



ESTONIAN ART

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1980s as the absolute top of Estonian art?

Eha Komissarov interviewed by Eero Epner

Olev Subbi
June. 1984
Tempera, oil, masonite
120 x 150 cm
Ludwig Museum, Germany



1970s and 1980s separately from the general Soviet art economy, although some things happened differently here. On the other hand, there is a strong tendency to attach 1980s art to national features and make it political.

Eero Epner: It seems to me that you consider the 1980s a significant period but, at the same time, the art of that period is not art that is to your taste – at least as far as painting is concerned.

Eha Komissarov: Is it to yours?

No.

As I and others were inside the art world, we lacked the distance to look at art as it then was. Living within the Marxist world-view, we felt as if things would constantly get better. Post-modernism allegedly arrived in the 1980s, and the topic is fascinating: whether it arrived and how, and what features of the Russian empire we mix up with the conservative Soviet culture. There was no opportunity to have a critical attitude towards the produced art. In hindsight, what seems interesting in the art of the 1980s is not the art itself, but various ways in which we talk and think about it. On the one hand, the 1980s are interpreted by very different groups with different experiences and, as a result, a number of competing dichotomies are born. I personally am convinced that we cannot look at our art of the

It was still art, mostly produced for aesthetic reasons.

Frederic Jameson has emphasised that if we talk about political cultural space, the symbolic meaning of historical works can evaporate quite easily, and we tend to politicise aesthetic art, and ascribe sharp meanings to it that are actually not there. For example, we have linked the entire art of the 1980s to the narrative of national freedom fighting, which was established as a discourse only at the end of the decade. We still interpret art of that period quite arbitrarily, tying everything to the national paradigm, although, quite honestly, there is no other paradigm in Estonia at all. Not one! Not then and not now.

The fate of the art of the 1980s was thus, on the one hand, to be totally without ideas, affectedly pretty and theatrical and trying to be academic; on the other hand, due to the radical changes in society at the end of the decade, those works of art are fixed in our mind as bright manifestations of independence born after Brezhnev's death. This creates a highly emotional field where everyone who wants to make a myth of themselves, conceal

their wrongdoings or something similar is pleased to operate in that field.

Were the 1980s perhaps an era of art-politics?

This is what we made of it – later. In the West, subcultures spread extensively, for example, anarchist punk culture, which emerged out of the proletariat and was an extremely political movement, opposed to the bourgeoisie etc. Our punk culture politicised itself as an anti-Soviet movement, although – let us be honest – it had nothing to do with advancing Estonia’s national aspirations. Instead, punk artists tried to protest against the decrease in democratic freedoms and creative opportunities. I am absolutely certain that, until Gorbachev turned up, the Estonian Artists’ Association was not fighting for any Estonian national interests, but wished to maintain a certain *status quo*. If anyone at that time was fighting at all, it was national radicals, who were in prison, and schoolchildren who

adopted punk attitudes and demanded freedom of expression and the right to wear safety pins. However, there is no way we can politicise art at that time according to traditional political features.

The 1980s was thus an era of conformism?

Certainly. Using a sociological model, we see that the artists back then were financially secure and had no need to fight. However, try explaining to young people today that, besides seeming just sweet, Toomas Vint’s dreamy landscapes, marshes and fields of heather also contain a strong message of Estonian independence. Arrak’s mythologising fairy-tale worlds held a political message for viewers. It is strange, but this is exactly how it was. No doubt about it! After all, this was a time when Russification intensified and the non-Estonian population increased. When you got to know a really large number of people representing the Russian community, the balance between the Estonian and

Toomas Vint
Marshy Soil
1988
Oil, canvas
92 x 115 cm
Private collection
Photo courtesy: Center for
Contemporary Arts, Estonia



Russian communities was lost, because the number of immigrants arriving from remote villages in Russia was staggering. There is no denying that the situation was frightening. I think we have reached a time when we must clearly and patiently explain the past situation to the young people today, although it is increasingly difficult to make them understand the experience of a totalitarian society. We all had to operate on so many different levels: you said one thing in one place and another thing somewhere else. Young people who have grown up in a democratic society do not understand this.

I grew up at a time when painting was the basis of everything. Architecture, for instance, did not count at all. Three qualities were most appreciated in painting: nationalism, Paris and pop, although the latter was favoured only by the young and the old did not follow suit. Paintings had to contain at least one of these three.

And then the 1980s arrived. Pop stepped aside, as did modernism. Edgar Viies [1931-2006], our best abstract sculptor, told me before his death that he was destroyed as an artist when hyperrealists and symbolists took over. He had been geared towards abstract modernist thinking, which disappeared, and he tried to adapt, but knew only too well that it wouldn't really work. A model of generations thus emerged. This was the most neutral way in the Soviet era of explaining changes: we had the generation of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

There had been no such divide before; despite the apparent changes, artists in the late 1960s got on with older artists, both personally and creatively.

There was also no division according to generations in the 1950s, because modernism was not picked up by the young, who cultivated socialist realism, but by Lepo Mikko [1911-1978], Elmar Kits [1913-1972] and others who had graduated from the Pallas Art School well before 1940.

Considering the 1980s, it is thus interesting to talk about the reception of the art, rather than the art itself. We can roughly divide the reception into two parts: the 1980s and later.

Absolute idolisation and adoration ruled in the 1980s, because the critical tradition had totally vanished by that time, together with the

minimal degree of freedom necessary for any criticism. Critics had been quite busy before, but everything was aesthetic in the 1980s: art, criticism, everything.

On the other hand, essential criticism occurred instead on the level of communication. People discussed art endlessly in clubs [for example KuKu Klubi, a club for art people – Ed]; they argued and criticised – various opinions emerged, but the media only presented boring and strictly work-related articles. The model of behaviour was directly dependent on the era: the 1970s were very open, while the 1980s were almost to the very end quite closed and focused on conservative values. In such a situation, art for some reason relied on star artists, who generally also occupied leading power positions and were accepted by everyone. There was no critical dialogue about their work, and there was no argumentation either. The star artists themselves, and not the critics, possessed more information and engaged in more argumentation, because they were able to go and see exhibitions, could read rare albums etc.

In evaluating the 1980s, I would first claim that it is very difficult to research that era. Secondly, the art world was extremely regulated: everybody had his place, and the biggest complaint was the small number of new artists. Still, how could they emerge if the only chance was to appear as the Other, who was then immediately interpreted as a dilettante? Society relied on the values of star artists: a smooth surface, a lot of colour and glamorous moves. A kitsch world was created even in our pop art, which was adored by the public. Even more adored than today, because there was nothing at all back then, not even kitsch. No kitsch! There was so little of everything that it was inevitable that everything turned into kitsch. If you wanted to buy your child a cotton-wool Father Frost, you queued up and did not complain that it was a Stalinist clone. Kitsch was everywhere, but we did not relate to it as kitsch – because we had no choices. And when I suddenly saw the wonderful beauties of Tiit Pääsuke...

Let us try and summarise. I am sceptical about today's model that the art of the 1980s encouraged people's faith in their national culture. I agree, but the support was to offer people kitsch! You had to be a dreadful stinker, a Party member, not to love such art in the context of the Soviet Union. The moment art discarded things that really mattered to it,



Tiit Pääsuke
Boy with a Violin. 1980
Oil, canvas. 140 x 150 cm
Art Museum of Estonia



people went crazy over it. Beauty and glamour – art offered all that and the times were, after all, truly awful. Nobody tried to compare our art with what was going on abroad. What I am saying is you were not allowed to write even about Kandinsky! And we are still paying for that lack of comparison today.

You thus see a danger that the new generation will fail to observe the opposition of the 1980s between daily life and the abundance of beauty in art?

When did the interest in the 1980s emerge? Not in the 1990s: they did not want to hear about the 1980s, preferring to forget all of the art of the decade, as well as the nomenclatura, all those hierarchies and clans. The interest has only recently reappeared, as we once again have rather conservative ideas. We cannot predict any developments in art, but it is possible that the 1980s will be considered to be the absolute top of Estonian art. For example, art may become so technological that the pure handicraft aspect of the style of the 1980s will make people weep with emotion. It is also possible that the 1980s will be rehabilitated semiotically as well, as it was in a sense the glory period of Soviet Estonian art: productivity and prices were sky-high, relations with the state were in order, nothing was forbidden, people liked it, and the average standard was certainly high. From a certain angle we could look at the 1980s as an end: something that summarised what came before.

There is indeed some nostalgia for the art of the 1980s.

Naturally. After all, Juri Lotman and Boriss Uspenski suggested a pendulum development theory of Russian history, where a revolutionary cosmopolitan stage alternates with stagnation. This is Russia, but we can see it also in Estonia: before the 2000s, there was not really enough ground for culture taken over from the West. People always seek something national in art, but Western art brutally said that everything was international, everything was based on lies etc. In ordinary people, this causes schizophrenia. Thus a vacuum has emerged: contemporary Western-style art

lacks sufficient support. It was easy to move in with Europe financially and economically, but this has not happened culturally – and we will never do this, never. We will not accept radical critical conceptual positions, where the aesthetic side is practically non-existent. I think that is a great pity.

In the early 1990s, writer and critic Hasso Krull said that history could be divided into boredom and violence.

What is boredom? When you know you are going to have fucking guests, and you go out to a shop and queue two hours for oranges. You see the number of oranges getting smaller and with just three people in front of you, the shop assistant utters the fatal words: 'That's it!'. This scene contains so much passion, tension and drama that boredom is totally excluded. These two hours pass quickly and you have received such an emotional charge that... Only rich people are bored. In fact, I am much more bored now than I was back in the 1980s, when you occasionally glimpsed something fascinating in the overwhelming grey, and were sincerely grateful.

Can you remember a work of art from the 1980s that spoke to you?

I can. I remember being at first bewildered when Ando Keskküla painted pictures with a fuse. But this was the time when the tower of Niguliste Church burned and houses around Tallinn mysteriously burst into flames. Through pyromania, the society expressed some sort of disorder, and Ando's pictures were so coded that they managed to speak to the viewer. Today I look at them with a totally different eye, but they worked back then. Or, when pretty ladies appeared in Tiit Pääsuke's paintings, I always wondered what foreign glamour journals he was able to access? This kind of connection occurred, and the pictures indeed spoke to me. As did Toomas Vint's landscapes. However, I also remember wondering whether those works were good or bad, and tended to decide that they probably weren't 'good'. Because 'art cannot be so simple'.

Eha Komissarov

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

Eero Epner

(1978), editor of *Estonian Art*, dramaturg at the theatre NO99.

Simple things in an ultimate system

Tõnis Saadoja decoding
Urmas Ploomipuu's paintings
Interview by Eero Epner



Urmas Ploomipuu in 1974

Eero Epner: How are the preparations for the exhibition of Urmas Ploomipuu's work going?

Tõnis Saadoja: Very well. I have tracked down all the paintings noted in the list of the memorial exhibition of Ploomipuu in 1992.

How many are there?

He did not paint that many: we know of only four oil paintings, and the total together with gouaches and watercolours is 12. The list has 35 prints and then pennants, certificates of honour and other such things which earned him his daily bread. He graduated from the State Art Institute in 1970, worked on graphic art for the next eight years, took up gouache work in the early 1980s, in 1981–1984 produced his four oil paintings and after that, in the course of six years, until his death, he devoted himself to applied graphic art, including the designs for the Estonian *kroon*. I am not keen on that part of his work, but that was how people used to earn money in those days, and experts claim that such works also reflect his special skill.

He once reputedly told his wife that he would love to paint, but there was nothing to paint. Maybe he truly had done everything he wanted in his dozen paintings, and that was that.

Why did he paint so little?

Tiit Pääsuke said he was lazy. Graphic artist



Kaisa Puustak said not lazy, but not really seeking work. He was certainly a calm person, and very thorough; he never got overly excited about anything. He could have, of course, produced a lot more: there was a frenzy of painting in the 1980s, and museum storage spaces are full of the results. In the context of his time, he was especially unproductive.

The motifs and the atmosphere in the paintings of the 1980s were rather similar: if you look at them from a distance, it might seem that all the pictures were painted by the same artist. Some, of course, had their own striking style, but the overall impression is, on the one hand, rather monotonous and, on the other, highly dramatic, and Ploomipuu stood out for his clarity and purity. He did not have any special style or manner of painting, but there was a concept and modest aesthetics, so that, in a sense, he was undercover, and this may be one reason why his work has not been examined more closely.

How has his work been appreciated? After all, he did not belong to any canon.

As Ploomipuu is regarded as a representative of the first wave of Estonian hyperrealism, to a certain extent he did belong to a canon. The choice of motifs was not exceptional either: in the 1980s, still-lives were painted in great numbers. Everybody was painting: Ando Keskküla, Andres Tolts, Tiit Pääsuke, Jüri Palm, Olav Maran, Lemming Nagel... What seems extraordinary to me is that nobody remembers



Urmas Ploomipuu
Still Life With a Bag. 1984
 Oil, canvas. 115 x 95 cm
 Tartu Art Museum

Urmas Ploomipuu
Still Life With Silvery Stick
 1984. Oil, canvas
 50 x 106 cm
 Private collection

Urmas Ploomipuu
Still Life With Blue. 1981
 Oil, canvas. 73 x 80 cm
 Tallinn Art Hall

Ploomipuu. Even those who initially claim to have boozed with Ploomipuu and thus know quite a bit, at some point suddenly go back on their words and admit that they know nothing. Indeed he was a bit of a hermit, not letting anyone too close, but it is still strange how little the others remember. This concerns not so much his person or his work, but the background, schemes, the backstage. Many have an axe to grind: 'he should have done more', 'occasional plagiarism'... After all, this is a generation that never says anything straight out, but prefers to beat about the bush. They are characterised by a great sense of fraternity and a joint silent front. The artists produced similar works and borrowed from one another without any interest, and there was no such thinking as today: 'if you did this, I cannot possibly do the same.' Things are different in my generation, and absolutely no one has heard of Ploomipuu.

However, there is one thing everyone keeps repeating: he had the most skilful eye and hand ever. He was able to guess just by looking at something how big it was. He fluently read Morse code, was a superb billiard and chess player, was a crack shot...

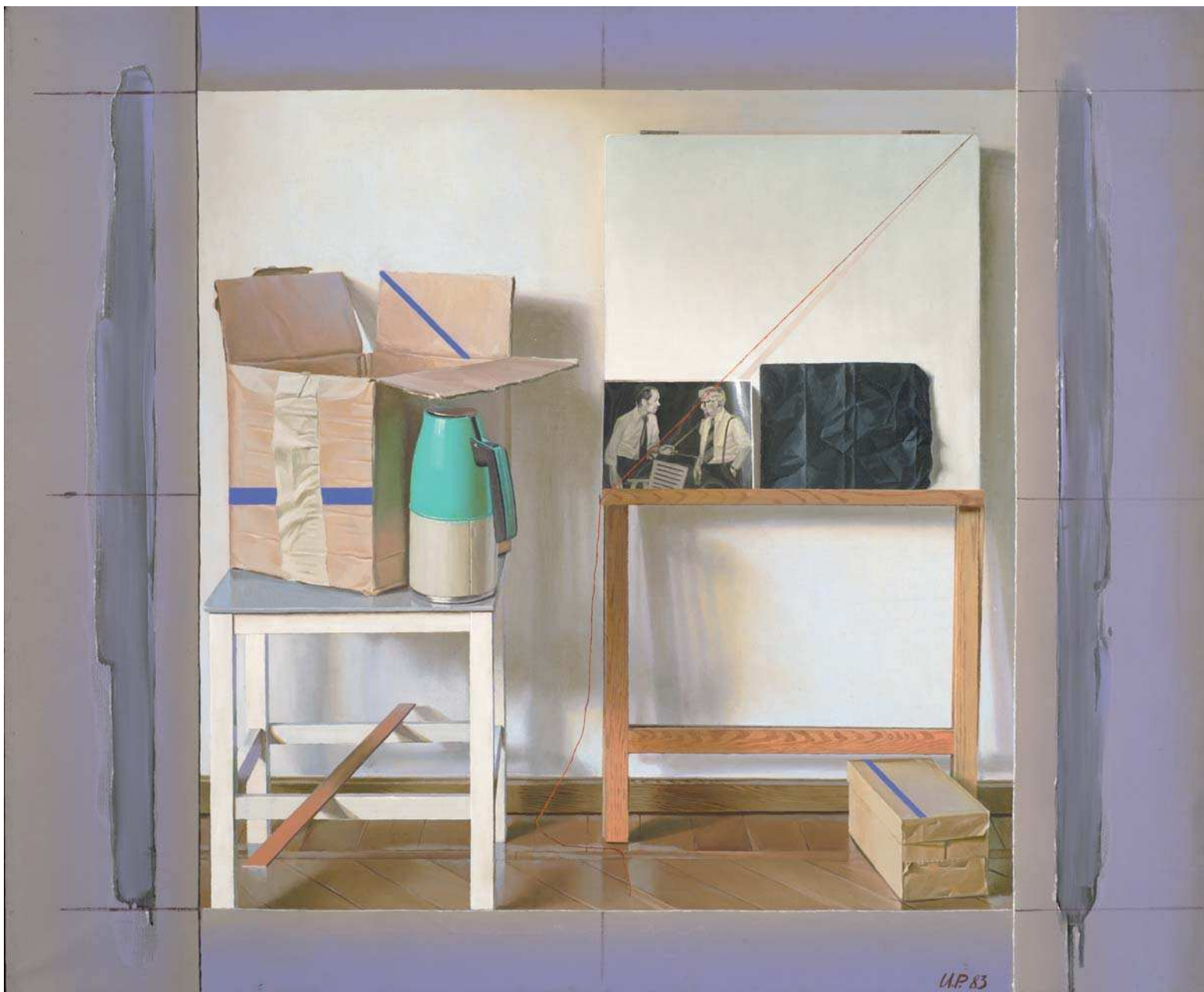
You sent a letter a year ago:

Hey!

You set me a tough task with Ploomipuu. His paintings are constructed on extremely precise geometry, starting with simpler forms, such as the circle and square, and extending to diagonals. I have yet to meet anyone who could unravel the latter or, if

he could, would be prepared or able to explain it. Part of the blame lies with my own ignorance and plain blindness, because mathematics, perspectives and figurative geometry are totally alien to me, and thus it is not clear to what extent this is logic and inevitability, a simple formula, and where the wishful thinking starts. This must be established first. Everybody to whom I have explained my observations raises an eyebrow but considers everything too complicated or mystical to be anything else but coincidence. I personally am against any kind of mysticism and am trying to find connections in order to define Ploomipuu's shrewdness, although I don't think I can manage on my own. I am already taking this task very personally; there is no shortage of ambition. After all, even if only 20% is true, we have here a most remarkable artist.

