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Front cover:
Back cover:
Estonian Art 2/2009 (25). Published by the Estonian Institute 2010. ISSN 1406-3549 (online version ISSN 1406-5711)
Editorial board: Tiina Abel, Andres Kurg, Piret Lindpere, Mart Meri, Johannes Saar
Editors: Liina Siib, Eero Epner
Graphic design: Angelika Schneider
Translator: Tiina Randviir
Language editor: Richard Adang
We thank: Cultural Endowment of Estonia, Art Museum of Estonia, Union of Estonian Architects, Liivi Haamer, Anu Mänd, Stanislav Stepashko, Rael Artel, Jaan Evart, Kristiina Aasvee, Andres Alver and Reio Avaste.
Photo credits: The Art Centre for Dismissed Employees: pp 1–3; Stanislav Stepashko: pp 8–16; pp 20–25; Arne Maasik: pp 32, 42; Reio Avaste: pp 32, 34–37, 39; Maiu Kurvits: p 33; SEA+EFFEKT: p 33; Bjarke Ingels Group: p 33, 50–53; Celander Projekt: p 34; Andres Alver-Tiit Trummal-Veljo Kaasik: pp 41–44;

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Still from
Eliise Henno's video,
2009

Why do dismissed employees need art? Margit Säde

The idea of establishing the Art Centre for Dismissed Employees (ACDE) emerged from one of the elective subjects at the Estonian Academy of Arts. The initial plan was to found a dream institution of contemporary art. Together with the participating students, we soon understood that in order to have both mental and physical space for realising new ideas in a society where contemporary art is not really appreciated, one single art institution was definitely not enough. First of all, society's general tolerance towards creative thinking and creating art should be increased. In connection with the drastic growth of unemployment caused by the dire economic situation, the students had the idea of offering art-making opportunities to those made redundant. Thus, from the 23rd to the 30th of April 2009, the ACDE was established on the first floor of the Tallinn main post office. Various workshops invited jobless people to gather there and find expression for their essential problems. According to a person's wishes and convictions, the Centre could be seen as a social art project, an experiment, an expression of related aesthetics or as communal art. However, more important than classification is the fact that our aim was not to seek a contemporary artist from among the masses, but rather to encourage people through creative work to realise their goals. The students certainly did not adopt the position of being know-it-alls, pedagogues or social workers: instead they wished to create a relaxed atmosphere where people with totally different backgrounds could come together and make a documentary film, produce a newspaper or posters, or photograph their daily lives. The hope was that newly acquired skills and creative thinking could be used in some future job and also in solving various life problems. Besides the daytime workshops, discussions took place, mainly meant for the art audience, about the relations between work and capitalism; meetings with artists were organised where the artists dealt with problems related to work, unemployment or citizens' initiatives. Various video and documentary films tackling citizens' initiatives were also shown within the project.

We have to be honest here: despite being promoted by the Labour Market Board and coverage in one of the major dailies, *Eesti Päevaleht*, and on a morning television programme, there were fewer participants than expected – only twelve unemployed people visited our centre during the week. Perhaps it does not really matter how many people took part in our experiment. Rather, what was important was the potential of the whole undertaking and the fact that there were students and participants with the motivation and willingness to try to get something done. I have to admit that it is quite difficult in Estonia to undertake anything as a group and have a dialogue on any topic. Perhaps people still have some sort of prejudice regarding collective enterprises as a result of the Soviet era, or maybe it is in our nature to do things on our own. In any case, the only project that truly worked was the documentary film workshop called *Edit Your Own Life*, run by Anna Shkodenko, Anne-Liis Kogan and myself. The clear and slogan-like title might have clearly conveyed the aim of the workshop – to make a documentary about the workshop, people's lives, experiences, thoughts and their topical

The Art Centre for Dismissed Employees on the first floor of the Tallinn main post office, 2009

problems. This aim brought together people with very different backgrounds and problems, from secondary school-aged boys to elderly ladies. In their video clips, they all managed to show what they truly cared about. The result of joint discussions, filming and montage were seven sincere and realistic stories from different backgrounds, all reflecting topical social issues in Estonia. I have to admit that despite not being close to art in any way, a person with real life experience can produce an impressive and socially revealing work. The whole undertaking unleashed in me an avalanche of significant questions, such as whether people are really valued in Estonia and whether they have a chance to develop and express themselves outside their daily jobs. I met people who for years had been involved in routine and mechanical work, but they still wanted to be creative and feel needed by society. 'Why do dismissed employees need art? After all, art will not feed the unemployed!' is said by politicians and the internet commentators in unison. If our level of education is so super high, why then is Estonian society unable to appreciate creative activity and self-expression simply because 'it does not earn any profit'?

I cannot say that this undertaking was a total success or a failure, but I can say, on the basis of the feedback from the participants, that it was necessary. People stressed that it was interesting, gave them ideas and self-confidence and encouraged them to get out of their homes. They also needed to meet people in a similar situation and wished the centre could be open indefinitely. In my opinion, we could draw conclusions about the undertaking only if the ACDE were open for a longer period of time and I personally would consider it a success if the people who have been made redundant would take over the running of the whole thing themselves. The experience was actually most enlightening for us. The critical aspects of the workshop were that we had got to know the participants, gathered interesting material together and had to decide what to do with it and how and where to show it. The situation was ethically quite unpleasant and, after discussing the matter, we agreed that the material had to be shown somewhere. Thus, we decided to issue a collection of DVDs, including the documentary about

Still from the centre's documentary, 2009

Still from Harry Loomus' video, 2009

Still from Herdis Soorski's video, 2009

how the centre was established, plus video clips made by the participants in the workshop. As a result, the project has preserved the views of the participants, and these viewpoints can address more people. We asked one of the workshop participants who he/she would like to show his/her film clip to, and the answer was: "Maybe to the politicians, or to ordinary people. I haven't thought about it like that. It should perhaps be shown to everybody."

The works and documentation produced in the ACDE can be seen at the exhibition titled *Blue-Collar Blues* curated by Anders Härm, which opened in December in the Tallinn Art Hall.

Margit Säde
(1984), art historian, freelance curator and cultural worker. Interested in participating in different forms of artistic activity.

Rael Artel Gallery: Non-Profit Project Space
Short tale of an experimental project's space tactics

Kiwa

Rael Artel Gallery: The Non-Profit Project Space (henceforth RAG) existed for four seasons, from 2004 to 2008. Its activity was rounded off by an archive-like publication, the project book Hotel Pärnu, *which appeared one year after the exhibitions ceased (2009). The brief but purposeful flight of RAG covered the entire authoritarian burden of generally accepted truths that constitutes the operational tactics of the art world and gallery systems. To the established conventionality of the gallery scene, this kind of activism and manner of running a gallery certainly seemed quite a challenge. It is truly weird, for example, that Rael Artel, the creator and moderator of the project space, recalls in* Hotel Pärnu *that the original lo-fi interior of the rooms did not bother the artists working there, or the viewers, but did bother art functionaries. It was more economical in every sense not to direct the resources into fulfilling conventions, but into producing and promoting a quality programme. This kind of contemporary Western non-profit exhibition activity, positioning itself as a conceptual project-based environment and being critical of institutions, however, turned out to be too novel for the comfort standards of the European early capitalist periphery. Equally novel was the incorporation of the new vocabulary and terminology needed by new strategies into an art critical discourse. The middle of the current decade was a time when the local art landscape had stabilised and there was surprisingly little initiative and nonconformist spirit. Additionally, there was no physical art space in Estonia where programmatic preferences could seek to generate practice, knowledge and experience, and not reproduce previously formulated truths, and which would have no sales compulsion to produce drama and spectacle values on a conveyor belt.*

From the information noise, RAG screened out a small meaningful area, thus getting closer to essence and meanings in the context of art communication. Everything not radically crucial for the existence of a gallery was cast aside. What remained was the pure form of the projects' processuality and the form of its output/display. RAG's practice included the issues of displaying and initiating contemporary art, grass-roots activism, and establishing relations, non-profit aims, experiments and meaningful activity. The projects were commissioned, produced and realised for a specific space, relating to its physical character and inner essence, as well as to the urban context and types of visitors. At first RAG operated in an old garage in Pärnu, then from 2006 in the cellar hall of the Tartu Public Library. These are two larger Estonian towns where the exhibition activity of contemporary art is more or less non-existent, so this was also an attempt at regional-political decentralisation. Both spaces were anything but neutral standard environments; they were anonymous white cubes, which had long ago turned into power spaces that dictated creative processes, and actually suppressed artwork. As the visible part of Pärnu constitutes trajectories for directing holiday-makers, opening a squalid garage, a territory behind the facades, drilling a hole into the idyll of the summer resort, became a kind of statement. True, this act was ideological, but rather than being autocratically declarative it was contemplative and exploratory. At first, only curated projects were accepted and only photographs and sound art were displayed, but the second season introduced new, often place-specific and context-sensitive art. The environment's active role in starting cognitive processes, and the dialogue with space in establishing connections were very much present in the continuing activities in the Tartu library cellar. From a spatial-topological point of view, the cellar could be defined as the unconscious of the library. Inspired by this, various projects were carried out there connected with information and science-based art. People in Tartu, one of the oldest university towns in Europe, pay a lot of attention to issues of text; after all, Tartu is home to Juri Lotman's school of semiotics, as well as to several contemporary phenomena connected with experimental text production. Considering this, RAG was located quite naturally in the same sphere, specialising in the relations between art and information.

Hence, there was a need for a project dedicated solely to text-based art. It was curated by the undersigned at RAG in 2007. In addition to the local experimental authors Erkki Luuk, Kivisildinik and others, the display of *From Text to Machine* also presented Vadim Fishkin and Hans Hemmert; a concert-performance of the sound poet AGF took place in the old botanical gardens of the university. The general profile of the gallery, and the activity of the above-mentioned artists, as well as of many others promoted by RAG – altogether over 150 – was characterised by discovering truths about the world by means of experiments: experiment as a procedure generating knowledge, a transformative process. RAG's exhibitions and the archive publication were the output of practice, experience, knowledge relations and ideas in creating phenomena by means of experiments, means making the invisible visible, using different exhibition formats and tactics. The work method of the moderator was almost like the 'social art of engineering' in Karl Popper's political philosophy, aiming to develop a citizen-focused society, create institutions that would help oppose power that has exhausted itself, and get rid of it. As far as we know, RAG's experience of being in contact with real space encouraged at least one more art space to emerge in Estonia.

Kiwa
(1975), artist, composer, curator and writer.

133 Tekstist masinani / From Text to Machine – Kaur Garšnek & Katrin Parbus. LAAS-LAGENDIK-LABÜRINT / FOREST-PLAIN-LABYRINTH. Installatsioon peeglitega / Installation with mirrors, 2007

Tekstist masinani / From Text to Machine –14NÜ. SILMA KABINET / OPHTHALMOLOGY CABINET. Installatsioon/Installation, 2007

Pages from the project book *Hotel Pärnu*. Idea and editing: Rael Artel; translation into English: Eva Näripea; graphic design: Jaan Evart;Tallinn 2009

AGFi *performance*'i plakat / Poster of the performance by AGF. Disain/Design Tuuli Aule

AGFi *performance* / Performance by AGF

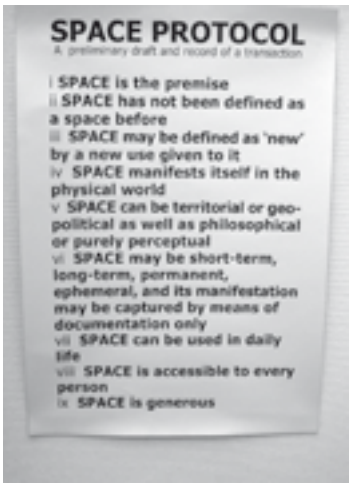
09.02.–03.03.2007

↑ Ki wa; Katrin Parbus, Kaur Garšnek

↑ Toomas Thetloff. TÕDE JA ÕGIUS / TRUTH AND THE JUICEST. Raamatud, installatsioon / Books, installation, 2007
Vaade installatsioonile / View of the installation

09.02.–03.03.2007

30 Paula Roush, Manuela Ribadeneira
Ruumi eeskirjad Space Protocol



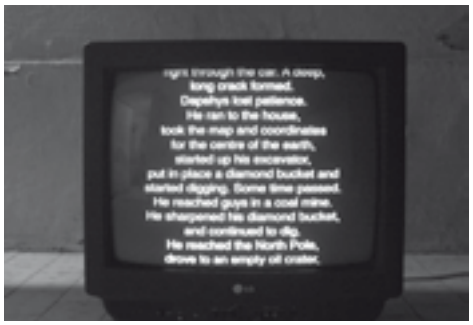
↑ Paula Roushi ava-*performance* / Opening performance by Paula Roush; Vaade installatsioonile / View to the installation

31 15.07.–28.07.2004
JUHITUD REISID / GUIDED TOURS
Raivo Hool, Daisy Lappard, Liisi Peets, Rataplan, Piret Räni, Tiit Sokk, Katrin Tees, Anu Vahtra
Kuraator / Curated by Anu Allas
Garaaž / Garage on Lõuna 20, Pärnu

15.07.–28.07.2004

↑ Urmas Martinson, Anu Allas; Vaade installatsioonile / View to the installation

64 Akvile Anglickaitė, Eglė Budvytytė, Liudvikas Buklys, Kipras Dubauskas, Antanas Gerlikas...
Valge küüliku järel: kohtumine tavalisega Down the Rabbit Hole: Meeting the Familiar



↑↑ Kipras Dubauskas. 10 KULLAAUKU / 10 BONANZAS. Vaade installatsioonile / View of the installation; ↑ Antanas Gerlikas. LEAD-UP. Vaade installatsioonile / View of the installation; Vaade näitusele / View of the exhibition

65 Akvile Anglickaitė, Eglė Budvytytė, Liudvikas Buklys, Kipras Dubauskas, Antanas Gerlikas...
Valge küüliku järel: kohtumine tavalisega Down the Rabbit Hole: Meeting the Familiar

12.03.–12.04.2008

Q le Maya. Vaated installatsioonile / Views of the installation

Artist Interrupted. Exhibition of Ülo Õun in the Kumu Art Museum

19 June–1 November 2009

Kirke Kangro

I visited Ülo Õun's exhibition twice, first on a free admission day at Kumu, when the hall was swarming with people, and the other time on a morning almost without other visitors, except for a politely smiling Japanese couple wandering aimlessly between the sculptures. The might of the individualist that emanates from Õun's sculptures, however, remained undisturbed by the surroundings. Upon entering the exhibition hall, the first impression was simultaneously weird, enchanting and strangely compact. Kumu has displayed a remarkable number of works of that most prolific of artists; the loose, grotesque and, at the same time, sincere world of portraits and figures has been arranged in white surroundings; the dominant plaster makes the works seem fragile.

Õun was considered to be someone different and an exception in the sculpture of his time; it would be truly difficult to place him in the mainstream of the 1970s and 1980s. A solitary progress, a personal art story and a psychic landscape can instantly be perceived. It is, however, obvious that this is no marginal phenomenon. The numerous portrait sculptures have, besides their aesthetic value, a significant place in the history of Estonian culture.

For various reasons, Õun never really got involved in monumental sculpture. Toomemägi Hill in Tartu has his Schmidt monument. The monument to World War II by Lake Peipsi caused an uproar amongst the local population, and its genitals had to be covered up with decent 'trousers'. It is most probable that a sculpture placed in public space matters to the sculptor, and such opportunities would have raised Õun's self-confidence about his talent and way of seeing things. Nevertheless, keeping away from monumental sculpture largely enabled the sculptor to avoid conforming to the authorities or making ideological compromises; he remained more or less untainted untainted by ideology (disregarding the strange botching of a

Lenin head in the portrait film). Such sculptures as *Comsomol Secretary* seem more like criticism or caricature of everyday life. The figure titled *Sculptor-monumentalist* shows Õun's irony directed at his more successful colleagues who belonged to the 'centre'.

