible Hand in a Cage* was located in the opposite corner. Pictures of Visible Solutions' flag-hoisting activities and Estonian, Latvian and Finnish flags with the image of a cut-out hand were gathered around one cement column. The Belgian flag, which had recently undergone the ceremony, found its place on the third floor of the exhibition in a rather prominent exhibition zone. Near the ceiling floated a paper model of an incubator, *(In)dependence* (2010), made from a rescue boat, which offered a "quick, effective, comfortable and pleasant escape from restricting systems for a maximum of six people". New additions in the 'sales hall' included a fax machine, which could be used to send suggestions to artists about barter deals, which made it possible to acquire Visible Solutions' product prototypes, and a vending machine, which made it easy to acquire Visible Solutions' new catalogue for 10 euros. The most recent work, *Chamber of Freedom with Integrated Memory Hole* (2012), was presented as

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5. Visible Solutions LLC. *Adam Smith's Pet Invisible Hand in a Cage*. Video installation. 2010

6. Visible Solutions LLC. *Chamber of Freedom with Integrated Memory Hole*. Installation. 2011

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1. Visible Solutions LLC. *Trading Post* at *Manifesta 9*. Genk, Belgium. 2012

2. Visible Solutions LLC. *Exterior space for interiors Clarity*. Installation. 2012

3. Visible Solutions LLC. *(In)dependence*. Installation. Cesis Art Festival, Latvia. 2010

4. Visible Solutions LLC. *Book vending machine for a book Concise Visible Solutions*. Installation. 2012

well. Their product samples were minimalist, mainly works that used the aesthetic code of cool Nordic shades of wood, more objects of art than design, which do not directly participate in the the malicious contract of contemporary design with a marketing rhetoric, as described by Hal Foster.<sup>6</sup> Their product-promotion performance, once again carried out in Belgium, cannot be characterised as being a slick seductive marketing rhetoric that turns commodities into substitutes for sublimated desire. Instead, they take a stricter approach, by creating poetic bureaucratic jargon while imitating the specifics of the inner communications of the business world, of product development manuals and brand manuals.

The main part of Visible Solutions' new catalogue is connected with the communication project emerging from their public appearance at the Tartu Art House. Visible Solutions LLC contacted 49 people, internationally renowned in the fields of art, theory and economics, and sent them a customised

proposal and an offer to receive a service.<sup>7</sup> The list of recipients did not contain the Forbes 400 business elite, but instead agents from the academic sphere and from the intermediate area between business and the art world. The list included everyone you could possibly imagine, from Georg Soros and Sir Nicholas Serota to Noam Chomsky. From my point of view, the only one conspicuous by his absence was Richard Florida, the most prominent ideologist of creative industries. Among others, there were some names that are relevant from the standpoint of the personal iconography of Visible Solutions; for example, Laurie Anderson, in whose work the motif of the invisible hand has appeared and who received a proposition to include Visible Solutions in the list of companies in her song *Only an Expert*. Feedback to the letters was practically non-existent, as expected. The silence revealed the imbalance in the diagram of the global distribution of social capital. This made the central installation at the Tartu exhibition, *Chamber of Freedom with Integrated Memory Hole* (2012), seem even more powerful. The installation consists of speakers, an mp3-player and a glass tube in a vacuum, into which the sound waves coming through the machine are directed – resulting in total silence. As stated in the product manual, the integrated memory hole can skilfully spread dystopian, utopian and poetic thoughts while not bothering anyone else. As if underlining its tautological nature, the installation is accompanied by an audio file of Marshall McLuhan's text *Medium is the Message*. It is the perfect product from the test tube capitalist for generating a vacuum of meaning.

- 1 Anneli Porri. "'Manifesta" kui monument mälestusele'. *Sirp*, 09.08.2012
- 2 'Pealelend'. *Sirp*, 07.05.2010
- 3 <http://artishok.blogspot.com/2009/04/analusiv-sissevaade.html>
- 4 Karin Laansoo. 'Superartikkel'. *Kunst.ee*, 1/ 2003, p 60
- 5 Spencer J. Pack. *Capitalism as a Moral System*. Edward Elgar Publishing, England, pp 51-72
- 6 Hal Foster. *Design and Crime*. Verso, London, 2002
- 7 A full overview of the names and relevant proposals is available at [www.visible-solutions.eu](http://www.visible-solutions.eu)

## Hanno Soans

(1974), freelance art critic based in Tallinn. Part-time editor and author of art and architecture related subjects at TEA Encyclopaedia. He worked as a contemporary art curator at the Art Museum of Estonia from 1997-2008 and has run independent projects with various artistic collectives. He was a curator of Estonian pavilion at the Venice Biennial in 2005 representing Mark Raidpere.





# THINGS

Indrek Grigor



Before tackling essential issues, I would like to honestly confess that, besides being a freelance critic, I also run a gallery at the Tartu Art House and was thus directly involved in the birth of the idea of this particular work, as well as in the technical side of the installation.

The six-part work *Things* by Jevgeni Zolotko,<sup>1</sup> one of the brightest of the younger Estonian sculptors, was displayed in the attic of the Tartu Art House for six months, 19 March–6 October 2012. The idea was born after the Art House suggested to Zolotko that he work with the attic. The proposal was based on the playful but sincere realisation that the attic room, covered with an even layer of grey dust, resembled the monochrome abandoned environment of Zolotko's installations. It would have been appropriate to put a sign up on the door saying *Zolotko's Office*, and the work would have been completed. Zolotko, of course, did not agree to this kind of banal dubious deal, but the idea of undertaking the attic had been set, and a year later the first part of *Things* was opened.

The following is not an art-critical commentary on the work, but rather something like a reportage-description. The reason for choosing this genre is, first of all, Zolotko's

sharp reactions to the vocabulary of prestige language often used while talking about his work. According to the artist, this is not an installation, the work does not examine anything (least of all the room), despite the temptation, drawing parallels with archaeology is the wrong interpretation, and the moral enlightenment that struck the current writer at the opening of the fifth part, *Ecce homo*, that the essence of the whole series was humanism, turned out to be a misunderstanding. However, although the artist's world-view is directly religious, *Things* does not constitute religious art in its classic sense (iconography can be disregarded – the dove is not the holy spirit). Instead, it is a reflection of Zolotko's own picture of the world.

Thus, although the above can be classified as opinions influenced by the close cooperation between the artist and the critic, it still seems more sensible to tackle *Things* by describing the work in a way that is as faithful to the author as possible, which then provides the necessary layer before any critical analysis. Zolotko's view of the world, modern in form but occasionally rather archaic in content, is undoubtedly a unique combination in the Estonian art scene.



### Chapter I. *Speech*

Naming is one of the most archetypal images in the myths of creation. Thus Zolotko's work in the attic also begins with naming things. The thoroughly prosaic attic as it is realised as an artistic space by the artist who names the things he has found there. The loudspeakers issue a list of things in a monotonous booming voice ... The list is long enough to symbolically cover the whole reality, at the same time adding a fascinating layer when at the end of reading the list the voice becomes tired and coarse.

### Chapter II. *The Loss*

Directly after the world was created, we were deprived of it. This is the central intrigue of the work: man's relations with things. An attic is a strange zone where things have not been thrown away, but equally they do not quite exist, so we can call it a junk room of memory.

The artist has removed all the things from the attic and filled it with books made of pulped paper known from his earlier works. The essential element of the chapter is a video where a young man sitting at the attic window reads extracts from the *Book of Moses* about

the genealogy of the human race since Adam (1Ms5). According to Zolotko, this is one of the most peculiar parts of the Bible, because it is practically impossible today to understand the meaning of the family tree leading back to the first human being. This is a text that associates with the beginning of everything, but it has become an incomprehensible, illegible muddle.

The things in the attic form a layer of memory, and if we remove this layer there will be a gap, although the consequences remain unclear for the time being.

### Chapter III. *Things*

The title chapter *Things* is visually perhaps one of the most impressive. A sieve has sifted out smaller items from the debris on the attic floor, and these are placed for our viewing on two graduated altars. These things cannot be named and thus constitute the beyond of the attic.

The images of the Last Judgement Day in the form of the altars and the sieve are, according to the author, intentional but not completely meaningful. Sieving things is indeed a reference to the beyond, although at

Jevgeni Zolotko. *Things*. Attic of the Tartu Art House, 2012



the same time it is a purely practical or ethical question: on what basis should the displayed things be separated from the debris?

#### Chapter IV. Dove

Chapter IV starts the conditional solution of the raised intrigue. The previous chapter contains a reference to archaeology and an attempt to make the unnamed meaningful, whereas now the reconstruction attempts are properly finished. A room with walls painted white displays found objects. The central object is the Dove, the only living being, who is shown in many forms: a photograph of the found skeleton, the skeleton itself, its 3D reconstruction, and a dove in a sculptural form.

#### Chapter V. Ecce Homo

The static *Ecce Homo* is both a semantic pause and the solution to the intrigue posed in Chapter II. In the second part, a large-format projection depicts the young man reading the incomprehensible genealogy, bringing back his father from the country of the dead. Man is defined by remembering his roots. It is no coincidence that the title indicates man in the singular, but the photograph shows father and son; a human being is a human being only in relation to others.

The key text of the chapter is an excerpt from Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls* about the layers of things in the Pljuškin manor house, which even too figuratively describes the nor-

mal situation in the attic. At the same time, it presents a moral evaluation: the way we relate to things reflects back in our human relationships.

#### Chapter VI

Every single thing, to the last detail, has been put back in place. The sound track is Helena Tulve's *Stella matutina*, where the lyrics are the *Litany of Loreto*, dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Chapter VI does not have a title, but brings us from the relationships between human beings and things to eternity. Zolotko does not agree with the opposition between the spiritual and the material world. The Virgin Mary was the purest part of the material world through whom God became material and, against the backdrop of the litany dedicated to her, the attic is still the same as it was: nothing has changed. Man's moral obligation is to cleanse the material world. Nothing is disgusting, and everything is equally harmonious. This brings us to the work's epigraph: "Love all the creation of God, both the whole and each single grain of sand. Love every little leaf, every ray of God's sun. Love animals, love plants, love every single thing. If you love every single thing, you will also understand God's secret in things" Dostojevski's *The Brothers Karamazov* (from the conversation with the old wise man Zosima).

1 Zolotko has been awarded the Köler Prize (2011), issued by the Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia, and in 2012 he received the Anton Starkopf award from the town of Tartu, the only award in Estonia for sculptors.

**Indrek Grigor**  
(1981), gallerist at Tartu Art House, guest lecturer at the Tartu Higher Art School and the Estonian Academy of Arts, art historian who studied semiotics at Tartu University, belongs to several boards of independent cultural publications and is a freelance art critic.



# The science-fictional light of the materialised designator

Jaak Tomberg

The title of the exhibition, *Speed of Darkness and Other Stories\**, connotes allegorical physics. Its particular components connote mobility/expansion and outer space/the unknowable. Science fiction – either the phrase or the phenomenon – also designates all of these things. The exhibition and the genre say a lot about each other, and they both have something to tell us about the artificial immanence of our globalised, techno-cultural present.

An initial impression might convey that at least two predominant figures in science fiction connote darkness: the utter silence of the furthest reaches of deep outer space, where light has never reached, and the corresponding overall figure of the unknown itself that science fiction has seemingly long tried to conquer. But, in actuality, both figures are rather rare, or at least in science fiction: more often than not during the course of its history, the furthest reaches have been reached and enlightened; the unknown has fallen prey to the scientific principle and turned into something fairly common or, for that matter, fairly banal. Examples of maintaining the darkness, of respecting the unknown as if it was some Levinasian Other, are (un)surprisingly rare.



Paula Lehtonen. *Multiverse Now!* 2012. Installation. Exhibition *Speed of Darkness and Other Stories*, Kumu Art Museum

Kristi Kongi. *I Haven't Moved My Head From the Pillow.* 2012. Installation. Exhibition *Speed of Darkness and Other Stories*, Kumu Art Museum





Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* is definitely one example: the impenetrable flat-black surface of the monolith and the lack of information given about the object throughout the film persist until the end and the viewer merely learns the fact that 400 000 years ago the monolith sent a strange signal towards Jupiter. For a representation to register as *representation* at all in the cognitive apparatus, at least something needs to be known about it. But Kubrick does not proceed from fulfilling this minimal requirement to anything further – quite unlike his literary counterpart from the same time, Arthur C. Clarke, whose novel of the same name explained exactly what the monolith was, and, if an aesthetic judgement is allowed, fell flat precisely because of that. A tactful formal reference to an overwhelming absence of content: this is the darkness of Kubrick's *2001*. And yet everything in the film seems to revolve around that darkness; there's gravity towards that absence. (As if, in the gnostic tradition, the knowledge, and therefore also the enlightenment of the apes seems to arise from that darkness...) Another

Karel Koplímets. *Suburbs of Fear*. 2012. Installation, video, scale model, sound. Exhibition *Speed of Darkness and Other Stories*, Kumu Art Museum



example in the same vein is Lem's *Solaris*. There's a long tradition of scientific research centred on the supposedly sentient planet in the focus of that novel, but the planet gives nothing away about its nature or character. As a result, the scientists achieve some success in creating a formal classification of the complex phenomena appearing on the planet's surface, but they are unable, because of a lack of any verified answers, to reach a conclusion as to the meaning of their actions as *science*. *Solaris* leaves the unknown intact in very difficult literary conditions: during its course, it also critically manages to prove that science fiction is a romantic genre written in a realistic mode.

But most of science fiction is rather inept in maintaining the darkness. The figure most of science fiction corresponds to is probably that of the effect of 'bullet-time' in *The Matrix*: the simultaneous, almost oxymoronic contradiction of Trinity jumping up in slow motion and the camera making an accelerated 360° turn around her. This is the figure of *absolute formal over-exposure*: the slow motion encompasses the totality and the minute detail of the temporal axis, whereas the shift in the viewpoint encompasses the totality of the spatial axis. Absolute over-enlightenment: this is the cognitive estrangement of most of science fiction. Rather than being the art of darkness, science fiction, then, is the art of light. But not of any kind of light: of artificial light. And not of any kind of artificial light but the artificial light that the object itself emanates, much in the same way as in outer space the planets *seem to emanate light themselves*, otherwise surrounded by total darkness. The artificial light of science fiction is a symbol for the scientific over-enlightenment of the globalised part of the late-capitalist everyday.



Insofar as *Speed of Darkness* presents not the art of darkness, but rather that of artificial/ electric light, it is also the art of science fiction. A regular exhibition is comparable to *Speed of Darkness* in a similar fashion that natural light is comparable to the light of the neon sign. The neon sign: an object that can be seen by means of its own virtue. Nothing like the sun needs to cast light on it from the outside: it lights itself. (And this is how Las Vegas is a profoundly banal mockery of *The City of God*.) The neon sign is a symbol of the contemporary immanence (and 'self-sustaining power') of the image, of the schizophrenic materiality of the designator. Advertisements as the only source of light – herein lies the science-fictionality of the contemporary cityscape.

But the object that lights itself from 'the inside' also acquires a spectral, a ghostly, an incorporeal quality for the outside beholder (if there is still such a thing), and at the same time radically materialises the darkness and/or other objects surrounding it. This is why, to someone observing from the silent inertia of the suburbs, the down-town of modern cities seems to be made of dreams: the most material buildings are also the most incorporeal. In this respect, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* is the best visual example. A city where the most material things appear to be the most incorporeal and where designators seem to have their own mystical power source – such a city is the symptom of a reality (or a consciousness?) where some of the fundamental oppositions of cultural cognition have also been turned on their heads. J. G. Ballard addresses this sufficiently in his foreword to *Crash*: when he says that we live in an over-lit cityscape ruled by science and pornography, sex and paranoia, science, pornography, and paranoia are most certainly enlisted because they are the manifestations of a common over-

\* Exhibition *Speed of Darkness and Other Stories* was on display in Kumu Art Museum from June to September 2012. It was curated by Jaakko Niemelä and Eha Komissarov.



intensification in the eye of the beholder. And over-intensification tends to over-accelerate the interaction and shorten the distance between poles of oppositions: this is why Ballard says that it is difficult to differentiate reality from fiction or, rather, that the fiction is already there and the reality has to be invented. This is why he says that it is difficult to differentiate the inside and the outside of the head of the subject, and this is why he mourns the loss of the ability to sustain historicity: the ability to meaningfully remember the past, or to imagine the future.