*I am attaching a few examples showing the symmetry in the painting *Still* and the diagonals between the tops of the objects. The lines touch the contours of the objects or the intersection of two other lines, and the tops of objects. It is complicated to explain all this in an email.*



Has anyone commented on it?

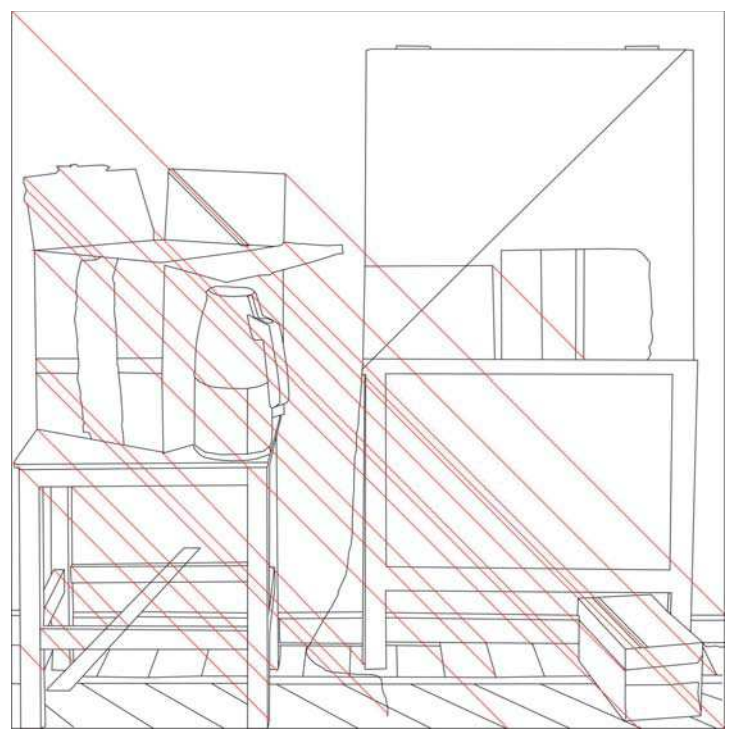
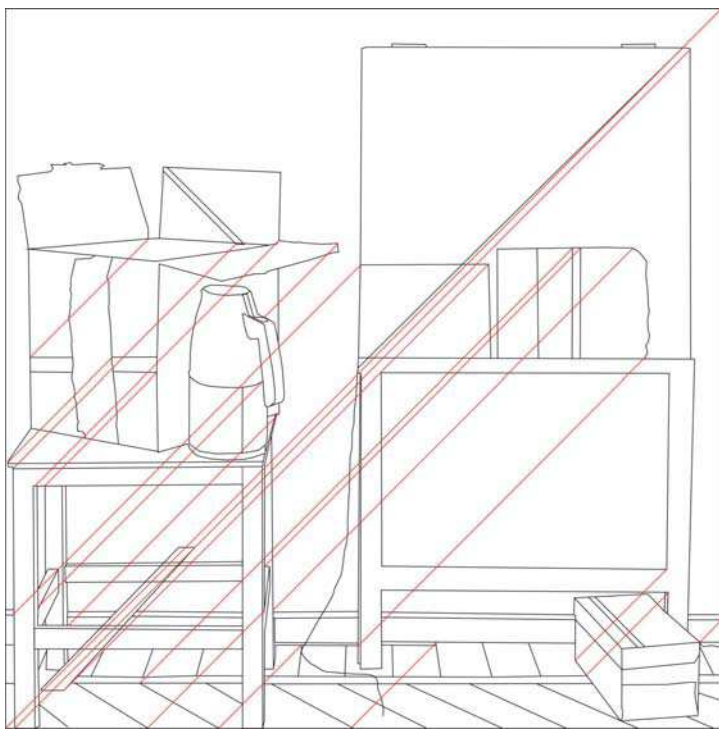
Nobody believes it. I showed the amazing symmetry in his paintings to his wife, and she too claimed that the artist definitely did not mean it 'like that'. I don't know. I am sure he meant it, there is nothing random about it, and it's just not possible otherwise. I have more or less decoded one painting and the symmetry is breathtaking. In other paintings, I see connections and systems as well. I'm getting closer, but haven't yet grasped the big scheme.

What is hidden behind it? Esoteric theories?

Logic, not the esoteric. I know that Ploomipuu's favourite book was Jossif Shklovski's *Universe, Life, Mind* – he was above all a realist, a thinker who analysed. Nobody remembers him as a philosopher, but instead as an observer and analyser. He even invented a supremely precise raster by systemically using a ruler.

You discovered symmetry only after your first elation. Why did you in fact take a liking to Ploomipuu's paintings?

They are so natural. The natural today is not what it used to be. All of his paintings were completed in the same place, in his studio of about 20 sq metres, just a room. He assembled them from random bits and pieces, never buying anything special (he was not well off), and he did not seek any magical motifs, the mythic or mysterious light. His metaphysical aesthetics is on a totally different level. A cardboard box, tubes of paint, a coffee pot, photo envelopes, sheets of paper, a woman's hand-bag, the most ordinary mundane bric-a-brac.



Urmas Ploomipuu. *Still*. 1983
Oil, canvas. 95 x 112 cm
Art Museum of Estonia

Analysis and scheme
by Tõnis Saadoja

The hyperrealism of others is narrative and tries hard – nobody has made a one-level picture, but immediately starts messing around with symbolism, whereas Ploomipuu’s work has no symbolism; instead, it is simple, natural and mundane. Everything in its place: no excesses, all very neutral. It is wonderful how simple things are placed in an ultimate system, and an entire inner cosmos is created.

As for technique, he was far from perfect. He was occasionally quite clumsy, but the other hyperrealists blundered even more. No offence but, for example, Ando Keskküla was quite an inept painter. He was very effective, true, but rather awkward as a painter. This may have been intentional. I have no idea what aesthetics or purity meant for people in the 1980s. The time was obviously revolting and dirty; this comes out no matter who you talk to or what you look at. Maybe Keskküla actually wanted to paint badly.

Are you at all keen on his graphic art?

The first impression of Ploomipuu’s graphic art is that it is chic and technical, machine-like, as befits an approach based on photography. However, his work also has soft spots, both thematic and technical: galloping horses, a farmhouse, a nice winter day, a family on holiday, a stone in seawater. He also used the motif of the white house, which was a frequent motif in the Estonian painting of the 1970s, and especially

in graphic art. Still-lives and white houses are indeed very typical of Ploomipuu’s work. Incidentally, I recently happened to read in Leonhard Lapin’s book that the image of an egg (probably inspired by Ülo Sooster) turned up in the work of a whole generation of artists in the 1950s and 1960s, and in the 1970s it was replaced by a white cube. I think that, at the end of the 1980s, a triangle of Estonian art emerged which has become a circle in the 2000s.

Urmas Ploomipuu

(1942-1990), graphic artist and painter.

Tõnis Saadoja

(1980), painter. He is curating the exhibition *Urmas Ploomipuu’s White House*, which opens on 13 April 2011 at the Kumu Art Museum (open until 23 October 2011).

The well-known unknown photographer Jaan Klõšeiko

Ellu Maar



Jaan Klõšeiko. Photographic setting. 1985

Jaan Klõšeiko. Counter-meeting of the People's Front to the autonomy of the International Front. 1989

People's Fronts were established by the April 1988 decree of the Communist Party Politburo, and were formally meant to support perestroika and oppose the conservatives in the CP leadership. Instead, the Fronts became widespread movements with extensive demands. The greatest achievement of the Estonian People's Front was the well-organised nature of the popular movement, inclusion of national minorities and avoiding random unrest. Several still influential political parties grew out of the People's Front. [JK]



Everybody in Estonian art circles knows Jaan Klõšeiko. He is that funny old man who is always present at significant art events and exhibition openings – always keen, seeking contact with people and artworks, always asking questions. He seems most fascinated with the world-view and problems of young artists who are producing their first exhibitions. Klõšeiko likes company, communicates easily and enjoys new art.

Wherever he goes, Klõšeiko always has his camera with him. He seems to be permanently attached to his digital camera, taking numerous pictures, several of each situation. I believe that he must take over one hundred photographs of every exhibition opening. It has always been so and we take it for granted. Klõš truly belongs and is seen as an inevitable, familiar phenomenon. He and his camera cause no excitement, as might happen for example if a press photographer working for one of the big dailies turned up. Klõš's pictures never appear in glitzy social magazines, newspapers or exhibitions. Having taken pictures of cultural events for 45 years, I suppose Klõš would not know how to move around without a camera. His posture seems to have adjusted itself to the camera over the years. Photography has become a compulsive activity for him, something to lean on, a movement coded in his body memory, which people politely pretend not to notice. This of course means that he is able to capture much more than forced poses and smiles.

Klõšeiko is actually a graphic artist, having worked for a long time at the legendary publishing house *Kunst*; he still produces layouts for books and lectures at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Photography has never been his chief way of making a living. However, photography seems to be the means by which Klõš defines himself and the means closest to his heart. Klõšeiko is a photographer-archivist. His archives must be bottomless, considering the span of time and his intense activities. Nobody knows what exactly he has in his archives, as it is not easy to get anywhere near them. Klõš is a



Jaan Klõšeiko. Art history professors Boris Bernstein and Leo Gens with guest visiting the Tallinn City Hall under construction. 1979

busy man and has not yet got round to the huge task of sorting out his archive.

The pictures taken by Klõš become increasingly important the more art history is written and certain eras and stages explored. Having graduated from the State Art Institute in 1964, he moved around in the art circles of the time and thus his photographs constitute a documentation of the representatives of the Estonian avant-garde from the end of the 1960s: exhibitions, parties, happenings and actions, which nobody at that time saw as part of the future art history. If we did not have these pictures today, there would be nothing to research, and the first Estonian happenings would be as good as non-existent.

Klõšeiko has said: 'I am the most famous unknown photographer in Estonia – I haven't actually seen most of my pictures myself. I only know that the negatives sitting in various boxes record something that I have deemed important, something the Soviet agitprop photographers did not bother about.'¹ As a

photographer, Klõš defines himself as someone who ignored the tasks set by Soviet-era photography, noticing things that official photography ignored or was not allowed to notice. Documenting the avant-garde art of the 1960s and 1970s, he was able to hold the position of photographer only in a non-official capacity, taking pictures for his archive and not for exhibitions.

Klõšeiko is therefore well aware that all these boxes contain valuable material, of which he has no clear overview. His legacy makes it possible to draw parallels in art trends within a long period of time and his activity shows no signs of letting up. Nor does he show any sign of sitting down and sorting through his archives.

Klõšeiko's current range is relatively wide, but his preferences seem to lie with the art of culture factories, performance art and young painting. Conceptual and rational young Estonian art leaves him rather cold. This is quite understandable from the point of view of a photographer who records art events. Performance offers more challenges to a photographer; it is a moving and vanishing

¹ <http://www.vaal.ee/est/uudised/rohkemkinuionn2ha/>

art and looks more exciting in a photograph than does cerebral art, with its dry forms on white gallery walls.

It would be difficult to write about Jaan Klõšeiko as a photographer if the homepage of the private Vaal Gallery had not published 12 of his photographic series in recent years, which Klõš compiled himself, arranged by topic, and provided with explanatory texts. Without this we would be lost: we know the photographer, but not his work. Klõšeiko does not wish to be displayed on the white walls of a gallery. The Internet is a better option. (Klõš is also on Facebook!) The younger generation is only now beginning to realise that Klõš is a photographer with artistic ambitions, and not just a chronicler of culture.

The series on the Vaal Gallery homepage has two types of photographs. The first reveals Klõšeiko's art education, a wish to create symbols through photographs, the popular tendency among Estonian graphic artists in the 1970s to move into an intimate private sphere – in opposition to the surrounding Soviet reality. In these series, the photographer plays with landscapes and surface reliefs, textures and patterns, and with an empty spatial plan that heightens the tension of the composition. These are poetic series, where natural elements in photography begin functioning as symbols, and pictures leave the impression of artistic compositions. Klõšeiko admits the influence of Japanese culture, which also played a role in the work of other Estonian graphic artists of his generation.

The other type of series depicts the cultural elite of the 1970s and openings of key exhibitions, Soviet monuments, propaganda posters, parades and slogans. All this formed a background to the young Estonian cultural elite with similar ideas who operated in that environment and quietly resisted that power. On the one hand, these series express political and social criticism and, on the other hand, pure art, by which the artists were constructing their own independent protective world within the surrounding political space. We can thus talk about Jaan Klõšeiko as a photographer in the same terms used in analysing the work of Estonian artists and graphic artists of the same generation.

Klõšeiko is invaluable primarily as a chronicler of Estonian culture in the 1970s. Although we are used to considering him a *perpetuum mobile*, who started taking pictures ages ago and still continues without any dis-

ruptions, Klõšeiko's best and most significant series originated in the early and mid-1970s. His photographs are quite revealing and have an enormous significance in the context of the Estonian art of the time and its social and cultural environment. The young generation of artists who emerged under the conditions of the cultural thaw of the end of the 1960s represented trends now known as avant-garde. During the emerging period of new Russification in late 1970s, they moved from public into private space and established their personal artistic handwriting. As a member of that generation of artists, Klõšeiko's reaction to the surrounding social reality was to record a suppressed generation and preserve the photographic documentation in numerous boxes at home.

Jaan Klõšeiko prefers to remain an unofficial photographer, collecting pictures in his archive and showing them in the undemanding environment of the Internet. Expectations and excitement are raised by the fact that such a position places his photographic art in a conveniently hazy area. Is it not true that in the end the most fascinating photographers turn out to be those whose activity was not regarded as art because it blended into life too much, was a by-product of life? It might well be that these pictures in particular manage to capture something telling and genuine about that time and its events. However, I tend to believe that if one day Klõšeiko's bottomless archive is turned into a powerful artistic document it will be done by someone else, not by Klõšeiko.



Jaan Klõšeiko

(1939), graphic designer and photographer. See more of his photographs at <http://www.vaal.ee/est/uudised/rohkemkuionn2ha/aid-1243>

Ellu Maar

(1982), BA in semiotics at the University of Tartu, MA in art history at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Works at the Art Museum of Estonia in publishing.

Jaan Klõšeiko. Exhibition *Man and Factory*. The opening ceremony included Soviet Estonian minister of culture Juhan-Kaspar Jürna, head of the culture department of the Communist Party Olaf Utt, ideology secretary Vaino Väljas, ?, academician Evald Okas, chairman of the Artists' Association Ilmar Torn. Tallinn Art Hall, 1977



Jaan Klõšeiko. Museum director Inge Teder and painter Henn Roode in the State Art Museum of Soviet Estonia. 1969

Jaan Klõšeiko. Efficiency and quality – the main aims of the 10th five-year plan. Actor and poet Juhan Viiding and Leonid Brezhnev. Võidu (Victory) Square, 1977-1980

Art is only function

Marco Scotini and
Andris Brinkmanis
interviewed
by Eero Epner

Eero Epner: When you opened up your laptop yesterday to present your paper, I noticed a number of icons there, which all in one way or another referred to the criticism of institutions. What do you think are the reasons why institutions in the contemporary art world are so fiercely attacked?

Marco Scotini: I think everybody understands that institutions in today's art world constitute a means of control. There have been various means of control in the course of history: for example the art market, the main topic in classical institutional criticism. But this is no longer the case. The chief problem now is the system of capitalist security.



Disobedience. An ongoing video archive within the exhibition *Forms of Resistance. Artists and the desire for social change from 1871 to the present.* Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. 2007

On the one hand, there is a liberal attitude to the art market but, on the other hand, different security ideologies seem to be getting stronger; a good example of the latter is [the dealer] Jeffrey Deitch becoming the director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in LA, which obviously encourages the *status quo* of the current art situation.

Another example is the strange situation where art fairs have become cultural events and the biennials market platforms. Remember Venice in the 1960s, when people protested against the idea of the 'biennial as a market', whereas today the ideology has totally changed and nobody bothers to protest any more. And, the other way round, the art fair is becoming more cultured, organising panels and discussions, for example at the last Frieze art fair. After the mid-1990s, for a decade big fairs were characterised by their extreme openness and desire to relate to society, whereas now the opposite trend prevails: at the Documenta and Manifesta, as well as at the latest biennials in Istanbul and Gwangju, the dominant approach was aestheticised art. This is a significant ideological shift, which includes a wish to control, preserve the existing and avoid change.

There have been a large number of biennials in the world in recent years and, as a rule, they unite economic aims and cultural productivity. These are intertwined, to the extent that, while the main task of institutional criticism was to reveal economic considerations behind the cultural system, today the art world has changed so much that these two no longer stand separately. We must thus find new means.

Is it at all possible for curators to work totally independently? Can they create their own autonomous curatorial field?

Marco Scotini: When I say that today the ideology of control dominates, I mean a new type of cultural codification, and obviously only whatever is accepted is codified. A lot used to be said about freedom, creativity and the need for social and cultural changes, but not any more. And therefore being a curator is one of the most closed and controlled spaces of all. This is also reflected in the format of biennials, which is always the same everywhere, and this helps to homogenise and control. True, the latest Berlin biennial tried to be political, but that was in terms of content, not format. I thus think that the new and 'independent' is not totally accepted, but I find that it is not possible to find a new form outside the existing structures, and the approach should come from inside: the biennial format should be interfered with from inside. I really believe this would be effective.

Another possibility is that the theoretician, curator and others work straight into society.

This could be much more creative. On the one hand, this is a new institutional criticism; on the other, it is a certain *exodus*: an attempt to escape the system, to be totally alternative.

The topic of art education is naturally highly significant as well. If we really want to change something, we must tackle education. I therefore suggested that a three-month art school in Cyprus should be established within the Manifesta framework, which would replace the classical format of presenting works with a platform of creating. This would be a challenge for the art world, and within the classical biennial system.

Andris Brinkmanis: Let us look at the issue from an 'independent' historical perspective. When the Berlin Wall collapsed, the art world's hopes regarding democracy were huge: people did not just expect an increase in the freedom of expression, but also a greater

tolerance for different versions of creating and presenting. But what has happened? State control has not disappeared; it has merely been replaced by economic control. We are in a situation where everything is getting even more homogeneous, and I mean creative activity all over the world. Everything must fit into the logic of economics and contemporary capitalism. The range of freedom is naturally greater than it was during the Soviet era; people can do various things and nobody forbids it. But, on the other

hand, if you do not fit into certain models, you will not find channels, means of expression. Many people just put up with these rules of the game and it is difficult to change the situation. I think there are strong parallels with the Soviet time: if you failed to produce a certain kind of work, you did not get a flat, a studio and many other privileges. Today's model is exactly the same: if you do not produce your work in a certain manner or if you do not present it in a certain manner, you can



Learning Machines. Exhibition view at NABA - Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti, Milan, Italy. 2010

forget privileges – an audience, grants, exhibitions etc.