After graduating from the Art Institute, Ülo Õun worked as a taxidermist. In one of the three portrait films presented to the viewers, the sculptor says: "Sculpture is just as organic as a stuffed animal", and his works indeed have an organic appearance: the colour used by the sculptor seems to radiate from inside the sculpture; the surface is porous and may be crumbled by the environment. One of his most prominent works, *Portrait of a Nuclear Physicist*, has real stuffed animal eyes in it.

Õun's preference in materials also indicates non-monumentality: he used a lot of plaster, which some sculptors do not regard as a proper material at all; this is a means used to make a mould in the intermediate phase before the 'real sculpture'. Coloured plaster was Õun's trademark. In a sense, this kind of colourful showing-off takes his work closer to pop art, although there is probably no intentional reference. Rather, it could be taken as the sculptor's spontaneous jolly game, a peculiar humorous experimenting – and at the same time a wish to create his very own tool. The artist sought something typically his own through an intuitive and playful manner, without really considering the circumstances. One reason he preferred plaster could have been the fact that it was possible to work fast with it.

It seems to me that the main attitude that set Õun apart from his contemporaries was sincere subjectivity, the artist's unwillingness or inability to protect himself with any intellectual or formal constructions. Õun really seems to have been – and this impression is backed up by the portrait films – an artist of perceptions, intuitions and spontaneous finds (stuffed animals' eyes in some figures), who experimented according to his feelings. In one film, he says that he wanted to be completely free; and this freedom for him constituted uninterrupted spontaneity, and not mechanical serving of an idea. Õun was an artist who felt most free in his studio, working and handling his materials. Through that jolly process and spontaneity, he hoped to find something exciting. In the 1980s, a vulnerably subjective and sincere person was not at all as appreciated as he would be today; there was less trust in society and this was naturally reflected in art. Today's artist can boldly play around with revelations about himself, or naivety – it is actually quite encouraged and the main technique for many. We could speculate that Õun might have found today's world a much easier place to exist in: a defenceless and sincere artist could find a personal curator and benefactor, who would be able to promote his individuality and peculiarities. It is rather touching to hear the artist in the film talking about his worries about whether his model might take offence at his experiments (one actor was reputedly annoyed about his fixed smile and huge tie). I was only a child in the 1980s, but I do remember that the intellectual atmosphere in Estonia at the time was occasionally rather tense, double morals were there in force and nobody was quite sure what kind of game one should play. What exactly turned out to be too much for the sincere and open Ülo Õun remains a secret, but in 1988 he decided to quit the game.

Juta Kivimäe remarked that Õun's playfulness and merry experimenting was often regarded as 'fooling around'. The sculptures' humour and grotesqueness nevertheless acquire a sad and chilling shade if we think about the artist's fate. You inevitably start perceiving some anxiety in the humour, an attempt to relate to another human being.

Trying to find even indirect analogues to Õun's art, his playfulness with a hint of tension, evokes a distant image of Maurizio Cattelan's works. The autodidact Cattelan, whose job as an assistant employee in a morgue could have influenced him as much as taxidermy influenced Õun, is equally fond of somewhat risky fooling around. The artist's conscious aim, so obvious in Cattelan, remains rather vague in Õun.

The work of the latter constantly hints at something that is not totally under the artist's control. Maybe this is why the portraits that perfectly capture a person occasionally seem a bit chilly. The series of chickens' bodies certainly contain nihilist and childish boldness to do something terrible – a slumped, featherless chicken on a plate, its feet dangling over the edge.

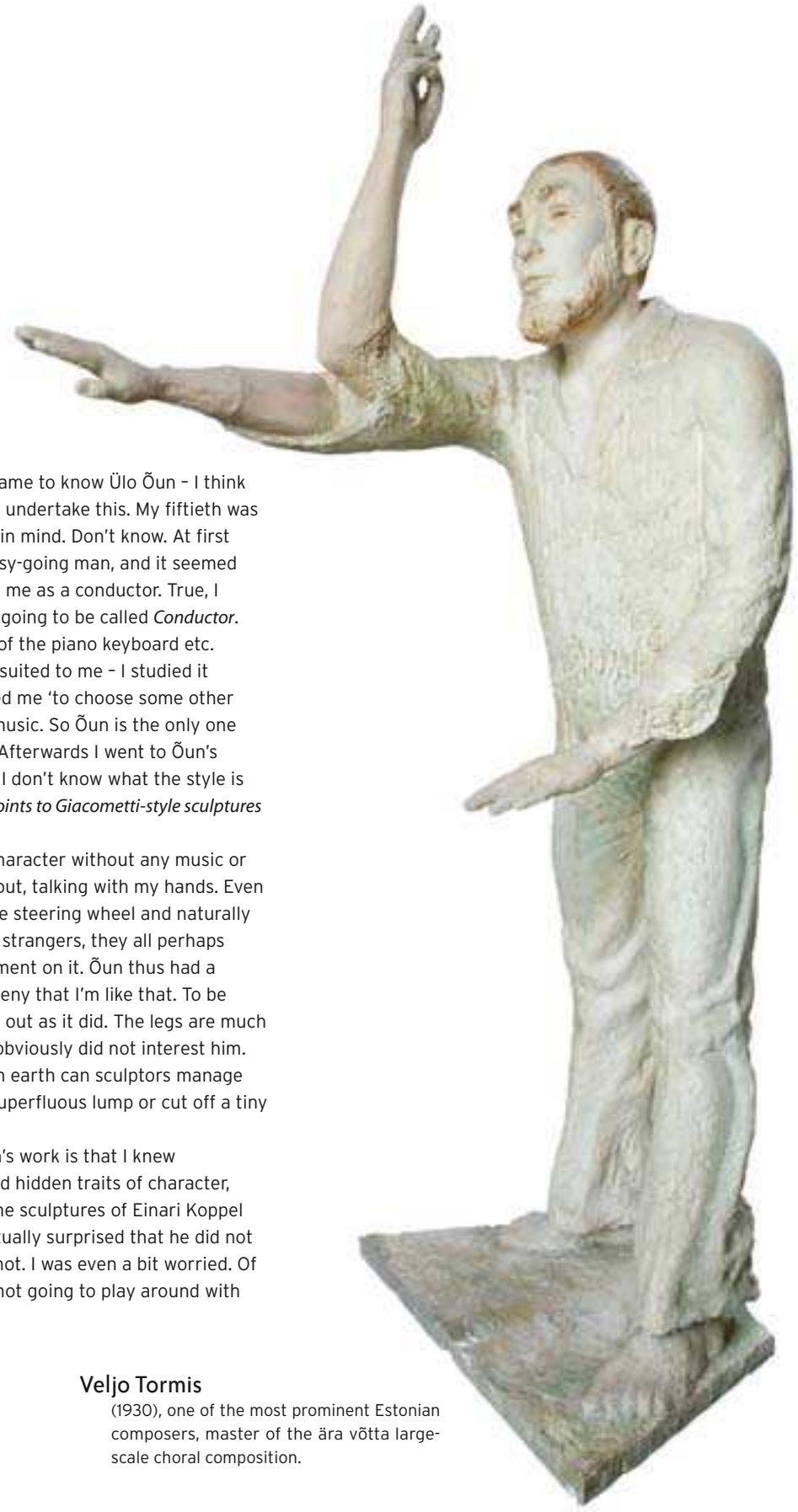
Freud used the word *unheimlich* to describe the uneasiness and sense of fear which grows out of the familiar and the habitual. *Unheimlich* is an essence that has lost its borders, the alien inside the familiar. Ernst Jentsch, who introduced this term before Freud, gave a good example of *unheimlich* as being a situation where we do not know whether we are dealing with a living creature or a lifeless object. *Unheimlich* could be the key to quite a few of Õun's works; for example, it helps to explain the big hand with the portrait of each member of his family stuck on a fingertip, and *The Seeker*, which has a classical male body and a sunken face with wolf's eyes, once again borrowed from a stuffed animal. Something of the *unheimlich* can also be detected in the portrait of the artist's daughter Laura (a horrifyingly large baby head, although the artist himself probably saw it as a mockery of big portraits of important people) and a couple of sculptures where a life-sized man walks hand in hand with a realistically modelled small boy, only the latter has been enlarged to the height of the man. This work, however, displays a more conscious problem which naturally invites much psychoanalytical reflection – a humorously expressed Oedipus complex, a man's fear of the child or seeing himself as a big clumsy child. Among today's artists, Jaan Toomik uses similar motifs.

The entire Õun exhibition offered an enjoyable overview of a peculiar artistic spirit, his era and his individuality. It was wonderful to see that, despite the term 'interrupted' in the title, Õun and his work have arrived in our present day and are again interpreted and appreciated.

Ülo Õun
(1940–1988), sculptor.

Kirke Kangro
(1975), sculptor and interdisciplinary artist, MA in 2009 from the Estonian Academy of Arts.

Veljo Tormis on his portrait by Ülo Õun



Veljo Tormis: I cannot now remember how I came to know Ülo Õun – I think he sought me out. I certainly didn't ask him to undertake this. My fiftieth was approaching but he probably didn't have that in mind. Don't know. At first he came to me, to my home, a friendly and easy-going man, and it seemed then that he already had the idea of depicting me as a conductor. True, I didn't know for a long time that the work was going to be called *Conductor*. Õun asked me to stand, measured the height of the piano keyboard etc. Incidentally, being a conductor was not really suited to me – I studied it for a year, but then my teacher politely advised me 'to choose some other speciality'. I was thus forced into composing music. So Õun is the only one who saw me conducting a non-existent choir. Afterwards I went to Õun's studio a few times. What I mostly remember... I don't know what the style is called, but there were many works like this (*points to Giacometti-style sculptures in the catalogue*).

However, I think this sculpture shows my character without any music or conducting – I am fond of waving my arms about, talking with my hands. Even when driving, my hands often do not touch the steering wheel and naturally whoever is sitting in the car, family, friends or strangers, they all perhaps don't berate me for it, but they certainly comment on it. Õun thus had a special intuition to have grasped this. I can't deny that I'm like that. To be honest I am pleased that the sculpture turned out as it did. The legs are much nicer than in real life: mine are crooked. This obviously did not interest him. The features are excellently conveyed. How on earth can sculptors manage with material like that? They cannot leave a superfluous lump or cut off a tiny fragment from the wrong place...

Another reason why I am pleased with Õun's work is that I knew beforehand that he was ironic, that he exposed hidden traits of character, and that everything had an ulterior motive. The sculptures of Einari Koppel and Mikk Mikiver were truly stunning. I am actually surprised that he did not try to make a caricature of me – no idea why not. I was even a bit worried. Of course I was relieved when I saw that he was not going to play around with me. *Laughs.*

EA: Why did you agree to sit for him?

VT: Vanity.

Veljo Tormis
(1930), one of the most prominent Estonian composers, master of the ära võtta large-scale choral composition.

I am simply an Estonian artist
Interview with Nikolai Kormašov by Eero Epner

Eero Epner [EE]: You came to Estonia at the age of twenty-two?

Nikolai Kormašov [NK]: Yes. I knew almost nothing about Estonia. I did not even know that Estonia was a Finno-Ugric country. I was certain it was German. One day I saw a mural at an exhibition, showing girls in national costumes. I come from Murom [city appr. 300 km east of Moscow – Ed] and my neighbours were all Mordvins, Tatars etc. I know their national costumes very well; I actually have a Mordvin costume myself. When I saw those clothes at the exhibition, I was stunned – these are OUR national costumes! WE are Finno-Ugrians. And I wondered how those Finno-Ugrians in Mordvinia could be so totally different from the Finno-Ugrians here in Estonia. This is how it was.

EE: Why didn't you go to Moscow to study?

NK: I did not and still do not like Moscow. I decided to travel as far as I could afford. I only had enough money to come to Tallinn. When I stepped from the train and saw the Toompea Hill above – it was July, warm and the sun was shining – I was naturally instantly bewitched. There is nothing like that in our flat lands, we have no such medieval period, and I had never seen anything like that before. It was almost a miracle.

EE: What was the reason you stayed in Estonia?

NK: The reason? I had a choice. After graduating, I could have become a university lecturer in Ivanovo or Vladimirskoye. But I had already got married and during the six years I had got used to people here, and they had got used to me. Still, the main reason was my anxieties about drinking. Had I settled in Ivanovo, I might easily have started serious drinking there, and could have become a hopeless drunk. Not that people didn't drink in Estonia. Everybody I knew drank a lot. But here I could be independent, whereas in Russia I would have had to drink with everybody. So I stayed.

True, it was very difficult, because we didn't have a thing. We lived in a communal flat with a man who had open tuberculosis. And we had a child! But then one of the portraits I painted received an award at a young artists' festival in Moscow, and I was immediately admitted to the Artists' Association. This was crucial! The rule was that if you didn't belong to the Union, you were a good-for-nothing freeloader. A bit later I got a commission from Moscow, and so life gradually improved. Such things happened by chance, but they were crucial. From that time onwards, I have not only been connected with Estonia, but I can no longer be separated from it.

EE: What was the art situation like back then? Had something already changed in the art of the late 1950s?

NK: The first who started with the 'rough style', their 'anti-everything' campaign, were Peeter Ulas, Nikolai Kormasov, Valdur Ohakas and Ilmar Malin. Enn Põldroos came later and Olev Subbi still much later, but they began as conformists, rather than rebels. They became national artists only afterwards. This was a general trend at that time, also in Russia. We were frequently summoned to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, to the ideology department, where they wanted to know why we were exhibiting such work, which was not a bit realistic.

EE: Did they merely ask or …?

NK: Indeed, they did not ban anything, they just wanted to know. Nobody slammed their fist on a table and shouted and put their veto on anything – it wasn't like that. For example, in 1959 I displayed a self-portrait with a woman: the face was blue and black, because I was always blue back then. Henn Roode produced a picture of a linden alley, where all the trees were round. We were asked why we exhibited pictures that did not show things as they really were. Was I, for instance, black and blue? Or, 'why show such monstrosities? They resemble cabbages and not trees?' We did our best to explain why the forms should be as they were, and why….

But we displayed everything. For example the painting called *Fishermen* in 1963, where one fisherman was the spitting image of the CP leader Ivan Käbin, neck and everything, absolutely. Käbin said: 'people can't have such red necks, can they?' The ideology people naturally reacted too, did not like the picture and said so. But it was displayed nevertheless. Here, works of art were not taken out of an exhibition, as happened in Moscow. Many people here boast of having been dissidents. No! There was no dissidence; everyone exhibited what they wanted, or rather, what they were able to produce. Of course there was criticism, but that's perfectly natural.

EE: So what caused the radical change in art?

NK: In 1958 we met up with Latvians and Lithuanians, and organised a joint summer plenary, actually several times. In Moscow, the radical turn in art reputedly began in 1963, but here everything happened 3–5 years earlier. The Lithuanians' style was purely emotionally picturesque; they did not have the strong protesting elements that were typical of the work of the Latvians. We, on the other hand, had the brilliant Peeter Ulas, as well as Roode, who united intellectualism with a very rough, strong style. The young artists of the three countries thus shaped their joint understanding of their tasks, means of expression etc.

New young artists emerged later, very good ones, groups such as ANK'64, SOUP'69 and others. But then the dreadful Seventies arrived, with their conformist works. Total conformism. How was this expressed? In neutrality. The absolute neutrality of topics. Everything was ciphered, concerning nobody; no issues were raised, just pure art.