The immanent intensity and infinite inner gravity of self-producing light: this is the final symbol of the modern cityscape. In other words, an allegorical black hole from whose event horizon no light is able to escape – either to the past, to the future, or to the surrounding wasteland, where, as Baudrillard has cynically noted, it is boring to trudge once you step off the highway.

**Jaak Tomberg** (1980), is a post-doctoral research fellow at the Estonian Literary Museum. His current fields of research are literary utopias, philosophy of literature, theory of criticism and the contemporary relations between realism and science fiction. He has also translated fiction and literary theory, edited the Estonian avant-garde magazine *Vihik* and written plays.



**МЕМОПОЛ-2**  
by Timo Toots  
at Ars Electronica 2012

Ksenia Fedorova





This autumn, Estonian art was celebrated within the international scene of technological art. The young Estonian artist Timo Toots was awarded a prestigious Golden Nica award at one of the world's oldest and most influential media art festivals, Ars Electronica. Every year the competition jury sorts through several thousand submissions, often by already well-established artists, to select only a few. Every year the PRIX acknowledges life-long achievements (by such artists as Joe Davis) and at the same time launches new international careers for younger less known artists. To win a Golden Nica in the category 'interactive art', as Toots did this year, meant not only standing out from a list of 700 applications, but also contributing something new



to the over 30-year-long history of the category. PRIX Ars Electronica is a record-keeper of the development of technological art: a complex set of practices whose artistic significance is often overshadowed by technical mastery and, thus, is underestimated by the general art community. As I had the honour to observe in person, being part of the jury, PRIX Ars Electronica is about art, and through this year's selection we intended to give preference to projects with strong imaginative components, functioning as self-governing realities based on their own sets of rules and zones of freedom in a world of continuing instability.

Timo Toots's *Memopol-2* is a large-scale and intricate machine that creates a map of the visitor's personal data field. The information is collected from individual ID cards

that visitors can scan and process at a special stand. Estonian ID cards, which were the main type of cards to be used in the first version of the work (the one presented in Linz also included Austrian ones), are known for being a uniquely deep and versatile collection of data. Electronic ID cards were introduced in Estonia ten years ago and connect to governmental databases. Through Toots's machine, one can see multiple traces of oneself in one continuous procedure. Besides the typical parameters, such as nationality and date of birth, the concept of personal identity includes information on prescription drugs, high school exams, tax reports, grants, occupation and driving licenses, as well as various predispositions based on horoscope prognosis, details of social life based on Facebook data, and even expected time of death – based on health condition.

The information is displayed in an intimidating, sinister, slightly irreverent, but also humorous and pungent way. We are exposed to the individual tunnel of memory, taking a journey through the vestiges of social and individual transitions. It is a curious bank of details and connections to analyse on your own, but in this case it becomes a distinct picture of something else. In a very self-conscious way, the project refers to the problematic situation of surveillance in today's society, when people cannot even imagine how many information traces they leave daily while using their bank cards or surfing the Internet.

The theme of information privacy protection in the face of the increasing development of control mechanisms has been consistent in media art since the beginning of network technologies. Theorists and artists, such as Geert Lovink, Alexander Galloway, Geoff Cox and Alessandro Ludovico, to name only a few, have emphasised the necessity of critical response and the development of routes for raising people's awareness of how the 'big system' functions and what the consequences of their actions may be. Among these routes are visualisation of data flow within various networks (Warren Sack's *Conversation Map*, 1997–2003), hacking news-streams (*Newstweak* by Julian Oliver and Danja Vasiliev, the winner of a Golden Nica in 2011), and interventions into social networks (*Face to Facebook* by Paolo Cirio and Alessandro Ludovico, 2011). Political themes underlie many projects featured by Ars Electronica every year.

What makes *Memopol-2* unique is its retro-futuristic aesthetics, a combination of science fiction and Cold War tints, transporting a visitor into an almost cinematic reality, mesmerising in its charm and absurdity, and fascinating as it is not just virtual and fantastic creation, but a physically working system. The daunting intonation of the interface is slightly reminiscent of the famous war room from Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*. A three-wall screen, it is enough to evoke the image of a control room and fill it with invisible observers, whose secret work we accidentally witness. Sharing space with these pervasive, but hidden forces gives a feeling of uneasiness, where natural curiosity and desire for power come into conflict with the critical voice of a moral being.

What seems at first an unapproachable knotty map mysteriously emerging from the dark is in the end a quite comprehensible and clear data structure. The connections are playful and this ironic mode is what returns you to the sanity of the present moment and appreciation of the constructedness of the whole project and its instructive, but generally benign character.

As the winner of the main award, *Memopol-2* was presented in Linz in its full installation version (which is an advantage in comparison with presentations of video documentations). This is an especially significant factor in the case of interactive art: viewers can relate to the work fully only when they have an opportunity to interact with it. Though in its most impressive version the work involves Estonian ID cards, many non-Estonian citizens can still get a mechanical processing of their own identities. Open to the international community, the project emphasises the unique situation of surveillance in Estonian society, which becomes even more noticeable when compared to the policies of other countries with national electronic ID cards. The peculiar artistic qualities of the work, its recognisable and subtle aesthetics, which were the main reasons for the jury's decision, thus help to raise questions of particular differences in social organisation in European countries, showcasing Estonia, but only in order to refer to the global agenda of increasing political control over individual life paths.

### Ksenia Fedorova

(1982), media art researcher and curator, initiator of Art.Science.Technology program at the National Center for Contemporary Arts, Ekaterinburg (Russia); PhD (candidate), University of California, Davis (USA), Ural Federal University, Ekaterinburg (Russia).



# Internationality Meets Locality - ART IST KUKU NU UT Festival In Tartu

Tanel Rander



*HUH? PHOOEY! ACK! OH! WOW! Classics of Estonian Contemporary Art* at the Tartu Art Museum:  
Jaan Toomik. *May 15–June 1, 1992.1992/2012*. Installation (paper, marker, glass, shit), size variable.  
Courtesy of the Artist / Tartu Art Museum



Left: View of the collection of archival materials and related documents at the Tartu Art Museum.

Top:  
Johnson and Johnson.  
*Estonian Rhapsody*.  
2012  
Sound installation.  
2 min 50 sec.  
Courtesy of the Artist

## Location - periphery

The character of the Tartu art life is seen through the contrast between locality and internationality. In the Estonian context, the latter is represented by Tallinn, a bigger, diverse and more open art scene. The contrast and contest between the capital city and second largest town within one country seem stereotypical, as they are determined by the logic and infrastructure of capital moving from the centre to its affiliates in the periphery – in the eastern European context, from the West to Tallinn – leaving the other localities in a third position in this hierarchy. The mentality of Tartu, whether myth or reality, tends to reject this logic and search for other infrastructures, but in practice it survives as a certain kind of isolation. Ellen Blumenstein, who participated as a visiting curator in ART IST KUKU NU UT 2011, gave an interview in which she described her first impressions of the Tartu art scene. She found Tartu an obviously small town and noted that many

artists were related through semiotics, which as a domain is not very popular in Germany. Above all, she sensed an insurmountable difference between herself and the local art scene: it was difficult to understand what the artists were doing and why. The title of this interview was 'A brief glimpse into the local art arena – Impressions from another galaxy'. Another newspaper headline about last year's festival was 'Abramović in the periphery', referring to Marina Abramović's exhibition at the Tartu Art Museum. It is notable that the rhetoric of the ART IST KUKU NU UT festival was closely related to its location: a periphery inside of a periphery. The organisers of the festival, Kaisa Eiche and Rael Artel, have stated their aims as being to enrich and activate the Tartu art life, as well as to integrate local artists into the international network and develop professional cooperation. Hopefully, the effect of these aims will be visible soon, as the organisers have planned to run the festival for five years. Still two years to go.

### Contemporary art classics

The highlight of the 2012 festival was *HUH? PHOOEY! ACK! OH! WOW! Classics of Estonian Contemporary Art* in the Tartu Art Museum, curated by Rael Artel. The exhibition revolved around the three most legendary artworks of Estonian contemporary art history – *May 15 – June 1, 1992* by Jaan Toomik, *Apocrypha flags* by Raul Meel and *Loser* by Kai Kaljo – and their comments, or remixes made by artists of the younger generation, such as the artist duo Johnson & Johnson, Anna-Stina Treumund and Flo Kasearu. The whole exhibition was supplemented by archive materials: related artworks, articles and information. As predicted, the most dominant work of the exhibition was Jaan Toomik's installation: a certain period of social reality that was documented by the artist's digestion process, day by day, and represented by each day's menus and corresponding faeces, inside jars set on the newspapers of each documented day. In the Estonian society, the whole work is widely known and has been known as 'shit jar' since the 90s. 'Shit jar' is also a metaphor for the whole of Estonian contemporary art, reflecting the popularity and the social status of art and artists, although neither the original work nor its documentation has been exposed to a wider audience. That was also the reason why Rael Artel decided to provide public access to the works that form the foundation of the

reputation of contemporary art. For *HUH? PHOOEY! ACK! OH! WOW!*, the ephemeral part of Jaan Toomik's installation was re-made by an assistant who followed the exact concept of the work (the original menus) during a certain period of time in August 2012. The idea of the exhibition was also to re-think the reception and representation of legendary artworks, and place them in the context of contemporary times, using remixes and comments made by the younger generation of artists.

Besides numerous articles about the exhibition that were mainly obsessed with the 'shit jar', the most intense reaction from society was a criminal act: one of the jars from the installation was stolen from the museum on 8 September. Criminal proceedings were started and the thief was found, although the jar was lost. The public reactions to the theft, the whole rhetoric surrounding the re-make of the installation, didn't show any widened understanding of the installation. The criminal act and police proceedings occurred in public as a shit joke on bureaucratic formalism, which actually alerts us that representational matters might make whatever or whoever an outlaw.

### Building bridges

Another exhibition of the festival was created by this year's visiting curator, Chris Fitzpatrick from Antwerp/San Francisco. The exhibition's title, *Ride Gently Over The Bridge* [Sõida tasa üle silla – Ed], refers to an Estonian myth about a beauty contest of world languages, where the Estonian language took second place, after Italian. The exhibition itself speaks a rather meta-language regarding communication and the problematics of the object and its representation. Works by a wide range of artists (from Vilnius, Cairo, Los Angeles, etc.) were exhibited on three floors of the Noorus Gallery, which somehow divided the exposition into three conceptual parts: the central part as a collection of content and statements, and the two others as provocation and challenging judgement. Speaking of the context and locality, the central object of the exhibition was the exhibition itself: explicitly international content served in a hijacked sentence from bordered locality. The exhibition worked as a semiotic bomb, fallen through the gallery ceiling and landed on the floor without fully exploding, but fractured, releasing the bomb's content gently – communication would work if the pieces of this bomb could be carried



*HUH? PHOOEY! ACK! OH! WOW! Classics of Estonian Contemporary Art.* View of the collection of archival materials, connected artworks and related links. Tartu Art Museum



*HUH? PHOOEY! ACK! OH!  
WOW! Classics of Estonian  
Contemporary Art* at the Tartu Art  
Museum:  
Flo Kasearu. *Creative Estonia*.  
2012. Installation (glass, textile).  
14 x 19.5 x 14 cm  
Courtesy of the Artist

Flo Kasearu.  
*Creative Estonia*.  
2012.  
Video. 1 min.  
Courtesy of the Artist

away by locals, bit by bit. Or not. Sometimes discommunication works better: a mistake or a displacement may have greater effects and explosions in culture than a gentle ride. An example was represented in the exhibition catalogue by the great text 'Word to Your Mother' by Chris Sharp, referring to the fatal slip by Vanilla Ice in the song *Ice Ice Baby*, which had an enormous impact on American pop culture.

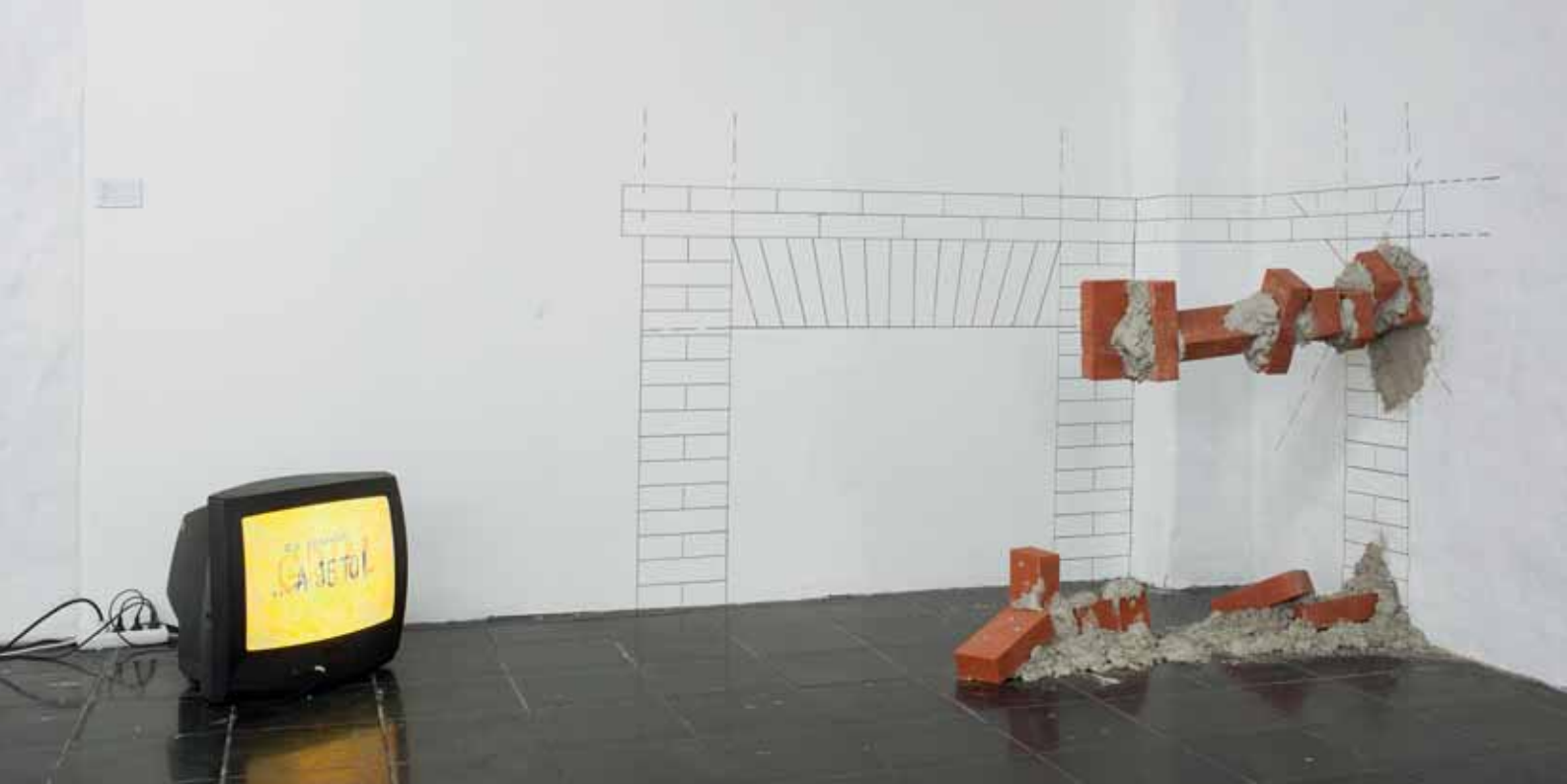
### The Girl Who Loved Everything

Each year the festival gives the KUKU NUNNU grant to a local artist to create an exhibition in the Y Gallery. This year's grant winner, Eike Eplik's exhibition *The Girl Who Loved Everything*, was inspired by a fairy-tale by the Hungarian author Ervin Lázár, but it can also be seen as the development of her 2011 exhibition in the same gallery space. What she does is turn a whole gallery space into an installation environment, filled with small sculptures of different kinds of animals, insects and creatures, mixed with man-made objects, leftovers of human civilization. The organic opposition to art, multiplicity and the emerging wilderness of content take over representation and meaning: one way that Eike Eplik's handwriting could be described. Looking at the exhibition is like looking at nature after a major catastrophe or observing consciousness under heavy psychosis, where, in both cases, everything has melted together, and where nature has won. In its language matter, *The Girl Who Loved Everything* can be compared with *Ride Gently Over The Bridge* by Chris Fitzpatrick. As it represents the local art scene, it is a proper third element of the festival programme, contextualising the contemporary art classics and international bridge building within locality, letting it speak its own language, the borderless language of nature, understood (or not) without any bridges, without its representation inside of a jar.