We should regard a curator as a semi-otic institution that is able to change things. There is no point in criticising institutions; we should instead analyse and try to change something. For example, change the fact that tolerance for different means of expression has again become quite small. However, let us not forget institutions; after all, they enjoy considerable power. This, in fact, is the exodus of which many Italian thinkers write: if you do not agree with something, you do not deny it, but instead try to find alternatives.

Marco Scotini: We can no longer talk about the art field as something that stands separately and has closed into itself. After all, art and aesthetics are only functions and, from an anthropological point of view, we should constantly change our views of what art is or

still active. The previously different vocabularies have now become similar and it is no longer possible to immediately recognise the strange phenomena that invade the art field.

Andris Brinkmanis: Maurizio Lazzarato wrote that we live in a hyper-modern world, where neo-archaic values are constantly produced. He gives the example of northern Italy, where economics and technology are highly developed, but where neo-fascist movements keep emerging and people increasingly want the world to be governed as it was at the beginning of the 20th century. The same thing is happening in the art field. Although the concepts of 'art' and 'artist' have changed, via neo-archaisms we still think about them in the same way as in the 19th century. These old-fashioned concepts are kept alive by attaching them to other concepts, such as 'authorship' and 'private property'. Most important,

however, is linking art with 'value'. It seems that art should always have some sort of value – economic, symbolic, ideological etc. A work of art is truly appreciated if it is something from which at least some value can be squeezed out.

Is colonisation that is associated with homogenisation still topical?

Marco Scotini: It is. For example, the last Istanbul biennial was a classic example of colonisation. Or Manifesta. Manifesta was characterised by exactly the same

keywords as a modern factory. It wanted to be a travelling biennial, a truly democratic network. Such an ideology was very typical of that era. And it was thus naturally easy to change Manifesta's structure from a cultural institution to an economic brand. A similar shift occurred simultaneously in economics, where the 'factory' increasingly became a platform of interference and distribution. There were no more factories, places of production; they were instead forms of a certain



could be. In culture, however, a neo-archaic system prevails. It wishes to maintain control, and this can be done via biennials, as they arrange the distribution of roles, rooms etc, and create hierarchies. If we approached society directly, these would disappear.

In a sense, this kind of control ideology is of course schizophrenic, because the slogan of neo-liberal society is: 'Be creative!' Several biennials have aimed to cross over or abolish borders. At the same time, extreme control is

Disobedience: Art as Agent of Change. Ernest G. Welch Gallery, Atlanta, USA. 2010

divergence, located in different countries and united by one compact brand. Both the Istanbul biennial and Manifesta attempted to create a bridge in words between East and West, or provide an opportunity to the East and promote it in the Western market. Manifesta, was for a long time, characterised by a certain pan-European idea and thus one of the curators was always from the East (e.g Viktor Misiano or Iara Bubonova). And, indeed, many works by eastern European artists were displayed (for example, the works of Jaan Toomik), although few managed to stay in the mainstream. As many enterprises in Europe are scaling down their activities, Manifesta too must find new markets, and hence the new idea of the pan-African biennial. Which, of course, is another example of a classic colonial approach.

What could be the topic of a biennial taking place in today's Europe?

Marco Scotini: Strangely enough, I think Europe itself. A few decades ago it would have been too obvious.

Andris Brinkmanis: Quite a few things in the post-Ford world are actually worse than in the pre-Ford world. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Western art world was deprived of strong innovative ideas or, in other words, its resources ran out. As is typical of Europe, if you do not have resources yourself, you go and get them elsewhere. The biennialisation of the world is, to some extent, urged on by a wish to find new resources.

Of course, we should also talk about the colonisation of desires and here, too, we can draw parallels with the Soviet era. Regarding the West, a very interesting semi-openness prevailed at that time, a certain local cannibalism, where everything Western was swallowed whole, and we tried to make it 'our own'. I am talking about copied records,

reproduced photos, the entire world, and this was not colonisation in its classical sense. Not even if we consider the fact that many cities are interested in hosting biennials, because this is a chance to share in the Westernisation, become Western.

How can we explain the phenomenon that retrospective exhibitions have an increasing role in museums, but also at biennials, and contemporary art gets neglected? Some find that there is less good art today than in the past. Or is it connected with neo-archaic values: people look to the past and find good art there?

Marco Scotini: There are several reasons for that. First of all, of course, it's economic: in order to survive, museums must sell themselves as much as they can. To achieve that they turn art into clichés, as van Gogh is not art, but a cliché of art. Still, this is a chance to attract masses of visitors. The other reason is cultural: you must erect a certain border or a barrier, which suits the ideology of security. By showing retrospective displays, you do not support experimentation and you keep the concept of art under control. Thirdly, relating to history has become generally topical, including in eastern Europe. In earlier years, I did not see that as much.

The curatorial field, in turn, is keen to change our present ideology. What we perceive as 'contemporary' has changed. Contemporary for us is no longer only what is totally new, fresh, made yesterday – relations with the past are considerably more complicated.

The biennials of, say, Tirana or Mexico, about ten years ago, included many active authors. There were symposia etc, but now – nothing. Nothing new. Culture is becoming more homogeneous, and this is nothing to rejoice about. If you are not inside the codified world, you are not accepted. And as Foucault said, there is a power behind absolutely everything.



Disobedience. An ongoing video archive within the exhibition *A History of Irritated Material.* Raven Row, London, UK. 2010

Marco Scotini

(1964), an art critic and independent curator. Director of the Visual Arts School at NABA - Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti, Milan.

Andris Brinkmanis

(1978), art critic, curator and lecturer at NABA - Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti, Milan.

ON CRITICAL ART AND ART CRITICISM IN TARTU, SEPT 2010

Jaak Tomberg

In September 2010, Tartu was packed with various meaningful cultural festivities. It was almost as if there was so much happening at the same time that even with the remarkable additional crowd coming in from Tallinn many of the events still lacked large audiences. In September 2010, Tartu had a very liveable feel to it: it almost generated the hope that it could be like this every month.

Along with the annual theatre festival and the avant-garde festival *Eclectica*, at least two very important contemporary art projects saw their openings. Both being participatory and interactive social events rather than merely static gallery-exhibitions, the annual ART IST KUKU NU UT art month and the 2nd ARTISHOK art/criticism biennale were revealing, not only because of their particular thematic content but also due to their surprisingly inventive formats. Both led to the conclusion that there was a considerable further need for representational forms which would not only present their own specific 'inner content' but, through their mode of existence, would be critical towards art and its various institutional aspects.

The ART IST KUKU NU UT art month resurrected the somewhat tired six-year-old format with a socio-critical exhibition, an avant-garde experimental scientific conference, a few screenings, an auction and, last but foremost, the release of a conclusive catalogue which, exceeding the potential and generic limits of all its other previous local counterparts in 'catalogue culture', provided extremely thorough, critical and practical insight into the pros and cons of the contemporary art scene in Tartu. Compiled by Rael Artel and Kaisa Eiche, and meant for free distribution in Tartu, the main part of the catalogue is composed of dozens of interviews and questionnaires with Tartu's artists,

art critics, curators, politicians and the general local intelligentsia, who were asked to diagnose the current highs and lows, the concrete possibilities and limitations of organizing artistic activities in today's Tartu. This main corpus is supported by journalistic reviews of the annual event's previous editions, an overview of the bibliographical production of Tartu's art institutions, a comparative discussion of the ongoing contextual 'pseudo-war' between Tallinn and Tartu, a thorough interview with Paolo Virno on collectivity and collective work, a critical introductory agenda, which establishes a preliminary five-year plan for internationalising and rejuvenating the organization of artistic activity in Tartu, and various brief extras. The result almost resembles a fully fleshed-out social survey, where nearly all the relevant participants in the scene have their say, and the compilation is a rare and (at least in terms of its scope) a successful attempt to map the problems of the here-and-now of Tartu's art life.

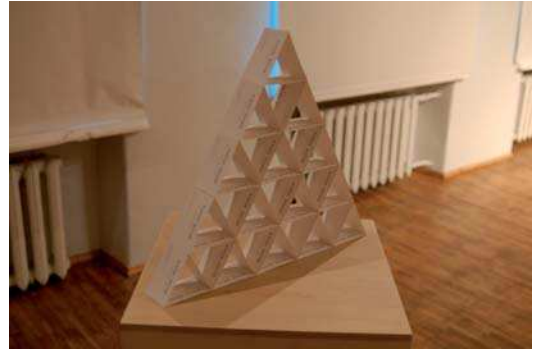
Nevertheless, the rhetorical tone and the overall choice of the components of the compilation strongly suggest the local art scene's implied international isolation, wider critical irrelevance and stagnant management, and the catalogue is clearly intended as a wake-up call to the slumbering and largely unenthusiastic organizational community, as well as an attempt to lay out the various possibilities for its gradual improvement. Whether the situation really is that bad or whether the compilation is entirely fair or unbiased towards all participants and institutions involved is probably not clear. (And the only English sentence on its cover implies that the research doesn't aspire towards objectivity.) But, despite its definite subjective undercurrents and sharply critical approach (and maybe because of them), the catalogue rewards us with constructive answers rather than neutral descriptions. The effect, for those involved in the scene – and those involved are, paradoxically, mostly the same people who are being questioned in the catalogue – resembles that of Brechtian-style estrangement: the people who are being asked to criticize the local scene's hindrances are, unsurprisingly, almost the only people who can and should 'do something about it'. The fruitful potential of such an approach lies precisely in the possibility of direct critical self-recognition. Whether this has a catalysing or suppressing effect remains to be seen, but the truth is that without such enterprises the chance for any organised change is considerably smaller. For those with the ambition to improve and enliven the scene, I suggest re-reading the catalogue from a critical perspective and not dismissing it as a statement of nothing-to-do necessity. The only downside to Artel's and Eiche's compilation may be its almost too efficient and self-homogeneous design and structure,



AB². Toomas Thetloff & Taavi Piibemann. *Schrödinger's Box*



Artist talk. Toomas Thetloff and Taavi Piibemann in conversation with architect and physicist Kaja Pae.



AB². Visiting cards by Kaisa Eiche



AB². Kaisa Eiche. *Loves Me, Loves Me Not*

2nd Artishok Biennale (curator Kati Ilves).
Tartu Art House, 2010

AB²



AB². Johnson & Johnson. *Untitled*



ART IS KUKU NU UT
Exhibition *Annex 6. The Politics of the Invisible Hand*
 (curator Rael Artel).
 Y Gallery, Tartu, 2010



Flo Kasearu. *Best Before Is Over*. 2010. Video. 13'



Johnson & Johnson. *Well... we all have our own theory about the way of the world*. 2010. Installation



OÜ Visible Solutions. 2010. Installation. Y Gallery, Tartu

which provide the possibility of it being interpreted, dismissed and forgotten as another interesting art project rather than remembered as a constructive institutional agenda. But this, again, is the case with any good socio-critical artistic initiative.

The 2nd ARTISHOK art /criticism biennale [AB²] had a similar meaningful effect in terms of the status of current local art criticism and the overall relationship between art and criticism. The inventive format – ten critical pieces, written in advance by local critics for each of the ten works of art chosen and specifically made for the biennial, and then being simultaneously presented in the same exhibition hall as the works of art – led to many analytical conclusions about the current situation and the prevalent currents in Estonia's younger art generation, as well as about the status and potential of its fresh critical reflection. Rarely does any artist – especially a young artist – receive ten reviews of a single piece of work, and rarely is criticism elevated to the level of artistic production. Irrespective of this year's particular content, which I have unfortunately no space to discuss here, the ARTISHOK biennale conception provides the benefit of giving instant constructive feedback to artists still at the beginning of their careers, as well as stressing the urgent need for freely creative rather than merely reflective, descriptive and institutionalized art criticism. The format, in its second year, still has its small flaws and dangers: an overwhelming amount of destructive criticism might smother the vital enthusiasm of a young artist, and an overwhelming amount of critical work required from the writer in a short period of time might render the criticism a bit inadequate. But, here too, the pros outweigh the cons.

So, all in all, and, paradoxically, to the contrary of the claims made in the ART IST KUKU NU UT catalogue, September 2010 was a good and enriching month for Tartu's critical art and art criticism scene. It almost led to the hope that it could be like this every month. But it isn't, and the critical wake-up call was very much in order.



Cover of the catalogue
 ART IST KUKU NU UT

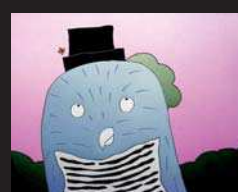
Jaak Tomberg
 (1980), is a postdoctoral researcher in Estonian Literary Museum. Currently, he takes theoretical interest in the philosophical function of fiction and the contemporary relations between realism and science fiction. Besides this, he has written a lot of literary criticism, two plays and translated science fiction.

NEW GENERATION IN ESTONIAN ANIMATION

Mari-Liis Rebane

Estonian animation is an area that has certainly managed to prove itself worldwide and earn its keep as a shared cultural value. Local animation veterans have prepared the ground for the young by creating a situation where international specialists are quite keen on our animated films. Estonian animated films have, in fact, become a sign of quality – why else would Chris J. Robinson, the artistic director of the prestigious Ottawa festival, have produced a special book on the history of Estonian animation?

On the last pages of his book, however, he wonders where the young authors are? Has anyone heard anything about them? The Estonian Academy of Arts has been training animation students for five years. Most of them are already seeing the world more extensively, within the European Union, but those who decide to stay at home must face the situation of professional film-makers being separated by a wasteland from young directors and animators on the threshold of their careers. Without studio support, no one gives them any money, but even



Chintis Lundgren.
Stills from *The Great Grey Shrike*. 2009. Animation. 6'22"

HALLÕGIGA
THE GREAT GREY SHRIKE
6'22"
2009

RE ŽISSÕÖR / DIRECTOR : Chintis Lundgren
STSEENARIST / SCREENWRITER
ANIMAATOR / ANIMATOR

MUUSIKA / MUSIC : Kristjan Raidna
HELI / SOUND

HÄÄLED / VOICES : Inge Ting, Kristjan Raidna

with the best intentions in the world not all studios want or can take the young under their wing. This of course does not mean that the young who cannot get into a studio (or do not want to) have any less potential. But their day will come, no doubt about that.

Now that working in a studio is no longer the only opportunity to produce an animated film, an independent 'indie-anima' is emerging, which can be cultivated irrespective of background or education. If the film is good, it can also make it outside the elite circle. Indie films' budgets are considerably smaller than those of studios and the director is often also the film's artist, animator and editor. Such a situation is still mostly possible in animation. Chintis Lundgren, for example, has attracted a great deal of enthusiastic attention in recent years with her films *The Great Grey Shrike* and *Volli Pall*. A few more people have managed to slip through the puppet film doors, and some who have worked in animation before have also succeeded in directing their own authorial films. Except for the triumphant directing duo of Mari-Liis Bassovskaya and Jelena Girlin, who have frequently been called the Estonian Quay Sisters, nobody has quite managed to stay at the top. Animation studios have been somewhat reticent: besides Kaspar Jancis and Ülo Pikkov,

only a few animators (e.g. Elisabeth Salmin and Katri Haarde) have directed their own films in the past ten years, without creating much of a splash, and Martinus Daane Klemet, in 2007, worked with Olga and Priit Pärn on their animation *Life Without Gabriella Ferri*. In 2009, Klemet debuted at the *Eesti Joonisfilm Studio* as the director of his own film, which is perhaps the most meteoric rise in a long time.