EE: Boris Bernstein wrote that there are three main trends in the work of Nikolai Kormashov: situational, social-poetic and then your own aesthetics. Do you agree?

NK: This could be true for anyone. An artist, after all, lives in his environment, and he simply cannot be independent of it. This determines his position as a citizen, as it were. An artist's own aesthetics depends on his genes and origin; it is inseparable from him. And the circumstances – existence – determine awareness.

EE: However, for example, your still-lifes seem to contain something religious as well.

NK: I had a serious crisis in 1968. Not just health problems, but some sort of inner… and I travelled up North and saw splendid, fantastic houses – like huge ships, but standing empty. Totally abandoned, forsaken villages. And in the midst of that vacant and ravaged world, I suddenly saw icons. All this evoked a sense of dreadful drama, tragedy. Hence, I made *Trapeza*. The still-life, however, is a result of training, rest and entertainment.

EE: Boris Bernstein also writes about the 'beauty of simple things'…

NK: This is only natural, as simple things are always beautiful.

EE: Your, perhaps, most famous painting is *My Estonia*. I tend to think that an Estonian artist would not have done anything like that.

NK: Indeed not, because Estonian artists do not know their country, at least in my opinion. Well, they know the country, of course they do, but if you look at something from close up you don't see it, whereas I look at it from a certain distance and so it is more compact. Estonia for me… When that monument [Freedom Monument – Ed] was put up, that dreadful monument… In my eyes Estonia is always associated with youth, prospects and the future, but this monument has no future. Estonia's future is its youth, and we should only be oriented to the young. Culture in Estonia is quite young too, as is the independent country, and the poetry. What poetry there is in Estonia, superb! Wonderful! And Estonia itself is like that as well. For me, Estonia is a young open person or a young couple, who face life with open eyes. That's why I made this picture. Moscow liked it too, but here, unfortunately … and now this painting is not hanging in this museum, but in

Tretyakov Gallery in Russia.

Russian artists are like an installation in Estonia.

EE: Why installation?

NK: Why? Well, the thing is that, for Russians, an installation is always a heap of things, which could be gold, but equally could be dung.

Incidentally, I consider myself an Estonian artist. What do you think of that? What a question, right?

EE: Of course you are an Estonian artist…

NK: I wasn't actually convinced about this, even a year ago. But when I saw my work at an exhibition in Kumu, and later at the exhibition *Progressive Art in Estonia During the Soviet Period,* in Tartu, which displayed ten of my works, I felt that was quite a lot. A lot! Compared with other Estonian artists, I thought I was the most Estonian. You see? I did not express myself in a Russian form. I expressed myself in contemporary Estonian form.

EE: How did you feel when you realised you were an Estonian artist?

NK: People have often asked me, and keep asking: who do you think you are, a Russian or an Estonian artist? I have never been able to reply to this properly. I have said I am a Russian in Estonia or an Estonian artist of Russian origin, but now I tend to think that I am simply an Estonian artist. I am of course Russian, but in art I am an Estonian artist. This is how it will be. On the other hand, among Estonians I am a Russian, and among Russians I am an Estonian.

EE: Is it difficult?

NK: No, it isn't. Why should it be? What matters is that I have to know myself. There are things I cannot accept in Russian culture, just can't, never have, and the same goes for Estonian culture. But there is a lot I happily accept in Estonia. For instance, Kristjan Raud [1865–1943, known for his drawings, often regarded 'as the most national Estonian artist' – Ed], of course Estonian poetry, *Toomas Nipernaadi* [an influential Estonian novel, where the main character is an archetypical traveller; a vagabond – Ed] – all very close to my heart.

EE: Very interesting!

NK: Russian traditions are naturally close to me as well, especially folk traditions. These are really close. Just like Estonian folk traditions.

EE: Setumaa, area in the South of Estonia, is certainly one such melting pot, where both traditions meet. What are your relations with this region? You depict Setumaa and its people often in your paintings.

NK: I have had a cottage for decades, in a small village near Petseri. This is where my closeness with nature began, which I lacked before. I think, and not only think, but can prove it by examples, that besides the Orthodox faith, Setumaa has also retained the ancient language and dialect, and the tradition of festivities. Wearing national costumes and using pagan symbols, which after all stand for motherhood and matriarchy, all those chains and other ornaments. Setu is thus an excellent example of a pearl, which both Russians and Estonians should preserve, because Russians themselves no longer have such traditions. My neighbours, for example, speak the most archaic Russian dialect. Amazing! Linguists arriving from St Petersburg and Moscow claim that there are ancient expressions and sayings in Setumaa that have vanished from everywhere else. This Russian-Setu region has maintained its customs and culture, and for the Russians their own sayings and of course applied art. This is a really good example of the mutual impact of two cultures.

Nikolai Kormašov

(1929), painter. Became famous in the 1960s as the representative of the so-called 'rough style' in Estonian painting. His manner of painting with its expressive form and colour focuses on conveying the most essential with scant means.

Practical *Kunst ja Kodu* (Art and Home)

Kai Lobjakas

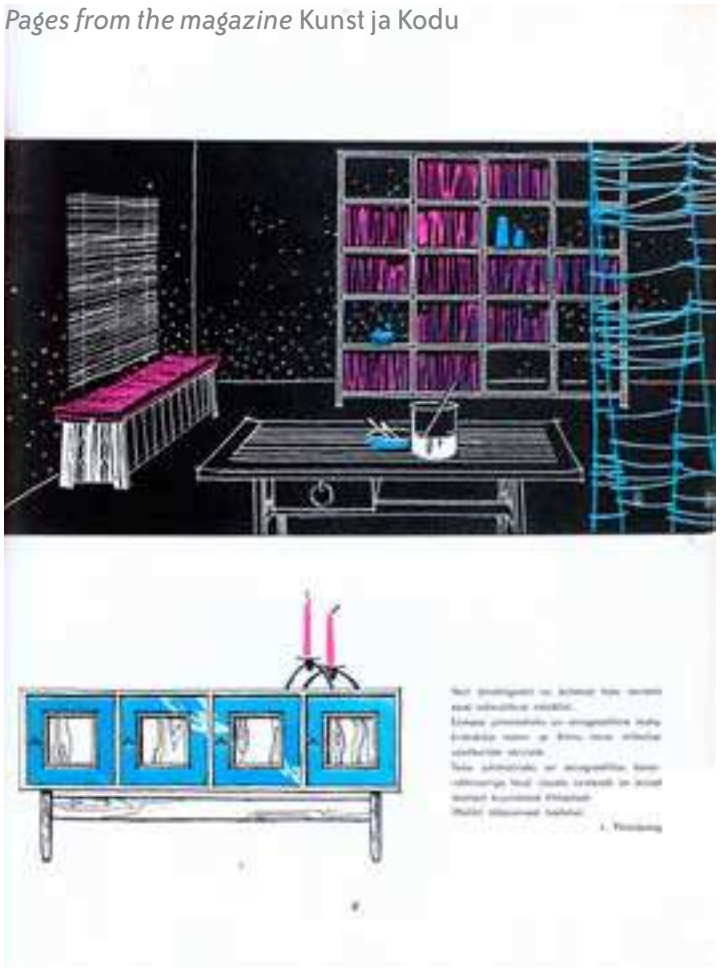
The main aim of the last triennial of applied art was to offer ideas for general use, information for viewers and exhibition visitors about professional skills, and a chance to actually produce an object on the spot. One of the satellite exhibitions, Practical* Kunst ja Kodu, *is thematically connected. An almanac of the same name was first published in 1958 and is fascinating. Its role within the framework of the current triennial topic is interesting to examine from the viewpoint of the free spread of local design and the encouraging of people to try their hand at producing something themselves.*

Kunst ja Kodu first appeared when, within the ideology that allowed a focus on man, the status of the type of home that was connected with man's spatial environment and the design of daily surroundings was changing. The environment of objects became important. It was a time when working in the name of new ideals was the thing to do, creating a new environment, both as public space and a more intimate home environment.

The almanac thoroughly tackled issues connected with new homes, mostly small flats, both from the aspect of planning as well as furnishing. Presenting the ideas of prominent interior designers, it was suggested that a new home should be as practical and pretty as possible. The main aim of *Kunst ja Kodu* was expressed in the first issue: "to develop the reader's aesthetic taste in home culture" and, assuming the unavailability of necessary furnishings: "to offer drafts for commodities made at home... taking into consideration easily available materials, existing possibilities and today's taste" (1/1958). The almanac was assembled by a board of active interior architects (E. Velbri, V. Asi and others) and applied artists (M. Adamson, H. Kuma, T. Vaskova, L. Habicht and others); for years, the compiler was Leida Madisson. The offering of practical advice survived until the early 1970s, when the mainstream changed because of the new editor Andres Tolts, a young industrial artist who had a different vision for the magazine.

The set of garden furniture in the first issue of *Kunst ja Kodu* was designed by Leila Pärtelpoeg and made by Raul Erdel. View of the exhibition Practical *Kunst ja Kodu* in Hobusepea Gallery, Tallinn in November 2009

Pages from the magazine Kunst ja Kodu



Home Bar

Clock Compositions

Besides generally educational and instructive topics, the magazine always offered all kinds of ideas and emphasised the importance of do-it-yourself. For years it relied on the do-it-yourself ideology, expressed in design solutions and practical advice, and on regularly published worksheets. Do-it-yourself is usually associated with women's handicrafts, and here, too, a remarkable role was played by textile items (wall and floor carpets, doilies and clothes). However, as there already existed a special magazine, *Käsitöö (Handicraft)*, which focused on that, *Kunst ja Kodu* felt a need to lay the emphasis on furniture and home-planning, thus suggesting "handicrafts for men who decorate their home" (1/68).

Each issue tried to focus on a certain topic. Besides attractively drawn solutions of ideas, there were practical hints on planning rooms and specific items. The range of topics was quite extensive, from designing an entrance hall to garden furniture, plus introducing various items, such as lamps, mirrors and door handles. Some worksheets were published as well, to enable people to try do-it-yourself projects. There was no special section on practical solutions; a worksheet could be found, as a rule, at the end of the text, accompanied by pictorial material, through all issues from the start of the almanac until the early 1970s.

An important aspect in everything recommended in *Kunst ja Kodu* was the emphasis on modernity and contemporaneity. From the late 1950s, the key words directing designs and carrying a clear and unambiguous message were: simple stylised forms, clarity and simple materials. In the late 1960s, the design language of pop, with its softer forms, slowly took over.

Besides contemporaneity, which had in a sense become the norm, the legacy of the past was included. It was thought wise not to throw it overboard light-heartedly; instead, a middle ground was recommended, where the old and the new could blend, for example in a national, or simply a historically attractive, item (e.g 3/1960, 1/1963). Going along with everything modern without any criticism was seen as the threat of standardisation.

The designers whose work was offered in *Kunst ja Kodu* for free were active and well appreciated in their professional fields. Several members of the board contributed to the magazine, e.g Edgar Velbri and Saima Veidenberg, as did designers from 'outside' – Leila Pärtelpoeg, Maia Oselein, Väino Tamm and others – who soon offered an opportunity for their younger colleagues to introduce their ideas, for example Mait Summatavet, and Taevo and Helle Gans.

For years, *Kunst ja Kodu* provided its readers with 2–4 worksheets per issue. By giving up their authors' rights and freely offering their ideas, the designers could reach a wide range of people. Paradoxically, they gave consumers an opportunity to make various items for their immediate everyday environment on the basis of well thought through solutions. In the general wave of homogeneity, *Kunst ja Kodu* increasingly offered a chance to differ from standard solutions, thus becoming an alternative. We cannot of course know how much of the do-it-yourself section was actually accomplished, but considering the impressive print run of the magazine (it started with 20 000–25 000 copies, but by the 1960s the number was down to about 9000–10 000), it was in a way quite possible to become an alternative standard.

The exhibition presents the design ideas and worksheets published between 1958 and 1971, meant for men as 'handicrafts for home furnishing', mostly giving ideas for furniture and lamps in more unusual forms.

Kunst ja Kodu was published until 1990, altogether 59 issues.

* The main exhibition KNOW HOW (curator Kärt Maran) of the 5th Tallinn Applied Art Triennial takes place from 14 November 2009 to 21 February 2010 in the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design. See more: www.trtr.ee. Triennial's satellite exhibition Practical Kunst ja Kodu (curated by Kai Lobjakas) took place from 14 to 23 November 2009 in the Hobusepea Gallery in Tallinn.

Kai Lobjakas
(1975), art historian, curator and head of collections at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design.

In 1958 the magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* started with practical and sensible advice about the compact solutions for small flats – focusing on different rooms such as living room, kitchen, dining room, their furnishing and various ways of arranging it. At that time, the magazine was directed at people living in industrially fabricated standard flats, trying to help and instruct them how to make their home comfortable and singular with handy means. Drawings of garden furniture sets were represented for years.

In the 1960s, a shift occurred from environments to specific objects. Instructions how to place and use lamps, mirrors, tables and chairs, were replaced by emphasis on their stylistic side. Besides lamps and seats, new objects were now stressed, such as wall boxes (1/64), door links (1/67), serving tables (2/67), round tables and seats, tower-shape cupboards (1/68), home bars (3/68). Managing one's practical life was no longer paramount, people were instead keen on new forms of spending their spare time and imagined a more luxurious life at home.

By the end of the 1960s, design already offered rather exceptional solutions. Technological and social changes are afoot, the Soviet version of the consumer society and design as a new discipline were emerging rapidly. In late 1968, a number of drawings were published for designing a music centre, in 1969 Mait Summatavet experimented with lamps produced at Estoplast factory. In 1971 Helle Gans published her designs for sculptural clocks that were displayed at the Space and Form exhibition in 1969.

Unknown artist.
Flower Study.
I half of the 19th c.
Watercolour.
Tartu Art Museum

A few tips for understanding Baltic Biedermeier art

Tiina Abel

The period between the Congress of Vienna, the political end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, and the revolutions in 1848 was perceived in Europe as a social lull between the storms. In the 1850s, the mentality of retreating into one's private life, which flourished during the decades of peace and stability, was regarded with irony, and was called Biedermeier. This approach to life and its accompanying art practices, which lasted over half a century (some practices even longer) were named after a fictional literary character, the poet and schoolteacher Weiland Gottlieb Biedermaier. With his dull daily life and naïve poems, he was the embodiment of the contemporary 'ordinary man', a parody of the simpleminded, bigoted and cosy petit bourgeois existence. The critics of Biedermeier-style philistinism who tackled the fictitious character's grasp of life, which hardly reached further than his slippers, were clearly inspired by a mentality radically renewed by the birth of modernism. The inner world adventures of a *flâneur* – a new, demanding and dynamic type of person – were inspired by the streets, the public space.

Franz Burchard Dörbeck. *Scene of Street Life in Berlin*. 1820–1830.
Coloured

Theodor Gehlhaar (1805–1871). *Characteristische Szenen aus dem Bauernleben in Ehst- und Livland*. C. 1840. Coloured lithography. Art Museum of Estonia

The theoreticians of modern life, who admired the 'fleurs du mal', thus stigmatised the modest and private way of life and its taste in art, associated with the (petit) bourgeois, for a very long time. Today the understanding of Biedermeier art as something that created and reflected a cosy environment has changed. No more comprehensive term to cover the era of strikingly diverse art ideas has been found, and it is thought more sensible to focus on the nuances of the already circulating concept. Research on Biedermeier now includes neutrality and a sense of the inevitability of processes: the moral, high-flying classicism perhaps indeed evoked a desire for (a Biedermeier-style) simplicity as a natural counterbalance. The courts in Vienna, Berlin and Copenhagen (and not only the bourgeoisie), which shaped the new political reality in the spirit of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ideas, were also able to appreciate authenticity, practicality, love of home and intimate family relations.