### Tanel Rander

(1980), artist and PhD student at the Estonian Academy of Arts, research topics: East European landscape, social imaginaries and decoloniality.





Ivars Gravlejs.  
*Pat & Mat.*  
 Installation. Exhibition *And So On And So Forth* at kim? Contemporary Art Centre in Riga, Latvia. 2012

*As an artist the fact that the concept is meaningless is meaningful to me.*

Robert Filliou (1977)

## Rebeka Põldsam



Annika Ström.  
*Seven Women Standing in the Way III.*  
 Documentation image of unannounced performance. 2012

Sometimes the best exhibitions are those where you enter into complete confusion and leave feeling that you comprehend everything in the world: suddenly everything becomes balanced. *And So On And So Forth*, curated by Margit Säde Lehni at the kim? Contemporary Art Centre in Riga, has the potential to be such a show. First, when I enter the private view, there is a bunch of middle-aged ladies drinking wine and chatting at the door. They seem not to understand English, which is a bit irritating, since they are standing in the way, and I have to push through them somewhat puzzled and embarrassed at not knowing how to excuse myself in the local language, which is the case for most of the audience and artists this evening. When I have run this gauntlet, the exhibition continues to be full of wonderfully nonsensical objects, installations and texts. After an hour or so, when half of the people have left the gallery, the ladies are still chatting at the door and then I get it: it's a performance, *Seven Women Standing in the Way III*, organised by Annika Ström. And suddenly everything starts to make sense.





Takahiro Iwasaki.  
*Out of Disorder.*  
Toothbrushes.  
2012

According to the press release, the exhibition is based on the concept *Principle of Equivalence* (1968) by Robert Filliou, one of the many members of the Fluxus movement, who divided art into three categories: well made, badly made and not made. It is pretty risky to put together an exhibition that consciously shows badly made and not made art. At the same time, it is quite provoking to ponder why artists have agreed to admit that some things they do are not so good or are unfinished in terms of art, but that these things are still responsible for being art. On the other hand, the whole exhibition is a big conceptual game, altogether suggesting that maybe well made, i.e. completely thought-through, art belongs to the past now, when everything has become so ridiculously ephemeral. Curator and artists seem to find mind games much more engaging than ordinary socio-political critical art, which, according to Rancière, reiterates the object of criticism without proposing alternatives. Thus, art forgets humanity and hardly has any lasting value.<sup>1</sup>

*And So On And So Forth* plays on the criticism that contemporary art has no ambition for eternal beauty or wisdom. Actually, the show flirts with complete boredom, superficiality and downright dogmatism. The curator has expressed the absurd pain of the inability to change the somewhat catastrophic world into something better for everyone. The show addresses the relationship between immaterial and material reality in the contemporary world by having Ursula Nistrup present her artistic idea, which ponders the sound made by trees cut down in wintery forests to make high-quality pianos. There is a sculpture, a wooden post with a short text on steel by Pind outside the gallery, which is very material and, in its minimal aesthetics, even beautiful, but both of these pieces are completely worthless in a practical sense, as is the elbow-rest on the windowsill, by Annika Ström, and the breeze that comes out of a hole in the wall, by Toomas Thetloff.

Continuing to explore the exhibition, it all becomes rather cynical at one point: David

Horvitz asks people to put 50 centimes into a jar and e-mail him, and he will think about them for one minute at home. At the same time, 1000 non-motivational letters by Julien Prévieux, which almost all have the same beautiful reply from different employers, represent the silliness and poetics of the old formalities, in this case refusal letters. The installations by Ivars Gravlejs carry on the pondering of the un/reasonability of practicality by realising the ideas of two Czech cartoon characters, Pat and Mat, who are experts at disastrous homemade solutions, such as a furnace without a chimney, and a wardrobe made of hangers on a dusting brush. Anyone with a practical mind will become infuriated by all these parodies of art and lack of seriousness, the unhidden waste of energy used for small and questionable pleasures.

All these issues are made charmingly obvious in Krõõt Juurak's performance *Scripted Smalltalk And So On, So Forth*, where a bunch of artists read a script which reflects on the context of this (or another) exhibition and the trouble of accepting being lost in the eternity of possible meanings of existence these days. At the end of Juurak's performance, everything becomes crystal clear and soothes the confused minds, at least for a little while. Furthermore, one must understand that all this elaborately staged silliness is a precondition for the practical life, for thinking about alternatives, and most importantly for reconsiderations. Without shallowness, depths would have no value or measurement, and so on and so forth.

<sup>1</sup> J. Rancière. 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community' in *The Emancipated Spectator*. Verso, 2009.



Krõõt Juurak's performance  
*Scripted Smalltalk And So On, So Forth*.

## Rebeka Põldsam

(1989), has studied contemporary art theory at Goldsmiths, London. Her research interests are feminist and queer art practices in Eastern Europe and contemporary ethics. She works as a curator-project manager at the Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia.



Early works by San Keller.  
The Collection of Marianne  
and Fritz Keller.





# CONTENT AND FORM

Margus Tamm

Views of the exhibition *Content and Form I* at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design in Tallinn, 2012

Exhibitions of graphic design are not that frequent. The most common formats are overviews based on open competitions, personal displays or retrospective curated exhibitions. A curated exhibition, which aims to describe graphic design here and now, is still quite a rare format. The most interesting approach is thus using opportunities offered by this format, the self-articulation expected of a curator's exhibition and the mechanics of dichotomy and differentiation.

The exhibition *Content and Form I. Contemporary Estonian graphic design 2001–2010*, at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, displays applied design by lecturers and their students of the Design Department at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Most works were commissioned by various cultural institutions, although there are also exercise books, skateboards, CD designs, T-shirts and logos. It is also nice that everything can be touched, flicked through.

Strangely enough, there is no additional information about the design items to be found at the exhibition, not even the names of the authors. In an interview with Rene Mäe, the curator Indrek Sirkel explains his decision: "by leaving out the authors' names, the viewer focuses on the object". This approach does not seem to be too convincing: a basic concept of the culture-theoretical debate about the author's function is that it is precisely the author's name that enables an object to be more visible, revealing its perception as a symbol and as a whole. We could also ask whether, in this case, the curator should have stayed anonymous as well, in order for the 'exhibition itself' to emerge. The curator's doubts about displaying 'live' graphic design in a white cube are natural (in his interview, he compares a poster in the exhibition room with a stuffed bird), although the chosen solution seems to increase the 'stuffed effect'.

The nameless design objects with no origin, taken out of their initial context, are

organised according to their formal, rather than contextual continuity: posters placed together on the walls, and publications on a table. The display is united by the curator's name, museum walls and stylish exhibition furniture. This kind of display could be characterised by the term *Wunderkammer*. The art historian Francesca Fiorani describes *Wunderkammer* as "memory theatre which conveyed symbolically the patron's control of the world through its indoor, *microscopic* reproduction". Regarding the exhibition *Content and Form* as a *Wunderkammer*, it becomes clear why most works come from the curator himself and the rest from his immediate surroundings. This is a case of a personal memory theatre.

Luckily, the book-catalogue accompanying the exhibition, *Content and Form II*, has abandoned the exhibiting concept. Each picture has the author's name and a brief introduction of the project, and thus several works open up which did not attract attention at the exhibition.

The catalogue records several hundred design projects and this in itself is a remarkable event. Equally important are the three thematic essays. If we look at graphic design from a wider perspective, it is an emancipating discipline, which is rapidly growing a textual layer around it. Quite a few serious treatments of the history of the speciality have been published, and there is an increasing need for analytical self-description and criticism beyond the discipline.

Rene Mäe's essay *Graphic Design as Cultural Work* offers an excellent analysis of the peculiarities of cultural work in the contemporary risk society. As the article is theoretical rather than empirical, it can be expanded to other fields of creative work, so the essay is a must for all students of applied art.

Essential writings about graphic design have been produced by Indrek Sirkel, the curator of the exhibition *Content and Form I*, and an associate professor in the Graphic

Design Department at the Academy of Arts, and by professor Ivar Sakk, at the same department.

With the addition of the extremely pretentious subtitle to the exhibition (*Contemporary Estonian graphic design*), we can say that all the preconditions for writing history are there.

However, reading both texts, they seem too fragmented to map the set of problems aspiring to be a whole. The texts contain individual interesting bits and pieces, but a more compact analysis gets lost in the confusion of wandering thoughts, autobiography and depictions of single cases. The confusion, in fact, begins with terminology marking the (self) determining object; it is unclear what exactly is being described: contemporary graphic design, a generation, a school or a 'school' (Sirkel), the graphic design of the new millennium or youngsters (Sakk). These terms, open to very different interpretations, are constantly interchanged within the same essay, and thus make it impossible to arrive at any kind of serious discussion. On the basis of texts by Sirkel and Sakk, it appears that the presented graphic designers are honest, methodical, thinking and skilful people. There is no reason to doubt this, although these are hardly qualities that can determine one school or another, a particular generation, a circle of friends or a university chair.

The central argument, emphasised in the exhibition press release, in the interviews and in Sirkel's and Sakk's essays, is that the work of the designers at the exhibition opposes the domination of the market logic. This is not immediately obvious in the works themselves: practically all the exhibits are, after all, commissioned works. Opposing market logic, according to the curator Sirkel, seems to mean that the designer works freelance and that his work is project-based (to this kind of work culture, he opposes advertising agencies). However, precarity generally characterises today's market economy, and it certainly cannot be said that a freelance designer opposes the dominance of the market logic; we are, instead, dealing with an adaptation tactic (or, as Rene Mäe says in his essay, an organisational alternative to advertising agencies).

It could be therefore concluded that, although the curator's views clearly express a sharp opposition ('thinking designers' vs 'nine-to-five mouse-rubbers who produce visual rubbish' at advertising agencies), this is not really an essential opposition.



*Content and Form I* at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design in Tallinn. Installation by Elisabeth Klementi

Looking at the biographies at the end of the catalogue, something common strikes the eye: this is the Schengen-visa generation; after enrolling at the Estonian Academy of Arts, practically all of the designers furthered their studies abroad. Most of them did so at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in the Netherlands. Considering the many thousands of universities offering design studies in the world, this kind of special relationship is obviously significant. It would certainly be interesting to find out why such close relations have developed with this particular Dutch design school, and how the rather one-sided cultural exchange has influenced graphic design at our Academy. How does the Dutch design school relate to local design heritage, e.g the photographic poster of the 1980s? *Content and Form* does not provide answers to these questions, and that is a great pity. A more open analysis of the relations between the Graphic Design Chairs at the Estonian Academy of Arts and the Rietveld Academy would have given *Content and Form* a considerably clearer definition, instead of the supposed opposition to the market logic and the rather pointless rhetoric of being honest and decent.

It should be emphasised, however, that the mere fact of an exhibition of graphic design and the publication of a bulky catalogue are remarkable events in Estonian context. The presentation is occasionally not very well thought through, but this could be regarded as a feature characteristic of a developing discipline which is still seeking its own place and image. In any case, *Content and Form* offers a comprehensive overview of the work of the Graphic Design Department at the Estonian Academy of Arts during the last decade.

### Margus Tamm

(1977), artist and graphic designer. PhD student at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Topics of research: tactical media, interventionist public art practices.



## AN EDUCATION Terttu Uibopuu

When I was fifteen, I took my first photography class at Nõmme Noortemaja in Tallinn, and thus the journey of my photographic education began, one that would unexpectedly follow me across the Atlantic to the suburbs of Chicago, where I worked as a waitress to pay for community college, and found myself photographing the women there in a project entitled *Subtopia*, while I myself was adjusting to this foreign land. And then, some years later, I was accepted to the Yale School of Art graduate photography department, where I spent two rigorous years transforming my work, being a part of a strong creative community and further investigating how the possibilities of the medium could best serve my interests. All of my classmates, there were nine of us, had their own unique stories about what brought them there, and I was surprised to discover that only three were American, the rest of us coming from Estonia, Korea, Lebanon, Greece, England and Canada. The drafting of this group, with a set of diverse backgrounds and interests, was like an art in itself, and being a part of this community was and continues to be the thing that matters most to me. Despite whatever assumptions one may have about MFA programs, the artists I was engaged with were not as interested in strategising about their careers in the art world, by polishing their work or learning the lingo of the current trends, as they were in sparking dialogue, supporting one another and getting used to the inevitable failure that comes with attempting to create something meaningful.

The critiques at Yale were notoriously intense, open to the public, with an impressive roster of artists and critics on the weekly panel that included the likes of Gregory Crewdson, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Paul Graham, An-My Lê, Collier Schorr and Taryn Simon, to name just a few. Not to mention an array of artists and critics from the painting, sculpture and graphic design departments, surprise visitors from New York, and the dean, Robert Storr. But, as the students understood, it was Tod Papageorge, who was the director of the program from 1979 until 2011, the year I graduated, whose voice was the most fierce, moving and lucid when critiquing our work. Tod didn't earn our attention simply because he spoke the loudest, which he often did, or because of the title he held (Walker Evans Professor of Photography & Director of Graduate Studies), but because he was

sympathetic to our respective struggles, and understood the difficulty of each of our paths. Whether or not you agreed with everything he said was up to you, and we had the benefit, and the trauma, of having plenty of opinions and feedback from a wide range of artists to sort through. In fact, at first I was resistant to what I felt were the male-dominated voices of the panel and was prone to cling to the women of the group. However, there was no denying that Tod had a rare gift for articulating very complicated matters in a clear and convincing way that wasn't a mere theoretical stance, but rather a poetic way to challenge each of our respective concerns. Perhaps the most valuable thing I took away from Tod's teaching was his belief that photography shared more similarities with literature than the other visual arts. A picture contains and describes literal facts, much in the same way a poem deals with words that we all know the literal definitions of. However, it is how a poet sequences the words, separates the lines, and uses language to deliver something meaningful and mysterious that makes it poetry. Likewise, a photograph is merely the result of what a lens can describe. But, what still excites me about photography is its ability, not merely to document facts, or to use objects to deliberately represent a preconceived idea, but to transform the world into photographs, which is another world altogether, 'an analog of reality, not a mirror of it.'<sup>1</sup> As Tod quotes W. H. Auden, 'it is both the glory and the shame of poetry that its medium is not its private property, that a poet cannot invent his words.'<sup>2</sup> Tod continues that this 'could also be said of the photographer's relation to the things of the physical world: he cannot invent them. By being fictions and, at the same moment, returning their subjects to us with a compelling fidelity, both photographs and poems work with the same surprise.'<sup>3</sup> I feel that this approach remains a great challenge, and is far from being exhausted, much in the way great poetry remains essential to our life and times.