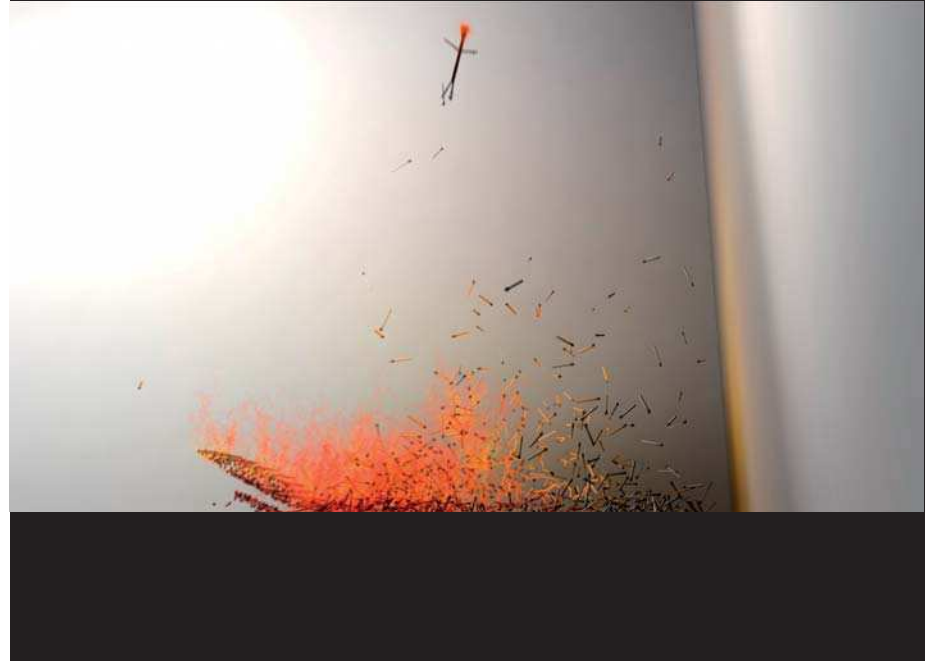
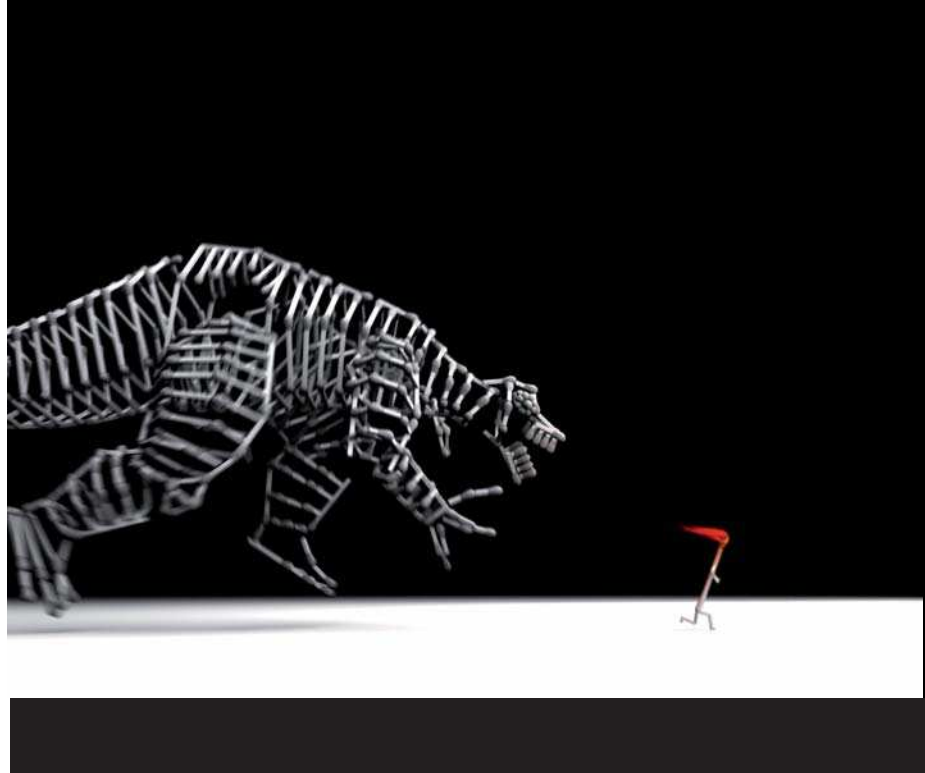
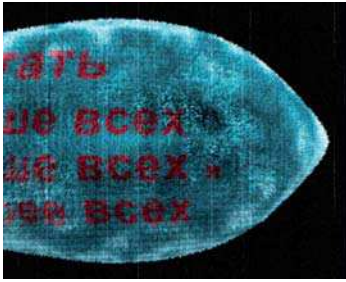
VOLLI PALL
 11'41
 2010
 REŽISSÖÖR / DIRECTOR : Chintis Lundgren
 STSENAARIST / SCREENWRITER
 ANIMAATOR / ANIMATOR
 MUUSIKA / MUSIC : Kristjan Raidna
 HELI / SOUND
 HÄÄLED / VOICES : Maur Mere, Kristjan Raidna
 Tõnis Metsar, Inge Ting, Janno Lepind



Chintis Lundgren.
 Stills from *Volli Pall*. 2010. Animation. 11'41"



Martinus Daane Klemet.
Stills from *Furry Flurry*. 2006.
Short film. 3'49"



Martinus Daane Klemet (b 1982 in Tallinn), successfully competing with the generation of Pikkov-Tender-Jancis, is probably the most promising young director at the moment, and his work deserves to be examined.

His debut, *Furry Flurry*, was made in 3D in 2006. It is a semi-sci-fi short story about an unusually hairy Soviet space shuttle and a satellite which find each other in their wanderings through the expanse of space, but whose brief love story culminates in a massive attack by the seemingly docile partner. The content of the abstractly playful fantasy world, with its soft cosmos shuttles as hairy toys, may be a bit unclear in this film. However, Klemet's second film, *Light My Fire*, which was supervised by Priit Pärn in the animation department of the Estonian Academy of Arts, is a much more skilful achievement, both technically and contextually.

The three-minute animation keeps viewers on their toes with its Tom & Jerry scheme, which emphasizes action rather than any hidden semiotic systems: a matchstick Trojan horse, Mickey Mouse, a Brontosaurus and others all find their way on to a pyre. Three-dimensional visual graphics achieve Hollywood-like action, seen in detailed time exposures of matchstick sculptures that burn to ashes. The brisk story of a matchstick that successfully wriggles out of unexpected situations is quite a step forward compared with the first film.

Martinus Daane Klemet. Stills from *Light my Fire*. 2007. Short film. 3'15"

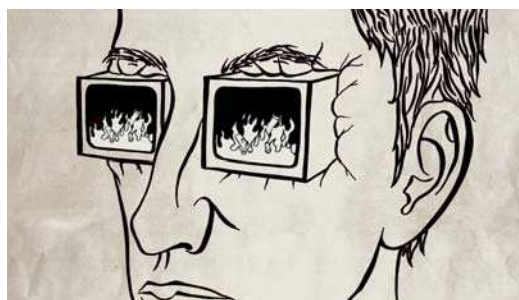
Light My Fire attracted enough attention to make it possible to produce the next, and so far the most successful film, *In The Air*, at the *Eesti Joonisfilm Studio* at the invitation of the studio itself. This is Klemet's first film in the classic hand-drawn animation technique; the artist is Gerda Märten. In a sense, *In The Air* is a total innovation for the *Eesti Joonisfilm Studio*, because its visual language remarkably differs from the earlier manner. Aesthetically, it is quite contoured, resembling black-and-white vector art, and the film has a contemporary feel, although there seem to be too many shots that do not move. Maybe it is precisely the realistic details of the new handwriting that make the film's animation method annoyingly static. Contextually, Martinus Klemet has again taken a huge step forward, as this time the story is hidden in symbols, which requires creating an ambiguous system in the film. The plot was inspired by George Orwell's book *1984*. A message about a society where people are manipulated by information, and in fact directly strapped to it, is not essentially new, but it is the manner of narration that makes the film extraordinary. In a hypnotized world, it is enough to press a button to make a bus-load of people dance to the right tune. People are lighter than air, floating like helium-filled balloons to the accompaniment of Vaiko Eplik's music. Ülo Pikkov has called the protagonists of Klemet's latest film *animal idiotas*, who live as prisoners in a post-modernist world. When ordered by the control systems, people jump headlong into unknown waters. The manner of the film is illustrative and connected with the chain of cause and effect, but it does not captivate viewers quite as much as, for example, the ceaseless Olympic Fire marathon in *Light My Fire*. *In The Air* is a film that resembles a passive code system, and does not attempt to entertain and wrap the viewer around its little finger, which has so far been the stock in trade of animated films.

Considering Martinus Klemet's relatively short filmography, his sources of inspiration and favourite topics are quite obvious – sci-fi, technology and media – reflections on a new era served up as fictitious visualisation. His films' visual language, too, is minimalist, focusing on contrasts, contours and empty surfaces, and the stories often wind up in the same places where the films start.

Animated film is a format that requires a quick, apt and shrewd script from the direc-

tor in order to prove itself to viewers. Every tiny detail, rhythm and sound counts. Producing an animated film is a laborious undertaking, requiring dedication, thinking everything through carefully and the persistence to work perhaps a whole year to produce ten minutes of animation. These are rare abilities, but in addition to talent they are the key to success. Motivation, an enthusiastic approach to the work process and bold experimentation seem to accurately characterise the work of Martinus Klemet.

Animation in Estonia almost totally depends on the generosity of the state budget. There is never enough money in the cultural field but, as Mait Laas has said, Estonian animation is like a European common frog in a marsh: we must try to preserve the species, as it adds to diversity. This also requires investment. It's better not to speculate on what would happen to Estonian animation if the state pulled the plug – something that has already happened in some parts of the world. There would be room for young animation directors, but would there be enough money to finance their films? Maybe it is time to start looking for other options to support young directors. Estonian animation is currently in its prime. Kaspar Jancis recently won the most prestigious animation award in Europe, the Cartoon d'Or, which has opened the door to the international animation world. Another film that is picking up awards at the moment is Olga and Priit Pärn's *Divers In The Rain*; before that they achieved success with their full-length animated film *Life Without Gabriella Ferri*. Martinus Daane Klemet's *In The Air* won the main award at the Melbourne animated film festival. Young Estonian animators may still be gearing up behind the old guard, but they are certainly ready to strike any minute now.



Mari-Liis Rebane

(1988), studies animation at the Estonian Academy of Arts; previously studied Japanese and general cultural theory at Tallinn University. Has been writing film and music criticism since 2005.

Martinus Daane Klemet. Stills from *In The Air*. 2009. Short film. 8'38"

'THE WORD WAS SUNG, THE WORD WAS BOUND'

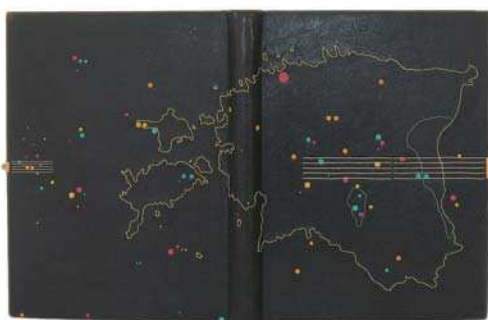
Lester Capon

Jaan Ross (Professor of Musicology Department, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre) in his paper 'Tormis and Minimalism', presented at the conference of the international bookbinding exhibition *Scripta manent IV* on 28 September 2010 in the National Library in Tallinn, has said:

"Veljo Tormis is one of the composers who have not only written music but have actively spoken out about issues concerning the relationship of music with reality. In the programme for *Estonian Ballads*, performed in 1980 at the Estonia Theatre, he wrote: "Folk music is not a means of 'self-expression' for me. Quite the opposite - I feel a duty to convey folk music itself, its essence, spirit, ideas and form. As far as I understand, runo-song is the most remarkable and original phenomenon in the history of Estonian culture. As it has lost its role as an inseparable part of the past way of life, I am trying to link it with contemporary art forms - in order to reveal the singularity and the message of runo-songs." It is unimaginable that anyone could have done this better than Veljo Tormis."



Jeff Clements, The Netherlands



Hannah Brown, UK



Illu Erma, Estonia

International bookbinding competitions do not happen very often. *Scripta manent IV*, the Estonian competition that was exhibited at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, is, as the name implies, the fourth in this series and has taken five years to come to fruition. The reason for this is clear. Such events require an immense amount of organisation and hard work. This work is usually provided by volunteers whose primary skills are concerned with the making of books, rather than project management. Speaking as one who has been involved in organising a similar event in England, I know that you have to take on the role of diplomat, fund raiser, promoter and publicist, learning these skills as you go along. You have to negotiate the many snags that try to trip you up as you feel your way forward to the fast-approaching deadline that you have imposed on yourself. So, I congratulate Sirje Kriisa and her team on their success with this exhibition.

It is interesting to note some statistics as, to a certain extent, these can be a measure of success. Twenty two countries participated. This is a good figure. It indicates the effectiveness of the publicity. The largest number of contributors from outside Estonia were from Japan. This is not very surprising. We also had many Japanese binders in the UK international competition. Indeed, there are many Asian binders training and working in Britain. That a small country such as Estonia can attract entrants from all these countries says a lot about the way the competition was promoted. The enthusiasm and commitment emanating from the announcements and publicity material was very apparent.

There was a fee for entering, which, of course, is essential. I do not know of any similar competition which does not charge participants. I imagine this fact is a problem for some struggling bookbinders, young or old, in less affluent countries. It is, unfortunately, inevitable. There is, almost certainly, an inspired, inventive artistic binder out there who was prevented from entering due to lack of resources.

One other interesting statistic is that there were more Estonian entrants (91) than all the other countries put together (74). This seems to detract slightly from the encouraging overall numbers. More positively, it shows the healthy state of the art and craft of bookbinding in Estonia. This was clear to me when I noticed the number of Estonian entries in the UK competition – almost as many as the French. Sixty-one professionals and 29 students provided a very exciting nucleus for *Scripta manent IV*.

We were able to view a tremendous variety of approaches to the art of the hand-bound book at the exhibition. This being an international competition, we could look for national characteristics. We could assess possible influences from each country's society and culture. Bookbinding, like all art and crafts, can be coloured by the political and economic background from which it grows. We cannot escape our working environment, and why should we want to?

Thirty years ago there were endless discussions and arguments over whether modern bookbinding was art or craft. Did it belong in the bookshop, in craft shops or in art galleries? I don't think it matters any more. Contemporary designer bookbinders each have their own agendas, and their work is valid and justified if there is a high standard of technical skill in its making, and a well-reasoned and well-rounded design.

The set book that was worked on by everyone was *The Word Was Sung* – audio transcripts of four lectures by Veljo Tormis, dealing with his creative work and Estonian folk music. Visually and typographically, as a piece of book-making, it is not the most inspiring of subjects. However, binders were fortunate to be provided with a mini-disc of *13 Estonian Lyrical Folk Songs* by Tormis. I would strongly suggest that this is where the inspiration came from for the binder.

The composer speaks of accentuating the inner tensions of songs. This, for me, was reflected in several of the bindings. Jeff Clements has always presented resolved tensions in his bindings, with simple lines and strong shapes, incorporating a certain musicality. His contribution here was no exception.

The subtle, curved line down the spine of Tiina Piisang's work, with buttons that can almost undo the binding, was a triumph. One of the winning bindings, by Maila Kaos, also with simple lines, had this quality, referencing strings or staves, and with an attractive use of the spine.

Ruuda Maarand's binding in hazy vellum seemed to have grown organically around the book, evoking an unspecified time when folk songs may have emerged, as if from the ether. If there is one thing that unifies most Estonian binding it is that earthy, organic feel – almost as if the binder has just watered the book and allowed nature to take its course!

Two other bindings which were really pleasing were Katinka Keus's deceptively simple paste paper covers and Lolita Grabauskiene-Tarbunaite's rather charming forest scene of birds and trees.

Books have defied prophecies of obsolescence in the computer age. E-books are quite appealing in some ways. Over 100 books can be downloaded, the pages are not back-lit, so it's not like a computer screen, and you can change the point size of the type. I'm sure there's a place and a future for them, though I don't think bookbinders should feel too threatened by them. Technologies change and become obsolete. There is not much technology required to read a piece of paper centuries old – as long as there are conservators to preserve it, and binders to contain it.



Lolita Grabauskiene-Tarbunaite, Lithuania



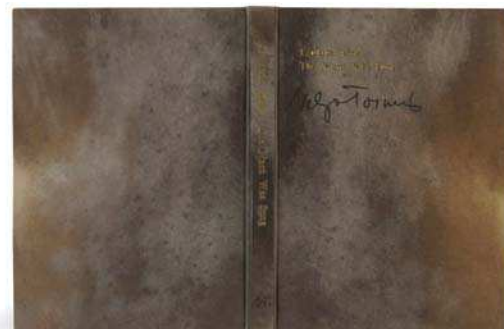
Tiina Piisang, Estonia



Maila Kaos, Estonia



Katinka Keus, The Netherlands



Ruuda Maarand, Estonia



View of the *Scripta manent IV* exhibition at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design. Tallinn, 2010

Mass-produced books and hand-made books are flourishing. The book form, invented so many centuries ago, is a triumph of civilisation. Bookbinders may play with its shape, give it new contexts to exist in, adapt its function, and experiment with its structure. They may call it book art, a book object, a book structure, or a bookbinding event! But it is still a book. There will always be an interest in, and love of beautiful hand-made books, whether elaborate or simple. Examples of all of the above are contained in this exhibition, with materials including wood, leather, vellum, brass, copper perspex, fur and textiles. It must be an extraordinary experience to view this type of work for the first time.

The conference which accompanied the exhibition contained a well-balanced group of talks on bookbinding within Estonia, Germany and the UK. The musical link was provided by Jaan Ross speaking about Veljo Tormis and minimalism, and by Einike Leppik on sound and the visual in artists' books, illustrated with music by John Cage.

Live music was also provided by the Women's Chorus of the National Library of

Estonia. They performed several Tormis songs. For me, coming from England, this was a rare treat. To hear these Estonian songs sung live, in the presence of the composer gave me an insight into the music which I had not had before.

The fact that this whole event was free to the public is a major achievement. The organisers were obviously very successful in raising funds from sponsors. There is a list of these in the catalogue and it is an impressive number, ranging from government departments to private individuals. Perhaps the culture of philanthropy is strong in Estonia. Also, it seems the government is serious about the tradition of crafts and is prepared to support such projects. I have no knowledge of how much money was spent overall, but I know that a conference in the UK would not be free.

Perhaps there is a case to be made for creating an international society for bookbinders which could concentrate on funding competitions and exhibitions across frontiers. No doubt there would be numerous problems with running and financing such an organisation. If we can link up more as societies in differing countries, tackle projects together and communicate more, then events like *Scripta manent* can travel the world. I would be delighted if an Estonian bookbinding exhibition were to come to Britain.

I look forward to *Scripta manent V*.

Lester Capon

(1951), studied at Camberwell School of Art and Crafts in London. Designer bookbinder and restorer since 1977. Fellow, and current president of Designer Bookbinders (UK).

When disruption was taboo

Tiit Hennoste

To what extent was exile-Estonian culture* a continuation of the 'home-Estonia' culture of the 1930s, and to what extent was it a disruption (and beginning when)?

This question has weighed heavily on my mind for a long time. What does continuation mean?

The first level is individual. The authors just continued their own artistic development. Those who continued were certainly classics at home, but for them exile was a stage of their late works. The central continuators are authors who started in the 1930s and a large part of their work was produced in exile. For example, there was poet Bernard Kangro

Leida Org. *St John's Day*, 1974
Textile, appliqué. 112 x 88 cm
Private collection, Stockholm



and novel writer Karl Ristikivi and artist Erik Haamer. And in my mind among those who continued were also the young people who started after the war and were committed to expressing sentiments of exile, as well as carrying on the ideas of literature or art that came before, for example Kalju Lepik in poetry or my uncle Juhan Hennoste in art.

Besides, how much does an artist think about continuing Estonian art and how much does he think about continuing his own development? It seems to me that artists have always been much more self-centred than writers.

Another level is the general. Modernism-centred European/American culture idealised radical innovations, which involve disruption and not continuation. However, boundaries of modernism are drawn differently in art and in literature. It is common in literature that modernism goes back to, for example, Baudelaire, whereas in art it starts with Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism etc. A modernist in literature can thus link himself/herself with the 19th century aesthetics or with symbolism, whereas a modernist in art cannot do this.

In the exile culture, which focused on preserving everything Estonian, disruption was taboo and everybody guilty of disruption had to be cast out. The most important element was survival, one of the methods of continuation. This, however, tended to denote stagnation, which easily leads to the death of culture.

A nice example here is surrealism in literature. It arrived at the margins of Estonian literature before the war via the literary group of very young writers named *Elbumus*. It is clear that without the war it might have developed into one of the trends in Estonian literature and thus we can claim that the post-war surrealists Ilmar Laaban and Ilmar Mikiver continued the trend in Estonian literature. However, it has never been interpreted in that way.