The emergence of the aristocracy as the carriers of Biedermeier principles is especially significant in understanding the 19th century art processes in Estonia and the former Livonian areas. The organisation of life according to social standing, which supported the power of the nobility in the Baltic provinces, fit into the Biedermeier ideals perhaps more smoothly than elsewhere. Although dependent on the German cultural space in terms of language and cultural influences, the Baltic nobility developed an identity based on the local way of life and customs of governing. The privileges for about 300 hundred families established by the Baltic special order (*status provincialis*) guaranteed power, land and the free labour of the local population. In the first half of the 19th century, not one of the Russian tsars who nominally reigned over the Baltic territories ever challenged this arrangement. The unshakeable stability of the social order might have been the basis for the 'Livonian still life' as one reason why the Biedermeier mentality lasted so long, and why Biedermeier could be seen as the code of Baltic German culture. In the first half of the 19th century, the Baltic nobility felt totally safe from all dangers. As the Baltic German self-image was based on two institutions — status and family — it was not a matter of accepting new art principles; it was, rather, a case of the local ancient arrangement of life and the Biedermeier ideals coinciding.

Various typical Biedermeier art qualities became magnified in the province, including stylistic diversity. The ideas of classicism, romanticism and early realism all operated in the art field simultaneously, but also the slowly returning old styles, such as gothic and neo-baroque, were active. The layers of different aesthetic systems therefore merged; in the case of Baltic Biedermeier, this is often connected with the typical indifference towards abstract style categories typical of a practical approach. What is so charming about the Estonian and Livonian Biedermeier is its anonymity (in many cases we do not know the name of the author or the portrayed person) and the wide diapason of its artistic realisation: the artists' skills swung between virtuoso professionalism and joyful amateurism. A large number of local 'Biedermeier' works were not created for immortality, but out of practical need (supplementing the portrait galleries) or out of pure joy of

1. Carl Sigismund Walther (1783–1866). *Portrait of a Young Lady*. 1838. Oil. Art Museum of Estonia

2. Ernst Hermann Schlichting. *Young Lady Admiring Her Birthday Presents*. 1842. Oil. Art Museum of Estonia

3. August Georg Wilhelm Pezold. *Group Portrait of Doepp Family*. 1845. Oil. Art Museum of Estonia

4. Gottfried Jakob Ferdinand Napiersky. *Portrait of a Lady*. 1828. Oil. Art Museum of Estonia

5.Alexander Schwabe. *Horse in a Stable*. 1844. Oil. Art Museum of Estonia

6. Carl Sigismund Walther (1783–1866). *Portrait of Karoline Paucker*. 1838. Oil. Art Museum of Estonia

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life (pictures of flowers as a reflection of botanical interests and entertainment). Thanks to the lack of any great personal ambitions on the part of the authors, even the most anonymous part of the Baltic Biedermeier art splendidly presents the world of the era and local circumstances through different motifs.

Biedermeier art adores family values. Due to corporative social arrangement, the relationships between the Baltic nobility (and the status of the intelligentsia who imitated their way of life) were family-oriented, and they all felt like members of one big family. This arrangement strengthened the Biedermeier ideas of gender roles, where men were active in the social sphere, whereas women were relegated to marriage, home and family. In the manors of the Baltic provinces, the fields of public and private life blended more naturally than elsewhere in Europe, and a genuine home-hearth culture emerged here, based on both spouses. Although the portraits show women embodying the compulsory virtues — tolerance, patience, submission, fidelity, selflessness, moderation and compassion – the normal burden of household duties here demanded that women be sensible and industrious. The strong character of Baltic female aristocrats and their strong knowledge of people came in handy in arranging the relations and marriages among the many families. In Baltic German noble families, the ideal marriage rested on friendship and lifelong affection, whereas passion would have been too unsafe an investment from the point of view of stability. The couple raised their children, spent time together and shared their worries – or in other words, established a web of closeness and joint memories.

The sense of home included both the immediate and more distant surroundings. Although the Baltic nobility and intelligentsia were well versed in European cultural currents and the nobility were often in contact with the Russian tsarist court in the line of their duty, for them Estonia and Livonia meant a beloved homeland, which for historical reasons had to be shared with the Estonian indigenous population, which was culturally very different. A common destiny and geographical space compelled both sides to determine themselves, translate the alien way of life and customs into a familiar cultural code, and recognise the inevitable mutual impact. For artists, the image of a country, the possession of which formed the basis of wealth and a way of existence, was elevated into a romantic perception of homeland that could usually be depicted from a divine height. The strong sense of location characteristic of the Biedermeier era inspired hundreds of panoramic vistas of Estonia, Tallinn (Reval) and Tartu (Dorpat). In the midst of the urban bustle, we find respectable married couples, carriages and people at the market, strolling ladies and playing children. Listening closely, we might hear the cries of delight at unexpected encounters, secrets being exchanged in whispers, and suddenly erupting and quickly fading arguments. Ideals, daily life and creative handicrafts thus came together in beloved topographical locations. Looking into inner space in its widest meaning, the artists also included Estonians as a special subject matter to be depicted. In the 1830s and 1840s, the open-minded Baltic German intellectuals, including many artists, were fascinated by

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the picturesque culture of the indigenous population. Thanks to a wish to record the singularity of local popular culture and the beauty of national costumes, Biedermeier art acquired another thematic shade – the Estonian as a charming ethnographic curiosity.

Baltic German artists of the Biedermeier period: *F. B. Dörbeck, T. Gehlhaar, J. Hau, E. Hau, G. A. Hippius, A. J. Klünder, C. F. von Kügelen, F. L. von Maydell, G. J. F. Napiersky, C. T. von Neff, A. G. W. Pezold, H. L. Petersen, J. Schwabe SCHWABE, MAYBE?, G. F. Schlater, K. A. Senff, M. F. Stegemann, J. C. E. Ungern-Sternberg, C. S. Walther, O. Zoege von Manteuffel and many others.*

Tiina Abel

(1951), art historian, curator at the Kumu Art Museum. Main area of research: Estonian art history from 1850–1940. In 2009 curated the exhibition Baltic Biedermeier at Kadriorg Art Museum (open until 29 August 2010) on the basis of Estonian and Latvian art collections.

Death Up Close

Bernt Notke. *Dance of Death* in Lübeck. Destroyed in 1942.

Bernt Notke's *Dance of Death*, originally commissioned for and still preserved in the Niguliste Church, stands as one of the most unusual monuments of late medieval macabre art.[1] Preserved as a fragment, the painting features the beginning of a procession of men and women of different social estates, accompanied by skeletal dancers and morbid personifications of Death. Guided by the words of the Preacher painted at the beginning of the procession, laymen and ecclesiastics are invited to repent their sins before joining their last dance. The lines of dialogue painted below each figure reveal the futile struggle of mortals in the grip of mocking, cruel Death. Even though only a fragment of the painting remains, we can reconstruct the rest by looking at the *Dance of Death* in Lübeck, a sister-piece of the Reval *Dance*, painted by Notke some years earlier, which now survives in black-and-white photographs only.[2] It is fairly certain that the Reval *Dance*, which now includes the Pope, the Emperor, the Empress, the Cardinal and the King, also featured the Burgomaster, the Merchant and the Craftsman, among others, and ended with the image of the Child in the cradle.

1 This article is a brief digest of the paper given at the *Art, Memory, and Patronage: Visual Culture in the Baltic Sea Region at the Time of Bernt Notke* conference. An expanded version will appear in Chapter 4 of my forthcoming book, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages: Image, Text, Performance* (Brepols, 2010).

2 For a comparative analysis of the two paintings, see primarily Hartmut Freytag, ed., *Der Totentanz der Marienkirche zu Lübeck und der Nikolaikirche in Reval (Tallinn): Edition, Kommentar, Interpretation, Rezeption* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993).

Bernt Notke.
Danse Macabre.
End of the 15th c.
Niguliste Museum

Elina Gertsman

The placement of the painting in Niguliste is of special interest, largely because of the diverse audience that regularly gathered in the church. By the fifteenth century, Reval had been transformed into one of the key trading ports, the second largest on the eastern side of the Baltic, and its harbour welcomed a dizzying variety of merchants, sailors, craftsmen and, if we believe Balthasar Russow's *Chronicle*, envoys of the Pope and royalty.[3] Niguliste occupied a key position within the walls of Reval: it was close to the Town Hall and its marketplace, the *loci* of festivities and trials, council meetings and itinerant performances; it stood in some proximity to Lange Strate (Pikk Street), one of the main arteries of the city; and it bordered the artisan quarter, centered on the modern-day Rataskaevu. Lange Strate was home to the Great Merchant Guild and the St Canute's Guild, both of which had their altars in Niguliste. Artisans, too, from blacksmiths to shoemakers, had altars there, and a number of civic groups – goldsmiths and beer-carters, for instance – paid for masses. Tombstones scattered throughout the church reveal that it was patronized by the upper classes as well. In addition, at least three religious confraternities were associated with the church. *Ecclesia mercatorum* Niguliste served a variety of both religious and civic purposes throughout the Middle Ages; scholars suggest that similar Hanseatic churches were home to burgher assemblies, used to receive especially important visitors, and provided the space where the public gathered to hear the newest decrees.[4] Niguliste, in particular, functioned as a fortress and a storage facility as well. In other words, the message of the *Dance of Death* – that death equalizes all, in spite of rank, age, gender or status – seemed tailor-made for the varied public that necessarily comprised the viewers of Notke's painting.

That viewers play a particularly important role in the consideration of this painting is evident. Almost life-size, the protagonists of the *Dance* look out directly at the beholders, holding their gaze. The only medieval *Dance of Death* painted on canvas, Notke's image offered the flexibility in its placement that frescoes, for instance, did not. For example, the roughly contemporary *Dance of Death* of Kermaria (Brittany, France) was painted well above eye-level, probably to accommodate the nave

3 *The Chronicle of Balthasar Russow & A Forthright Rebuttal by Elert Kruse & Errors and Mistakes of Balthasar Russow by Heinrich Tisenhausen, trans. Jerry Christopher Smith, with the collaboration of* William L. Urban and Juergen Eichhoff (Madison: Baltic Studies Center, 1988).

4 For the full list of civic and religious groups who had connections with Niguliste, see Anu Mänd, ÐKes on kes Niguliste kiriku peaaltari retaablil,Ð Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 18, nos. 1Ð2 (2009), 31 and 39. On the varying functions of Hanseatic churches, see Schildhauer, *Hansa,* 174; specifically for Niguliste, see Sulev Mäeväli, *Architectural and Art Monuments* (*Tallinn: Perioodika, 1993*), 5, and Rasmus Kangropool, *Niguliste Kirik* (Tallinn: Kunst, 1993).

Dance of Death of Kermaria (Brittany, France)

arcade. The *Dance* dominates the space, but at the same time appears distant and impersonal. Notke's dancers, conversely, confront the viewer, both in word and image. The Preacher, for instance, addresses viewers directly, urging them to consider the painted surface of the canvas as if it were a mirror. It is a moralizing mirror, no doubt: the beholders are certain to find their doubles in the morbid procession, sure to discover the Merchant, the Burgher, the Craftsman and the Young Woman, all seized by Death. Not only the image but also the painted word would speak to them, as Death provides ironic and blunt remarks on everyone's worldly status. The immediacy of the painting's message is underscored by the way both the dejected mortals and grinning skeletons appear pushed almost into the viewer's space, lined up as they are at the edge of the painting.

The looming effect produced by this line-up owes quite a bit to the representation of the city in the background. This, too, is highly unusual for *Dance of Death* paintings, which tend to place their protagonists against an abstracted, generic background. Yet, here Notke offers the viewer a typical, and certainly recognizable, Hanseatic town, its skyline studded with church steeples, towers and gabled roofs. No doubt, as in the Lübeck painting, the harbour would have been included in the original panorama. In other words, even though this is not the city of Reval *per se* that stretches behind the dancers, it serves as its close approximation. The trope of the reflecting mirror, and the call for the identification of the beholder with the macabre procession, is therefore strengthened by the inclusion of the familiar locus, now inscribed in the distant background, as if already left behind.

Precious few documents survive from the Middle Ages that record and analyse the viewing practices of laymen and laywomen. Yet, the shift of focus from the question of intention to that of reception allows us to see the *Dance of Death* as a visual sermon, complete with the Preacher and the diverse crowd that gather to hear the homily in the intimately familiar setting. The protagonists of the Dance may not have time to escape death, but viewers are given a chance to meditate upon this visual sermon, a chance to repent their sins. In this, the painting becomes actively involved in the viewers' salvation, and functions as a vehicle for their preparation for inevitable death.

Elina Gertsman

PhD in 2004 from Boston University. Assistant Professor of Medieval Art History at the Southern Illinois University.

Contemporary *Dances of Death* in Niguliste Museum

Triin Hallas

Dance of Death Today,
Niguliste Museum

The Niguliste Museum has been offering interesting educational programmes and excursions for schoolchildren for years. In 2008 a new project was started – *Dance of Death Today*, which is connected with the 500th anniversary of Bernt Notke, one of the most renowned artists of all time in the Baltic Sea region. Secondary school students listened to a lecture about the famous painting by Bernt Notke, *Danse Macabre*. The students cut out pictures of well-known people from newspapers and inserted them between skeletons according to the medieval hierarchy, thus creating modern *dances of death*. In early 2009 an exhibition was organised of these works.

An exhibition called *Bernt Notke – Between Innovation and Traditions*, opened in June 2009 in the Niguliste Museum (St Nicholas Church). The curator, Anu Mänd, wanted part of the students' effort to be shown with the Notke display. Thus visitors can still see a fragment of the *Dance of Death Today* project.

The aim of the project was, on the one hand, to arouse interest in students in old art, and at the same time allow them to express their own creative views. Their work reflected the young people's attitudes to various topics, such as starving fashion models, over-consumption and politicians. Besides foreign stars (Mick Jagger, Madonna, Mariah Carey, Victoria Beckham, Enrique Iglesias and others), there were prominent people in Estonian public life (Carmen Kass, Tanel Padar, Liis Lass, Edgar Savisaar and Jan Uuspõld).

The audience, including several foreigners on state visits, genuinely enjoyed the display. The exhibition was even seen by the Queen of Spain, who was delighted to find Paris Hilton in a museum of old art. Many tourists have wanted to buy a postcard with the death of dance and George Bush – alas, it is not available.

Triin Hallas

(.....), art historian, assistant-curator at the Niguliste Museum. Curated the project *Dance of Death Today*.

Thoughts on public urban space

Margit Mutso

Squares, parks, alleys, green belts, promenades and empty sites are the parts of urban space that actually make a city a city. The existence of a quality public space makes a city competitive, and attracts tourists and city dwellers. The more space – as diverse and exciting as possible – where you do not have to spend money, the more valuable a city really is, and the more emotional and memorable it is.