### Terttu Uibopuu

(1984), earned an MFA in Photography from the Yale University School of Art. She was recently selected for the Artists in the Marketplace programme at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and is currently teaching the courses 'The Book and the Photograph: Bookbinding for Photographers' and 'Brief Encounters: Making Portraits of Strangers' at the International Center of Photography in New York City. For more information, see [www.terttuphoto.com](http://www.terttuphoto.com)

1 Quoted by Philip-Lorca diCorcia in *Philip-Lorca diCorcia: Streetworks*. Spain, Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 1998.

2 Quoted by W. H. Auden in 'Writing' in *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays*. New York, Vintage Books, 1968, p 23

3 Quoted by Tod Papageorge in 'Garry Winogrand: Public Relations' in *Core Curriculum: Writings on Photography by Tod Papageorge*. New York, Aperture Foundation, 2011, pp 85-86



Terttu Uibopuu.  
*Elan (New Haven, CT)*, 2010.  
Digital inkjet print.  
68 x 86 cm





Terttu Uibopuu.  
*Sarah (Tulsa, OK)*. 2010.  
Digital inkjet print.  
68 x 86 cm

Terttu Uibopuu.  
*Timmy (Paintsville, KY)*.  
2010. Digital inkjet print.  
68 x 86 cm







Terttu Uibopuu.  
*Tina (Orange, CT)*. 2011.  
Digital inkjet print.  
68 x 86 cm

Terttu Uibopuu.  
*Ashley and Josh (Beverly Hills, FL)*. 2009.  
Digital inkjet print.  
68 x 86 cm

# Monumental painting as public space

Gregor Taul

In December 2012, Tõnis Saadoja completed a ceiling painting in the foyer of Theatre NO99 in Tallinn. The painting depicts a view we see when we look up into the sky in a deciduous forest. The event was especially noteworthy because monumental painting in Estonia has for years been as good as dead, and only a few professional contemporary artists have received institutional commissions over the last decade to undertake any large-scale works. The mural was supplemented by a book recording Saadoja's work process and introducing the history of Estonian monumental painting.

The ceiling painting was, symbolically, commissioned by a theatre which has been politically the most active cultural institution in the last five years. One ideal of NO99 seems to be that a bit of news from the morning should appear as a production in the evening. Besides swift reaction, they are consistently involved in mapping and directing social processes, aiming to improve our local, somewhat shaky democracy. Commissioning the painting is another example of how a theatre that is concerned about and feels responsible for the abuse and non-use of public space manages to find means – instead of moaning and groaning – to visually and socially enrich the theatre. It is also typical that NO99 has no far-reaching plans for their current building in Sakala Street, and actually seems keen to leave it behind as quickly as possible. The ceiling painting that could, if it is lucky, survive hundreds of years, is primarily an addition and a gift to the building (and its cultural history), and not to the theatre itself.

The building was completed in 1947 as the Culture House for Working People. When it was designed earlier, during the Republic of

Estonia (architect Edgar Kuusik, 1938), it was supposed to accommodate the Central Board of Officers in Tallinn. The architect installed a casino and a banqueting hall, which now serve as theatre halls. Saadoja's mural now adorns the ceiling of the foyer between the two halls. Typically of the era, the building is quite lavishly decorated, boasting the obvious Soviet symbols of victory. Saadoja's mural is located on a decorated ceiling, once also adorned by a mural, which was later repeatedly covered with white paint. Saadoja decided to supplement the Stalinist interior (NO99 had already treated some of it rather boldly) with a *sotto in sú* 'forest view'. Without going any deeper into the topic, I'd just like to mention that the picture resembles the sky of the mural in the Estonia Theatre, but with no figures. It emphasises the absence of people.

The book published to go with the mural features photographs of most of Estonia's monumental paintings (starting with Johann Köler's 1879 fresco in the Charles Church in Tallinn), taken by the photographer Paul Kuimet in summer 2012. However, these are not the usual reproductions in the service of art history: like the mural, they have a wider critical purpose. The mere fact that Kuimet used a medium format camera and black-and-white film stresses the essence of his photographic diary as an independent art project. Kuimet's pictures add a certain sense of distance and a double coding between the monumental paintings (including their spatial location) and the book's readers. Besides interpretations, this is also a demanding statement regarding the usage of public space. The click of the camera in front of a mural is like a Marxist fist: it is unacceptable that the public space is uncontrollably covered with

shameless, mostly ugly and profit-hungry endless advertising noise. Taking pictures of the monumental paintings took four months out of the life of the productive artist, who could have done something else with his time, and thus the whole process of purposeful usage of time is certainly a statement in itself.

The photographs show a total of 100 objects, most of which were, for obvious reasons, made in the Soviet era. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the Soviet-era monumental paintings (i.e. frescos, seccos, sgraffiti, mosaics, ceramic murals etc made for specific rooms) were limited to portraits of Lenin or other political leaders, or various other forms of propagandist 'pictorial monuments'. Such works can be counted on the fingers of one hand and, ironically, one of the most extensive of them was completed only in 1987 in the Estonian History Museum in Maarjamäe. The wall painting by Evald Okas, created at the same time as the Singing Revolution, became a curiosity back then, rather than a serious slogan, and vividly demonstrated the inability of the Soviet power to present itself in any credible manner.

Most of the monumental paintings of the Soviet era didn't bare any ideological connotations and were executed at a high technological level. One reason for this was the establishment of the Council of Monumental Art in 1965 at the Soviet Estonian Ministry of Culture, which included professionals in the field. The unshakeable competence of the respected council in artistic matters restrained the employees of the ideology section of the Communist Party to the extent that they did not stick their noses into the 'alien' business (to turn monumental art into an 'alien' business was a remarkable achievement in itself for the ideologues!). More important than placating the ideologues, was restraining all kinds of amateurs. This is colourfully recorded in the minutes of many meetings of the time. Alas the monumental paintings in more secondary locations didn't have to pass the aesthetic requirements of the Council of



Photos by Paul Kuimet:

1. Residential house. Tartu, 55 Anne Street. Concept by Tõnis Kimmel. Picture by Ado Vabbe 2009. Supergraphics
2. Residential houses. Kohtla-Järve, 4 Metsapargi Road and 36 Kalevi Road. Aleksander Igonin. ab. 1976. Supergraphics
3. Initially an administrative building of the Kreenholm Factory. Currently abandoned. Narva, Kreenholm island. Jevgeni Olenin And Eduard Pašover. 1982. Mosaic
4. Initially V. I. Lenin Palace of Culture and Sport. Currently the City Hall, not used since 2009. Tallinn, 20 Mere Av. *Life of People*. Design by Enn Põldroos 1985. Tapestry
5. Initially the hall of the Volta factory culture club. The building is currently unused. Tallinn, 47 Tööstuse Street. Author unknown 1980-1981. Fresco





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Monumental Art – hence dozens of truly poor artworks were realised.

As for individual artists, Enn Põldroos was the most fruitful in monumental art (mosaics in the Radio House and Tallinn Technical University, mural in the Soviet Estonian representation in Moscow, site-specific oil painting in the University of Tartu, one of the world's biggest tapestries in the City Hall, etc), and Rait Prääts was one of the most talented in stained glass (his works are in the Estonian National Library and St Nicholas Church). Eva Jänes and Urve Dzidzaria produced numerous frescos. Artistically, the most successful frescos were made by Elmar Kits in various places in Estonia.

In addition to the aesthetically more demanding interiors, murals were also commissioned in different Soviet Estonian towns. These pictures, completed in the spirit of a synthesis of the arts, are clear evidence of the strange fact that we are currently talking about the poverty and dullness of the public space, whereas it was the opposite during the Soviet Estonian period, when the space was overloaded. It is naturally a different matter whether it was a positive space or an 'official', 'state', 'party-line' or some other kind of dubious space. In any case, the private sphere began only after you closed the door of your flat, which meant that the outer wall of your home belonged to the public, to whom the state had to tell something positive all the time.

In independent Estonia today, the professional artistic design of urban space is unfortunately considered unimportant. The public space is dominated by advertisements or feeble attempts at street graffiti, which have not yet reached monumental scope. It will be interesting to see what happens next. The idea of monumental painting has been resurrected and we will shortly learn if and to what extent the time- and money-consuming monumental painting as public art is possible in capitalist Estonia.

## Gregor Taul

(1986), studied semiotics at Tartu University (BA) and art history at the Estonian Academy of Arts (MA). Works as a gallerist at the Academy of Arts and writes on art, sculpture and installation in the public space.

# EKKM

## Interview with Elin Kard by Eero Epner

Berit Teeäär. *Non Kodak Moment*. 2008.  
Installation. Exhibition *Madness* at the  
Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia  
(curator Dénes Farkas)



**Eero Epner (EE):** What was the most significant artistic aspect for you when you were establishing the Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia [Eesti Kaasaegse Kunsti Muuseum – EKKM], and where did you place the museum in the institutional field?

**Elin Kard (EK):** The incentive of establishing EKKM was the recently opened Kumu Art Museum and its 5th floor, dedicated to contemporary art. We had all been waiting for this event and most of us had probably even donated as much as we could from our modest school grants for the building of the museum. However, when we saw the 5th floor, we felt that there was still too little space in Estonia for displaying contemporary art. EKKM could not naturally have the same role as, for instance, Kiasma, and this was not actually the aim. We did not wish to compete with Kumu or even compare ourselves with it – that would have been absurd. We simply yearned for rooms that would deal with contemporary art, via curated or thematic exhibitions, and focus on young artists. Now a whole generation of artists has emerged from EKKM, and they started out with us: Visible Solutions, Johannes Säre, Kristiina Hansen, Karel Koplímets, Marge Monko and many others.

The only difference was institutional: we wanted an artist-run space, which did not then exist in Estonia. There weren't, and still aren't, any squatter exhibition spaces. And unfortunately – and I emphasise 'unfortunately' – we are no longer a squat either. It is inevitable that, being an alternative museum, we operate on the basis of the same models as other institutions. This is not just a problem in Estonia; it happens everywhere. Indeed, we move further away from being alternative every day, especially due to generous financial support during the Tallinn 2011 project. This enabled us to do renovation work, present the exhibitions better, buy relevant technology and pay people fees. We are currently

operating with the support of the Cultural Endowment, where I myself belong to the foundation. That does seem somewhat dodgy, and I do not, in fact, think that a foundation like that should support institutions. However, it is inevitable, as there is no alternative support scheme in Estonia.

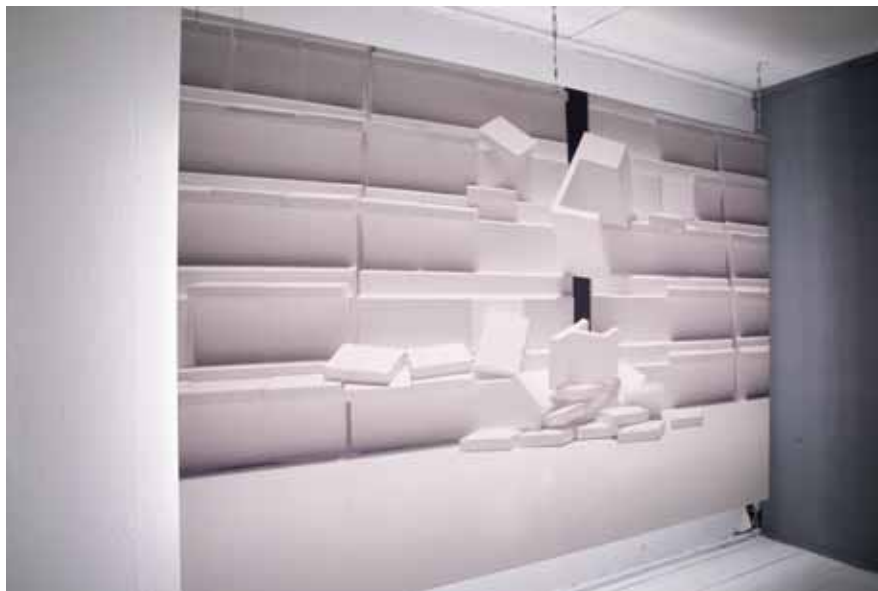
Incidentally, I think that if the Cultural Endowment ceases to fund us in the future, that won't necessarily lead to anything drastic, because until 2010 we functioned with zero budget and the museum existed and still largely exists with the help of volunteers. EKKM has been a hobby, a matter of doing something extra. Most of us worked or still work in other art institutions: the Tallinn Art Hall, Estonian Academy of Arts, galleries of the Estonian Artists' Association etc.

**EE: What was the institutional ideal that you wished to emulate?**

**EK:** Institutional ideal? To be far way from anything institutional: indeterminacy, freedom and an anarchistic atmosphere. I already miss all that and am nostalgic about it. I also miss student exhibitions, when the students had to do everything from scratch, when they were pushed out of the comfort zone and they thus acquired invaluable experience. Fortunately, the great advantage of this space is that practically everything can still be done here: if installing a work required taking down a wall, it would be possible. There is no other space like this in Estonia. At the same time, however, it means that such works cannot ever be displayed anywhere else.

**EE: The word 'museum' is not exactly associated with indeterminacy and freedom. Why 'museum'? Is it ironic?**

**EK:** There are four different answers to this and to how and why EKKM appeared. I don't think we intended any irony regarding the museum institution as such; the first half of the brand name was a comment on the Center for Contemporary Arts and the other



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1-2. Dénes Farkas. *КОГДА МЫ ТОЛЬКО ИЗУЧАЛИ СЛОВА*. 2011. Installation at the *Köler Prize 2011* exhibition, Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia

3. Dénes Farkas. *Closing Up*. 2010. *Köler Prize 2011* exhibition, Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia



half referred to the 5th floor at Kumu. We have still not registered as a museum, although the Ministry of Culture would like us to do so; that would mean abandoning yet another large slice of freedom. We are trying to fulfil the role of a museum: we have our own collection, acquired by donations and exchanges, but it is not a traditional collection and we certainly are not, and do not want to be, a traditional museum.

**EE: Does the collection reflect your personal relationship with each artist, and does that reflect a significant principle of EKKM?**

**EK:** Indeed. The students who have displayed their work are, after all, our own students. Personal relations with artists have been essential to us, not only while putting the collection together, but also in our exhibition practice.

**EE: What is the current Estonian institutional art landscape like? Is it stagnant, or are there fresh winds blowing?**

**EK:** I am less optimistic than three or five years ago. We then hoped that more galleries and project spaces would emerge. I especially miss the latter, as even these two galleries, where I am employed, are under quite a bit of pressure: the applications for exhibitions outnumber the possible time schedules by a factor of four or five; among the hundred or so applications only a few can be immediately discarded. Instead of a white cube, many would perfectly fit into a project room. But project rooms are not available.

**EE: Why?**

**EK:** There is a little less initiative and desire than before, but the primary reason is a lack of a sense of security: where to get the seed capital. You can of course always do things without money, and EKKM is an example, but without any kind of support, even if it's just symbolic, all initiatives tend to fade pretty quickly. So how can we find the capital? The Ministry of Culture has no money either. A medium-size gallery needs three years to get going: this I know from my own experience.

There are no longer any exhibitions organised in flats, although just a few years ago there were quite a few. This is probably also connected with the fact that it is difficult enough for a gallery exhibition to become newswor-

thy in the media and attract visitors, let alone exhibitions in flats. It's quite another matter, of course, whether this should be an aim at all.