At the same time, we might wonder why the disrupter Laaban was cast out and Kalju Lepik's modernism was accepted a little later. Perhaps first a poet had to receive indulgence as someone who continues and maintains, and only then was he allowed to start innovating, while not discarding exile art's nucleus, nationalism. The situation was more complicated in art, because expressions of nationalism were more vague.

Another issue is the literature and art loyal to national power. In literature, I have called it 'national closeness', according to its ide-



Karl Hintzer. Estonian writers Henrik Visnapuu and Pedro Krusten in a Geislingen refugee camp, Germany. Courtesy of Herder Institute, Marburg

ologist poet Henrik Visnapuu. This was literature subjected to national ideology that voluntarily gave up the idea of a creator's independence, which had prevailed in Estonian culture ever since the neo-romantic Young Estonia group at the beginning of the 20th century. This topic is essential in

interpreting exile culture. However, we have not even agreed on the ambivalent role of the authoritarian rule of President Konstantin Päts which lasted 1934–1940. If we were to list all the methods to restrict democracy that Päts used, we would claim that this was certainly a very unpleasant authoritarian state. But if we add that this was our own beloved little Estonia, all sorts of excuses and justifications are immediately found. Everything came down to the times and circumstances, and our authoritarianism was infinitely milder than in Germany, let alone in the Soviet Union. People tend to ignore the fact that these justifications sound pretty similar to those used by communists in describing the Soviet power.

I have a feeling that in trying to assess the exile-Estonian history of culture the methods have been slightly different than they usually are: every tiny detail is archived, as are correspondences, text fragments, memories and backgrounds, whereas critical evaluation is often neglected. Is this so and, if so, why?

It is. Part of the reason is that these two branches of research are in two stages. First, it is necessary to collect and gather facts, even details, and only then one can interpret. The fine cultural network which springs to life can only be based on details. The other reason is the conflict between the national and artistic task, which emerged together with the slogan of Young Estonians: Let us remain Estonians, but let us become Europeans too. But if we look from the viewpoint and level of European, not much is left over from the exile culture. Estonian art and literature abroad, as a whole, did not aspire to be the best in the world, although many critics in exile so wished. However, stressing national survival

suppresses assessments, because too much of what is nationally essential is artistically feeble. This is an art which people want to buy to their homes and which is very often close to kitsch.

Besides, exile art as a whole has been much less researched than exile literature. Basic biographical facts about many artists have been collected only during recent years, something that was done in literature a long time ago.

There is a certain difference in the exile-Estonian history of culture: according to literary history, the crucial texts of the second half of the 1940s and 1950s were written by exiles, whereas exile artists are not dominant in art history. How do you see the role of the Estonian diaspora in the development of Estonian professional culture?

Both art and literature developed abroad. Still, literature depends on language, and exile literature written in Estonian is certainly part of Estonian culture, however a particular writer saw his/her writing. This compels the researcher to put the works of that era in their appropriate place in history.

Art does not depend on language and is thus much more free from nationality. This is important especially for Estonians, as the cornerstone of Estonians identity and almost the only distinguishing factor is the language. What does nationality mean in art? Techniques, many topics and motifs, and schools are all international. Exile art can be directly linked with Estonian culture via topics. How can art be used in advancing national matters, as writers did after the war? Painting portraits of significant cultural figures? Art that recorded great moments and great people was not very typical in the 20th century and besides needed special clients.

Things are equally complicated by the idea of resistance – an essential problem in literature. How can resistance be painted? Produce war pictures, where Estonians fight until the last drop of blood ...in Nazi uniforms? Nothing was left except depicting symbolic resistance, Kalevipoeg and ancient freedom fighting. But even that tended to go stale.

However, there are two things we can talk about in literature and art. One is the feeling and problems of being in exile, and the second is nostalgia for the lost home. In art, post-war nostalgia is especially strong in motifs of birthplaces and popular views of Tallinn, which is primarily the topic of home-wall

art. More important is the despair and loneliness associated with exile, manifested in expressionist, Picasso-like or Modigliani-like sadness.

The other issue is connected with words. I think that not all creators who went into exile were exiles in their creative work. This is a very important ideological question that evokes a great deal of passion. However, in my opinion, the development both in literature and in art goes from exile art/literature towards art/literature in exile. The radical changes here occurred in the 1960s when literature came under the influence of American counter-culture, new youth culture, sexual liberation and other such phenomena, while in art the changes happened against the background of the explosive pop art.

But if literature in Estonian is always tied to Estonian culture, then if national or exile motifs disappear in art, I can no longer see good basis on which to decide whether or not someone belongs to Estonian art. Sometimes the only link is that an artist associates with other Estonians, participates in various Estonian organisations etc. In other words, this has nothing to do with creative work, but with the identity of the creator.

There is another essential difference. Art is also a studied technical skill, whereas in literature this is less important. For example, in post-war Estonia we can certainly admire the excellent painting technique of Evald Okas (b 1915) or Elmar Kits (1913–1972). There's nothing much to say about this in literature.

It is pointed out in art history that the artists living in Sweden, the USA, Canada and elsewhere had direct contacts with international art trends and the avant-garde. And yet only a few took advantage of the opportunity and fewer succeeded. What was the general attitude of exile-Estonian culture-makers towards the international avant-garde? Did they turn towards the future or the past, towards Estonia or abroad?

I do not quite agree. First, what is direct contact or opportunity in art? I don't know how avant-garde Sweden or Canada were as far as art was concerned. I'm afraid not much. The USA certainly was.

On the other hand, very few authors in literature related to modernism, although not unsuccessfully. We cannot see the modernism of Ilmar Laaban, Karl Ristikivi, Kalju Lepik and Ivar Grünthal as failures. It was

not innovation on an international scale, but earlier Estonian modernism had not been international innovative too. The most important trend in post-war literature in European countries was not modernism. It largely constituted recording the war and its prequels, and it was literature of ethical choices, greatly influenced by existentialism. In my opinion, Lepik's poetry, for example, was a highly original mixture of nationalism and modernism.

More important is the fact that the authors did not pursue the avant-garde of their time (except for a few poets and artists, such as Ilmar Laaban and Enno Hallek), but instead they followed what I have called after Thomas Kuhn 'a normal paradigm modernism', a diluted cocktail of past radical methods. But this had been a feature of Estonian culture at the beginning of the 20th century yet. Painters of that time travelled to Paris and lived in the middle of the craze of the avant-garde, but did not much relate to it, except for a few, such as Ado Vabbe or Jaan Koort.

And the other problem: it seems to me that the artists did relate much more to the art fashion, so not much originality was left over.

* An Estonian diaspora formed after WW II abroad, together with journals and a network of Estonian Houses; exile-Estonian cultural life was actively maintained. Today this has become a fading phenomenon, as the descendents of exile Estonians have on the whole totally assimilated into the culture of their resident country.

Tiit Hennoste

(1953), literary theorist. Research interests are text studies and spoken language.

Eerik Haamer
On a Terrace. 1988
Oil, canvas
96,5 x 113 cm
Private collection



EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE ESTONIAN DIASPORA

Ellu Maar

Vello Muikma
(1920–2008).
Photograph
for a cough
remedy advert



*Photography from the Estonian Diaspora** was an exhibition that gathered the work of Estonians who escaped the advancing Soviet army in 1944 and fled to the West, and Estonians born in exile in the West who worked as professional photographers.

During World War II, about 80 000 people left Estonia, most of them in September 1944 with the retreating German troops by boat to Germany, or to Sweden on whatever boat could be found. Out of about 40 000 people who arrived in Germany, most spent the following years in refugee camps for Baltic peoples, until they were sent on to more permanent places of residence in 1949, mainly to the USA, Canada and Australia. In 1991, when Estonia regained its independence, these historical events began to be systematically researched and analysed, and are still being interpreted. In 2008, a bulky collection of exile Estonian literature was published, and the local art world also started a thorough project tackling exile art. This was supposed to offer comprehensive insight into Estonian art created in exile.

In a sense, the current exhibition carries on the project on art in exile. The artists of the Estonian diaspora were closely connected with relevant Estonian communities and their work thus supported the mission of all communities to maintain Estonian culture abroad. These artists largely continued the art

tradition that had prevailed at home, in free Estonia. All this, however, does not apply to Estonian photographers working in exile. This is a topic that had never been properly researched, if at all and, besides a few names, the whole discourse had to be worked out during the preparations for the exhibition. By choosing photography as a narrative and documentary medium, we hoped to expand the existing treatment of exile in the Estonian visual culture. Photographers in exile worked in an environment that followed the requirements of the Western information society and, unlike figurative artists, did not rely on traditions established in their homeland.

The exhibition gradually evolved into a collection of photographs and photographic stories that cover approximately 60 years and reflect the Estonians' escape to the West, the commune years spent in the German refugee camps in the hope of a permanent country of residence, and life in the free world (the exhibition presents the works of photographers living in Sweden, Canada and the USA). The display also includes pictures of Soviet Estonia, where the exile Estonian press photographers encountered the Soviet reality and produced a grim, merciless and critical picture of it. These pictures reveal the disappointment and culture shock inevitably experienced by exile Estonians used to Western life who visited Soviet Estonia in the 1970s and 1980s.

In addition to archive photographs with partially anonymous authorship, the exhibition introduces the work of nine photographers, each of whom deserves a more thorough examination. Their period of activity stretches from 1944 until today. Eric Soovere and Karl Hintzer were already known in Estonia as excellent recorders of the escape and life in German refugee camps. Their input covers the documentary-anthropological aspect, describing the post-World War II wave of refugees, and observes the daily life of the refugees until the end of the 1940s, when people were sent on to permanent places of residence.

The daily life in Soviet Estonia and the impact on it of the Soviet power were addressed by the National Geographic jour-

nalist Priit Vesilind, who focused on the Eastern bloc throughout his professional career. Vesilind's pictures of the fall of the Berlin Wall at the exhibition constitute a symbol of the entire collapse of the Iron Curtain. Another press photographer was Rein Vålme, who critically and also emotionally tackled the impact of the Soviet power in Estonia.

Professional photographers who definitely belong in today's discourse of the history of photography sometimes worked in very practical jobs as photographers. Olavi Maru became an aerial photographer in the US Air Force and, in addition to his aerial photographs, depicted the Cold War-era Western intelligence service and the working environment of an Air Force base in Denver, Colorado. Vello Muikma started at the end of the 1950s in Canada as a photographer at an

Ontario hydroelectric power plant and finally arrived in the field of advertising and corporate photography, working in the rapidly developing advertising industry. Thus, he was present during an era of shaping the visual language of advertising, which constantly changed to meet new needs.

The exhibition consisted of about 400 photos, embracing an extensive range of the areas of exile life. The exhibition tried to follow the creative twists and turns of nine exile Estonian photographers. This kind of exhibition had never been organised before. The main principle was to gather the best pictures from the best photographers, but there is one thematic line that unites them all and emerges powerfully: the opposition between

East and West, the Iron Curtain that separated them in the second half of the last century, the Cold War and political confrontation, and the very different cultures on the two sides of this dividing line.



Olavi Maru (1929–2008)
Aerial photograph
of the Pentagon

* The exhibition *Photography from the Estonian Diaspora* took place at the Kumu Art Museum from 8 October to 19 December 2010. It was curated by Eha Komissarov and Ellu Maar.

Ellu Maar

(1982), See also pp 10–12.
Co-curator of the exhibition *Photography from the Estonian Diaspora* at the Kumu Art Museum.

Faces of the East

Photographs
by Priit Vesilind

Most of my photography has been in connection with *National Geographic* magazine assignments where I am the writer, not the photographer. The concentration of the writer must be on collecting symbols that stand for the critical issues of the subject. Many of these symbols are words that come from conversations, interviews, books and thoughtful observations. But a substantial number of the symbols are visual; they come from the hundreds of photographs I take on assignment – in the hope that they will help me describe certain emotions and moods, and of course physical reality.





Priit Vesilind. *The father carrying his daughter on his shoulders during the May Day parade in East Berlin.* 1981

So, I take photographs mostly as visual notes, as a type of research. That seems a pedestrian concept for good photography, and it is. I am also a serious photographer who cares about composition, lighting and the power of the still image – although this is not what I take to my editors. I can't take the time to fuss with technology and return visits, so my photography is often a kind of street photography, which can be seen as shallow, not penetrating. I don't shy away from this description, but the truth is that any temporary documentation of a place or people will fall short of the ideal. Out of an infinite number of possible images and descriptions, we record only a minuscule number. A better description is that we stop a moment in time. This is delusional, but we do what we can.

Faces of the East is a collection of colour-slide photographs that I have taken over the past twenty years of work in eastern Europe. It includes photographs from the Baltic States, East Germany, Berlin, Kaliningrad and St Petersburg. Passing over the West-East divide, whether at Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin or on the *Georg Ots* ferry from Helsinki to Tallinn, was always an exercise in expectations. I knew that people were not going to respond or act like those I knew in America or western Europe. I understood that many of the people I would meet led double lives and fostered a deep distrust of anyone who was not a long-time friend. I could see that, for them, the prospect of meeting a Western journalist was often an act of bravery. So it was no surprise that they responded to me with deep reluctance.

What I also began to see as I traveled in the East was that people not only acted differently, they also looked different – especially in the street. The faces I saw on the street were strikingly different in terms of aspect and expression. I saw and photographed faces that you simply never see on the streets of New York or Copenhagen. People in the West would not present themselves to the public with such faces. They were resigned, discouraged faces, some with a hostility that could only have been created by fear. Often I felt as if I had wandered off a path and met an entirely new species. Now the line between East and West is blurred, and I see faces that are confident, open and fashionably cynical in even the most repressive places. The old genre is finished, at least in eastern Europe.

Priit Vesilind. *In Tallinn, a couple trying to sell willow branches with catkins at the market.* 1988

Priit Vesilind

(1943), Estonian-born American senior writer and photojournalist of *National Geographic* magazine and an author of nonfiction.

REFLECTIONS ON THE EXHIBITION:

Photography from the Estonian Diaspora
Peeter Langovits

When I was leaving the exhibition, I caught myself involved in three trains of thought. Firstly, the significance of the exhibition – the remarkable and diverse *Photography from the Estonian Diaspora* constitutes a considerable contribution to the overview display of Estonian Art In Exile in another hall of the Kumu Art Museum. The extensive documentary material and reportages offer an insight into the lives and beliefs of our com-

patriots who lived abroad. In addition, this is an extraordinary exhibition that definitely enriches the world of photography and offers a thorough look at photography in exile, as well as being a systematic study of a field of Estonian photography that has not previously been examined. This display is a kind of return home; in the pictures, national and Western aesthetics have blended into a new quality, thus enriching our general cultural field. These impacts are seen in the way of life and in creative work, in aspirations to preserve everything Estonian and in seeking an individual place through the undertakings and way of life of the community. An additional value is provided by photographs depicting various trips abroad and visits to Estonia.

Secondly, I realised how little I actually knew about the photography of the Estonian diaspora – just a few names. The often anonymous material presented at the exhibition offered so much background information about an era when we lived in a different rhythm here.

Thirdly, it occurred to me how necessary it was to have a similar overview of photography in Estonia in the same period, starting with the occupation of Estonia in 1940 and ending with regaining independence. There are still people around who can remember it all. It would be fascinating to see pictures stuffed away in desk drawers (or well hidden) in the 1940s and 1950s. Peeter Tooming used to do excellent work with his annual summaries.

Numerous history books and biographies have revealed a lot, but photographic production has not been sorted into any cultural-historical perspective. There are summaries of a few periods, but no thorough and comprehensive overview embracing different genres.

And – this project should have been started 10 years ago. The result would have been enhanced, as many creative people have already passed away. The exhibition definitely deserves a place in Estonian museum collections.

Olav Heinmets (1953).
Home series. 1979-1992



Alar Kivilo (1953).
Hollywood,
Los Angeles,
California. 2009

Peeter Langovits

(1948), Estonian
photographer, photo editor,
since 1995 photojournalist
at daily *Postimees*.



Salme Parming (1919). *In Liberty State Park*. 1979



Karl Hintzer (1895-1967)
Exhibition of handicraft in a DP camp
 Photo archive of the paper *Teataja*,
 Estonian Literary Museum

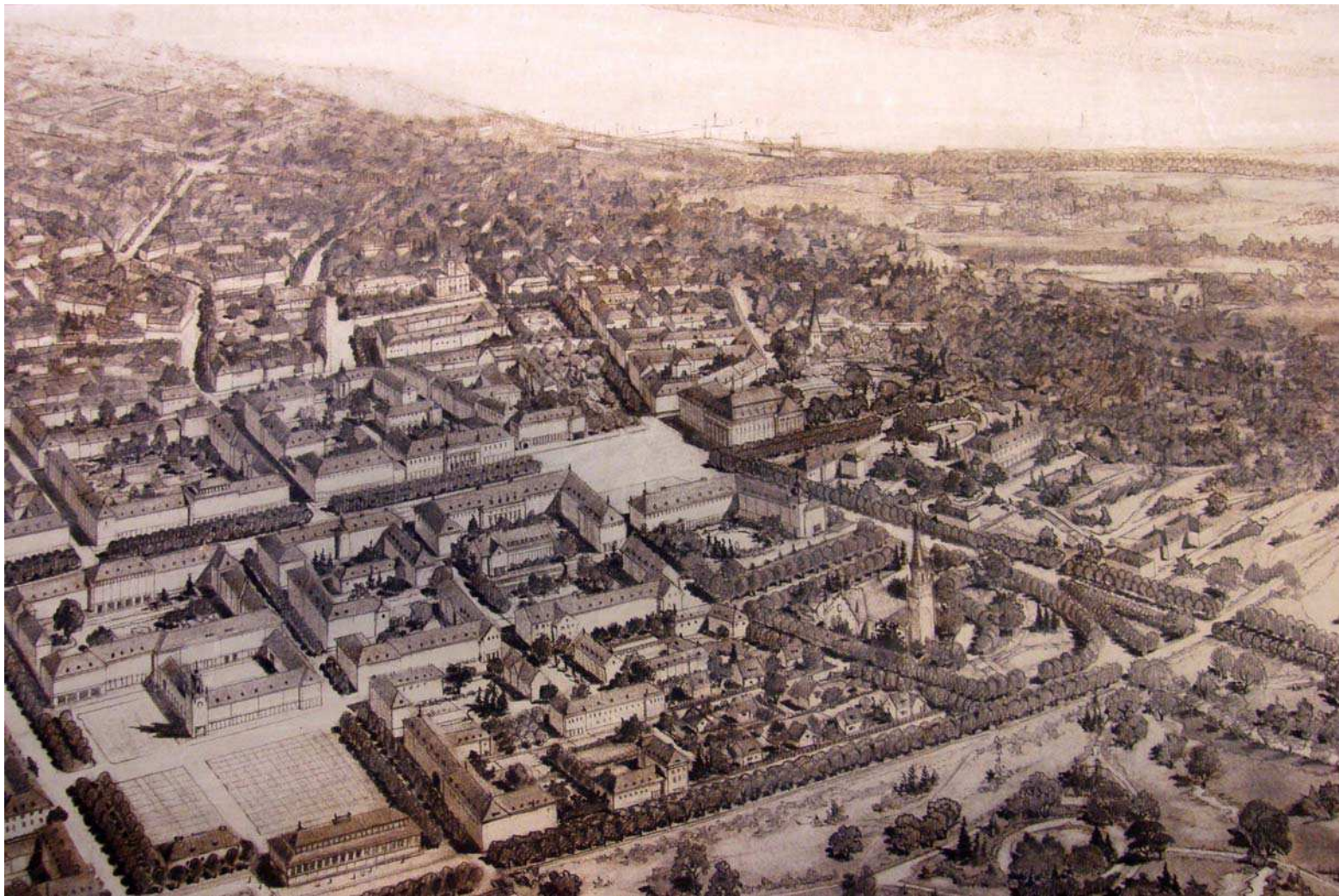


Eric Soovere (1916-2008)
Ülo and Leili taking their first look at the Statue of Liberty, New York. 1949

FROM TOWN TO HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREA

Changes in the construction of urban structures
in small Estonian towns from the 13th to
the 20th century

Lilian Hansar



The oldest Estonian towns emerged over seven hundred years ago, although many had existed long before as ancient settlements. Despite being destroyed many times, the towns have been repeatedly rebuilt, and the location and the scheme of streets have stayed more or less the same. New and more modern towns gradually emerged only at the end of the 19th century, each, as if for safety, clinging to the old town heart that carried its meaning and traditions and which we protect today.