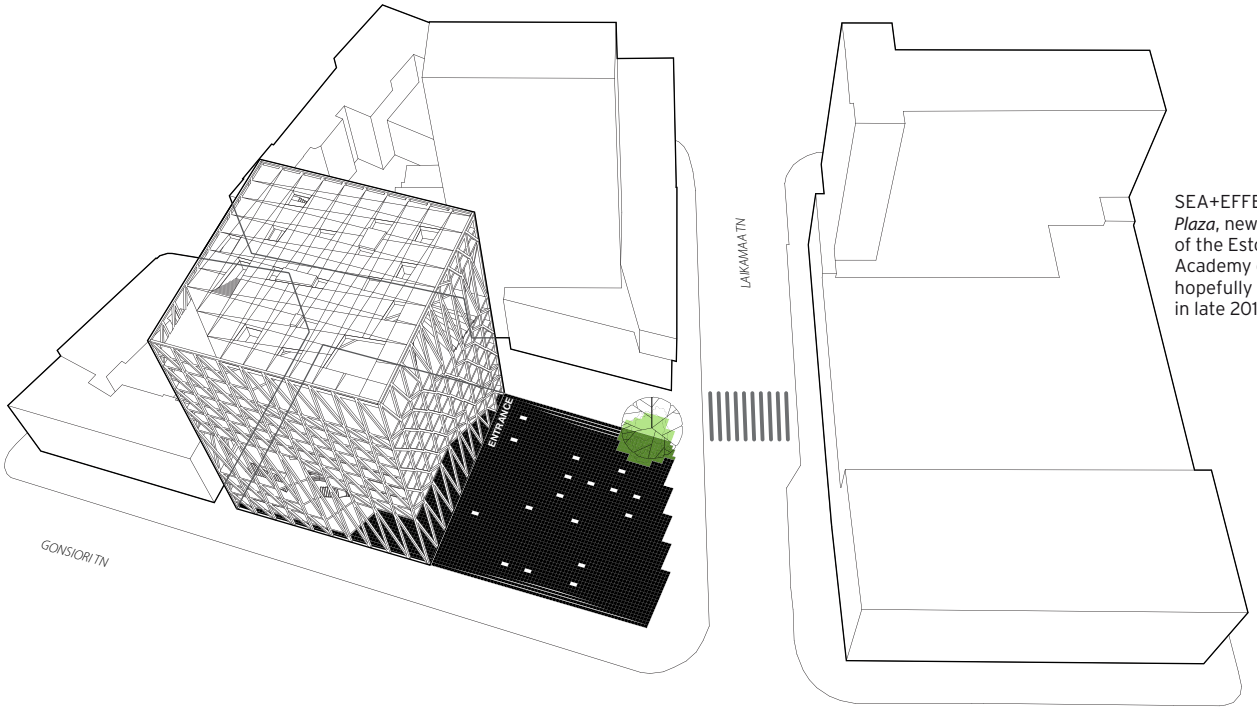
There are certain preconditions for creating an active public space, without which the new place will be stillborn and the disappointed townspeople will feel that their money has gone with the wind. To make everything work, it must first be established for whom the place is created and what the aims are. If the planned environment is designed for a large number of the city inhabitants, it is clear that the place will only be successful if it is visited by many people. This is guaranteed by two main preconditions: location and the existence of buildings that relate to the external space meant for the public. There is no point in creating a square for people in a remote corner or between non-functional buildings. The formula for an ideal square is a location on a crossroad + buildings that feed and support the external space. Ideally, there is a park as well, or a body of water or a green belt, which will balance the densely populated artificial environment. From there, it is simple: good lighting, carefully considered paths and roads, and nicely designed small forms – the place will run like clockwork. With these preconditions in mind, it is good to analyse the squares created in Estonia during the past few years.

Vabaduse väljak (Freedom Square)

As Tallinn prepares to become the Capital of Culture in 2011, the urban public space in Tallinn has acquired special significance. The recently completed Vabaduse väljak (Freedom Square) is quite a good start. A space like this will never be empty – it is located at a crossroads, at the gate to the Old Town, surrounded by art galleries, cafes and a church, plus the green area of Harjumägi Hill. All this gives Freedom Square such a boost that it would work even if it were totally empty except for a few benches. As it is, it is very nearly ideal, with its exciting steps, designed barriers, marked moat and effective lighting. It is only regrettable that the powerful ruins of the medieval town walls, revealed during construction work, can be admired only from the car park; and it would be nice if the wheelchairs and pushchairs were able to get up Harjumägi Hill from the square.

Looking at another recent public square in the Rotermann district, it appears to be much more difficult to breathe life into it. The developer, who has done an excellent job in creating an architecturally exciting urban space, has resorted to *feng shui* and public events, but the result is not quite what was expected. One does not need to be an Oriental genius in order to understand why this architecturally superb space is not functioning; it suffices to look at the preconditions outlined above. The Rotermann district has business spaces that relate well to the surroundings, it has cafes and offices, and flats on the upper floors, which keep the place alive at all times, and there is an exciting urban landscape and diverse small forms, but townspeople or tourists hardly ever find their way here. The problem is that no roads or streets lead here and there is nowhere to proceed from here either. There is one stopover – the Museum of Architecture – but the rest is a lot of empty space where nothing happens. Those wishing to go to the seaside find it a frustrating experience crossing Ahtri Street, with its busy traffic. The Rotermann centre is therefore visited by people who know exactly what they are looking for and, to encourage them, various public events have been organised and a small market has been set up. It is a great pity that the city has not bothered to support this splendid initiative, for example by building a thoroughfare connecting the sea and the town. The city government is certainly the body that should see the big picture, welcome good ideas, bring different plans together and give them a push if necessary. The decisions of the city government are unfortunately often haphazard and politically motivated.

The Rotermann centre



SEA+EFFEKT. *Art Plaza*, new building of the Estonian Academy of Arts, hopefully completed in late 2011

Pekka Vapaavuori. Square in front of Kumu Art Museum

One of the nicest public spaces in Tallinn, created a few years ago, is the square in front of the Kumu Art Museum on the border of Kadriorg and Lasnamäe. Alas, once again we have to admit that despite excellent architectural ideas and a strong public building, the place is mostly empty. We only need to imagine how this kind of art square would work, for example at Teatri or Viru Square, or by the Admiralty Basin, in order to realise what a potential has been lost here. The place in front of the museum could have become a meeting place for art people, where the displays outside would enrich the urban space and where the summer café terrace would be full of tourists and the local cultural elite. Now it merely serves museum visitors, whose number might have been much bigger had the location been different. In that sense, it was the only conceivable decision to leave the Academy of Arts in its central location. When the winning entry *Art Plaza* (authors SEA+EFFEKT, Denmark) is completed, together with a new public square around the Academy, we can hope that there will also be a well-functioning cultural public space in central Tallinn which balances the numerous business centres. The other remarkable solution that, with any luck, will actually be realised is the building of a new city government between Old Town and the sea. The winning entry for this was submitted by the world-famous Danish architectural firm Bjarke Ingels Group. Having the building next to the Tallinn City Hall will be the first serious step in connecting Tallinn and the sea, and will finally shift the public space towards the sea, one of the most emotional sources of energy for the whole city. The buildings by the planned seaside promenade will hopefully mostly be for public use, especially since there are historical mighty buildings there already (the hydroplane hangar and the former Patarei prison). Tallinn thus has a good chance to develop into a truly attractive contemporary environment both for local people and tourists.

VIRU KESKUS

Bjarke Ingels Group. Public Village, design for the new Town Hall in Tallinn...

....and its future location

Central square in Rakvere

As for the bigger urban spaces for public use in the rest of Estonia, the first one to spring to mind is the central square in Rakvere, completed in 2004 as a result of an architectural competition (authors Villem Tomiste and Veronika Valk). The square in Rakvere certainly raised the small town to the top of the list of Estonian towns. Alas, the whole potential of the place was not fully realised. The buildings left on the square are introverted, and the Turu [Market] department store in the square failed to find any connection with the external space either. The planned market did not even materialise; there are no cosy cafés around the promenade and square, the use of which could easily expand in summer months. Luckily, much of this is compensated for by the design of the square (architectural office Kosmos), with its hills and water bodies offering exciting experiences for children and adults. Architecture magazines in Estonia and abroad wrote about the special urban square. The success of the central square probably has encouraged the city government to take the next step as well: another square near St Paul's Church. This should have a different image, as the focus will be on the music centre dedicated to Arvo Pärt, established in the church and its auxiliary building. Although this location is by no means as attractive or as frequented as the central square, the significant public building with businesses around it could bring the whole area to life and create another remarkable place in the town (winning entry Celander Projekt).

Celander Projekt. Winning entry of the competition for the music centre dedicated to Arvo Pärt in Rakvere

3+1 Architects. New public library in Pärnu

Elsewhere in Estonia, attempts have been made to create public spaces, but not always successfully. A place with good potential, at least at first sight, is the embankment in Pärnu. which has been in the process of revitalization for years. A few years ago, a new concert hall and a huge supermarket called Port Artur were built there, supplemented a bit later by Port Artur II. It has everything – culture, business, central location and river – but for some reason it does not work. The public space is only used when people go to a concert or walk from the shops to their cars. Two factors inhibit its chance of becoming an attractive public area. Firstly, it is situated in a dead end in regard to the city, with nowhere to walk further – a wide river on one side and a road on the other, so people cannot, for instance, stroll along the river to the marina. Secondly, there is a problem with buildings that have a public function but do not sufficiently relate to the surrounding environment. The ignorance of trading centres concerning the surrounding space is notorious. People arrive by car, buy enormous quantities of goods and race off again. Extensive parking areas make the whole region unpleasant for pedestrians and spoil the urban space. Similar low-quality places can be seen everywhere lining the access roads to the city, and in the city centre they effectively turn away the pedestrians.

However, a tiny but excellent slice of a public space appeared last year in Pärnu: the new library, together with a small square in front. The fact that the very heart of Pärnu now has a library, in addition to the theatre, is truly significant. Moreover, the authors of the new library (3+1 Architects) wished to establish a connection with the surroundings – in the functional construction of the library (the ground floor has a space for reading newspapers and magazines, and a café), in the terraces united with the library's interior, as well as in the transparent cover, which opens up the city centre to the space and the other way round.

In recent years, Tartu has paid a lot of attention to architecture. The mayor was probably the only one whose campaign in the local government elections included promises of a better environment; this brought victory and another term as mayor. The Tartu architectural policy as a whole is quite remarkable compared with other Estonian towns. It includes young enthusiastic architects who are trying to find the best solutions to develop their town. At the same time, it must be admitted that the quality of the public space lags far behind the new architectural objects. The new department store and the expansion of the embankment centre, called Tasku [Pocket], should have produced exciting spaces in the centre of town, but instead both big business buildings have jealously retreated into themselves, and show no interest in their surroundings. True, the renovated streets in the old part of Tartu offer a pleasant walking space and contain cosy green areas and small squares. There are semi-public spaces which make you feel good, aimed at certain target groups. For example, the extension to the Tartu Kesklinna School (architectural bureau Salto) created a wonderful square, also used after school. Alas, one of the biggest assets in Tartu is still not properly used – the Emajõgi River. The whole population of Tartu is probably waiting for the time when they can promenade along the banks of the river, and from a café window watch children feeding the ducks on a Sunday morning.

Public urban space consists of more than overpopulated squares. A diverse town also has places for solitude, green areas in which to stroll with a child or walk the dog, parks where you can enjoy the changing seasons, tranquil seashores or riverbanks

AB Salto. The extension of the Tartu Kesklinna School

for collecting thoughts. Such places need only a bit of looking after by the town and some security controls. Sometimes, however, one has to wonder how the zealous city fathers manage to make such places inaccessible to their main users. An example from North-Tallinn that boasts a huge mighty green area called the Stroomi forest: the previously wild territory is being gradually tidied, starting with the beach and the park, and now the path running through the forest is finally lit. Everything seems fine, except when you look at the sign with instructions on using the path; it turns out that you cannot bring your dog, horse, pushchair or bicycle. It is therefore out of bounds to about ninety percent of those who would enjoy the forest, and the rather costly project is only meant for solitary joggers. Such bad thinking characterises quite a few green areas. Dogs are also banned from the Stroomi coastal park, to say nothing of the beach itself, which is almost totally deserted from autumn to spring. What do you do then if there is both a child and a dog in the family, both wanting to go out? Tie the dog to a tree at a distance while the child plays in the playground?

The public urban space is meant for townspeople, and each district has its own population with different preferences. It is clear that not everybody's wishes can be considered, but maybe people should actually be asked about what they would like to have. Public urban spaces are often remembered only before election time, and then something is done quickly. In the great haste and enthusiasm, alas, it is sometimes forgotten why and for whom all this is being done, and whether the place will come to life or will languish for years, waiting for better times.

Margit Mutso

(1966), studied architecture at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Since 1995 architect at the architectural bureau Eek&Mutso. Chairwoman of the Union of Estonian Architects in 2004–2005. Has published extensively.

Social space and design: the case of the Rotermann quarter

Andres Kurg

In May 2009, simultaneously with the Days of the Tallinn Old Town, the newly opened Rotermann residential and shopping quarter, in the vicinity of the central business and shopping district, celebrated the Days of the New Town. Organised by the developers of the district, the events of the New Town occurred around the central square of the area, where the public was offered theatre and music performances, different product presentations and other kinds of entertainment. During the day, throughout the summer, in the same square, a farmers' market was held, with an emphasis on free range and organic food products – one newspaper called it an authentic market for Estonian food. On weekends, one could also find there crafts and design products. As the Rotermann district had been praised in the media for its outstanding and bold architectural features, and for its successful attempt to convert a former industrial area at the heart of the city to accommodate vibrant leisure and retail spaces, the market had to follow the same design principles down to the last detail. Thus the vendors were dressed in uniform black designer aprons and hats, and sat behind minimalist shopping carts designed by a young media savvy architect. To match the vigorous architectural layout of the area, the carts were organised in diagonal rows, an effort to make the total project complete.

So why was all the staging of public streetlife and of the so-called authentic market necessary? And what kind of social relationships were called forth by this harmoniously designed environment? I do not wish to lament the ubiquity of commerce in urban spaces, or to look for some long-lost ideal public space as a model to return to. What I am interested in are the different discussions around issues of urban planning and public space in the past decades in Tallinn, what kind of models have been envisioned in these discussion and also what has been missed from these models – why areas like the Rotermann quarter have, instead of becoming socially diverse areas, become carefully managed enclaves. My aim is to then draw attention to perhaps less evident issues related to land use and through this analysis to open up a space for alternative and critical practices.

The post-socialist 1990s were defined by radical urban changes in Tallinn. Rejecting the Soviet centralised state and planning practices, the municipal government ceased to be the source of control for town matters and more

often took the role of a cartographer, mapping the changes that had taken place independently of them. In contrast to the Soviet situation of state ownership of land, the new neoliberal situation established an almost total privatization of public property. And the general policy of attracting investments avoided regulations that would have made the city less attractive for entrepreneurs and developers. Planning was now initiated by developers, done in micro-scale, and the city grew 'one piece after another', with the interconnections between the pieces being designed only retrospectively (often after surprises, such as the fact that a new shopping/entertainment/ business facility was inaccessible to pedestrians or far from public transport nodes). Becoming more and more fragmented, Tallinn was often represented as following an island logic, being composed of different unrelated chunks which in some cases had been separated from each other already historically: for example the Old Town was cut off from the rest of the city by its surrounding green park area, a former fortification zone, next to that was erected a new business district with skyscrapers desperately trying to outdo each other in their height and spectacular quality, on the other side from the Old Town was located a former working-class wooden housing area, and in the outskirts were located the Soviet prefab areas.

In parallel with deregulation and decentralisation, the architectural discourse of the 1990s in Estonia was marked by a growing interest in urban processes and urbanism, rather than the design and style of singular buildings. Asking, in 1996, what was then the current main field for architectural practice, Veljo Kaasik, the Dean of

the Faculty of Architecture at that time at the Estonian Academy of Arts and the mastermind behind an 'urban turn' in Estonia, supplied the answer: that it was the 'planning of the physical environment in the widest sense':

'I cannot agree with the idea that an environment (a city) grows and develops by itself ... Only strategic planning can, to some extent, organise accelerating processes; it can invigorate one or another spot, heat it up, and give meaning to it in such a way that, when a company contemplates erecting a building there, the meaning of that place will increase, its potential connections will be envisaged, and a greater guarantee will have been given for success.'[1]

Seeing the architect's place as being alongside the developer, Kaasik imagined the former's role as being in charge of spatial decisions that would follow professional architectural logic rather than enterpreneurial logic and, through 'wise' decisions, would guarantee that the community, as well as developers, would profit from it. It was ultimately the architect – as an expert on space – who was to be in control. The paradox of that moment however was that simultaneously with the architects' turn to urbanism, they no longer had a role in urban planning, and architects-urbanists were in a situation in which a single house was no longer interesting, yet it actually remained one of the few means to intervene in public space.