**EE: State support looks as if it will remain insufficient, but what about private capital, which is available elsewhere? How are private galleries doing in Estonia and can institutions like EKKM seek help from the private sector?**

**EK:** C/O started in Berlin in an old post office as a squat gallery, but now their biggest supporter is Deutsche Bank. They are no longer an alternative gallery, but a respectable exhibition venue with a prestigious backer. There are two sides to every coin. We cannot, alas, rely on the banks in Estonia: Swedbank used to have its own gallery, which no longer exists, and it used to issue an art award, also gone. To make banks here reconsider and support contemporary art is probably... very complicated. Naturally there are private patrons in Estonia, but everyone is after them and it would be unfair to increase their burden.

As for private galleries, there are three that rely on private capital: Haus, Vaal and Temnikova&Kasela. The latter has reached outside Estonia and is probably doing quite well. Auctions at Haus and Vaal of older art have considerably decreased, but as they are still open they obviously manage.

**EE: Does private initiative thus mean offering investments that are worthwhile?**

**EK:** Yes, but are they? It takes decades before a work of art becomes a good investment, especially in a very limited market such as Estonia.

**EE: The Minister of Culture recently said that the state should support culture during times when it is suffering from a 'hitch in the market', e.g the market is not interested, but the cultural phenomenon is worth preserving. This should apply especially to visual arts, although that seems to be the poorest cultural field in the country.**

**EK:** Visual arts in Estonia are indeed experiencing a 'hitch in the market', whereas theatre, music, literature, film and others are supported much more generously. I have no idea why this is so. Maybe it has something to do with insufficient art education.

**Elin Kard**

(1972), artist and curator, runs Hobusepea and Draakon galleries; board member of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia.

**Eero Epner**

(1978), art historian; dramaturg at the theatre NO99.

**EKKM**

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

# Insurgent Neoist Kantor

Kiwa

## Choose Alienation

Since early childhood, through my entire conscious life, I have been amazed by the 'semiotic determinism' of humankind – the blind belief that, by naming something, the object and the name become identical. I realised that it was smart to project my name together with the relevant 'self' into a safe (occasionally also dangerous) distance. Later I found my intuition confirmed by Oriental philosophies, which also talked about the 'self' as (a rather unnecessary) construction. Investigating the identity concept, I then got to Neoism, which invented an open identity for everyone to use, an open situation and 'radical play'. By that time, I had already created the media phantom KIWA (which has nothing much to do with me as a muscle mass or in a legal sense). People naturally presumed that I was the 'real live KIWA'. Well, I had no reason to object – a nice snappy nickname. Writing articles about identity-political art and pseudonyms in free usage, at some point I discovered the name Istvan Kantor. I assumed that this was yet another invented name, a fake identity. Living in Indonesia in 2011, I was mightily surprised when someone told me that Istvan Kantor was there as well. It turned out to be he who invented Neoism and open identity, Monty Cantsin, one of the most legendary living anti-artists. I tracked him down and introduced my new plan to organise his exhibition in Estonia.



## Rebelling Neoist

*The Istvan Kantor or Monty Cantsin? Amen!* exhibition in the The Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia [EKKM] in Tallinn (and the relevant Neoist actions in June 2012 in the Baltic and Scandinavian countries) was a remarkable milestone in the Neoist cultural conspiracy. The EKKM in Tallinn is a post-industrial building, started on a grass-roots level as a citizen-initiative squat. Located in the area of 'Stalker zone'\*, it has hijacked the name of a museum and thus holds high the flag of tongue-in-cheek institutional identity.

Within one month Kantor put together an exhibition at the museum, which introduced both himself and Neoism from historical and contemporary viewpoints. The exhibition was supplemented by the Neoist Apartment Festival, the Confrontation panel, the Neoist Disaster Night and various more or less spontaneous performances, together with local noise-artists. The shooting of a Neoist film began in the former Patarei Prison. The huge poster on the outer wall of the museum declared MUSEUM=PRISON, and a flag bearing Kantor's logo, a cross of blood, fluttered on the museum roof in the winds of the Baltic Sea.







According to Lenin, Marx regarded rebellion as art and declared that it must be seen as art. Istvan Kantor has been known for the game for over three decades. Although Kantor is a renowned anti-artist, he is not an embodiment of a normative rebelliousness. I am sure that the first shaman-artist who ever scratched pictures of cultivating fields and hunting on a cave wall was no other than Kantor in his previous life. Cave painting might have seemed just as unconventional, confusing and rebellious as what Istvan is doing today, although there is no denying that this created a meme that changed the entire human culture. He is like the Indian god Shiva, whose dance transcends the contradiction between creation and destruction.

Kantor's best known series of works since the late 1970s is the *Blood Campaign*, a shrewd travesty of Viennese actionists, where a medically trained artist draws blood from his own vein and splatters it over the audience or on the walls. His most famous performance with blood is the intervention in 2004 in Hamburger Bahnhof, the Museum for Contemporary Art in Berlin, where Kantor splashed blood on the wall behind the sculpture of Michael Jackson made by Paul McCarthy. His aim was to point out the fact that the Bahnhof collection was founded on treasures looted from the Jews during the Third Reich. Another action became well known too: it happened in 1988 in MoMa in New York, where, while producing a blood cross between two Picasso paintings, a few drops actually landed on one of Picasso's most famous work. For his scandalous actions he has been declared persona non grata in many art institutions across the world. According to Kantor himself, he has been arrested approximately fifty times and thus he can promote himself as being 'banned from most museums around the world'. In 2008 he was arrested just because he went to the exhibition (*We Are The Revolution*) of his one-time friend Joseph



Beuys in Hamburg in 2008 carrying a banner reading (*And We Are Too*).

Kantor has also published an encyclopaedia. It contains practical information on how to perpetrate a crime in a museum and how to attack artworks by using a hammer, scissors, lipstick, weapons, acid and aerosol spray.

### **Life Begins Where History Ends**

Neoism is the rightful illegitimate child of all 20th century cultural, social and political discourses. In fact, all of the information of intellectual and textual legacy was included in the 20th century, from the core texts of Western culture to the contradictory 'understandings' of non-Western cultures that had reached the 20th century. Plus an amalgam of its ontological and epistemological experience, as well or badly as the 20th century finally managed to formulate it. Refusing the rhetoric of logical arguments, Neoism opposes Western philosophy, and the Neoist concept 'it's always six o'clock' annuls linear history. The clock hands pointing up and down, a simultaneous expansion and accumulation on the vertical axis, creates a zone where time and history become impossible. The projections of the lost sense are also annulled, where unconsciously desirable conditions are projected on to the time axis.

The strategies of Neoism, 'big confusion' and 'radical play', took shape at the Apartment Festivals in 1980–89 in North America, Australia and Europe, and in publications promoting these strategies. The aim of Neoist methods is the extreme undermining of the concepts of identity, bodies and the media, property and truth. According to Monty Cantsin, since the dissolution of Situationist International, the Neoists have constituted the only movement that tirelessly works towards the death of history; in the history of 20th century thought, it is placed together with anti-art and critical phenomena, such as Dadaism, Situationism, Lettrism, Fluxus, mail art and conspiracy theories.

Neoism, an -ism consisting of a prefix and a suffix has a strong hint of parody about it. Its essential part is the contradictory definition of itself, avoiding categorisation and becoming part of history. This is a revolt against the establishment, which sees art as goods or property. At the same time, Kantor and other Neoists have for years compiled dozens of manifestos and books that exclusively deal with defining Neoism. If one concept is given so many names, it becomes unexplainable – the result is something truly chaotic, where every next definition differs from the previous one. By explaining Neoism so much, it thus becomes undefinable.

### **Create The Future By Destroying The Past**

Monty Cantsin was invented in 1978 by Kantor along with the notorious prankster and correspondence artist David Zack. Zack called upon all mail artists to use the name Monty Cantsin. Kantor fully adopted Monty Cantsin's identity, organising an exhibition in Montreal, (1979). He gathered a group of people called Neoists; this developed into an international subcultural network, which collectively uses the name Monty Cantsin. In his essay Kantor declares that "If everyone would call himself Monty Cantsin, the revolution would be exactly where we want it to be: out of control."

Until the late 1980s and before the Internet reached the masses, the network of mail art was the main means of propaganda and communication of Neoism. The latter entered the 21st century, having to accept the fact that their subcultural network and identity games at the analogue-virtual level have now become electronic-virtual mass culture and global media experiments.

The contemporary understanding and doubts about the rules and regulations of identity and about 'self-construction' are shaped, on the one hand, by biopolitical processes, which chain identity to serfdom. On the other hand, by the subjective desire to lose identity and self, they blend psychedelically into the experience of the universe, while maintaining vigilance towards the all-governing inevitability or uncontrollability. Constructing and understanding the 'self' has been influenced by transnational and postcolonial discourses, technological and research developments, transgenderism and virtual identities. The construction of an image of self is an active reflexive process, where objects, people and activities are chosen in order to confirm the notion of 'self' as something significant. This construction needs to be affirmed by communication: expressing opinions and views, and identifying with existing opinions and views. This is a Golem which requires constant quantitative energy: it must be seen and heard to enable the construction to survive. Why then can't it be Monty Cantsin instead of the Golem?



\* *Stalker* by Andrei Tarkovsky was filmed nearby in 1978–1979.

### **Kiwa**

(1975), multidisciplinary artist, independent curator and experimental writer. Studied at the Estonian Academy of Arts and Tartu University. [www.kiwanoid.com](http://www.kiwanoid.com)

# A blossoming heaven - medieval murals in the Koeru parish church

Anneli Randla



No medieval church – no matter how small and remote – was complete without sculptures, paintings and furnishings. However, much of this splendour has been lost over the centuries through the ravages of wars or because of changing theology and fashion. In the luckier cases, the older cultural layers are just hidden under more recent ones and can be made visible – if not *in situ* then at least in digital format.

The murals depicting rows of saints and/or apostles under fanciful canopies in the churches in Valjala, Muhu and Ridala are well known in Estonian art history. Likewise, the illusionistic tracery windows of the Kaarma and Karja churches are clearly visible (although largely reconstructed). But most of the Estonian medieval churches are (still) whitewashed and only small traces of decoration can be seen. Investigations in recent years have brought much more colour to this scene: decorative murals have been discovered in Martna, Risti (both have painted stellar vaults), Pöide (large rose window and vault bosses) and Koeru.

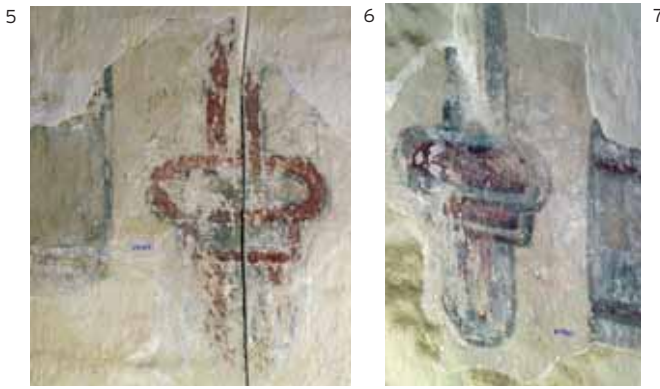
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2



Fig 1. The parish church in Koeru.  
Fig 2. Circular composition in the centre of the vault.  
Fig 3. The toolmarks from the preparatory stage of the painting.  
Fig 4. The painted nervatures of the vaults.







Figs 5.-6. The painted corbels in alternate colours in the vault under the tower.

In the summer of 2011 an expedition of teachers and students of the Department of Conservation of the Estonian Academy of Arts uncovered test areas of finishing layers in the 13th-century parish church of the village of Koeru (fig 1). The results were more than surprising.

It turned out that the church had had at least five different colour schemes in its history. The oldest one was executed at the time of the first plastering of the church. The windows and transversal arches were framed with painted ashlar-imitations in red and black.

The second decorative finishing is likewise medieval, and it is clear that it was also painted on fresh plaster, since the compass and pointer which were used for composing the paintings have left specific marks on the plaster and the paint layer has integrated into the plaster layer, thus generating a fresco effect. This decorative scheme is the richest in the church. All of the vaults, transversal arches, window and door openings, as well as other arches, had multi-coloured decorations. In the centre of one of the vaults, a large circular composition has been preserved (figs 2 and 3). Possibly, all of the vaults had a similar design. The composition was extended by painted vault-ribs in different shades of red and grey (fig 4). In the vault under the tower, these were completed with painted corbels – their alternate colours clearly show the playful character of these decorations (figs 5 and 6). In the nave, the transversal arches have second layers of ashlar-imitation, this time somewhat more complicated than the first layer (fig 7). The same type of ‘ashlar’ surrounds the western arch, western portal, northern portal etc. (fig 8). The most interesting finds came from the triumphal arch and the window openings. Both are surrounded by four-petalled stylised flowers or crosses bordered by stripes. On the triumphal arch, the flowers are black and the stripe red (fig 9), and around the windows the scheme is reversed: red flowers and a black stripe (fig 10). The chancel part of the church was treated differently; here a red and white fishbone motif decorated the nervatures of the vault (fig 11). In spite of the richness, these ornaments only stressed or added to the architectural features of the church. However, this does not mean that they were purely decorative, i.e meaningless, as any church building was ‘half way to heaven’ for the medieval viewer. Flowers were suitable companions on this road.

The third, fourth and fifth decorative layers are from much later period; the church has been whitewashed several times before and between these finishings. The oldest of the three layers dates from after the Reformation, and made the interior of the church more austere – only plain grey colour was used to emphasise the window openings, pillars, transverse arches and corbels against the background of white walls. The focus had shifted from the walls to the furnishings: the old altar retable, the pulpit and some of the pews from 1645 still adorn the church. The next fashion was more cheerful, but far less decorative than the medieval design. The walls were painted pink and some



Fig 7. The striped corbels of the transversal arches.  
 Fig 8. The ‘ashlars’ on the western arch.  
 Fig 9. The black ‘flower’ on the triumphal arch.





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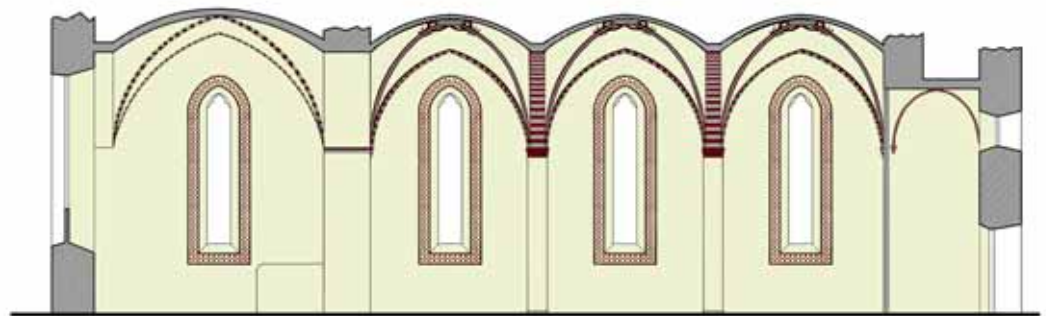


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Fig 10. The red 'flowers' around the nave windows.  
 Fig 11. The fishbone decoration and 'flowers' in the chancel.  
 Fig 12. The largely 19th-century finishing of the church.  
 Fig 13. The reconstruction of the medieval decorative scheme of the church.  
 Drawing by Martin Siplane



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architectural details were painted ochre, yellow and brown. The last historical colour scheme dates from 1883 and is still visible in the church (fig 12).

From the conservation point of view, the question of whether to uncover the medieval layers of decoration has not been resolved. On the one hand, the discovered remains are in good condition and the church must have been far more expressive than its present, mostly 19th-century appearance allows us to experience. On the other hand, the indoor climate in the church is not very stable, the 19th-century interior design is nearly complete and there are more urgent conservation projects than uncovering the medieval design schemes. However, the results of the investigations are sufficient to reconstruct digitally the several historical finishings of the church, thus contributing to our knowledge on this topic (see fig 13).