The research on old towns is limited both temporally and spatially – it examines the emergence and development of historical towns from the 13th to the last quarter of the 20th century, when protection zones of old towns were established. The first to be protected was the Old Town of Tallinn in 1966, followed in 1973 by the historical centres in Lihula, Haapsalu, Kuressaare, Paide, Pärnu, Rakvere, Tartu, Viljandi, Võru and, in 1995, in Valga.

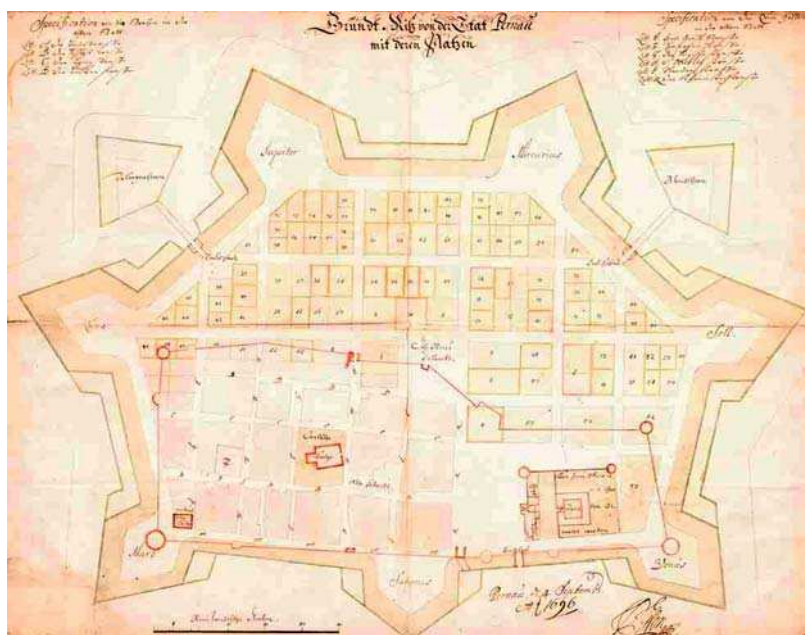
The content and laws of heritage conservation have changed over the years, but the

problems related to the protection of historical towns are the same as they were when the protection zones were established. Discussions of the ways and extent of maintaining and innovating old towns are still continuing. One reason is the vagueness of the principles of protection, and also insufficient knowledge of the true values of old towns. As the general research on the history of Estonian art and architecture primarily deals with bigger towns, the aim of the current research is to increase knowledge of the construction of small towns: without knowing a great deal about old towns we cannot really protect them. This work focuses on changes occurring during different construction periods.

Ancient roads and settlements form the foundations of many towns. However, the result of establishing medieval towns in the Estonian territory was the destruction of earlier cultural layers and the emergence of new layers. Medieval towns, which had taken shape over the course of centuries, were destroyed in wars, leaving only the ruins of strongholds and some churches (except in Tallinn). Still, most older towns have retained their medieval structures of streets rather well. The networks of streets is therefore the oldest and best preserved component of urban structures in heritage protection areas. It should be pointed out that the 17th century Swedish-era plans to fortify and modernise towns did not radically alter the medieval structural plans. Tessellation plans, typical of the era, were connected with the existing scheme of streets, for example in Narva and Pärnu.

The subsequent two centuries in the Russian tsarist empire were significant in the development of Estonian towns – this was the time when the extent and general outlook of the old towns we protect today actually took shape. After the Great Northern War, the shattered towns were restored within their medieval boundaries. Despite changes in the locations of buildings, the streets of medieval town centres were maintained as important structural parts of old towns, and the tradition of densely built-up street fronts was maintained as well. A new impetus for the development of towns was their new status: in 1783 they became the district centres in the Russian empire. A good example of the era's urban planning is Võru, established in 1784, where the tessellation plan has survived to this day. The building of railways and health resorts in the last decades of the 19th century was accompanied by the first functional

changes in old towns. The new buildings extended towards railway stations, and new town centres were built. Health resorts in Haapsalu, Kuressaare and Pärnu were established in empty areas, and the older built-up areas thus did not significantly change. Bigger changes, however, started in areas of several other old towns that had rather homogeneous low wooden buildings. Houses with new architecture, which were taller than the earlier ones, are especially visible in the medieval sections of Viljandi, Rakvere and Pärnu. The biggest developments took place in Valga, where a grand-looking business street, at some distance from the old centre, was constructed.



Plan of Viljandi in 1948.
Compiled by E. Laasi.
Archives of the Museum
of Estonian Architecture

Plan of Pärnu in 1696.
Compiled by P. von Essen.
The Military Archives
of Sweden

During the Republic of Estonia, in the 1920s and 1930s, most old towns did not undergo any rapid development that would have considerably altered them. Although in several towns it was planned to replace the historical set of buildings with something new, nothing much ever happened; the few clearly higher stone houses in streets with historical buildings are signs of unfinished urban construction plans. The Republic of Estonia did not last long enough to realise all the planned innovations in towns.

When the Soviet Union gained control of Estonia, it initiated truly radical changes in urban planning and construction. The general plans of post-war large towns mainly involved preserving historical structures, whereas in smaller towns it was decided to replace the old buildings with new ones. The claims that the first post-war years spared our historical heritage and old towns are thus somewhat inaccurate: the majority of plans involved changing the network of streets and buildings in historical centres. Until the mid-1950s, all plans relied on traditional plan-

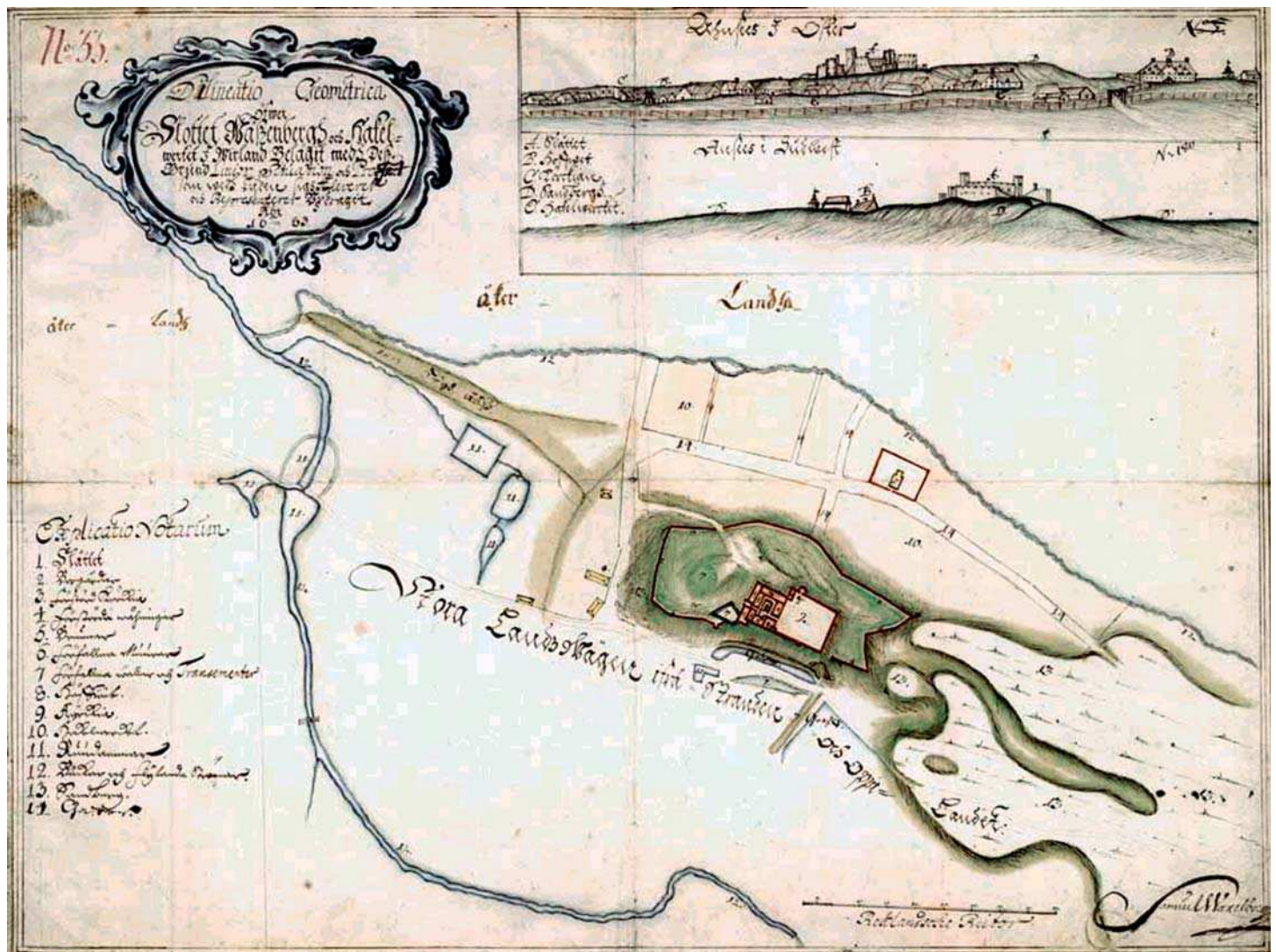
ning principles. Symmetrical compositions were designed where central squares formed grandiose ensembles – towns were planned as large sculptural works of art. In the 1960s, the new residential districts and their service centres were designed further away from old centres, but the reconstruction of historical towns and the addition of new buildings continued. The Soviet power structure provided a favourable social background for planning: all land belonged to the state, which enabled some utopian urban plans to emerge.

An overview of the development of old towns leads to the conclusion that the radical changes in their evolution can be associated with totalitarian ideologies of the ruling empires in Estonia and utopian ideas of urban construction, accompanied by aspirations of order and rationality which are typical of utopias. Good examples are provided by medieval colonial towns, with their fixed plans, the Swedish-era regular plans of the ideal town and fortifications, tsarist urban construction regulations, standard facades and tessellation plans, ideas of great cities of the Republic



Street network in Rakvere in the 17th century. Compiled by Lillian Hansar

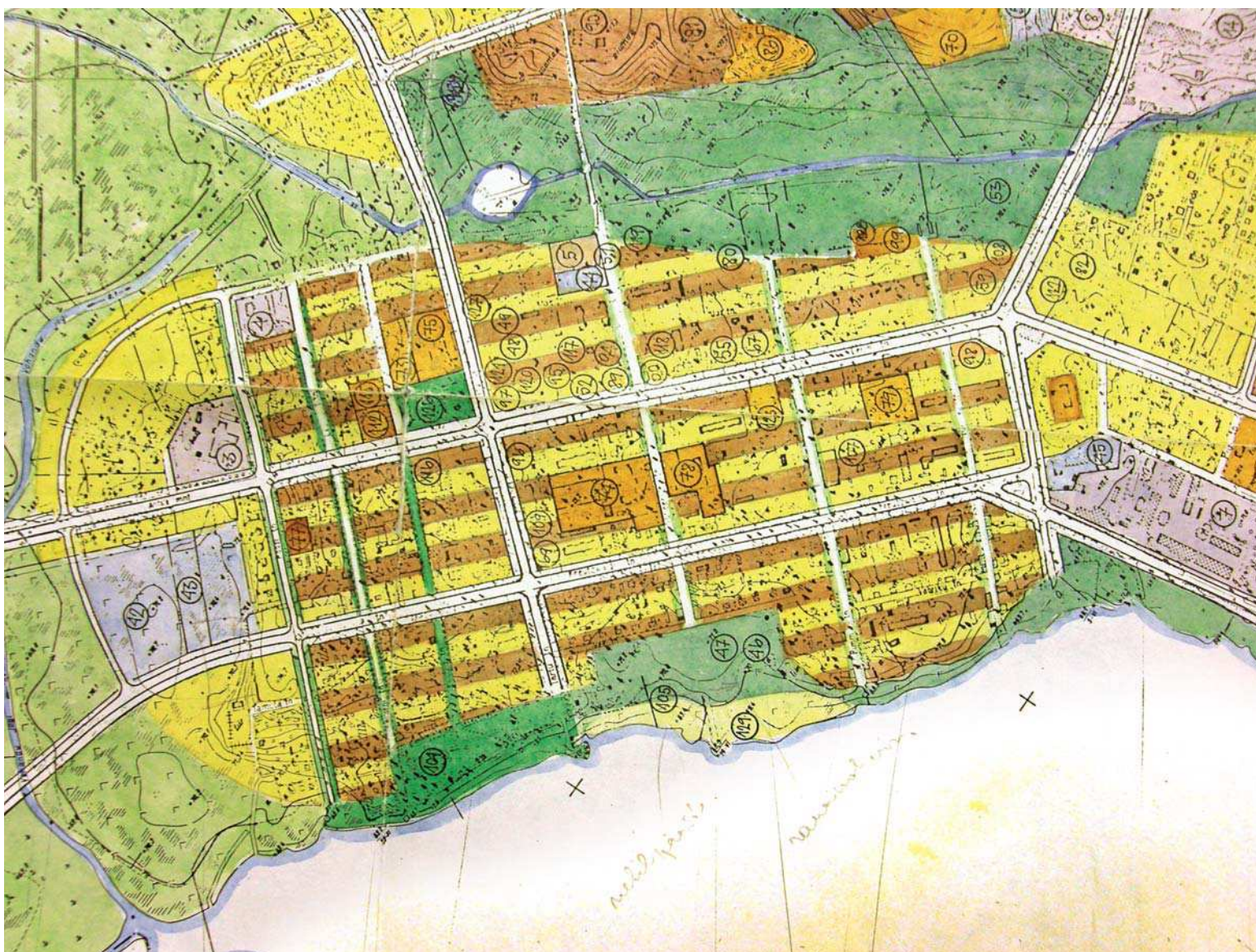
Plan of Rakvere in 1683. Compiled by S. Waxelberg. The Military Archives of Sweden





Building of block of flats at Tartu Rd 33 in Võru.
Photo in the 1960s

Plan of Võru in 1971. Compiled by R. Riitsaar.
The Estonian Folklore Archives



period and the Soviet total urban innovation designs.

Generalising about the development of towns, it is clear that each new period has tried to make space for the future. The new has emerged instead of, or alongside, the old, expressing the principles of different eras. Changes have brought about the destruction of previous cultural layers and have created new layers. The long history of old towns is thus reflected in the architectural layers of different times and in the uneven structure of built-up areas. Typical features in streets include the varying heights of houses and stretches of empty plots of land, which mark past endings and new beginnings. Heritage protection thus inherited old towns with centuries of history, but full of controversies: such towns are located on top and underneath one another, and they have had many beginnings and an equal number of endings. However, history, with its many layers and meanings, unites centuries-old towns and justifies contrasts.

Lilian Hansar

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Establishing Orthodox churches in Estonia and their architecture

Jaanus Plaat

The first contacts of people inhabiting the territory of Estonia with the Russian Orthodox Church probably occurred in the 11th century. Orthodoxy is the oldest form of Christianity to reach Estonia, as the first representatives of the indigenous people were christened into Orthodoxy around the 11th–12th centuries, hence before the Teutonic conquest and the arrival of the Roman Catholic Church. The first Christian church in Estonia may have also been established by the Russian invaders in the 11th century in Jurjev (Tartu). Orthodox churches definitely existed in Tartu and Tallinn in the 14th–15th centuries.

The oldest surviving Orthodox churches in the Estonian territory determined by the 1920 Tartu Peace Treaty are located in Russian part of Setomaa (Petserimaa). The oldest of them, the Irboska St Nicholas Church, which is connected with the Seto Orthodox people, was built in the 1340s. The contacts of the ancestors of the Seto people with Orthodoxy may have also started in the 11th century and strengthened since the 16th century due to the activity of the Petseri Monastery. There are a total of 11 stone churches currently in Petserimaa (including four churches of the Petseri Monastery) that were established before the 18th century, but they have changed considerably in the course of centuries through reconstruction.

The oldest surviving wooden sacred buildings in the mainland part of today's Republic of Estonia are also located in Setomaa: the Mikitamäe and Uusvada *tsässons* (village chapels of the Seto people), built in the 1690s. The oldest wooden Orthodox

church in Estonia is the Church of Our Lady of Kazan in Tallinn (completed in 1721). The earliest Orthodox stone chapel surviving in ruins may be the 13th century St Mary's Chapel in Viru-Nigula, with its ground plan in the shape of a Greek cross, but this is not certain.

Several Orthodox churches and monasteries, no longer surviving today, were established in Estonia in the 16th century during the Livonian War, as a result of Russian invasions. By the end of the subsequent 'Swedish era', the only Orthodox church that continued to operate was St Nicholas Church in Tallinn.

The Church of Our Lady of Kazan in Tallinn. Completed in 1721



The Church of St Nicholas in Irboska



The Church of St Nicholas in Irboska, Pechory County, nowadays Pechory Raion of the Pskov Oblast of the Russian Federation. Built in the 1340s

At the same time, Russian Orthodox people in Ida-Virumaa (nowadays Eastern Viru County) gathered in several chapels that have not survived.

After the Russians gained power in the early 18th century, some Lutheran and Catholic churches in Estonian towns were reconstructed into Orthodox churches and, beginning in the 1720s, new churches were built. Besides the Seto people, the local Russians were Orthodox as well. They mostly lived in towns and in the eastern part of the country (including the Old Believers, who arrived here from Russia beginning in the late 17th century). Beginning in the 17th century, some Russians in north-east Estonia converted to the Lutheran faith, but still followed many Orthodox customs (including the *poluverniks*, 'half-believers').

Among dozens of new Orthodox churches in Estonia in the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, mention should be made of the architecturally stylish baroque Great Martyr St Catherine cross-domed church (1769, architect P. Jegorov) in Pärnu. Quite a number of these churches were modelled on local and Western European church architecture, for example St George's Church in Paldiski (1787, architect J. Moor).

Establishing new congregations in Estonian towns also prepared the ground for Lutheran Estonians to convert to the Orthodox faith in the 1840s. Most hoped

to gain benefits, especially land, according to widespread rumours. Between 1845 and 1848, about 17% of the peasantry in southern Estonia converted to Orthodoxy. There were people in all of the counties in southern Estonia who converted (at least 65,000 Estonians in 1845–47); by spring 1848, their percentage on Saaremaa Island was as high as 30%.¹ In northern Estonia, a similar movement took place in the 1880s. In 1897, the members of the Orthodox Church in Estonian parishes (i.e. mostly Estonians) totalled 113,671 (14% of the rural population). The rest of the Orthodox members lived in towns and were largely Russian.²

For the Estonians who had converted, numerous wooden and stone churches were built in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century; a large number of them were built according to a standard design.³ The churches were mainly designed by Riga Bishopric and province architects and differed in size and ground plan, based on the shape of the Latin or Greek cross. However, even the standard stone churches (e.g. 10 Saaremaa churches, completed in 1872–73) often differed in details and the usage of local materials.

The Church of Great Martyr St Catherine in Pärnu. Consecrated in 1769, architect P. Jegorov



St George's Church in Paldiski. Consecrated in 1787, architect J. Moor

Of the four main church types of the era, we should point out rural churches with five domes or one dome and a bell tower. The three-part edifice (entrance hall, nave and altar) in the shape of a Latin cross was often built of red brick and natural stone walls, which is only typical of Estonian Orthodox churches.

Most of the wooden or stone churches in Estonia of that time were built during the reign of the Riga bishops Arseni (1887–97) and Agafangel (1897–1910), a total of ca 50 churches. In addition to standard projects, many churches had individual designs, e.g. the Narva Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ, a unique example in Estonia of the Byzantine trend of Russian sacral architecture (consecrated in 1896, architect P. Alisch), and the monumental Alexander Nevski Cathedral in Tallinn (1900, architect M. Preobrazhenski). Other examples of sacral historicism is the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God at the Pühtitsa (Kuremäe) convent (1910, architect A. Poleshtshuk), the St Vladimir Church in Narva-Jõesuu (1893, architect A. Ivanov, detonated in 1944 by German forces), and The Mother of God Church of

the Pühtitsa Convent in Tallinn, which was demolished in 1960 on the orders of the town's executive committee (1902, architect N. Nikonov). These churches largely followed the tradition of the historical sacral architecture of central Russia.

Among the over ten Orthodox sacral buildings⁴ (including two Seto tsässons and a wooden prayer house in Surju, which was converted into an apartment house in the 1960s) completed during the Republic of Estonia in the 1920s and 1930s, mention should be made of the Kohtla-Järve church. The only Orthodox church built in the functionalist style in Estonia (1938, architect A. Soans) acquired domes on its roof only in 2000. The architect A. Vladovski's work deserves also special attention. He designed various original wooden and stone churches (e.g. in the Nõmme and Kopli areas of Tallinn and in Saatse). Still-surviving wooden churches are in Treimani and Urissaare in Pärnu County, in Luhamaa in the Seto region and in Levala on Saaremaa Island (the latter resembles the prayer houses of local free congregations). In addition to those, Old Believers prayer houses-churches were built (1928 in Väike-Kolkja, and 1930 in Mustvee and in Tallinn); the capacious Mustvee stone church stands out among other wooden prayer houses of the Old Believers.

Besides erecting churches, there was a serious issue in the 1920s and 1930s: whether or not to demolish the Nevski Cathedral on Toompea Hill.⁵ Many Orthodox churches and chapels were pulled down or remained in ruins during the subsequent Soviet era (plus those destroyed in WW II).

In 1945, the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church (EAOC) was liquidated and replaced by a bishopric of the Russian Orthodox Church. During the atheist Soviet era, the Orthodox tradition suffered greatly. According to the 1897 census, the Orthodox believers in Estonia made up 14% and, in 1922, 19% of the population (the additional 5% largely consisted of Orthodox members in Põhja- and Lääne-Eesti and beyond the Narva River; in 1922, the percentage of Estonian Orthodox members was 12%), whereas by the end of the Soviet era, the active members of Orthodox congregations made up less than 1% of the population in Soviet Estonia.⁶ The closed churches were used as community centres, offices, storage spaces of state farms, workshops, sport halls



The Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God at the Pühtitsa (Kuremäe) convent in Eastern Viru County. Consecrated in 1910, architect A. Poleshtshuk



etc. Many were left empty to slowly crumble. By 1961, 25 Orthodox churches and prayer houses had been closed, and the process continued. These witnesses of Soviet religious politics can still be seen standing in ruins.

Before the fateful 1960s, some new Orthodox sacral buildings were erected. In spite of all the difficulties, the local people in Setomaa managed to complete wooden churches in Obinitsa in 1952 and in Meeksi (Miikse) in 1953. In 1951, a wooden chapel was built in Agusalu, which was demolished the following year. In the post-war years, the

Old Believers erected prayer houses in Kükita and Tartu. After that, the building of churches was disrupted for decades. Before Estonia regained independence, the only new buildings were the church of St Alexy and Varvara (1986), the church of John the Baptist and the Tartu Martyr St. Issidor (1990) and the chapel of St. George in the Pühtitsa Convent.

After Estonia regained its independence, the Orthodox Church split into two parts: the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church (EAOC), consisting at the end of 2009 of 64 congregations and about 27,000 members,



The ruins of Sts Peter and Paul Church in Saatse, Setomaa. Construction was started and discontinued in 1939, architect A. Vladovski



The Holy Spirit Church in Luhamaa, Misso Parish, Võru County. Consecrated in 1932



The Edinoverie Church of Holy Trinity in Mustvee. Consecrated in 1877

and the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (EOCMP), which in 2009 had 31 mostly Russian-language congregations and about 170,000 members. On the initiative of the latter, new stone churches were built in Sillamäe (completed in 1995) and Maardu (1998), and log churches following the old Russian style in Narva (2003) and Aseri (2010). Some buildings that had been used for other purposes were converted into churches in Viljandi (completed in 1998, reconstructed from a former morgue), Valga (2001, a club for railway employees), Loksa (2003, a kindergarten) and Paldiski (2003, a town museum building). By the end of 2011, a stone church in Türi should be completed (construction started in 2007). The bigger version of the latter is being erected in Tallinn: the Church of the Icon of the Mother of God 'Quick to Hearken'. The construction of this monumental, cross-domed church, which follows the Byzantine tradition, began in 2006 (architects O. Zhemtchugov, N. Djatko and J. Kolomeikin).⁷

EOCMP has also restored war-damaged churches in Jaama and Vasknarva. Since the early 21st century, Vasknarva has housed an auxiliary convent of Pühtitsa. EAOE established a small convent in Saaremaa and the Platon chapel in Tallinn. Many EAOE churches and *tsässons* have now been restored. There are also four new Seto *tsässons*. The number of all the Estonian churches and chapels-*tsässons* is about twice the size of the number of congregations: more than 180 including the buildings standing in ruins. The Old Believers have 11 churches-prayer

houses; there are also some other Eastern Rite congregations, e.g the Church of Edinoverie (Russian: единоверие, i.e. unity in faith), the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (Eastern Rite Catholic church) and the Armenian Apostolic Church in Estonia.

In conclusion, the tradition of Orthodox architecture in Estonia is diverse and has a long history, from the Middle Ages up to the present day. The golden years of building wooden and stone churches were the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. A large number of churches, mainly established for Estonian congregations, suffered great damage in wars and under Soviet rule, and are today in ruins or in danger of collapsing. However, since the 1990s, the construction of new churches and restoration of old ones has definitely picked up again.

¹ See Hans Kruus. *Talurahva käärimine Lõuna-Eestis XIX sajandi 40-ndal aastal*. Tartu, 1930; Jaanus Plaat. Saaremaa kirikud, usuliikumised ja prohvetid 18.–20. sajandil. Tartu 2003

² *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской Империи, 1897 г.* Ред. Н. А. Тройницкий. Том XLIX. Эстляндская губерния. Санкт-Петербург., pp 122-125; Том XXI. Лифляндская губерния. pp 226–229.

³ See Aleksandr Pantelejev 1990. Apostliku õigeusu kirikud Eestis. – Eesti chitismälestised. Aastaraamat. Toim. Tiit Masso, pp 132–140

⁴ See Egle Tamm. *Moodsad kirikud: Eesti 1920.–1930. aastate sakraalarhitektuur*. Tallinn, 2001

⁵ In 1924, the architect K. Burman designed the grandiose Pantheon of Independence (Freedom Church) in the place of the Nevski Cathedral, which was seen as a symbol of Russification (EgleTamm 2001, pp 32–33).

⁶ In 1987, only 2400 people in Estonia regularly attended Orthodox Church services. See Jaanus Plaat. *Usuliikumised, kirikud ja vabakogudused Lääne- ja Hiiumaal: Usuühenduste muutumisprotsessid 18. sajandi keskpaigast kuni 20. sajandi lõpuni*. Tartu, 2001, pp 222–223

⁷ See also Urmas Oja, Possibilities of modern churches. - *Estonian Art* 1, 2005

Jaanus Plaat

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The Church of the Archangel Michael in Maardu. Consecrated in 1998



The Church of Transfiguration of Our Lord in Obinita, Meremäe Parish, Võru County. Consecrated in 1952

A European in the Soviet era: architectural historian Villem Raam

Villem Raam (1910–1996) was an acclaimed art historian whose main research area was medieval architecture. He was a prominent architectural historian and art critic even before World War II, but he was deported to Siberia, where he remained between 1941 and 1956. After his return, he was actively involved in researching medieval architecture and in issues of restoration. He was one of the most popular public intellectuals of his time. Conferences are now organised in his honour, and researchers who worked with him form a remarkable school in the research of medieval Estonian architecture.

Interview with Villem Raam's disciples Kaur Alttoa and Juhan Kilumets by Eero Epner.



Villem Raam. *Northern windows*. Church of Pirita Nunnery, 1975



Villem Raam whitewashing the walls in Põide Church

What is Villem Raam's most essential contribution to Estonian art history?

Kaur Altkoa: On the one hand, medieval architecture is always international: we are talking about European cultural space and it is unthinkable to try to draw little national borders. On the other hand, there are plenty of cases where researching some phenomena or objects is reduced to local studies, especially in closed societies such as Soviet Estonia. Thanks to Villem Raam, we can say that, beginning at the end of the 1950s, Estonia was a part of the classical international research history, at least as far as medieval architecture was concerned. This did not happen in many countries with a similar fate, where nice people tackled the issues, but nothing came of it.

How did he manage that?

Kaur Altkoa: Firstly, there was his high level as a scholar, and secondly his 'charm', plus a network of contacts.

How did he make these foreign contacts? After all, he operated in the closed Soviet system and, besides, he spent 15 years in Siberia, cut off from everything...

Kaur Altkoa: We should here explain about the Estonian school of medieval architecture research, where Raam was a student of Sten Karling [Sten Karling, 1906–1987; Swedish art historian; 1933–1941 professor of art history at Tartu University; after the war, he held the same position at Stockholm University – Ed]. Another student of Karling was Armin Tuulse [1907–1977; Estonian art historian; 1942–1944 professor of art history at Tartu University; he escaped to Sweden during WWII – Ed]. The level of art history teaching at Stockholm University was very high and at some point there were two professorships: Karling's and Tuulse's. These were obviously the first contacts Villem Raam managed to establish with scholars abroad. For example, Karling arranged the publication of Raam's article on the Tallinn Cathedral in a Swedish research journal. Tuulse helped him to make contacts in Finland, and recommended that Finnish researchers of the Middle Ages get in touch with Raam etc. One of those researchers recalled how he arrived in Tallinn with a tourist group, walked to the Cathedral and saw a kind of ditch beside it, where a man was busy doing something. 'Mr Raam?' he asked. 'Yes, it's me,' said the man from the hole in the ground.

Raam was keen on Old Livonia, and this field of study was very important after the



Villem Raam. Northern portal of Valjala Church. 1971



Villem Raam. Western door of Valjala Church. 1974

war, for German and, especially, Westphalian researchers (primarily in the context of missionary activities). When they sought relevant people via Stockholm, they were advised to find Raam. These were the starting points and what followed was a snowball effect.

Considering Villem Raam as a scientist, what methods or conclusions of his do you value most?

Kaur Altoa: From today's point of view, Raam's method is essential both in art history and in archaeology. On the one hand, many contemporary art historians consider it an outdated approach, but Raam always emphasised the importance of knowing an object, and meticulous research on and analysis of that object. He examined, dug and took photographs. Alas, digging is sometimes all that happens in archaeology. Raam regarded fieldwork as providing the basic material for further analysis; instead of the style-critical method, he analysed details and form. Another essential aspect was his knowledge of parallel literature and making generalisations on that basis: where a fascinating detail, a construction method, an exciting zigzag actually came from. Villem had a nice saying about researching medieval architecture: you have only a hind leg of a horse and this must tell you everything about the animal's pedigree.

In addition, Raam always considered the function of objects; he never saw buildings as 'dead'. For example, he considered how pilgrims stopped over in Saaremaa churches, or what happened in the Piritä Convent.

Juhan Kilumets: Raam's knowledge of objects was indeed phenomenal. One part was description, where he was truly amazing,

even when depicting, say, a staircase. True, it is sometimes quite boring to read page after page of descriptions, but it was important to him, because in that way he learned about the object. Then photography: using it, he examined buildings stone by stone. This was Raam's starting point, and everything else followed. For some time now, however, describing an object has been regarded as something for first-year students, whereas scholars immediately start to interpret and date. But this does not work. There are plenty of examples even in monographs, where the knowledge of objects is clearly insufficient.

Kaur Altoa: Description requires a systematic approach, which is then reflected in a person's writings. It used to be normal that, if a question emerged in the course of writing an article, you jumped into your car, drove to the location and found out the answer there, instead of solving everything in your office. This kind of approach has largely disappeared from today's art history.

Juhan Kilumets: At the end of his life, Raam became almost totally blind, but was nevertheless able to supervise his students from his desk; he knew exactly where someone should go and what to look at, what row of stones to examine. This was possible thanks to his phenomenal skills of observation and description.

He left behind a massive archive, mostly notes made about various objects. He made them with great enthusiasm, even on bus tickets and cigarette packets on his way to see an object or on his return. It is clear from reading the notes that most of his ideas were born during fieldwork.



Villem Raam. *Sculptures from Maasilinna Castle*. 1972



Villem Raam. *Portal of Karula Church*. 1971



Kaur Alttoa: He was also extremely well read on European architecture and its issues.

Juhan Kilumets: Indeed, and we should keep in mind that he knew about objects abroad only through literature, as he was not allowed to go and explore on the spot. It was amazing how well Raam knew medieval European architecture almost solely on the basis of literature.

Kaur Alttoa: When I think how he, almost 70 years old, was finally able to visit



Villem Raam. Eastern gable of Pöide Church. 1958



Villem Raam. Church of Pirita Nunnery, view through the sacristy door. 1979



Villem Raam. Ambrey niche in St Nicholas, Tallinn. 1958



Villem Raam. Curtain wall of Põltsamaa Castle. 1970

Westphalian churches in Bad Homburg, at least ten years too late, I want to weep.

What were the most significant objects that Villem Raam researched?

Kaur Alttoa: Certainly the convents of Padise and Piritä, but also the earlier layers of Ösel-Wiek churches, paintings in Valjala and Muhu churches, and churches in Järva County.

Villem Raam published numerous articles. His archive is enormous, but he did not pen a single monograph on medieval architecture. Why?

Kaur Alttoa: I think that he must have had enough material for ten monographs – but none was published, except thorough articles tackling Evald Okas [b 1915, painter – Ed]. This may have been because of his unwillingness to oppose some important people [Okas was an acclaimed People's Artist – Ed]. There was naturally his need to earn money, especially after returning from Siberia. With his superb qualifications in art history, he nevertheless had to accept invitations to lecture at retirement homes, as he had to provide for himself and his family.

Another reason may have been his perfectionism, and the fact that in medieval architecture you cannot produce research on just one object, but have to move around in a wider area, compare etc.

Juhan Kilumets: Tuulse's letters to Raam are symptomatic; through the decades, they end with a caution: 'Villem, don't forget: plough one furrow after the other!' Raam's letters always contained five or six objects, and 10–12 problems. The writer Jaan Kross warned him as well: 'You are wasting your time lecturing to the collective farmers.' But for Raam this was a mission.

How often did he talk about Siberia?

Kaur Alttoa: Very seldom. Occasionally he mentioned an incident or two, but that was all. There were other men who had, for example, served in the German army and talked about it over coffee, but Raam never joined in.

Juhan Kilumets: He was not embittered, did not protest, and did not become a dissident. He avoided conflict, both with people and the system.

Kaur Alttoa: I think he followed quite straightforward, self-imposed rules about what

he said in public. This was a typical situation in the Soviet era, where two worlds existed in parallel.

Researching the Middle Ages is perhaps not very political, but did Villem Raam see his role during the Soviet era only as being an architectural historian?

Kaur Alttoa: Not only. What mattered to him was not just 'I have studied what century this or that stone originates from'; he perceived that the stones in question were part of the Occidental culture, as was he. He was a European.

Is there a school of Villem Raam?

Juhan Kilumets: Hard to say. Academically, he did not have any students and there are few successors to Villem Raam's legacy, but the number of scholars using his research is remarkable. He no longer constitutes the absolute truth; new methods and conclusions have supplemented previous conclusions, but Raam's significance as a researcher and his personal model are still impressive.

The thoroughness characteristic of Villem Raam as a researcher is also evident in his photographs. He often placed his camera on a tripod in the morning and sat there for hours, waiting for the best light: the moment when the wall would talk most, or a detail was perfectly delineated. A shot took a long time, and seemed almost a ritual to a bystander; he did not as a rule acknowledge retakes. An object was interpreted through the lens, became familiar and was recorded, not only on film. Later when his eyesight was gradually failing, he remembered his objects with amazing precision – details appeared to him as shots taken a long time ago. Architecture was always his passion and stones his favourite models. There are hardly any people in pictures taken by Villem Raam; a person would sometimes be photographed in order to finish off a roll of film.

Villem Raam's earliest known surviving camera is a pre-war Voigtländer Brilliant, which was also used by his wife Lii – that is how pictures of the children reached their father in Siberia. A Minolta camera acquired in the second half of the 1960s took his work to a new level. The camera lasted ten years and was followed by a Rolleicord III and Rolleiflex.

Kaur Alttoa
(1947), art historian,
specialized in Estonian
medieval castles and
sacral architecture.

Juhan Kilumets
(1964), art historian.

Kumu Art Museum

Weizenbergi 34 / Valge 1, Tallinn
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

- 8 Dec–10 April 2011 Personal and Public Space in 1970s Estonian Graphics
- until 17 April *Mapping*. Hits from the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts. 15th Tallinn Print Triennial
- until 23 April *For Love Not Money*. 15th Tallinn Print Triennial (Gallery of Contemporary Art)
- until 8 May *For Love Not Money*. 15th Tallinn Print Triennial (The Great Hall)
- until 6 June *Colours of Light*. The Motif of Light in Estonian Interwar Art
- 13 April–23 Oct *Urmast Ploomipuu's White House*
- 29 April–28 Aug *Alone in the City*. Ludmilla Siim and Jüri Palm
- 13 May–25 Sep *gateways*. Art and Networked Culture
- 10 June–18 Sep Pavel Filonov and the Russian Avant-Garde
- 17 June–30 Oct *Double Portrait*. Flemish Symbolists James Ensor and Jules de Bruycker

Kadriorg Art Museum

Kadriorg Palace, Weizenbergi 37, Tallinn
 Mikkel Museum, Weizenbergi 28, Tallinn
www.ekm.ee/eng/kadriorg.php

Open: May–Sept Tue–Sun 10 am–5 pm
 Oct–April Wed–Sun 10 am–5 pm

Permanent exhibitions:

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

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

- until 23 April *Unveiling Masterpieces*. Kadriorg Art Museum 10
- until 30 April *Samson and Delilah*. A History of an Italian Painting

Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design

Lai 17, Tallinn
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 10 April Contemporary Slovak glass art
- until 10 April *Družba narodov or Friendship of Nations*. Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian ceramics
- 17 Feb–20 Mar Gloves
- 4 Mar–22 May Form in porcelain
- 30 April–7 Aug Estonian design. Lamps
- 30 April–7 Aug *Star is a Star. Laborattori di carattere. Grammatology*. Exhibition about letter
- 26 May–3 July Metal artist Haivi Raadik
- 7 July–4 Sep Leather artist Mall Mets

Museum of Estonian Architecture

Ahtri 2, Tallinn
www.arhitektuurimuuseum.ee

Open: Wed–Sun 11 am–6 pm

Museum of Estonian Architecture – 20 years

- 9 Mar–27 Mar Baltic Brick Architecture
- 10 Mar–27 Mar Wooden architecture from Austria
- April–May Estonian lighthouses
- April Competition for new Tartu

Adamson-Eric Museum

Lühike jalg 3, Tallinn
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 20 March Ernst Jõesaar (1905–1985)
- 25 Mar–3 July Female Artists in the Önningeby Artist Colony in the Åland Islands
- 8 July–13 Nov *Forever Feminine*. The Work of Johannes Greenberg and Ferdi Sannamees

Niguliste Museum

Niguliste 3, Tallinn
www.ekm.ee/eng/niguliste.php

Open: Wed–Sun 10 am–5 pm

Permanent exhibitions:

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

- until 29 May 2011 *Villem Raam as a Photographer*

Tallinn Art Hall

Vabaduse Sq 8, Tallinn
www.kunstihoone.ee

Open: Wed–Sun 12 am–6 pm

- until 13 Mar *Catapult*. Exhibition of Estonian applied art
- 19 Mar–30 April *EXIT*. Andres Tali
- 7 May–26 June *Untold Stories*
- 2 July–14 Aug Annual Exhibition of Estonian Artists' Association

Tallinn Art Hall Gallery

Vabaduse Sq 6, Tallinn
www.kunstihoone.ee

Open: Wed–Sun 12 am–6 pm

- until 6 Mar *Ordinary*. Drawings
- 11 Mar–3 April Leonhard Lapin
- 8 April–1 May *Polematus*. Enn Tegova
- 6 May–12 June Jean Charles Hue
- 17 June–17 July Elis Saareväli

Tallinn City Gallery

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

Project *Money, Money, Money* until 5 June
 until 13 Mar *Everything Counts In Large Amounts.* mariaUNDMaria
 17 Mar-10 April *You Are Dear To Me Or Love At The Time Of Inflation.*
 Anna Hints & Maria Rõhu
 14 April-8 May *Money Is Chasing The Kids.* Epp Kubu
 12 May-5 June *From The Birds Mouth.* LeRoy Stevens
 9 June-26 June Mariliis Laanemaa
 30 June-17 July Laura Põld

Hobusepea Gallery

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

16 Feb-28 Feb Alver Linnamägi & Tõnu Tunnel
 2 Mar-14 Mar *Dirty Sexy Graphic.* Britta Benno, Karin Link,
 Lauri Koppel, Martin Tõnts
 16 Mar-28 Mar Agur Kruusing
 30 Mar-11 April Anu Juurak
 13 April-25 April *I Am Off To Take Chinese Singing Lessons.* Merike Estna
 27 April-9 May Johannes Säre
 11 May-23 May *Fast Sexual Aid.* Krõõt Tarkmeel & Andri Allas
 25 May-6 June *Tallinn 2011 / Filter-tipped Cigarettes.* Erki Kasemets
 8 June-27 June Jaan Elken
 29 June-11 July *Home Recordings.* Tõnis Kenkmaa
 13 July-25 July Manfred Kalatski

Vaal Gallery

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

March Juss Piho
 April Sven Saag and Andres Koort
 May Lithographic Center
 June Summer Salon

HOP Gallery

Hobusepea 2, Tallinn
www.eaa.ee/hop
 Open: Thu-Tue 10 am-6 pm

until 22 Feb Leo Rohlin
 25 Feb-15 Mar Kaie Pungas & Jarõna Ilo
 18 Mar-5 April *Textile of the Year*
 8 April-26 April Mare Saar
 29 April-17 May Anni Kagovere
 20 May-31 May Margus Tamm
 3 June-7 June Helen Orgla
 10 June-28 June Creative team *Emma Leppermann*
 1 July-19 July Inyanim Group (Israel)

Draakon Gallery

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

until 26 Feb Berit Teeäär
 28 Feb-12 Mar *Faces Behind Us All.* Martin Kaares
 14 Mar-26 Mar *We.* Eva Sepping
 28 Mar-9 April *Room Of Love.* Margit Lõhmus
 11 April-23 April Ulvi Haagensen
 25 April-7 May Laurentsius
 9 May-21 May *Origins And Copies.* Toomas Kuusing
 23 May-4 June Kai Kiudsoo-Värvi
 6 June-18 June Project
 20 June-9 July *Perceptual Zones.* Marje Murusalu
 11 July-23 July *Hz...* Liisa Kruusmägi

Tartu Art Museum

Raekoja Sq 18, Tartu
www.tartmus.ee
 Open: Wed-Sun 11 am-6 pm

23 Feb-30 April *Estonian Art in Exile*
 6 May-5 June *PhotoArt.* German contemporary photography
 18 May-30 Sep New permanent exhibition
 8 June-30 July Graduates of Tartu University Painting Department

Tartu Art House

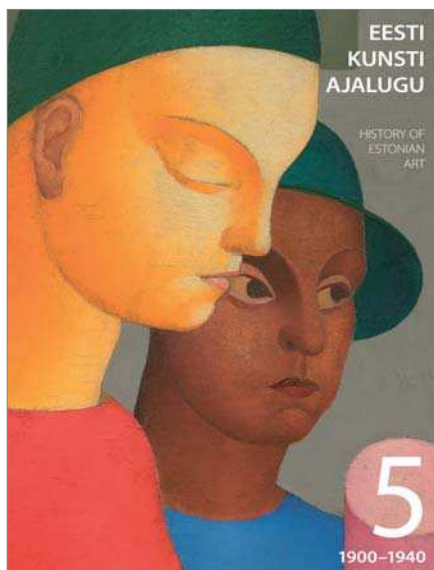
Vanemuise 26, Tallinn
www.kunstimaja.ee
 Open: Wed-Mon 21 am-6 pm

26 Jan-20 Feb Tõnis Saadoja and Flo Kasearu
 23 Feb-20 Mar Kursi School
 24 Mar-24 April Jass Kaselaan
 28 April-29 May Manfred Kalatski/Marta Stratskas
 31 May-26 June Graduates of Tartu University Painting Department
 30 June-24 July Jüri Arrak

Võru City Gallery

Liiva 13, Võru
www.vorulinnagalerii.ee
 Open: Mon-Fri 12 am-6.30 pm

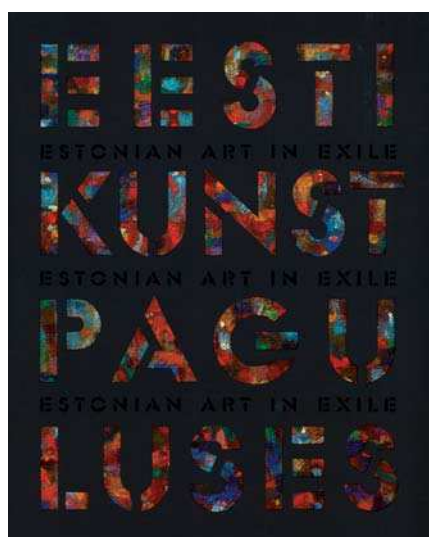
7 Mar-1 April Maria Laanelepp
 7 Mar-1 April Alar Tuul
 4 April-29 April Eda Lõhmus
 4 April-29 April NAK
 4 April-29 April Mihkel Ehala
 2 May-3 June Artists from Hungary
 6 June-1 July Graduates and teachers from Võru Art School



History of Estonian Art.
Volume 5. 1900-1940

Compiled and edited by Mart Kalm
Editor Elo Lutsepp
Designed by Andres Tali
712 pages
in Estonian, summaries in English
Published by the SA Kultuurileht
Tallinn 2010

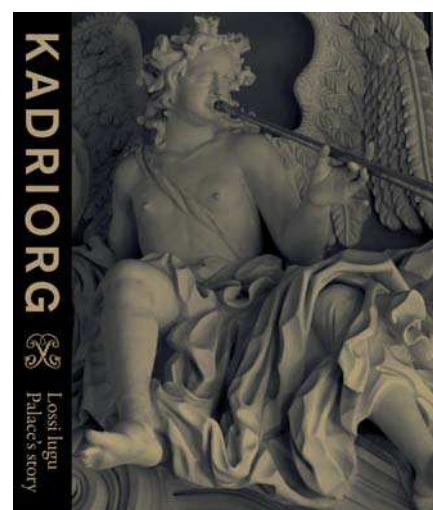
The period between 1900 and 1940 was a time of crucial development in Estonian culture. All traditional Estonian art institutions took shape, including a rapidly growing number of artists and diligently learning art viewers, exhibitions, critics, societies, schools, collections, grants etc. The literary group *Noor-Eesti* (Young Estonia) presented a slogan which suggested the Estonians remain Estonian, but also become Europeans. This meant leaning towards the models of Western dominant countries and art metropolises. The anxieties and problems accompanying the process of the 'Estonian peasant nation becoming a cultural nation', indeed formed the main line, but did not reflect the whole of Estonian art at the time. In this volume Estonian art is regarded as a sum of numerous art practices, including the work created by different national groups, both professional and folk art, the peculiarities of art by women artists, and what was more widely regarded as art only in hindsight (design, photography).



Estonian Art in Exile

Compiled by Kersti Koll, Reet Mark, Tiiu Talvistu
Designed by Tiit Jürna
544 pages
in Estonian and English
Published by the Art Museum of Estonia
Tallinn 2010

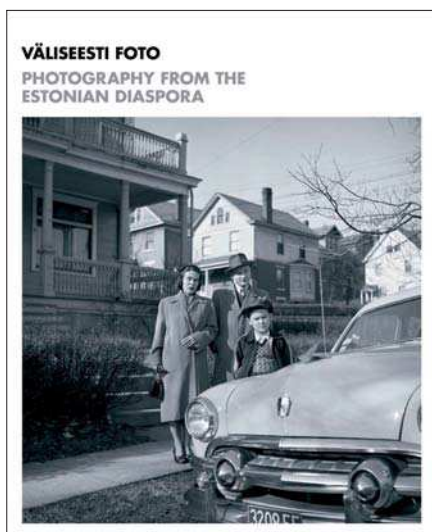
Catalogue to the exhibition at the Kumu Art Museum (3 September 2010-2 January 2011), Estonian Art in Exile. By the end of WWII, thousands of people had left Estonia as refugees, and as a result, many centres of Estonian culture sprang up all over the world. The catalogue offers a thorough overview of the art legacy created in exile. Compiled in cooperation of the Art Museum of Estonia (Kersti Koll) and Tartu Art Museum (Reet Mark, Tiiu Talvistu). See also pp 27-29.



Kadriorg. The Story of the Palace

Compiled by Aleksandra Murre, Kadi Polli
Designed by Tiit Jürna
420 pages
in Estonian, summaries in English
Published by the Art Museum of Estonia
Tallinn 2010

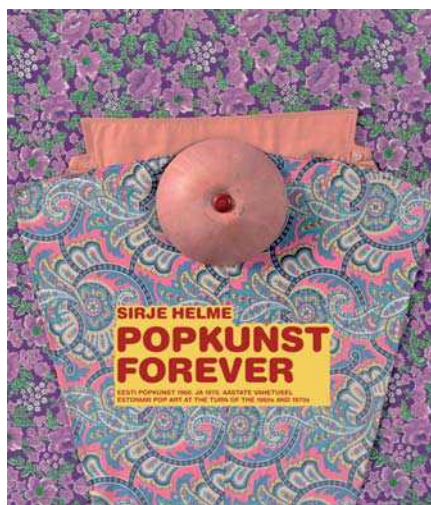
A comprehensive overview of the history of Kadriorg Palace since Peter the Great. Four authors describe the four essentially different periods in the Palace's life: Jüri Kuuskemaa writes about the building and functioning of the Palace as an imperial residence in the 18th century; the reorganisation and reconstruction in the 19th century is tackled by Aleksandra Murre; new reconstructions and response to them in connection with the Palace becoming the residence of the Estonian Head of State in the 1930s are explained by Mart Kalm; how the Palace has been acting as a museum in the 1920s and after WWII to this day, is seen in the article written by Kadi Polli. The book contains fresh points of view and new facts about more distant and recent past of Kadriorg, plus numerous pictures and photographs from collections in Estonia, Russia and Italy.



Photography from the Estonian Diaspora

Compiled and edited by Eha Komissarov, Ellu Maar
 Designed by Jaanus Samma
 160 pages
 in Estonian and English
 Published by the Art Museum of Estonia - Kumu Art Museum, Estonia
 Tallinn 2010

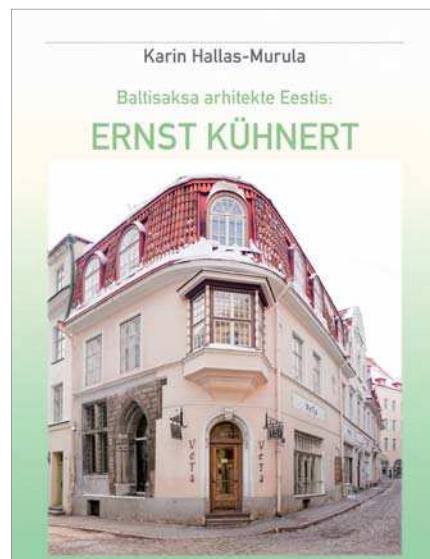
The work of Estonian photographers in exile reflects the post-war society in the West and also provides an overview of the photographic trends of the time. Those who escaped to the West to avoid Soviet power came into contact with a totally different culture. A highly developed photographic tradition was part of the West's information society and, impacted by new cultural contacts, photography made a tremendous developmental leap.
 See also pp 30-35.



Popkunst Forever. Estonian Pop Art at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s

Written by Sirje Helme
 Designed by Martin Pedanik
 224 pages
 in Estonian and English
 Published by the Art Museum of Estonia - Kumu Art Museum, Estonia
 Tallinn 2010

This book examines Estonian pop art from the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. The work of young artists at the beginning of their careers, which fell into this brief period, changed the whole paradigm of Estonian art. The author analyses the pop art phenomenon not only on the basis of the prominent group SOUP '69, but also through elements of pop in the work of young artists who belonged to the groups ANK '64 and Visarid. The book emphasises the local features of pop art that grew out of the social and ideological environment of that time. The visual language of pop quickly moved from figurative art into consumer spheres; a fascinating section of that was animated films. Pop art arrived to stay, and this can be observed in the work of subsequent decades in fine arts, design, fashion, interior design and elsewhere.
 See also *Estonian Art 1/2010*.



Baltic German Architects in Estonia: Ernst Kühnert (1885-1961)

Written by Karin Hallas-Murula
 Designed by Liina Siib
 96 pages
 in Estonian, summary in German
 Published by the Museum of Estonian Architecture
 Tallinn 2010

The book offers a comprehensive overview of the remarkable Baltic German architect Ernst Gustav Kühnert, who mainly worked in Tallinn in the 1920s and 1930s. As a keen historian, he adapted many houses in the old town to suite contemporary needs (Pikk 4/6/8, Pikk 10, Olevi Guild House etc) and was an active restorer of churches and other heritage objects. In the early 1930s Kühnert experimented with more modern architecture, designing the German schoolhouse in Rakvere. He also designed houses in the garden suburbs. The book contains numerous previously unpublished designs and photos.