By the 2000s, when the neglect of public infrastructures in municipal planning practices had become dramatically obvious, the architectural discourse started to interpose professional knowledge more directly against one-dimensional profit-oriented thinking, and the rhetoric shifted towards an emphasis on public space in the city. The architectural review *Maja* (*House*), which previously had introduced new buildings by listing them typologically (schools, offices, dwellings etc), became the main arena for discussing urban design and public space. Its new features were: 'The City Builds', 'Islands of Public Life', 'Urban Spaces', 'Public Spaces' or, simply, 'Planning'. The architect Andres Alver, Veljo Kaasik's compatriot and colleague at the Art Academy and a frequent contributor to the magazine, articulated in several pieces the need to engage in designing the public space: 'we need a clearly defined, human-centred, emotionally laden, specially designed new type of public space.'[2] His colleague Indrek Rünkla, writing for the cultural newspaper *Sirp*, announced that 'public space is a social good' and sounded the call to think about public space and talk about it.[3] Yet neither of the authors, nor other numerous architectural writers on the public space, offered any clear explanation regarding what they or their colleagues understood by public space and how their take on it differed, for example, from that of their clients.

As several discussions on cultural and social studies have demonstrated however, the term 'public' has no single meaning and its definition is often dependent on who is speaking. In political theory, it represents a terrain that lies between the state and the private sphere, an arena for rational-critical debate, where it is the quality of the argument rather than the status of the speaker that counts. This has been traditionally considered a position from which a critique of the state is expressed. In the market economy and economic theory, 'public' designates everything related to the state, while the private sphere is that of the market exchange and of enterpreneurialism; it is also the private sphere that is prioritised from this viewpoint. In anthropological terms, however, as well as in many architects' texts, at least from Jane Jacobs' groundbreaking works onwards, public space is imagined as a place of communication and meetings, with intersecting and dense social networks, spontaneous activities and pulsating everyday life. While the first two interpretations of 'public' do not always include a

Farmers' Market in the Rotermann Centre

specific spatial realm, the latter one is usually imagined to be located in the streets and squares, parks and leisure grounds, but also in cafes and shops, theatres and cinemas. And that is the main controversy when the notion of 'public' is left undifferentiated, as the vibrant Jacobsian social space often cuts across separate spheres in the political or economic sense. That which is public in the sense of belonging to the municipality or the state is not, automatically, a socially active space in the anthropological sense. On the other hand, socially intense space can equally well emerge in privately owned premises.

The planning of the Rotermann district, which had housed a bread factory in the 19th century and which after the end of the Soviet era became one of the environments that were 'growing by themselves', clearly represents this intersection of different meanings of 'public'. The zoning law for the area governing the development of single plots and the architectural design process was laid out by Andres Alver and Veljo Kaasik in 2001.[4] Rather than becoming a subsequent island that would be isolated from the rest of the city, the area was seen as an important link in central Tallinn, between the harbour and the new shopping and business district, with places that would drive the multilayered urban life forward. The architects characterised the area as 'labyrinthine' due to its historical character, and saw its future as being a 'bohemian-chamberly' environment that would become an alternative centre for cultural, business and club life. To achieve these goals, the land use plan foresaw the use of municipal property (the streets and the square in the middle) for public pedestrian use (i.e as unoccupied territory) and private land for business, housing and retail. Thus the public, as understood in a market economy, was to join forces with the public in the ethnographic sense and, supported by private retail spaces, it was to produce a new vibrant example of urban living. The development process, which included a two-round architectural competition in 2004, paid a great deal of attention to the design features of not only the buildings erected, but also of the streets and squares, lamps and benches. To achieve a lively character, different progressive teams of architects were used to design single buildings, which were often given a strong identity by the use of unexpected, yet authentic materials: core-ten steel, red brick in atypical configurations, but also the juxtaposition of old factory structures with super-modern glass configurations. At the same time, however, the connections with the surrounding city were discarded and, when finally ready, the Rotermann district became another part of the city that followed the island logic. Without a flow of people, the streets and squares were left empty, shops and cafes were left without customers and the desired public life failed to emerge.

Referring to David Harvey, Rosalyn Deutsche has pointed out one of the main contradictions in capitalist urbanisation, between, on the one hand, 'the social character of land' and, on the other hand, 'its private ownership and control as a commodity.'[e] Land is used for social interaction: there are roads for coming together, for movement, houses for dwelling or squares and parks for leisure, but land is also a commodity to make profit (most directly in the real estate business). The real estate business is on the one hand itself dependent on the society, on its customers, users and clients and requires, for example, different guarantees from society to be successful. On the other hand, interventions by the municipality or the state that benefit society could become a hindrance to doing business. The contradiction arises then that 'private property both impedes attempts to socialize control of land and needs that socialization for its own profit'[5], social space is the engine feeding businesses, but it is in the owners' interests to contain it inside fixed limits, for if it goes too far, it could start to threaten the established property relations. And this is very much the lesson learned from the Rotermann case, where an attempt was made to overcome this contradiction by the planning ideas established in 2001, with the municipal land as public space being combined (and containing) private property and businesses. When these failed – when the municipal public space did not generate a socially vibrant space, a Jacobsian public street-life that would have been profitable also for merchandise – the private owners looked for means to stage public life on the streets and thus attract new customers. With this gesture, however, not only were the streets and squares privatised, and users turned into consumers, but also the initially bold design ideas – to produce an alternative, 'bohemian-chamberly' environment – turned into the opposite, a means for ordering and controlling the space.

If public space is to be reclaimed in this area, it can be done by means of planning, building connections, and opening up the streets for diverse pedestrian flows, but it should also be done with the social character of the urban space in mind, allowing for various practices, the re-use and mis-use of public space. It is ultimately the users and user groups, in the course of their everyday lives, that have the power to transform the meaning of an urban environment and produce new critical public spaces.

1 Veljo Kaasik, Arhitektuur ja sajandilõpp – Andres Alver, Veljo Kaasik, Tiit Trummal, Üle majade. Over the Houses and Beyond, Tallinn: 1999, p 7.
2 Andres Alver, Ruumist ja väärtusest – Maja 1/2009
3 Indrek Rünkla, Avaliku ruumi asjus – Sirp 14. 12. 2007
4 See: Andres Alver, Veljo Kaasik, Rotermanni kvartali tsoneerimiskava – Maja 2/2001
5 Rosalyn Deutsche, Alternative space – Brian Wallis (Ed) If You Lived Here. The City in Art, Theory, and Social Activism. A Project by Martha Rosler. Discussions in Contemporary Culture 6. Dia Art Foundation: 1991, p 57.
6 *Ibid*

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Is Vabaduse väljak complete?
Kalle Vellevoog

Vabaduse väljak (Freedom Square) as the premiere square of the capital of the country, is a significant place, although it is also quite a luxury for a country with a population of under one and a half million. This, perhaps, partly explains the almost century-long epic of getting the square completed. The plans for the square have mostly turned out to be overly ambitious and have gathered dust on shelves.

Two architectural competitions for Vabaduse väljak come to mind from the recent past; in 1993, when one entry suggested pulling down St John's Church at the edge of the square to achieve a better result; and the 'fountain competition' in 1998, where a new function was sought for the huge car park occupying the whole square. The car park was temporarily closed down and flowers were painted on the asphalt.

On the basis of the winning entry of the latest competition (authors Andres Alver, Tiit Trummal and Veljo Kaasik), detailed planning was started in autumn 1998, and today's Vabaduse väljak is the outcome. Some bolder ideas were abandoned during the process of the final design, such as a console construction as an extension of Kaarli Road in front of the City Government building, or a wide water cascade instead of the current steps, but the essential original elements and logistics survived. Looking at the new Vabaduse väljak, the first perception is its feel of the metropolitan, in a positive sense. Moving along the tunnel starting at the SEB bank to Vabaduse väljak, a powerful and even surreal view from under ground opens towards the Art Hall and St John's Church. The moment of perception is startling, considering that, seen at the City Government building, the square space is hidden by a bus shelter with blue glass, through which you can only vaguely guess what is waiting behind it.

The new Vabaduse väljak is characterised by an enjoyably perfect and nuanced usage of material and form. The lamps by the square, the steps, railings, glass lifts, and the solution of texture and colour of the pavement and concrete are in place and carefully thought through.

The underground car park, with

Vabaduse väljak by Andres Alver, Tiit Trummal and Veljo Kaasik

its historical, well-lit walls, and view of the Ingeri bastion, is also unexpectedly effective. The parking area has already become a popular place for company parties.

With natural ease, cafes have taken over the northern side of the square, thus making sure that the area is indeed a multifunctional public space; other ways of using it must still be discovered.

Various art and cultural events would be perfect for the square as well. The enjoyable opening event was Alex Plutser-Sarno's performance *gavno- drug ili vrag?/ slava tevtonskim okkupantam!* on the bastion slope. The mayor of Tallinn, Edgar Savisaar, distributed potatoes and firewood for his potential voters on the square, which could perhaps be seen as a grunge performance. The steps and ramps were taken over by skateboarders and cyclists trying out their tricks during the first days of the new square. The initial plans for a water cascade along the steps designed by the architects unfortunately ended up as a narrow stream by the wall.

Movable furniture and greenery offer delightful spatial solutions, altering their location on the square at irregular intervals.

Against the background of the renewed square, a comparison inevitably emerges with the Monument of the War of Independence, which was completed only a bit earlier. The contrast is strong. The badly proportioned glass prism, with a dark wall of small granite panels behind, seems to be based on a shower-room aesthetic. The monument bears a text cut out of thin tin in random shrift, probably attached to the wall with silicone and totally illegible in certain light. Stainless steel flag poles and handrails display an unsuccessful design. The steep incline is covered with grass, where the lawn refuses to grow and where feeble attempts to mow it are carried out with lawnmowers suspended on ropes, to the great delight of the passing public...

Underground car park

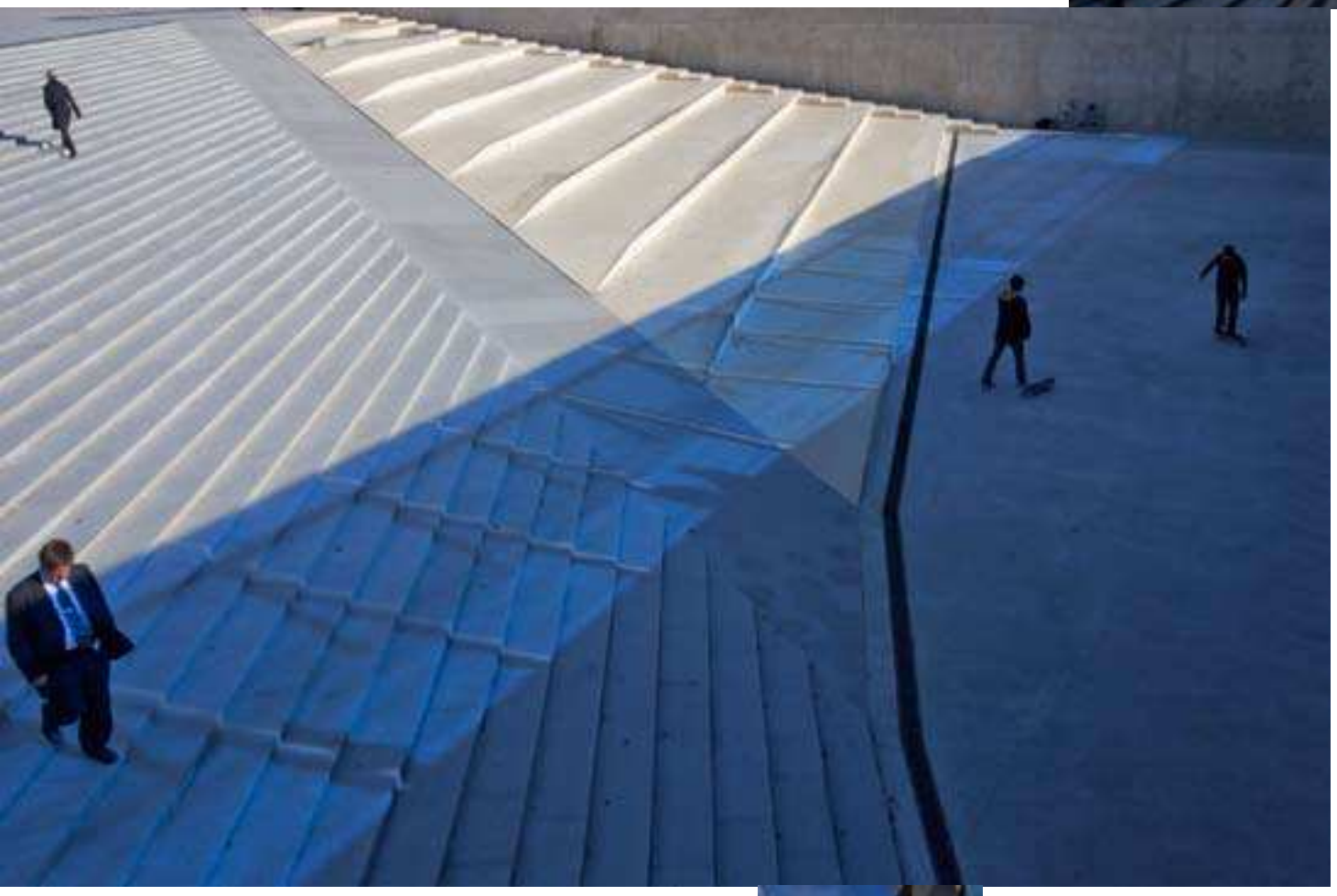
Unexpected problems start with the arrival of twilight. Most of the lighting on the square comes from tall posts, set up only near St John's Church. The western side is lit by lamps underneath the concrete handrails and the light reflected off the sides of the bastion. The monument, like a huge sparkling Christmas decoration, is supposed to light the whole western side of the square. Alas, due to technical problems, it was switched off from September to December 2009, thus plunging half the square into darkness. The town should seriously consider proper lighting on the square and stop relying on the frequently malfunctioning monument as the main source of light (besides, this is not its main function anyway).

In conclusion, we must hope that the currently artificially halved solution, which according to the architects' vision should continue above the former moat as a wide pedestrian promenade leading to Museum of Occupations and from there, underneath Toompea Street to Hirvepark, will be realised well before the next local elections. The tennis pavilion in the former moat, with its Soviet-era aesthetics, seems totally out of place next to the new square, and also blocks the view from the square towards the museum.

Kalle Vellevoog

(1963), architect and owner of the architectural bureau JVR. Chairman of the Union of Estonian Architects in 1998–2002. Currently a chair member at the UEA

Vabaduse väljak before reconstruction



The Spatialisation of Politics and/or the Politicisation of Space

Linda Kaljundi

The redesign of the Vabaduse väljak (Freedom Square) might be Estonia's prime textbook example of social formation of space. Perhaps it is an almost too ideal example, as it is a disturbing reminder that, after joining the EU, several Eastern European countries have started to challenge the European post-war memory culture (presuming that there is such a thing, however vague it might be).