### Anneli Randla

(1970), a medievalist and conservator; she gained her PhD in art history from the University of Cambridge and currently teaches in the department of conservation at the Estonian Academy of Arts.

# Architecture for people who can manage without it?

13th Venice Architecture Biennale *Common Ground*

Triin Ojari



A huge undertaking like the Venice Architecture Biennale is above all a collage of exhibiting techniques, a diverse mixture of methods and means, and an attempt to display architecture so that the experience will be memorable, direct and evoke ideas. Unlike an art exhibition, a display of architecture is an art of representation. Architecture is not born in galleries or art halls; instead, it must be presented by means of texts, models, diagrams, drawings, films and photographs. The demand for impressions, both physical and visual experience, in exhibition halls is on the increase, and the curator two years ago, the first woman to curate the architecture biennale, Kazyuo Sejima, did precisely that: in the Arsenale, she staged a powerful row of spatial experiences, installations to touch and experience. She said that people actually meet architecture in such a 'pure' form anyway (the topic of the 2010 12th Venice architecture biennale was *People meet in architecture*). In the intervening two years economically distressed Europe has focused more intensely on several critical issues in architecture: in the era of star architecture, can a speciality marketed as expensive and exclusive connect with today's topical, cheap and sustainable way of thinking? How can we help people living in slums, in poverty and in areas of natural catastrophes? How can we join in happy marriage the architect's professional expertise, the politician's populism, the cold calculations of the property business, and the constantly increasing 'grass-roots' level, i.e societies of urban districts, the vox populi? "I encourage my colleagues to react against the prevalent professional and cultural tendencies of our time that place such emphasis on individual and isolated actions. I encourage them instead to demonstrate the importance of influence and of the continuity of cultural endeavour, to illustrate common and shared ideas that form the basis of an architectural culture," this year's curator, the British architect David Chipperfield said, explaining his choice of topic – *Common Ground* – in a rather pedantic manner. "I was inspired to direct this Biennale towards concerns of continuity, context and memory, towards shared influ-

The German exhibition *Reduce/Reuse/Recycle* presented sixteen strategies that demonstrate the high degree of creative and architectural potential of post-WWII architecture. The exhibition provided a good comparison to the problematics of Soviet architecture presented in the Estonian pavillion.





Justin McGuirk, photographer Iwan Baan and the Urban-Think Tank team of Venezuela won the Golden Lion for their *Torre David/Gran Horizonte* installation and cafe. The project documents the Torre David vertical slum in Caracas, the 45-storey concrete frame of a corporate office building that was never completed and is now inhabited by people who would otherwise live in the city's slums.

ences and expectations, and to address the apparent lack of understanding that exists between the profession and society." The question of what society's common ground, which helped architecture to emerge and produced conditions for it, actually is seems to be somewhat neglected. After all, people and their houses do not live in parallel realities, where you specifically have to look for their overlapping, common points. "Architecture has changed from a discipline in service of the larger part of the population through public housing, public buildings, public spaces, urban planning and design to a particular and already in itself disparate niche of the real estate business that has more to do with the media

industry than with public tasks," is a long-standing view of left-wing architecture critics<sup>1</sup>. The next biennale will display the attempt of a successful, middle-aged British architect, known as an elitist modernist, to reply to such criticism, and to track down topics in architecture which address society personally, and constitute success stories about the social responsibility of architects, ethics and the ability to cooperate. We do not see moving pictures of African garbage dumps or South American slums; the time for global world improvement is over. The focus is on the small and specific, but also on the classical; the choice of exhibition techniques is academic: large models, survey sheets and one-to-one details. Visitors thus see an ironic copy-paste project by the architecture office FAT: unique architecture is culture, which

British office FAT has contributed an exhibition to the Arsenale titled *The Museum of Copying*. It explores the idea of the copy in architecture as an important, positive and often surreal phenomenon. The exhibit will be centred around FAT's installation, *The Villa Rotunda Redux* - a five metre high facsimile of Palladio's Villa Rotunda that explores the Villa as both a subject and object of architectural copying.





The installation *Inhabitable Models* by Eric Parry Architects, Haworth Tompkins and Lynch Architects features a series of three large-scale building fragments, the shared engagement with London 'as found' is their understanding of public space as the common territory between architectural fragments.



should be available to everyone, in spite of copyright limitations. There is also a life-size house put together by Indian builders with their own hands (Anupama Kundoo), and extensive retrospectives, e.g of the work of Carlo Scarpa, Piranesi, Leon Krier and Paulo Mendes de la Rocha. We see the decline of the existing urban texture (i.e the fate of Detroit) and the domestication of Tempelhof Airport as politicised architectural legacy. And, of course, there was the Venezuelan office Urban-Think Tank's bar *Gran Horizonte*, which received the main award of the biennale: about 750 families squatting in a high-rise building in Caracas, which was unfinished because of economic crises; with available materials and personal skills, the inhabitants

have created a multi-functional living environment (including the same bar) and, *voilà!*, we have a needs- and opportunities-based living space, a common ground, without any professional interference. Another exhibition, very low-tech and socially inclusive, offering counselling culture rather than high-profile design, focused on construction work in post-tsunami Japan, and was curated by Toyo Ito. Incidentally, Chipperfield never denied that he borrowed the biennale's title from the prominent American urban researcher Richard Sennett, whom he respects a great deal. Sennett is currently researching how urban space and its architectural forms shape

Herzog & de Meuron's exhibition is focused on the architecture of The Elbphilharmonie, a concert hall on top of a former warehouse in Hamburg. The project, in a very advanced state, remains halted since last year due to legal issues with the contractor. The large-scale models, whose spatial and physical presence represents what the architects wished and still wish to foreground: architecture.

The Dublin practice Grafton Architects presented *Architecture as New Geography*, which explored the work of the Brazilian architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha in the context of Grafton's first South American project for a university in Lima, Peru.



people's social life, how they influence the emergence of a new type of acting together and local 'horizontal' networks.

From this perspective, Estonia's Venice-project – an *hommage* to Linnahall, the City Concert Hall, one of the largest Soviet-era architectural monuments in Tallinn in terms of square metres – perfectly fits the biennale's main topic. It emphasised the social responsibility of both architects and society in preserving a building; on the other hand, it told the story (actually several stories) of a building that constitutes a huge public space, an urban monument between central Tallinn and the sea, which nevertheless has failed to find proper usage in the contemporary world, i.e the same common ground between contemporary needs and the existing building has not materialised. The quite snappy title of the Estonian exhibition, *How Long is the Life of a Building?*, seems to refer to imminent death. Urmo Vaikla's film slowly moves along the Linnahall, showing crumbling limestone and weeds, and original details in the interior, which are displayed like some kind of relics (leather seats, mirrors and a clock on the wall). All that evokes a sense of someone dear and prematurely departed; the dark room is redolent of decay, loss and sadness. Jaan Tootsen's video tales of people's personal memories related to the building are charming, but even these are told in the past tense. The Estonian exhibition was clearly nostalgic; no solutions were offered, nor explanations about the building's real location in town, its existing or planned neighbours: the Culture Cauldron, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia, a new town hall, Kalarand, etc. The visions of students from different universities (rather vague) about the possible future of the building are available only in the exhibition catalogue: one version suggests its hibernation, while others want it to be turned into an enormous musical installation, a youth centre or an old people's home.<sup>2</sup> The reality, however, is that the dream of an 'American uncle' as a possible investor, promoted by the city government, in fact never materialised, and the building is boarded up and rapidly falling apart. Crouching low and crumbling, the building sprawls along the middle of the Tallinn coast as a symbolic modernist mother figure, a concrete fossil, whose current state and future somewhat represent the common denominator of Estonian post-war unique architecture. The British architectural historian and specialist on eastern Europe David Crowley has written a positive review of the Linnahall exhibition. In his view, there is no point in keeping such monuments at any cost, and the memories and stories of the physical buildings are, in the case of the Linnahall, sufficiently monumental.<sup>3</sup>

Architecture is not born in an exhibition hall or in a book; at best, the medium shapes our relationship with the surrounding built environment. Buildings that become part of collective heritage are listed or written into history, and must make viewers/people feel that they are the 'heirs' and belong in the inheriting community, i.e these buildings in a way belong to them. Creating this kind of common ground between architecture and people is a subtle form of politics and, thanks to the biennale, the 'domestication' of the Linnahall is once again on the agenda. However, I am not quite so optimistic about contemporary architecture.



The Japanese Pavilion curated by Toyo Ito was awarded the Golden Lion for the best national pavilion. *Architecture. Possible Here? Home-for-all* presented alternative housing concepts for the homes that were destroyed by the earthquake and tsunami in 2011.

## Triin Ojari

(1974), since 2000 editor-in-chief of the Estonian architectural review *MAJA*. Her research subjects include the 20th century modern architecture, housing and urban planning of the Soviet period, contemporary architecture and architectural writing.

1 Bart Lootsma. *From Pluralism to Populism. Architectural Criticism in the Times of the Internet*. [http://www.architecturaltheory.eu/?id=magazine&lang=EN&archive\\_id=569](http://www.architecturaltheory.eu/?id=magazine&lang=EN&archive_id=569)

2 Maria Pukk, Ivar Lubjak and Veronika Valk. 'Dream. Sense. Adapt. Feed. 5 Visions for the Linnahall.' - Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla (Ed). *How Long is the Life of a Building? Estonian National Exhibition at the XIII International Architecture Exhibition* [Catalogue]. Tallinn, 2012, pp 208-217.

3 David Crowley. 'Reviving the Dead - the Linnahall at the Venice Architecture Biennale'. *Maja*, 2012, no 3.

# Post-ideology and post-conceptual architecture and urbanism in (eastern) Europe

Marina Gržinić

To understand the transformation of the ideological and conceptual that now bears the prefix 'post' when relating to architecture and urbanism in the specific context of (eastern) Europe, it is necessary to talk about entanglement and no longer about the reflection of the level of production on its upper structures, rituals and discourses of re-production. What is this entanglement? Angela Mitropoulos says that today the distinction between zones does not neatly match up with the differentiations established by borders, even if this is what borders have, in theory, purported to realise.<sup>1</sup>

The zones she is referring to are the zones of peace and zones of war that we can for our purpose call the 'public sphere of investments' (peace) and the 'private brutal logic of gentrification and privatisation of the public space' (war). She states that what we see today is a situation in which the legitimate and coercive – or peace and war – are entangled. If we talk about entanglement as the new condition, how capital and power relate and how production and re-production stand vis-à-vis each other, then life (including architecture and urbanism) is what is directly at stake. In their essay 'Past Futures: Extreme Subjectification. The Engineering of the Future and the Instrumentalization of Life,'<sup>2</sup> Rozalinda Borcilă & Cristian Nae show that the globalisation of capitalism is not only about conquering new markets, but that it is also a configuration that constitutes the very medium for the production of human relations.

Saying this means that we are confronted with a form of extreme reification in which the social space (along with art, culture, education and politics) and life are regulated not as bios (life), but as death (necros), i.e. as a necropolitical measure of the regulation of our lives from the perspective of death within the global capitalist world. Up till now, we have been talking about biopolitics, biopower

and biocapitalism but, due to this extreme situation of the processes of subjectivization, exploitation and expropriation, we propose instead to talk about necropolitics, necropower and necrocapitalism. The proposed shift from biopolitics to necropolitics is a measure of the historicisation of the biopolitical in light of its production of apolitical ideological subjects, or simply stylish biopolitical ones, predominantly in the ('former') First Capitalist World. At the present moment, necropolitics still is not something that is accepted in the First Capitalist World, which constantly emphasises a process of positivisation (which is subsumed under the biopolitical); even discrimination and subjugation are presented in the First Capitalist World as positive processes for the acquiring, for example, of a higher level of security, emancipation etc. Within such a context, it is therefore necessary to ask what the concept of the political is, in light of the neoliberal processes of governmentality within capitalism (which are today a state of exception imposed on subjectivities) that regulate, subjugate and systematically control us.

Biopolitics, which was elaborated by Michel Foucault and redeveloped by Giorgio Agamben,<sup>3</sup> is not only about how life is administered (Foucault), but also about life's differentiation, about its fragmentation. It presents a new division: life is now divided within itself; life, which was in the past seen as the antagonism of death, has been divided in two. Agamben conceptualizes that, today, biopolitics differentiates between 1) life with forms-of-life (life as style) and 2) life without a form or style, i.e. bare or naked life. In other words, this process of differentiation is, in fact, the procedure by which life is administered and managed, how it is controlled on the supposition of its 'improvement'. It is a process that only allows life as a form-of-life, life as a style (only allowing for new forms, new



styles of life). It is a process of a pure formalisation of life. The result is that all that matters in the First Capitalist World are forms-of-life, life as style. The consequence is that there are practically no longer any political subjects in the First Capitalist World. To put it more simply, we need to start thinking about how to define political subjectivity differently. It is not that it has vanished; it just needs to be re-framed and posited differently. Therefore, it is necessary to expose other agencies that are acting in the social and political space (communities, activists etc) and that are not political brands competing for more or less stylish forms-of-life. In the realm that interests us, it is important to see the re-appropriation of public spaces for insurgent politics.

I stated that today the capital surplus value is based on the capitalisation of death (Latin, *necro*) worlds. In the seminal text 'Necropolitics' (2003), Achille Mbembe<sup>4</sup> discusses this new capital logic and its processes of the geopolitical demarcation of world zones that are based on the mobilisation of the war machine. Mbembe claims that the concept of biopolitics, due to fact that the war machine and the state of exception are two of the major logics of contemporary capitalist societies, should be replaced by necropolitics. Necropolitics is connected to the concept of necrocapitalism, i.e. contemporary capitalism, which organises its forms of capital accumulation, a process that involves dispossession and the subjugation of life according to the power of death.<sup>5</sup> The necrocapitalist capturing of the social space implies new modes of governmentality that are informed by the norms of corporate rationality and deployed in managing violence, social conflicts, fear and the Multitude. No conflict is tolerable that challenges the supreme requirements of capitalist rationalisation: economic growth, profit maximisation, productivity, efficiency and the like. The logic of the organisation of life and the division of labour is not to achieve a maximum for life, but in reality to pledge only the bare minimum for living and sometimes (today too often) not even this. It is such a necropolitical logic that organises the contemporary neoliberal global capitalist social body. The minimum that is being imposed can be clearly seen through an analysis of all the battles that are going on around Europe at the moment to preserve the social state, the formerly guaranteed (and achieved only through workers' class struggles) social and

health security, etc. An excellent example is the complete dissolution of the social, medical and pension rights that were once part of the former socialist European countries. Wild neoliberal global capitalisation has transformed these countries into a pot of misery, nationalism, racism etc. The necropolitical can also be clearly seen in the measures of control (seclusion, deportation and the ferocious anti-immigrant EU law policy) within and outside the borders of the Schengen zone of Europe.

We should also add to necropolitics two other major processes fundamental to the way neoliberalism functions today: the privatisation and deregulation of each and every stratum of society, of its institutions and its social, political, economic, cultural and spatial configurations. The most important point is to understand that neoliberal necrocapitalism thrives on the intensification of these two primal conditions of re-production: deregulation and privatisation. To refer to these two conditions means to refer to a state of psychosis, or rather, to a state of (at first) exceptionality, which is soon seen as completely normalised and accepted. Privatisation means that the state withdraws step by step from social, cultural and public life and public space, and leaves these public sectors to struggle for private money. But privatisation also implies a format of private property or of a private instrumentalisation of a public institution by those who run it. Therefore, we can state that in neoliberal necrocapitalism the whole of society has been transformed into merely one BIG INVESTMENT sector that provides new opportunities for incessant capitalisation in

Estonian exposition *How Long Is The Life Of A Building?* at the Venice 13th Architecture Biennale 2012.

Commissioner: Ülar Mark  
Curator: Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla  
Exhibitors: Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla, Urmo Vaikla, Ingel Vaikla, Veronika Valk, Maria Pukk and Ivar Lubjak

Presented by the NGO  
Estonian Centre of  
Architecture & The Union of  
Estonian Architects







order to generate profits. Therefore, when we talk about the neoliberal, necrocapitalist radical deregulation of each and every institution/organisation/practice in society, whether of art, culture, politics, health, social security, the public, law, architecture, urbanism etc, this affects not only their 'investment' policies, but also their histories, strategies of intervention, ideologies, rituals and forms of organisation.

This has a clear consequence for ideology itself, which can rightly be termed the 'post-ideological condition'. If we follow Louis Althusser's<sup>6</sup> definition of ideology as an imaginary deformed representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence (by which he meant the relations of production), we should say that what ideology misrepresents today is not reality, but itself. In a way, it behaves today as a cognisant post-Fordist mechanism that takes the presented mechanism of ideology's materiality (which was presented in the 1970s, in the 'Fordist era', if we refer to Paolo Virno) as its raw material, as its content. But what does this mean precisely? It makes imaginary today what was earlier identified as material, and it transforms (again) through the repetitive performative ideological mechanism the materiality of ideology, the materiality of its apparatuses on imaginary levels. The materiality of ideology has been made redundant, nullified and emptied through repetitive (ideological) performative mechanisms. In other words, what is clear on the level of content has, on the level of form, now been made simply obsolete, ridiculous, not sexy or obvious enough, to the extent of not being attractive enough. What we have today at work is another misrecognition that is not a misrecognition at all, but a reflected cognition that takes as its basis the ideological misrecognition of the 1970s, and repeats it in such a way as to make it ridiculous, or more accurately an old knowledge; the materiality of ideology is now taken as raw material to be integrated into performative representations where this materiality is consciously set back to the level of the imaginary.

In short, we can say that today the level of dealing with ideology is a level of transforming it into a commodity, which means into a source of normalisation, through the processes of performativity and repetition; the ruling ideology is not seen as being pre-

occupying when it is perceived as a process of misrecognition (as it was preoccupying for Althusser), but this misrecognition is today taken as the raw material for a stylish play. It is not a ghostly figure any more, but a terrain for experimentation, invention and infinite imagination.

Today, unlike Marx, who was the point of reference for Althusser, we live in a time in which the social reality is abnormal and the form of its articulation is here not to normalise this abnormality but to intensify it through voiding the abnormality of any content, meaning etc. This emptying is going on in an obvious way. So, first the 'thing' is being turned upside down, and then the form is just taking us somewhere else. This somewhere else is part of an obscene performative logic that is not saying that what we are witnessing in reality is abnormal, but is simply emptying the content through indetermination, indecision and irresolution. Form no longer hides content, but the way in which it is presented through its formalisation makes the content obsolete.

We get necropolitics at its purest. The culture that is being communicated within the necropolitical is not one in which we expect any kind of imitation or fakeness; it is 'authentic and differential', and through the performative repetitive mechanism it is presented as a kind of playful form in order to hide its entanglement with capital and power. Thus, the ideas born under such circumstances are no longer schematised cultural production, but are proliferations of the unbelievable 'freedom' of particularities. It's no wonder that we feel frightened in such situations. However, with the opportunity to elaborate what is going on we can also react against it.

This essay was written for the Estonian exposition *How Long Is The Life Of A Building?* at the Venice 13th Architecture Biennale 2012.

## Marina Gržinić

is artist and Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. She also works at the Institute of Philosophy ZRC SAZU at the Slovenian Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

1 Cf. Angela Mitropoulos. 'The Failure of Political Theology'. *Mute*, 2007, online at <http://www.metamute.org/en/The-failure-of-political-theology>

2 Cf. Rozalinda Borcila & Cristian Nae. 'Past Futures: Extreme Subjectification. The Engineering of the Future and the Instrumentalization of Life'. *Vector*, no 1, Iași, Romania, 2005, pp 144-153.

3 Cf. Giorgio Agamben. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1998.

4 Cf. Achille Mbembe. 'Necropolitics'. *Public Culture*, 2003, 15 (1), pp 11-40.

5 Cf. Subhabrata Bobby Banerjee. 'Live and Let Die: Colonial Sovereignities and the Death Worlds of Necrocapitalism'. *The borderlands ejournal*, 2006, volume 5, no 1.

6 Cf. Louis. *Althusser, Ideology and ideological state apparatuses*. Published in 1971.



# Spectacular-spectacular!

## The exhibition revolution in Estonian museums and theme parks

Mariann Raisma

During the last decade, the face of Estonian museums has changed radically: museums have learned to talk in a simpler language which is understandable and interesting to visitors. New storytellers have appeared as well, such as theme parks, and visitor and science centres. For the first time in history, designated buildings have been completed for museums and centres in the last decade, e.g the Kumu Art Museum (project 1994, completed 2006, architect Pekka Vapaavuori) and the Ahhaa Science Centre (project 2008, completed 2011, architect Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik).

The number of museum visits in 2011 increased to 2.6 million, which is a splendid result considering Estonia's population of 1.3 million. The high quality of museums is clear: in 2008 Kumu was the European Museum of the Year, in 2011 the Road Museum received the Tourism Innovator award, and in 2012 the display at the Great Guild in Tallinn was among the best in Europe. All this indicates changes in the museum landscape: an increase in the quality of exhibitions and the new role which museums are playing.



### EXPERIENCE DESIGN

A contemporary museum display feels like a performance rather than a book: the primary qualities are narration, perception and emotion; what matters is the design as a whole, as an artwork. Today's museum visitor expects to be impressed by the design as well as the content of an exhibition. This is the reason why, besides strong curatorial work, an interior architect is also essential. In recent years the number of visionary designers has significantly grown; two major players in the field are the interior design company Laika Belka Strelka and the architectural firm KOKO Architects, which have greatly contributed to the displays at museums and theme centres. The exhibition language of Laika Belka Strelka (henceforth LBS) is characterised by a sensitive perception of space and an environment that perfectly harmonises with the existing space and integrates the old and the new. LBS usually employs quite simple means, and prefers mechanically interactive solutions which make it possible to achieve a simple, but well-functioning museum space with many charming details. The solutions of KOKO Architects are characterised by vigour, contemporary design and displays that stand apart from the existing space. Using strong materials (e.g metal), design solutions rest on simple and laconic forms generally emphasising mass and monumentality; a lot of audiovisual interactivity and contemporary technical possibilities are applied. The work of LBS is, on the whole, warm and friendly, whereas KOKO Architects present coolness; the former intrigues, while the latter differentiates; one addresses the viewer via wood and wallpaper, and the other via metal and etching.

Open-air part of the Estonian Road Museum

The display at the Seaplane Harbour is among the most extensive museum projects in Estonia ever. The display can be called a real experience design, where architecture and museum ideas work together, where the design is excellent and objects enormous. The museum concept of KOKO Architects is simple and effective, dividing space into three levels: under water, on the water and above water. The solution is carefully thought through to the last detail – especially the system of bridges crossing the huge hangar – and comfortably rules the entire space, so that an unforgettable spatial impression is guaranteed. There are also various attractions for children and parents and a nice restaurant for families, which all result in a hugely popular place for everyone.

A new example of impression architecture is the Treasury of the University of Tartu (2012), which compared to the Seaplane Harbour is tiny. KAOS Architects turned the low room into a mysterious and cave-like treasure chamber, where a golden suspended ceiling holds glass cases suggesting stalactites, and the floor, covered with quotations, enables the visitor to walk on the thoughts of scientists and professors.

## NEW DESTINATIONS

As practically all new displays have been supported by the European Union through Enterprise Estonia, a significant aim has been to increase the attraction of various regions. Thus a delightfully impressive number of new museums and theme parks can be found outside bigger tourist centres. New attractions have even established new memory sites, and there is now good reason to visit, for example, the town of Paldiski or the Varbuse postal station. The most successful project is perhaps the Estonian Road Museum, founded about a dozen years ago at the Varbuse postal station in the midst of the Võrumaa forest. The second stage of the museum – the new outside exhibition *Teeaeeg* (meaning both road time and tea time) – opened in 2010 (architecture SALTO Architects, exhibition design LBS). The Road Museum has brought a large number of visitors to the area, who enjoy the display and a lot more, both indoors and outside.

Other fascinating institutions are museums of small cultures, for example the Kihnu Museum (completed in 2009, display design LBS) and the Saatse Seto Museum (completed in 2009, display design LBS). Museums of

small communities have an essential mission: to unite, preserve and create their culture.

One of the major advantages of the process is the revival of old architectural treasures: fascinating architectural environments are reshaped into museums. We have already mentioned the seaplane hangars; among other restored buildings is the biggest example of medieval profane architecture in Tallinn, the House of the Great Guild. The Theatre Home of the Tartu Toy Museum was established in a unique baroque building; the Palmse manorial complex was re-designed as an open-air museum; the medieval Rakvere stronghold has been developed; the small Amandus Adamson Museum was restored and opened in Paldiski, as was the Old Observatory, which is a part of the historical complex of Tartu University. Besides the Tallinn Old Town, the Observatory is the only object listed in the







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1. House of the Great Guild/Estonian History Museum - weapon room.
2. Börsi Passage at the House of the Great Guild, Tallinn
3. Museum inside the seaplane hangars. Seaplane Harbour, Estonian Maritime Museum
- 4., 8. Tartu Toy Museum
- 5.-6. Old Observatoy of the Tartu University
7. Seaplane hangars side view. Seaplane Harbour, Estonian Maritime Museum

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UNESCO cultural heritage in Estonia, and it offers an exciting overview of the history of Estonian astronomy (completed in 2011, display design by LBS). Among the most spectacular projects is certainly the opening of the bastion tunnels surrounding the Old Town in Tallinn and the exhibition there, as well as in the former cannon tower Kiek in de Kök on the fortifications in Tallinn (completed in 2010, display design by Leonardo Meigas).

### FASCINATING TOPICS

A museum is sustainable if the topics it tackles are significant and attractively presented. Along with design, a museum's curatorial work is also important. The exhibition in the Great Guild compiled by the Estonian History Museum, *Spirit of Survival. 11 000 Years of Estonian History* (completed in 2011, display design by KOKO Architects), has achieved a balance between design and content. Visitors can spend hours there, discovering exciting historical events and facts. The display is divided into thematic rooms, which are all different, but still form a compact design and enable the medieval architecture to shine along with the exhibition. The challenge was certainly complicated, as vivid imagination had to be coupled with traditional museum requirements.

An especially popular theme in recent years has been nostalgia-flavoured childhood: new exhibitions have opened in the Tartu Toy Museum and Theatre Home (completed in 2004/2010, display design by LBS), at the theme centre in Haapsalu – *Ilon's Wonderland*, dedicated to Ilon Wikland, the illustrator of Astrid Lindgrn's books (completed in 2009, display design by Liivika Krigoltoi) – at the NUKU [Puppet Arts] Museum in the Tallinn Old Town (completed in 2010, interior architecture by KOKO Architects, display design by Kalju Kivi), and at the Museum Miia-Milla-Manda in Kadriorg, which is for the youngest (completed in 2009, interior design by Maile Grünberg).

Another area worth emphasising are museums dedicated to the classics of Estonian culture. In recent years new displays have been set up for the Estonian literary clas-

sic Anton Hansen Tammsaare, both in his Tallinn museum and in his birthplace Albu; another example is the museum of the sculptor Amandus Adamson in Paldiski. Founding museums dedicated to prominent people certainly brings new visitors to the area.

### MUSEUM AS A SPACE

New exciting themes have, on several occasions, been presented in singular ways, even by European standards: one of the most radical examples is the outside space of the Road Museum. The innovative architectural solution has added additional value to the museum: a huge zigzag crossing produces a space where the visitor can proceed through the history of roads, from ancient times to the present day. The environment was carefully thought through and works especially well for domestic tourists, which is clearly evident in visitor numbers.

I do believe that a museum should move out of its building; another good example is the outside part of the exhibition by the Estonian History Museum in the Great Guild courtyard and Börsi passage. On snow-free days, the small street discreetly provides a brief overview of the essential dates in Estonian history on the pavement, and during summer the courtyard presents interpretations by contemporary artists of the most remarkable people in Estonian history. The street offers something for everybody.

Among various manor house and stronghold projects, we should mention the development of the Narva Museum's Northern Yard into a 17th century artisans' courtyard, and the Linné garden, where various herbs originating from Sweden are grown.

The renaissance of museums and theme parks has radically changed the Estonian memory landscape: dozens of museums have been renovated and renewed, and dozens of new theme parks and visitor centres have been established. It is obvious that, as in every project, some undertakings in Estonia are more successful than others, but the main thing is not to read about impressions, but to experience them first hand.

### Mariann Raisma

(1974), graduated as an art historian from the University of Tartu, MA in museology. Since 2010, director of the University of Tartu History Museum. Her research focuses on radical changes in Estonian museum policy in the 20th century.





### Tõnis Vint and His Aesthetic Universe

Compiled by Elnara Taidre  
Texts by Elnara Taidre, Sirje Helme and Eha Komissarov  
Pre-reviewed by Virve Sarapik, PhD  
Designed by Tuuli Aule  
In Estonian and English  
352 pages  
Published by the Art Museum of Estonia - Kumu Art Museum  
Tallinn 2012

The book that accompanied the exhibition of the same name held at the Kumu Art Museum (18.05.-09.09.2012) provides the first thorough survey of Tõnis Vint's work and the objective of the book is broader and more diverse than just being an exhibition catalogue. Articles by three authors explore various aspects of Tõnis Vint's activities: his artistic work, research on art and visual culture, and his teaching. The selection of reproductions provides an overview of Tõnis Vint's most important works and graphic series, of his book, poster, stage and interior designs, and of his architectural visions and studies of sign systems.



### Geometrical Man. The Group of Estonian Artists and Art Innovation in the 1920s and 1930s

Compiled by Liis Pählapuu  
Texts by Liis Pählapuu, Tiit Hennoste and Vojtěch Lahoda  
Pre-reviewed by Tiina Abel  
Designed by Angelika Schneider  
In Estonian and English  
256 pages  
Published by the Art Museum of Estonia - Kumu Art Museum  
Tallinn 2012

The book accompanied the exhibition of the same name at Kumu Art Museum (31.08.2012-06.01.2013). The book provides an overview of the history of one of the first and most important groups in Estonian avant-garde art - the Group of Estonian Artists. This book examines the work of the artists who belonged to the Group. A survey is also provided of the Group in the context of the contemporary international art trends and avant-garde aspects of Estonian literary life which set the trend.



### Fashion and the Cold War

Compiled by Eha Komissarov and Berit Teeäär  
Texts by Zhivilé Etevičiūtė, Jukka Gronow, Juta Kivimäe, Eha Komissarov, Ilona Martson, Anu Ojavee, Karin Paulus, Berit Teeäär and Sergei Zhuravlev  
Designed by Tuuli Aule  
In Estonian and English  
272 pages  
Published by the Art Museum of Estonia - Kumu Art Museum  
Tallinn 2012

The book accompanied the exhibition of the same name at Kumu Art Museum (14.09.2012-20.01.2013). This voluminous book includes a large amount of pictorial material and interesting observations and important conclusions about the relationships and contexts of the Cold War era. The latter includes politics, economics, fashion and the related institutions and journalism, as well as the role of women, kitchen and home, youth and subcultures.



### Sisu ja Vorm II (Content and Form II)

Edited by Indrek Sirkel & Anu Vahtra  
Texts by Indrek Sirkel, Ivar Sakk, Rene Mäe  
Designed by Indrek Sirkel  
Contributions by Ott Metusala, Elisabeth Klement & Laura Pappa  
Photography by Anu Vahtra  
Lithography by Marje Eelma  
In Estonian  
512 pages  
Published by Lugemik, Tallinn 2012

The book is published as a follow-up to the exhibition *Content And Form I. Contemporary Estonian graphic design 2001-2011* in Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, 21.04.-17.06.2012. Next to a wide range of works from the exhibition, it includes contributions from participating designers, three essays and a selection of very recent projects, thus aiming to link both the exhibition and the book with the present moment and future. The photographic contribution consists of 56 colour images showing the works exhibited from a more formal point of view.



Russian Art from the Collections of the Baltic Countries

Compiled by Tiina Abel and Aleksandra Murre  
 Texts by Tiina Abel, Aleksandra Murre, Ksenija Rudzite, Irëna Buzhinska, Dalia Tarandaitë and Zhivilë Ambrasaitë  
 Designed by Andres Tali  
 In Estonian, Russian and English  
 264 pages  
 Published by the Art Museum of Estonia - Kumu Art Museum, Kadriorg Art Museum Tallinn 2012

An exhibition of the same name held at the Kumu Art Museum and Kadriorg Art Museum in 2012 introduced a large selection of Russian art from the late 19th century and early 20th century from Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian museums. The book that accompanied the exhibition introduces the Russian art collections from the Baltics and treats both the renowned *peredvizhniki* from Russian realist art circles - Ivan Kramskoy, Ilya Repin, Ivan Shishkin and Vassili Perov - as well as art from the 'silver era': Russian impressionism and the work of artists from the group *Mir Iskusstva* and *Jack of Diamonds* (in Russian: Bubnovy Valet). The book also contains biographical data on better-known Russian artists and offers a brief overview of major Russian art movements, institutions and groups.



HULA: Tested on Humans

Editorial Committee: Vilve Unt, Catlin Kaljuste, Marit Ahven, Agnes Ratas, Mariana Hint  
 Design and layout by Mariana Hint and Agnes Ratas  
 In Estonian and English  
 396 pages  
 Published by the Estonian Academy of Arts, 2012

*Tested on Humans* celebrates the 10th anniversary of the HULA brand of the Department of Fashion Design of the Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA). Ten years of students' design experiments have been recorded and illustrated in this book. Many of the contributors to the HULA project have become noted fashion designers, whose influence on the Estonian fashion design is remarkable (Reet Aus, Eve Hanson, Karolin Kuusik etc). HULA brand was created as a master's thesis at the EAA in 2002. This project gives the fashion students a comprehensive experience of real-life design process, creative cooperation and enables them to experiment and put their innovative ideas into practice. HULA book is an inspiring collection of concepts illustrated with spontaneous ideas, sketches, print patterns, finished technical drawings and photo spreads by students as well as by noted photographers. This book was created as a bachelor's thesis by students of graphic design Mariana Hint and Agnes Ratas.



Lugemik

www.lugemik.ee  
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*Lugemik* is a small independent publishing initiative in Tallinn, Estonia, founded in 2010 by graphic designer Indrek Sirkel and artist Anu Vahtra. *Lugemik* publishes small editions of books and other printed matter, working closely with artists, writers, designers, printers in every step of the publishing process. *Lugemik* also tries to 'publish' in other ways, e.g giving lectures, organizing exhibitions and events, etc. At the moment *Lugemik* is working on building a bookshop which is scheduled to open in April 2013 on the grounds of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia. In English 'Lugemik' means 'A Reader'. A reader is usually understood as a collection of relevant texts on a particular subject. In Estonian, *Lugemik* is primarily associated with a book meant for children, a book which teaches them to read.



## 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, Wed 11 am-8 pm;  
Oct-April Wed-Sun 11 am-6 pm, Wed 11 am-8 pm

Permanent exhibitions:

*Treasury*. Classics of Estonian Art from the Beginning of the 18th Century until the End of the Second World War

*Difficult Choices*. Estonian Art from the End of the Second World War Until Re-Independence

until 20 Jan *Fashion and the Cold War*

until 27 Jan *IRWIN*. Construction of the Context

until 10 Feb *Colour in Estonian Graphic Art*.  
Avo Keerend and Evi Tihemets

18 Jan-21 April Raoul Kurvitz

25 Jan-28 April Modern Classics: Jaan Koort (1883-1935)

8 Feb-19 May *Dreamy Spaces and City Visions*. Japanese animation

13 Feb-26 May *Like Face*. Estonian posters from the 1980s

22 Feb-2 June *Come in*. Interior design in contemporary German art

10 May-8 Sep *After-Life of Gardens*

28 May-6 Oct *Estonian Landscape*. Kaljo Põllu

14 June-6 Oct *One and Many Worlds*. Irving Penn

28 June-3 Nov *Critics and Crises*. European art from 1945

## Kadriorg Art Museum

Kadriorg Palace, Weizenbergi 37, Tallinn

Mikkel Museum, Weizenbergi 28, Tallinn

[www.kadriorumuuseum.ee/en/](http://www.kadriorumuuseum.ee/en/)

[www.mikkelimuuseum.ee/en/](http://www.mikkelimuuseum.ee/en/)

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.

9 Feb-18 Aug Repin. A Russian Master's Life and Work in Finland

NB! The Museum is closed for the renovation until the end of January 2013.

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

until 5 May *A Collector's Passion*.

Silver and Prints from the Reinans Collection

## 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 artists of the 20th century. 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 17 Mar *Drawings Through Five Decades*. Mare Vint

23 Mar-2 June *Sumi-e*. Japanese traditional ink wash painting

7 June-1 Sep Juhan Muks

## Niguliste Museum

Niguliste 3, Tallinn

[www.nigulistemuuseum.ee/en](http://www.nigulistemuuseum.ee/en)

Open: Wed-Sun 10 am-5 pm

Permanent exhibitions:

Ecclesiastical Art from the 14th-20th centuries The Silver Chamber

until 2 Sep 2013 *Ars moriendi – the Art of Dying*

## 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 3*. Survey of Estonian applied art and the development of design

until 3 Feb 6th Tallinn applied art triennial: *Art of collecting*

until 3 Feb Marit Ilison. *70 Cotton Smocks*. 2008-2011

## The Museum of Contemporary Art of Estonia

Põhja pst 35, Tallinn

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

Open from April-October

Tue-Sun 1 pm-7 pm

1 April-15 April *OFF-season exhibition*. Johannes Säre

27 April-16 June *Köler Prize 2013*. Exhibition of nominees

22 June-28 July *Side Effects*

## Tallinn Art Hall

Vabaduse Sq 8, Tallinn

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

Open: Wed-Sun 12 am-6 pm

8 Jan-10 Feb Erki Kasemets (curator: Johannes Saar)

20 Feb-24 Mar Anu Raud (curator: Vappu Thurlow)

3 April-5 May Estonian Artists' Associations's Annual Exhibition

7 May-9 May *Diverse Universe* Performance Festival  
(curator: Al Paldrok)

15 May-23 June European Union -  
China International sculpture exhibition

3 July-11 Aug Valeri Vinogradov

## Tallinn Art Hall Gallery

Vabaduse Sq 6, Tallinn

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

Open: Wed-Sun 12 am-6 pm

3 Jan-3 Feb Maarja Nurk

7 Feb-3 Mar Mall Nukke

7 Mar-31 Mar Fjuk. Vahtre. Tüür

5 April-28 April Virge Jõekalda

2 May-26 May Kurvitz-Kongi

30 May-23 June Laura Põld

27 June-21 July Jass Kaselaan

## Tallinn City Gallery

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

until 27 Jan	Anna Hõbemäe
1 Feb-24 Feb	Sarah Maple
27 Feb-17 Mar	Marko Kekišev
28 Mar-21 April	Ele-Riin Ello
25 April-19 May	ArtPrint Young photo artist exhibition
23 May-16 June	Edith Karlson
20 June-14 July	Kimmo Metsäranta

## Hobusepea Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn  
[www.eaa.ee/hobusepea/english/enindex1.htm](http://www.eaa.ee/hobusepea/english/enindex1.htm)  
 Open: Wed-Mon 10 am-6 pm

9 Jan-21 Jan	Ulla Juske
23 Jan-04 Feb	Margus Tamm
6 Feb-18 Feb	Tõnis Kenkmaa & Mariliis Oskar
20 Feb-4 Mar	Jean Charles Dequillarqo (FR), Ghislain Amar (FR/NL), Laura Toots (EE), Marthe Elise Stramrud (NO), Laura Kuusk (EE/FR), Simon Kentgens (NL), Mathijs van Geest (NL/NO)
6 Mar-18 Mar	<i>LadyFest Tallinn</i> (curators Rebeka Põldsam & Anna-Stina Treumund)
20 Mar-1 April	<i>New Coat of Paint</i> . Maros Krivy (SK/FI/EE) New Coat of Paint series events Curated by Panu Lehtovuori (FI/EE)
3 April-15 April	Marko Mäetamm
17 April-29 April	<i>Space Manipulation</i> (curators Anu Vahtra & Reimo Vösa-Tangsoo)
2 May-13 May	Katrin Sarapuu
15 May-27 May	<i>While in Eastern Europe</i> . Lilli-Krõõt Repnau
29 May-10 June	<i>is 320x240 enough to show you the world?</i> Taavet Jansen
12 June-1 July	<i>Still Humans</i> . Marju Ago & Marc Badia Quintana (ES)
3 July-15 July	Olivia Verev & Maarja Nurk
17 July-5 Aug	Edith Karlson

## 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

7 Jan-19 Jan	Ragne Uutsalu
21 Jan-2 Feb	Britta Benno
4 Feb-16 Feb	Lauri Koppel & Gudrun Heamägi
18 Feb-2 Mar	Jass Kaselaan
4 Mar-16 Mar	<i>Ladyfest Tallinn</i> (curators Rebeka Põldsam & Anna-Stina Treumund)
18 Mar-30 Mar	Antti Sinitsyn
1 April-13 April	Marko Mäetamm
15 April-27 April	Mihkel Ilus
29 April-11 May	Alver Linnamägi
13 May-25 May	Katri Sipiläinen (FI)
27 May-22 June	<i>Endgame 2013</i>
25 June-13 July	Jaan Elken
15 July-27 July	Mariliis Tammi-Kelder
29 July-10 Aug	Alessandro Volpin (IT/EE)

## HOP Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn  
[www.eaa.ee/hop](http://www.eaa.ee/hop)  
 Open: Thu-Tue 10 am-6 pm

4 Jan-22 Jan	Duncan Robertson (Scotland)
25 Jan-29 Jan	Artjom Babitski
1 Feb-19 Feb	Annikke Laigo
22 Feb-12 Mar	Jewellery from Latin-America
15 Mar-2 April	Annual Textile Awards
5 April-23 April	Lembe Ruben
26 April-14 May	Timothy McMahon (USA)
17 May-4 June	Studio Emma Leppermann
7 June-11 June	Estonian Academy of Arts. MA works
14 June-2 July	Siiri Minka, Christel Allik, Mari Haavel
5 July-23 July	Hanna Vainio, Minttu Sipola, Sonja Löfgren (FI)

## Vabaduse Gallery

Vabaduse väljak 6, Tallinn  
 Open: Mon-Fri 11 am-6 pm, Sat 11 am-5 pm

3 Jan-22 Jan	Jaan Elken
24 Jan-12 Feb	Silvi Väljal
14 Feb-5 Mar	Maire Koll
7 Mar-19 Mar	Matti Varik
21 Mar-2 April	Lembe Ruben
4 April-16 April	Valli Lember-Bogatkina
18 April-7 May	Heikki Hamarila & Liisa Harkkomaa (FI)
9 May-21 May	Kai-Mai Olbri
23 May-11 June	Tõnu Lauk
13 June-25 June	Inna Grinchel
27 June-9 July	Kristel Saan and Evelin Saul

## The Museum of Estonian Architecture

Ahtri 2, Tallinn  
 Open: Wed 12 am-6 pm, Thu 12 am-8 pm, Fri-Sun 11 am-6 pm  
 For new exhibitions please visit:  
[www.arhitektuurimuuseum.ee](http://www.arhitektuurimuuseum.ee)

## Tartu Art Museum

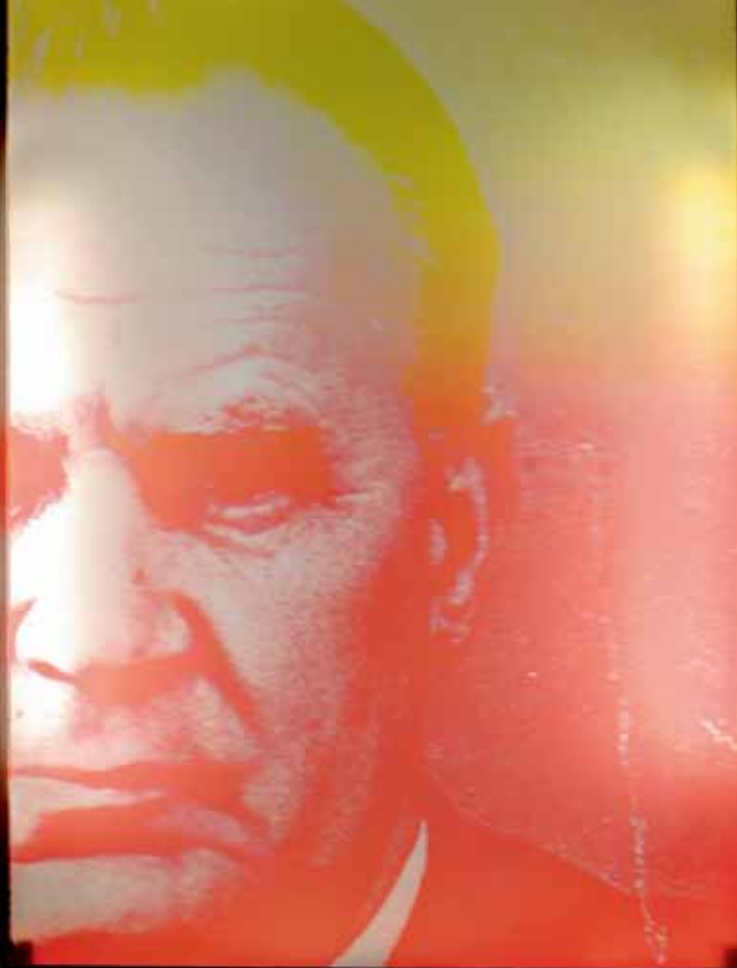
Raekoja Sq 18, Tartu  
[www.tartmus.ee/en](http://www.tartmus.ee/en)  
 Open: Wed-Sun 11 am-6 pm

until 27 Jan	<i>Winter Light</i>
until 24 Mar	Endel Kõks

## Tartu Art House

Vanemuise 26, Tallinn  
 Open: Wed-Mon 21 am-6 pm

For new exhibitions please visit:  
[www.kunstimaja.ee](http://www.kunstimaja.ee)



#### TEEDO MELTS

Born in 1915 into a working class family. Fought in World War II and was severally decorated. In 1955 joined Tallinn Firefighters Union, in 1963 became the head of the Union.

In 1966 a local newspaper published a story "The Maquette Master". The story reveals Teedo Melts as a skilled crafter, author of hundred miniature houses. Teedo Melts' most elaborate work is a model of his own family household. A Two-storey apartment building is wired to the desk. One can start a fire somewhere in the house using 27 switches.

Another remarkable work is a model of Teedo's summer house. By switching it on a dark cloud gets activated and a lightning bolt burtsing out of it will set the house on fire.

Teedo's personal favorite was a home of an Estonian revolutionary, leader of failed *coup d'état*, Viktor Kingissepp (executed by a firing squad in 1922, his household burned down in 1934).

In 1975 Teedo Melts finished his book "Suppressing the Flames." The same year he retired. According to the Estonian Museum of Firefighting Teedo Melts died in 1986 or 1988. Teedo Melts's works are courtesy of Estonian Museum of Firefighting.