Vabaduse väljak

1910 a monument to Peter the Great was erected
1922 removement of the monument; first initiative to erect a monument to the Estonian War of Independence (1918–20). Several competitions, but no monument.
1930s decision to turn Vabaduse väljak into the representative square and to encircle it with ministries. The decision was never realised.
after WWII the centre of the Estonian Soviet Republic was moved to Viru Square, the town administration to Vabaduse väljak. Renamed to Victory Square.
1990s renamed back to Vabaduse väljak
1998 a competition to redesign the square. The winning design was not realised.
2001 the first competition for the Freedom Monument
2007 decision to erect the Freedom Monument
2009 opening of the Freedom Monument

First and foremost, the political dimensions of this new public space originate from the fact that it was redesigned as a response to the Bronze Soldier crisis. One could even argue that it is Vabaduse väljak itself that finalizes the Bronze Soldier event. However, does it offer any balanced public spaces that may overcome the gap created in the society? Significantly, the crisis was very much about public space. Or, as the art theorist Andres Kurg has put it: 'The struggle over the monument of the Bronze Soldier could … be viewed more broadly as a struggle waged over the signification of the city.'

During the Bronze Soldier crisis, the polarity that existed in the society was revealed, namely in the spatial dimension: two opposing discourses of identity and memory conflicted in public space. To contextualise this, one has to add that in Tallinn there are not many prominent central squares. Town Hall Square in the Old Town belongs to the sphere of tourist escapism. Viru Square, prominent in the Soviet period, has now turned into a non-ideological space (if one does not consider consumerism an ideology), as it has been replaced by a shopping mall.

In post-Soviet Tallinn, new public spaces had, above all, been related to consumerism and finance. This makes a large-scale city-financed project like Vabaduse väljak rather exceptional. It could suggest a shift away from de-ideological 'third spaces', but a shift to where?

Along with the monument, the square design by Andres Alver, Tiit Trummal and Veljo Kaasik from 1998 was not realized in full scale, losing much of its broader and social dimensions (e.g. a pedestrian boulevard linking the square to the other parts of the town), and taking much of the public space it created underground (a car park, a pedestrian tunnel, a children's science centre and a cafeteria). The dominant elements of the new design stand out in terms of their dimensions: the gigantic agora, lamps and stairs to the tunnel. What is more, the square is dominated by the monument, and as the latter was designed independently of the plan, this results in a wide gap between the two. The gap is ideological and aesthetic, as well as professional – the authors of the monument turned out to be students (and not from the design curricula).

Also, on a broader level, there seems to be a certain gap between the official and the non-official discourse on this new public space. While the official verbal discourse has tried to neutralize its symbolic meaning, the monument presents its ideology in a hidden (non-vocalised) and, at the same time, a most open way, as it is clearly visible to everyone in the centre of the city. The cat-and-mouse game extends even to the material of the monument: as a compromise between heritage protection and the designers, stone was replaced by glass and the height slightly diminished, yet the aesthetics and the overall scale were hardly changed by these compromising gestures. The technologies of hiding have also extended to other dimensions: the poster advertising the inauguration of the square, which used a drawn image of the site, showed no sign of the monument but presented the Freedom Clock instead, even though the latter is located in a slightly

different part of the square (designed by Leonhard Lapin and erected by the town government in 2003). This hints that, on the square, at least two different agents of governmental politics meet: the neoliberal central government (whose initiative led not only to the removal of the Bronze Soldier, but also to the erection of the Freedom Monument), and the town government of Tallinn, which is not only located at the square, but also financed and organised its reconstruction. The reconstruction was ruled by a centrist party that is only one of the local ruling parties, also enjoying the strong support of Estonian Russian voters.

Thus there seems to be quite a bit of anxiety regarding the official attitudes towards this public space (while the unofficial attitudes are conflicting and contradictory). Space being the result of social relationships, this case does not speak of a healthy diagnosis, but almost a neurosis in what is related to this site. Of course, the neurotic attitude derives not only from the inability to choose a public narrative (or to relax and accept the plurality of public narratives), but it is inherent in the fixation on the traumatic past – which is, of course, according to Freud a prominent sign of neurosis. On the whole, the (post)modernist city square, over which looms a Mussolini-style monument, might itself turn into a monument of a hysteric who, under a seemingly calm exterior, movingly hangs on to painful memories, and thus neglects the present (to say nothing of the future). In addition, the hysteric is not fixated on the past, but on the symptom – the signifier of the past experience that has been repulsed from consciousness. Interestingly enough, Freud used an analogy of monuments, when explaining symptoms of hysterics, as memory symbols of traumatic experiences. Space – and especially public space – indeed has a great role in shaping memory, which can be mediated through streets, squares, buildings etc. Yet, traditional monuments indeed do not result in memory work (working through the past and its different interpretations), but in a fixation on symptoms. Giving way to this, Tallinn's new public space fails in its pacifying role. The site, needless to say, lacks stylistic or ideological unity but, due to the dominance of the monument, it forces the visitor to position and to define his or her political world-view. Thus, what seems to emerge from here is yet another rather good metaphor for social reality: on the one hand, it is (post)modernist and fragmented but, on the other hand, it strives hard to imagine the past, the present and the future as a coherent whole. Of course, to a certain extent, the result was predictable: erection (or, for that matter, removal) of monuments often collides with periods of political controversies or instability. As the anthropologist Mary Douglas has well put it, especially when exposed to boundaries and margins, one is concerned with establishing hierarchies and order, and dreaming of internal coherence. While it is the lack of the imagined community that characterises postmodern cities, the plurality of various communities can also create anxiety. From this perspective the redesign of the Vabaduse väljak complex can be interpreted as a reaction against the shading and fragmentation of meanings; it is a space that aims to create a politically and ideologically more coherent image of the world. The crucial question then is whether this has taken place at the cost of silencing alternative voices and limiting dialogue. Space is not only produced socially, but it also creates social relationships. It is difficult to imagine how a – potentially pluralist – city could win the site back (quite tellingly the Czech constructors of the monument claimed it would survive a nuclear war). Possibly in the future, the square can override the monument, but at the moment it seems more proper to adapt – once more – Andres Kurg's conclusion on the Bronze Soldier event to this new site (if we replace 'removal' with 'erection'): 'What was then lost in the monument's removal in the context of the city was the public space ... It is the city then, as a democratic public terrain, as a social and political space with the potential to counterbalance institutional politics, that has lost the monument, now hijacked by national politics...'

Linda Kaljundi
(1979), historian

New World – more than just an urban district

Peeter Vihma

Don't be alarmed! The traffic in the streets can sometimes be rather weird.

I will start with a harsh claim: it is easy to forget where you live, and I do not mean your flat or your house. Paying attention to one's physical home is a natural part of the Estonian national culture due to the Nordic climate, both the weather and mental climate. Instead, I mean the place that is just outside the personal space: the street and the whole district. The area that lies between your front door and your workplace seems for many people merely an unpleasant obstacle – to be traversed as painlessly as possible – rather than an interpreted and enjoyable environment. Thus the less attention paid to it, the better. Thinking about all the similar and characterless new districts of the property boom, one home street can indeed be easily confused with any other. 'This won't do!' thought a small group of young people in the New World district, and in October 2006 they founded the Uue Maailma Selts (UMS – New World Community). The aim of UMS is to turn the area into a cosy living environment and prevent it from becoming dull and anonymous. The undertaking, which was initially started by a group of friends, has now expanded to include different fascinating events. Its success has inspired others, for example the Telliskivi Selts (Brick Society) in the area of Kalamaja-Kassisaba.

Appreciating the surroundings

The Community was born out of the joint painting of a house at the corner of Koidu and Luha Streets by a group of friends. Watching the goings-on in nearby streets from the scaffolding, it became increasingly clear that urban streets contain people who move along the same routes and go about the same business every day. Mothers with pushchairs, children on their way to school or home, people going shopping or to work – they all gradually become familiar. Although the New World district is traversed by several shortcuts for cars, and traffic gets stuck in the narrow streets during rush hours, people are not totally forced into their homes. The struggle between cars and people was one of the starting points for the Community founders. How enjoyable is it to jump into your car at your doorstep, and then sit there alone in a traffic jam grinding your teeth? Perhaps it would be better, for you and for others, to say hello to the neighbours while walking along the street. The urban space around us is rather rigid and static, and you can only relate to it through activities that take place in it. Whether we see various activities through which we relate to our district as equal is precisely what UMS is trying to address.

Streets are not only for cars. Market in the New World.

The New World is of course also a historically significant place. The former settlement of plywood factory workers is one of several districts of wooden houses to be found in Tallinn, Tartu and elsewhere. Kassisaba, Kalamaja, Karlova, Supilinn and others each has its own distinct atmosphere. Such houses are no longer built. Instead they are being pulled down. One side of the coin is maintaining and appreciating, and the other is renovating. However, once you live in one such area, it better look nice. Restoring old houses as they deserve to be restored has become quite fashionable, and only because of the activities of UMS. One active institution, for example, is the Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department and another is the Centre for Sustainable Renovation. This, too, signals a more active approach and greater attention to the space where people actually live.

Not only space

A conference on urban space was recently organised on the initiative of UMS and Telliskivi Selts, and supported by the British Council. It emphasised that space does not just mean physical environment, but is also social. It consists of the people who surround us. We could even say that space is a petrified form of human activity, but this form must be recreated every day through this same activity. The fact that parking places surrounded by metal fences spring up between houses, instead of common space for people, is unfortunately not a situation limited to the New World district. As a result, an urban space can denote the presence of people, but it can equally denote the absence of people. Traditionally, to evoke a sense of community, it was enough to live in the same house, whereas now people often have no idea who lives on the other side of their living room wall. It has not always been so. I grew up in the New World myself, and I remember a time about 15–20 years ago when all courtyards were open to all. The change in attitude is visible. By creating common space, it is possible to advance human relations so that neighbours actually know one another. It is one step towards the emergence of a community.

The term community might sound a bit startling to Estonians, who are used to an individual lifestyle. It is mere speculation, but parallels may emerge with a religious community or the Klu-Klux-Klan. We would do well to remember not to simply push the dividing fence of the newly blended community towards the rest of society, thus marginalising those who are 'different'. From the outside, UMS could easily be seen as a tightly knit bunch of hippies. However, here we have a vastly different group of people and activities. The Society House of the New World in Koidu Street is frequented by people of all ages, from different walks of life and – however vague this seems – social positions. The events held range from street festivals to an international conference; there is a library and a newspaper.

The same urban space conference found that one clear opportunity to keep the community open is through the design of its surrounding space. This is not to say that the habitual fear of anyone alien is easy to change. For example, there is only a tiny passage cut in the garden between the Society House and the residential house of the Writers' Union members next to it. Still, it's better than nothing, I suppose. Bringing the worlds of strangers closer to one another takes time and patience.

Social space expands even when you merely open your window...

Who decides?

Inseparable from the issue of the urban district and community is the problem of how and who decides, or in other words, how power is divided. The participants in the urban space conference included representatives of the city of Tallinn. The question arose as to what extent the group of people, calling themselves a community, can legally represent other inhabitants of the same district. The simple reply would be that they can not. The New World district is home to over 5000 people, whereas only a few hundred are connected with the New World Community in one way or another. Furthermore, as one of the main value criteria of the Community is diversity, using the principles of simple majority democracy would mean eating their own words. The issue of representing and following is actually somewhat out of place. Yes, UMS and the other societies of the district work with the existing local bodies of power to achieve better and clearer cooperation. However, the aim is not to represent the votes of the urban district. Rather, the New World Community wishes to activate people and generate discussion. Expressing different opinions and taking these into consideration, or – putting it in a more refined way – discursive democracy, could be a continuing process, of which the city government should take notice.

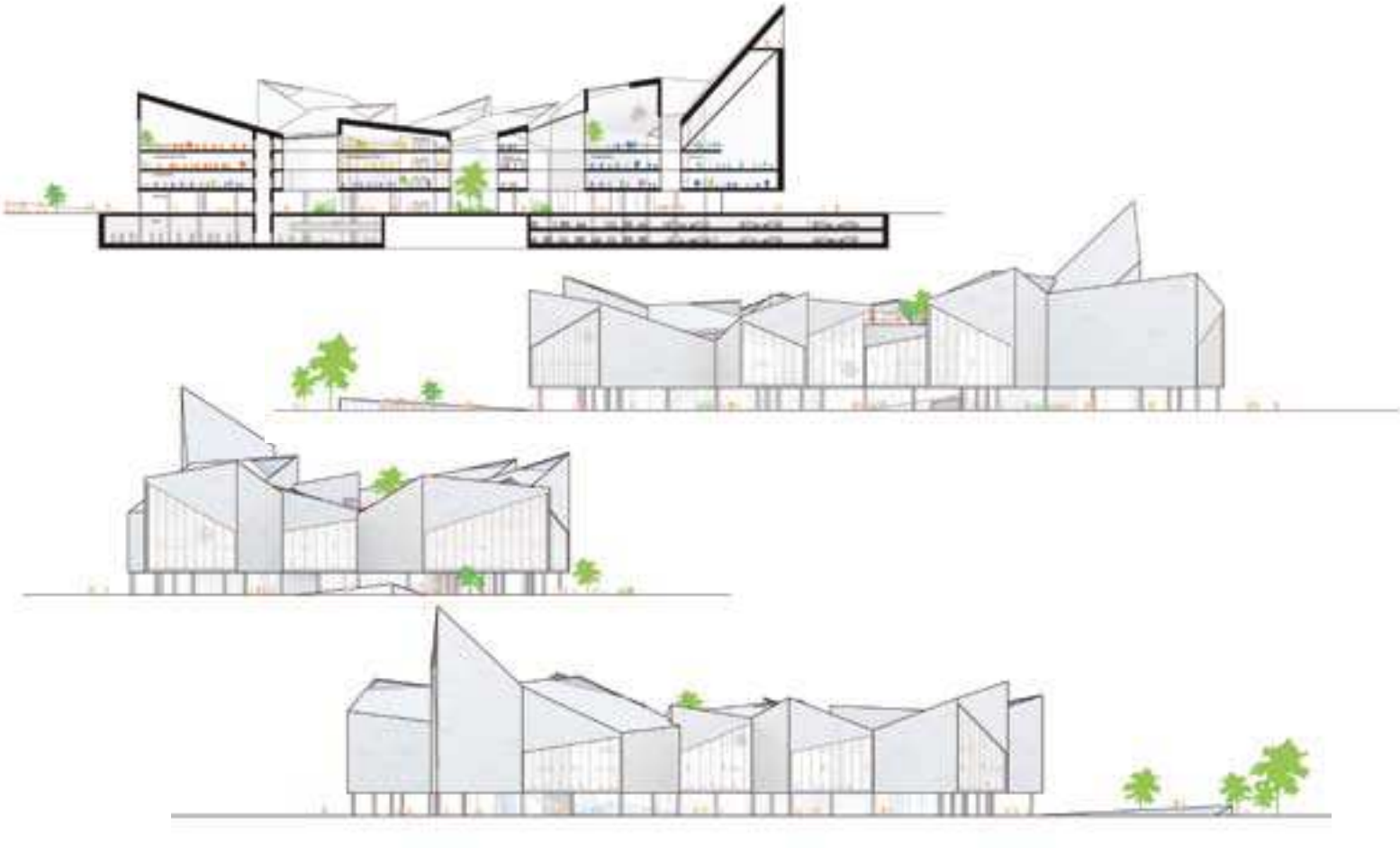
It is obvious that differences will remain. It is easy to find an example. The owner of the property opposite the New World Community house caused quite a fuss because – to be honest – the appearance of the Community House achieved through the members' own means and abilities could well seem totally crazy to someone with conservative tastes. The opposition would still be going on had a simple solution not presented itself – UMS asked the owner of the opposite property to advise them on the exterior of the Community House. The great number of different tastes and aims should not be an obstacle. Rather, this diversity represents wealth that should help to bring the surrounding town closer to us.

Peeter Vihma
writer, sociologist and volunteer worker.

Public Village – new Town Hall in Tallinn Triin Ojari

When the winners of the competition for the new Tallinn Town Hall – or to be precise, the new administrative building – were announced, there was joy in the domestic architectural world, mixed with disappointment. Joy, because finally the winner was an internationally prominent and experienced architectural office, which, staying true to the 21st century, had skilfully managed to blend architecture with the strategies of media world and stardom. Bjarke Ingels's BIG is a typical contemporary successful office which, on the wave of the last decade's economic boom and 'talent-seeking' in the architectural world focused on images, has reached worldwide fame. The other recent big competitions in Estonia – the Estonian National Museum in 2006, the new broadcast building in 2007 and the new building for the Estonian Academy of Arts in 2008 – were all won by foreign architects, most of whom did not have a 'name' and whose winning entries were actually the first major works for them. Local architects naturally have the right to see the Town Hall competition as yet another loss. In the light of the current worldwide economic slump and national market protectionism, this can be considered as a painful flow out of the country of the scarce funds designated for quality architecture. Openness and market liberalism on the state level have always been regarded as most important in Estonia. In the course of the architectural policy of the last ten and more years, this has meant extreme deregulation and the domination of private capital, primarily in urban planning, as well as the increasingly international property business and, along with this, the emergence on the market of architects from abroad – mostly working for impersonal consultation companies. However, looking at what has been built in the last decade, we can still say that Estonian architects have retained their position: our architecture is more national than we thought. Hence, keeping in mind the contemporary competition rules of the global world (and certainly the directives of the European Union), international competitions for major objects seem the only option for local heads of architecture; yet a greater level of success has smiled on architects coming

Bjarke Ingels Group. *Public Village* – winning entry of the competition for the new Tallinn Town Hall



from outside Estonia. On the one hand, an open architectural competition seems the most democratic, offering equal opportunities to all participants, and an arena where the public building policy can demonstrate its transparency. On the other hand, such competitions are not compared with the lottery for nothing: there can be literally hundreds of entries (81 in the Town Hall competition), a relatively narrow circle of judges who decide mainly on the basis of the essential imagological side and the visual quality of works. In no public building can we actually ignore the importance of the symbol, the need for the building to be officially representative, however much we sneer at 'wow-architecture' as hype of the media era. The copywriters and 3D renderders abroad must simply be better in technical ability and image-creating; we could add cynically that, on the level of the decision-makers, internationally 'speaking' form is regarded as being more important than local specifics.

Paradoxically, the visual uniqueness of Estonian architecture, especially Tallinn's architectural picture, lies in the striking diversity and polyvalency, in the liberalism of our contemporary building policy, which leaves 'gaps' for the birth of truly unique and unpredictable architecture. In a word, local building is dominated by the tolerance typical of a post-communist country, whose threshold of pain is believed to be high enough to level even the fiercest conflicts. The positive aspect of change of any kind has almost become a national ideology; Estonia is a 'positively transforming' country[1] and the built environment is among the mightiest indicators of these changes. Local architects have no choice but to swallow the bitter pill and wait for their chance to win the lottery.

Image of democracy bursting with optimism

Reducing 'competition architecture' to the status of a mere 'working' image is naturally an obvious simplification; it is more important to wonder what these buildings are talking about and what they are doing (e.g with the surrounding urban space). At the competition for the new Academy of Arts, the prevailing slogan was (probably carefully honed by the authors of the winning entry) 'public living-room', which referred to the large public square planned in front of the new house. In the winning entry of BIG, the slogan, strangely enough, already appeared in the title 'Public Village'. The new administrative building of a city was to be a public village, an embracing and cooperating community, a mini-model of democracy functioning on equal terms. The building's structure was to be split into numerous small parts, all scattered across the uniting plateau – across the

square – a public space open to all. "Our working method is quite possibly connected with Danish specifics," said Bjarke Ingels, when I interviewed her three years ago in Estonia: "Compared, for example, with Holland, Denmark is much more a social-democratic country. The idea of equality for all is valid here, and everyone must have enough space. This may sound boring, but it can be quite radical as well: how to make sure that everybody is fine and has enough space. It requires an ability to consider all the differences, the entire range of multiplicity. Our most recent projects indeed emphasise that everyone should be happy. Radicalism is usually associated with angry young men who tell everybody to get lost, whereas we are trying to find a way to make everybody happy at once. And not through compromises, but by finding a seemingly impossible solution."[2] Reading Bjarke's words, which are bursting with optimism, they now also appear to be valid for the new Tallinn Public Village – a powerful image *par excellence* was born, a story suitable to the city government's PR department, a structure that satisfied the functional and administrative needs of the city employees. Town and city space change: buildings must express the decisions and principles of society here and now and, if necessary, shout it as loudly as possible.

Transparent Village

"The Town Hall is not only surrounded by public space; it is literally invaded by the citizens in the form of the public service marketplace beneath the canopy of the public offices, where the citizens of Tallinn can meet their public servants," says the head of the project and the co-author Jakob Lange about the democratic space of the new Tallinn Town Hall. The building is divided into 13 departments-cubes, each separate but also overlapping, in order to create synergy and cooperation between departments tackling similar issues. Between the cubes – on the street level – people swarm around, with two floors of cars parked underground. The project describes the two-directional transparency of participatory democracy: the rulers should see the people and vice versa. The new administrative building has translated transparency into a literary language of form: "The various public departments form a porous canopy above the public service marketplace, allowing both daylight and view to permeate the structure. The public servants won't be remote administrators making decisions behind thick walls, but will be visible in their daily work from all over the marketplace via the light wells and courtyards. From the outside, panoramic windows allow citizens to see their city at work. Conversely, the public servants will be able to look out into the marketplace, making sure that the city and its citizens are never out of sight or mind." Special attention is paid to the hall of the city council, which is the highest cube in the 'village' and a place where a slanting mirrored ceiling allows outsiders to evaluate the working mood of the council inside. The upper part of the tower, open to the public, enables the visitor to enjoy views of the busy council hall, as well as of the surrounding peaceful city, almost like in the Berlin Reichstag.

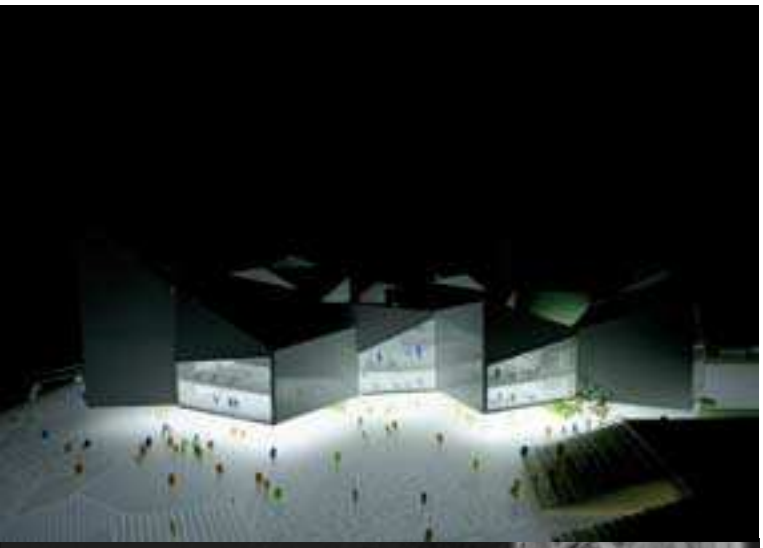
Monumental coastal area

The location of the building, close to the sea, between two architectural monuments – a century-old abandoned power station and Linnahall (the city hall for cultural and sporting events), the mega-structure of the 1970s – certainly sets a limits on the form logic and message of the new

building: whether to dominate as a strong monument or take the character of the neighbours into account too? What to do with the wide road separating the plot from the Old Town? BIG preferred a dominant monument, a totally different form logic, which leaves its 'edges' sufficiently open and sparse, so that whatever goes on in the neighbouring plots (considering the unclear destiny of Linnahall, this is rather vague) can be integrated into the new sparkling 'village'. The street can be driven underground and the extensive territory leading to town can be designed as a green area!

The waterfront so close to the city centre, still painfully and slowly awakening or, to be more precise, still waiting to be brought to life, is full of bulky objects pregnant with history and construction clutter. In addition to the above-mentioned Linnahall and the new Culture Cauldron in the old power station, there is also an old prison and Maritime Museum, adjacent to a landscape of ancient dockyards. Placing the Town Hall in that area was partly a forced decision by the city government (there was simply no other suitable plot anywhere else, as only a small bit of land in Tallinn belongs to the town). It was possible to make this seem like a good planning policy move: a public building and investment which opens Tallinn up to the sea and brings life into the area (as well as attracting further private investments). The architects from abroad who were members of the jury were in thrall to this kind of construction policy, so popular in European seaside towns.[3] The citizens of Tallinn, however, are quietly suspicious as to whether we have the critical mass of people here to make this work; the city government seems to have no power over the future of private land around the Town Hall, and thus the new bright village is surrounded by clearly tourist-oriented cheap shops and bare wastelands. Where are the next steps to put the area in order? What's to become of Linnahall?

Contemporary urban studies tell of the transition from a production-oriented society to one based on concept. This change has an inevitable impact on the way we relate to the city and environment, and how we perceive it. From this perspective, the economic might of a city is no longer determined by such 'hard' topics as industry, infrastructure and employment, but instead by 'soft' values – the experience of a place, atmosphere, diversity and public domain. The Tallinn seaside has long been justifiably considered to be an area with its own *genus loci* and special atmosphere. With clever development, it can certainly attract people and activities – and it is the people, a strong community, which constitutes the essential resource of a 'creative city'. The new Town Hall, in its internationality and monumentality, could be a powerful stage in the development of the region, and could gladden the hearts of all those who are impatiently waiting for Estonia to be launched onto the world star architectural map.



Location of the new Town Hall

1 Reference to a slogan in the 2002 advertising campaign Welcome to Estonia.
2 Triin Ojari. "Süžeega majad". Interview with Bjarke Ingels. – Eesti Ekspress, 2 August 2006
3 Interview with the jury members from abroad, Tarald Lundevall and Peter Wilson. – MAJA no 2, 2009, pp 18–19.

Triin Ojari
(1974), architectural historian, editor in chief of magazine MAJA. Mostly writes about modern architecture and urban design in numerous publications at home and abroad.

Kumu Art Museum

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

until 28 Mar	*HARRO!* A Classic of Finnish Pop Art
until 11 April	*POPart Forever!*
until 31 May	Anton Starkopf (1889-1966). Sculptures.
5 Feb–25 April	*Let's Talk About Nationalism*
9 April–26 Sep	*Soviet Woman*
23 April–5 Sep	Eero Hiironen. Sculptures
30 April–8 Aug	Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911)
14 May–10 Oct	Estonian Contemporary Painting
11 June–12 Sep	*In the Footsteps of Neoimpressionism*: Mägi and Finch
30 June–5 Dec	Metaphysical Landscapes in Estonian graphic art in the 1970s

Museum of Estonian Architecture

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

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 2*
Survey of Estonian applied art and the development of design

until 21 Feb	5th Tallinn Applied Art Triennial
11 Mar-30 May	Eduard Taska and Marje Taska
12 Mar-30 May	Bornholm Artists Book
12 June-12 Sep	*Classics*. Mall Tomberg

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

until 21 Mar	Under the Changing Rainbow. Art Collection of the Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences
27 Mar–13 June	Ellinor Aiki (1893-1969)

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 25 April	Bernt Notke
31 May–Jan 2011	Villem Raam 100

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 29 Aug	Baltic Biedermeier
6 Feb-12 Feb	Presentation of Leonardo da Vinci's Self-Portrait
13 Feb-21 Mar	19th century Estonian art from St Lucas Gallery
3 April-31 Oct	German Expressionism from the Art Museum of Estonia Collection

Tallinn Art Hall

Vabaduse Sq 8, Tallinn
www.kunstihoone.ee
Open: Wed–Mon 12 am–6 pm

until 31 Jan	*Blue-Collar Blues* (curator Anders Härm)
23 Feb-1 April	Enn Kunila collection: classical Estonian painting
9 April–9 May	Kristina Norman
12 May–13 June	Jüri Ojaver
19 June–25 July	Annual Exhibition Of Estonian Artists Association (curator Enn Põldroos)

Tallinn Art Hall Gallery

Vabaduse Sq 6, Tallinn
www.kunstihoone.ee
Open: Wed–Mon 12 am–6 pm

until 31 Jan	*Blue-Collar Blues* (curator Anders Härm)
5 Feb–21 Feb	Anu Tuominen (Finland)
26 Feb–21 Mar	Flo Kasearu and Tõnis Saadoja
26 Mar–18 April	Anna-Stina Treumund
23 April–16 May	Tim Davies
21 May–13 June	Piero Steinle
18 June–11 July	Andro Kööp

Tallinn City Gallery

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

6 Jan–24 Jan	Kristin Kalamees
28 Jan–14 Feb	Laura Toots
18 Feb–7 Mar	Ignar Fjuk & Silver Vahtre
11 Mar–28 Mar	Urmas Pedanik
1 April–18 April	Erki Kasemets
22 April–9 May	Liina Siib
13 May–30 May	Alessandro Damiano (Italy)
3 June–27 June	Odessa Champagne Factory presents: *Odessa punk* (curator Anders Härm)
1 July–18 July	Marko Nautras

Hobusepea Gallery

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

until 25 Jan	Anu Kalm
27 Jan–8 Feb	Agata Marzecova (SK) & Margaret Tali
10 Feb–22 Feb	Raivo Kelomees
25 Feb–8 Mar	*2/5 Interfenster* (Madis Luik & Jarmo Nagel)
10 Mar–22 Mar	Paul Kuimet
24 Mar–12 April	Raoul Kurvitz
14 April–26 April	Kaido Ole
28 April–10 May	Taaniel Raudsepp, Karel Koplimets, Sigrid Viir
12 May–24 May	Aili Vahtrapuu
26 May–7 June	Reimo Võsa-Tangsoo
9 June–28 June	Timo Toots
30 June–12 July	Alvar Reisner

ArtDepoo Gallery

Jahu 12, Tallinn
www.artdepoo.com
Open: Tue–Fri 10 am–6 pm
Sat 11 am–4 pm

until 5 Feb	Nadežda Tšernobai
6 Feb–6 Mar	Estonian and Latvian artists
10 Mar–3 April	August Künnapu
7 April–1 May	Peeter Laurits
5 May–29 May	Artemyi Troitsky collection
2 June–30 June	Jaanika Peerna

Haus Gallery

Uus 17, Tallinn
www.haus.ee
Open: Mon–Fri 10 am–6 pm
Sat 11 am–4 pm

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

Draakon Gallery

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

until 23 Jan	Ki Wa
25 Jan–6 Feb	Mati Kütt
8 Feb–20 Feb	Helen Melesk & Katrin Tees
22 Feb–6 Mar	Bie Erenurm & Helga Randmaa
8 Mar–20 Mar	Carmen Lansberg
22 Mar–10 April	Raoul Kurvitz
12 April–24 April	Estonian Ceramists Association
26 April–15 May	Johnson & Johnson
17 May–5 June	Neeme Külm
7 June–19 June	Kaili-Angela Konno
21 June–10 July	Külli Laikre

Vaal Gallery

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

until 26 Jan	Alice Kask
29 Jan–16 Feb	Rein Kelpman
19 Feb–9 Mar	Uno Roosvalt
12 Mar–30 Mar	Maarit Murka

Tartu Art Museum

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

until 4 April	21th century art from the Tartu Art Museum collection

Art sites

www.cca.ee/?lang=en
True Guardian – The official blog of the Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia
ekkm-came.blogspot.com
The Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia