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# On Care, Destruction and Transience. Augustas Serapinas' exhibition 'Pine, Spruce and Aspen'

January 29, 2025

Author Katarzyna Różniak-Szabelska



Augustas Serapinas, Pine, Spruce and Aspen, 2024, Arsenal Gallery in Białystok, exhibition view. Photo: Tytus Szabelski-Różniak

## On care

The creative process of Augustas Serapinas is deeply rooted in care. Each project begins with conversations with neighbours or the staff of the gallery. These encounters enrich his installations and help him in his attempts to pierce the bubble that the art world can be. Such as, when, at the main exhibition of the Venice Biennale, the artist presented high seats designed for those guarding the exhibition, modelled after lifeguard towers set up on beaches. For it turned out that at the most prestigious event in the art world no infrastructure was provided to enable those looking after the exhibitions to sit down. The artist is genuinely curious about people and their stories enclosed in material objects. Human relationships are not so much a theme as a method of working: they guide the improvisation-based process of making art. As the artist says, though, there is no deep sociological research. 'I arrive somewhere, and things start to happen. I just see where it will lead.'

Things indeed began to happen after Augustas Serapinas arrived in Białystok in February last year, although we already knew that the starting point of the exhibition would be wooden vernacular architecture in Lithuania and Podlasie. For years, Serapinas has observed the gradual disappearance of this aspect of the local heritage, which in Lithuania is preserved primarily in the centres of large cities. In rural areas, however, old wooden houses are often sold as firewood or left to decay. One of Serapinas' earliest works drawing from folk architecture used materials salvaged from a house near

the Lithuanian town of Prienai. The owner had planned to demolish the roofless, rotting building, but instead gave it to the artist. Serapinas carefully dismantled the house, treated the materials for insects and mould, and presented them as part of an exhibition. Since then, he has been 'rescuing' houses he knows are destined to vanish. The structure featured at the heart of the main installation in the Arsenal Gallery power station has a similar story. In Serapinas' words, 'A house transforms into a sculpture, and each sculpture becomes an ambassador for regional wooden architecture.'

The most important process in Serapinas' artistic practice, as he sees it, is socialising through art. Following this logic, the creation of the 'Pine, Spruce and Aspen' exhibition can be described by redirecting attention to people who are important to this process and the fate of wooden architecture in the region. Among them is Jerzy Misiejuk of the Society of Friends of the Open-Air Museum in Koźliki, which loaned the former smithy building that is part of the main installation. Misiejuk recalls the museum's informal beginnings: in 1987, at the age of just 19, he and a group of friends from the area purchased, transported and rebuilt a wooden windmill on fields near Stupniki, where they used it as a summer retreat. It was not until a decade later that the association was formally registered. Over the years, this group of friends planted trees and acquired and brought cottages, barns and granaries to the museum. Just like Serapinas, they were driven by a deep concern for preserving the architectural heritage of their community, and by the practice of dismantling, relocating and reconstructing wooden structures. Over time, these preservation projects became interwoven with their personal lives. Grassroots open-air museums operate under a different ethos to state-run institutions. The buildings in these museums serve the local community as needed, functioning as living 'monuments' whose essence is revealed through their use. The final element in Serapinas' monumental installation, a small granary, was borrowed from the Open-Air Museum in Białowieża, where it is cared for by Jerzy Monachowicz, among others. Monachowicz shares the story of the granary, which was built by Joachim Wołosowicz (b. 1905) in the village of Koszele. The exact date of its construction is unknown, for those who might have remembered it are no longer alive. The documentation of vernacular architecture rarely provides the level of detail available for state-sponsored projects, or those created for the upper classes, where both the dates and the names of architects and patrons are often meticulously recorded. This lack of documentation highlights the challenges faced by scholars of folk history. In the early stages of the current 'folk turn' in historiography, researchers sought to create a 'folk history of Poland', conceived as a general social history of the nation. Only recently have narratives emerged that include the micro-histories of specific individuals. In the earlier historiographical model, the granary from Koszele would have been classed as one of many typical ethnographic objects built before the Second World War. However, with the help of friends, Monachowicz uncovered some personal details: the years of the birth of Wołosowicz's wife (1915) and his oldest daughter (1943), the family's story of exile from the Western Krai to Russia, Joachim's untimely death, and the hardships of war. Thanks to the work of local activists, focused not only on generalised folk history but also on individual stories, these private histories now resonate through the materials that form Serapinas' installation.

However, the artist is primarily interested in the practical aspects of vernacular architecture: the mobility and functionality of modular construction systems. These buildings are crafted from locally sourced materials, typically pine, spruce or aspen, in the case of wooden houses in Lithuania and Podlasie. Their design allows them to be easily dismantled into individual components and transported by just two people. The timber construction enables the structures to be reassembled with minimal effort in a new location, whether a settlement, open-air museum, or art gallery. This process forms the conceptual foundation of 'Pine, Spruce, and Aspen'. It was made possible by the collaboration of Podlasie carpenters, part of the Białystok branch of the Polish Roofers Association, who preserve, practise and pass on traditional building techniques. Serapinas views mobility and modularity as intrinsic to the DNA of these structures, basing his installation on the logic of local architecture. He uses the 'rules of the art world' to once again set these buildings in motion. Perhaps the true essence of the artistic process lies in the efforts of the carpenters over several days, who

assembled the various elements into their final form. What visitors see is the result of this performance: a long corridor constructed from the alternating walls of the Koszele granary, a Lithuanian house, and the Podlasie smithy. This mode of presentation emphasises the architectural logic of the structures, revealing their adjoining, numbered parts and interlocking joints. It also highlights the similarities and differences in their construction and the condition of the wood. The state of preservation illustrates vividly which objects have been kept in local open-air museums, and which were 'rescued' by the artist from the brink of decay.

## On destruction

With the four works that open the exhibition, collectively entitled *Roof from Meškauš?izna*, the artist shifts the narrative from care to destruction. These square pieces, carefully cut from a traditional wooden shingle roof, are blackened by fire. Their charred surfaces evoke distant echoes of the work of Frank Stella, one of the most influential American artists of the 20th century. While the black colour and geometric arrangement might initially call to mind Stella's renowned *Black Paintings*, Serapinas' approach aligns more closely with Stella's 'Polish Village' series. This series of paintings, drawings and models (exhibited at the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews in 2016) paid homage to Poland's pre-Second World War wooden synagogues, destroyed during the Holocaust. Inspired by the research by Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka, Polish architects who documented these sacred Jewish structures in a landmark 1959 publication, Stella created abstract interpretations of these synagogues in the 1970s. Like Serapinas, he named his works after the towns and villages where the buildings once stood. Stella described his 'Polish paintings' as a form of construction, reflecting his desire to recreate cultural memory through art. This *need to build*, both as an act of preservation and artistic reinterpretation, connects Stella and Serapinas, who share a deep engagement with traditional craftsmanship and the architectural heritage.

While Serapinas' practice often centres on preserving vernacular architecture, he is also drawn to its destruction. Fascinated by this inevitable process, he sometimes chooses to destroy certain structures himself. The works on display are fragments of a roof he intentionally burned. Serapinas argues that when the demise of a building is certain, a dramatic end in flames can serve as its most striking farewell. The burned roofs from Meškauš?izna, exhibited in Białystok, resonate with a highly specific local context: the deliberate destruction of the city's wooden architectural heritage.

In 2019, Andrzej Kłopotowski, writing for the local edition of *Gazeta Wyborcza* about a fire on Angielska Street, remarked that it did not surprise him. The Białystok journalist had already reported on numerous fires in areas like Angielska and other neighbourhoods where old wooden houses still stood. He frequently criticised the systematic clearance of these structures by developers in districts such as Młynowa, Piasta, Słonimska and Angielska streets, as well as other parts of the city. A retrospective look at Kłopotowski's articles reveals the evolution in his attitude, shaped by a growing sense of powerlessness. Initially, he described filing reports with the prosecutor's office regarding the destruction of historic buildings. Over time, his tone shifted to anger and frustration, as he called out developers, urban planners, city council members, mayors, and indifferent residents. Eventually, he resigned himself to the situation, writing in later articles: 'If there's to be a block of flats, then there will be a block of flats,' and, 'To be honest, I'm tired of "typing away" about yet another fire next to a historic site. I'm tired of writing about a burnt house in a spot where a block of flats is destined to rise.' As with so many other values, vernacular architecture often finds itself defeated in the face of unchecked capitalism.

## On transience

The disappearance of wooden architecture in the region is not only the result of deliberate, profit-driven actions by developers. Old houses fall into disrepair when they are abandoned, dismantled, rebuilt, or extensively modernised, because they no longer meet the needs of contemporary owners and users. These structures were never intended to last for centuries. The advanced decay of wooden shingle-covered roofs, displayed vertically as part of a monumental installation in the exhibition, marks the final stage in their natural life cycle. The processes of transience observed here, much like vernacular architecture itself, are easy to romanticise. However, for the people who live in these buildings, the concerns are primarily practical. Residents of Podlasie grapple with the question of how to honour their folk heritage without reducing it to a tourist brand or a sentimental myth. This exhibition shifts attention to the complex and varied contemporary fates of vernacular architecture and its historical functionality, rather than its romanticised, picturesque qualities. Serapinas, who is interested in function expressed through minimalist forms, does not draw on the rich decoration of wooden architecture that is often celebrated in traditional aesthetic canons of folk art.

As Ewa Klekot has argued, these aesthetic frameworks were often shaped in urban contexts. 'A piece of folk art always had two creators: the person who made it in the countryside and the one who selected it as "folk" and transformed it into art.' The popular turn towards folk themes in visual art raises important questions about how to ethically engage with this heritage. It involves listening to the voices of individuals from working-class backgrounds who, through social mobility, have entered the art world. Serapinas himself, the son of an Orthodox priest raised in extremely modest circumstances, embodies this dynamic. While he does not view his upbringing as harsh or inferior, his life has diverged significantly from it. Nevertheless, he has successfully presented works in the art world that draw directly from the crafts and practices of his home region. This approach, however, carries the risk of reproducing the problematic historical role of folk art, which often served as an exported representation of Lithuanian (or Polish) art as a whole.

One possible ethical strategy for engaging with this heritage is to present artistically reimagined elements of vernacular architecture in their place of origin, creating spaces for a dialogue with the communities to whom they belong. This dialogue can explore the contemporary relevance and significance of these traditions. The development of 'Pine, Spruce and Aspen' fostered a range of new relationships in the region, emerging from the processes that Serapinas initiated. As part of the exhibition, the team conducted local research, met with residents, and connected local stories and figures with contemporary artistic and curatorial strategies. For Serapinas, the reactions of people living near his projects are particularly significant. Klekot suggests the concept of 'appropriation' as a means of fostering dialogue with folkloric representations and their perceptions, by creating conditions for their reinterpretation. Both the exhibition and its accompanying public programme attempt to realise this vision.

*Translated from Polish by Anna Bergiel*

Augustas Serapinas  
*Pine, Spruce and Aspen*  
Arsenal Gallery in Białystok  
15.11.2024 – 2.03.2025  
Curators: Post Brothers & Katarzyna Różniak-Szabelska



Augustas Serapinas, Pine, Spruce and Aspen, 2024, Arsenal Gallery in Bialystok, exhibition view. Photo: Tytus Szabelski-Różniak



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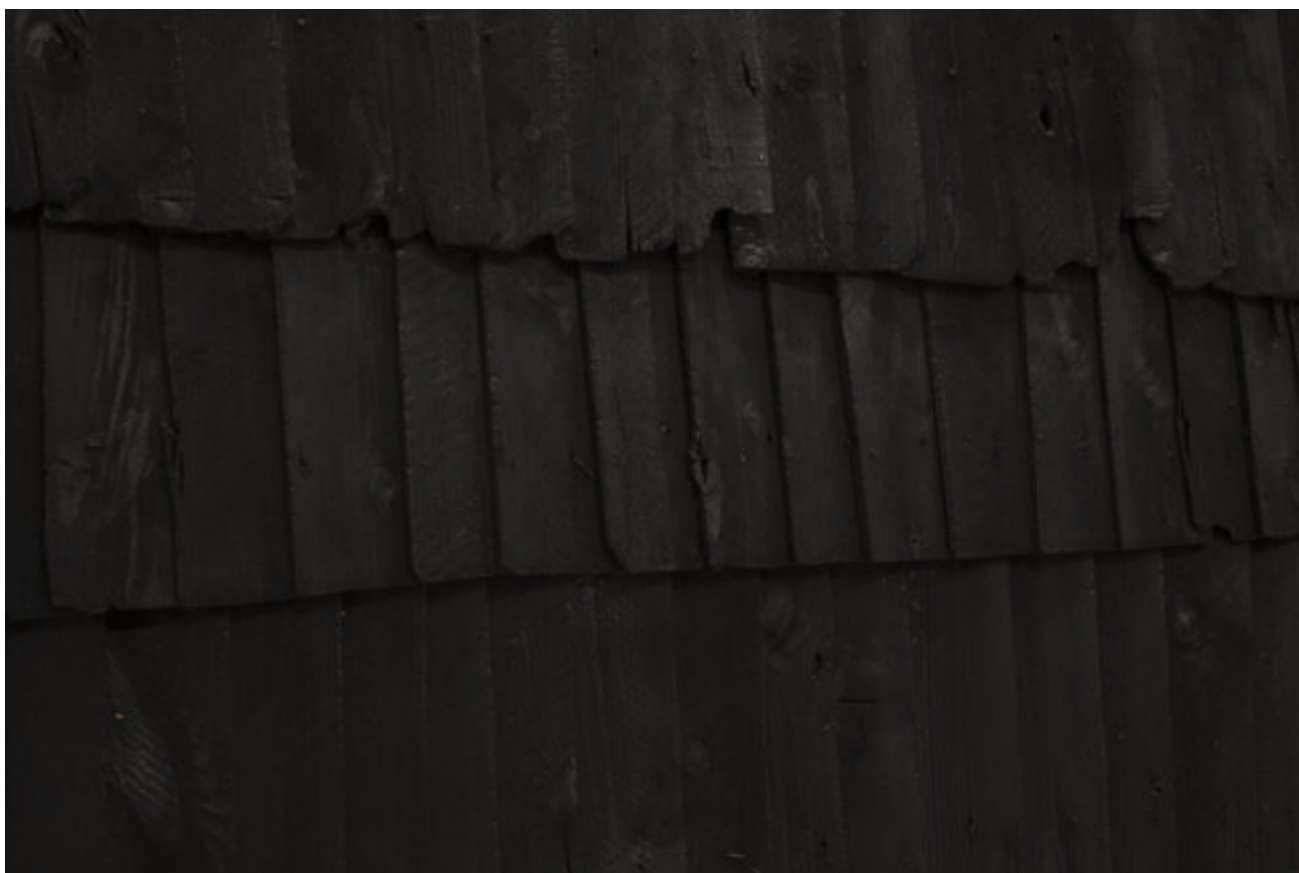


Augustas Serapinas, Roof from Meškauščizna, 2024; wood, 140 x 150 cm. Photo: Tytus Szabelski-Różniak

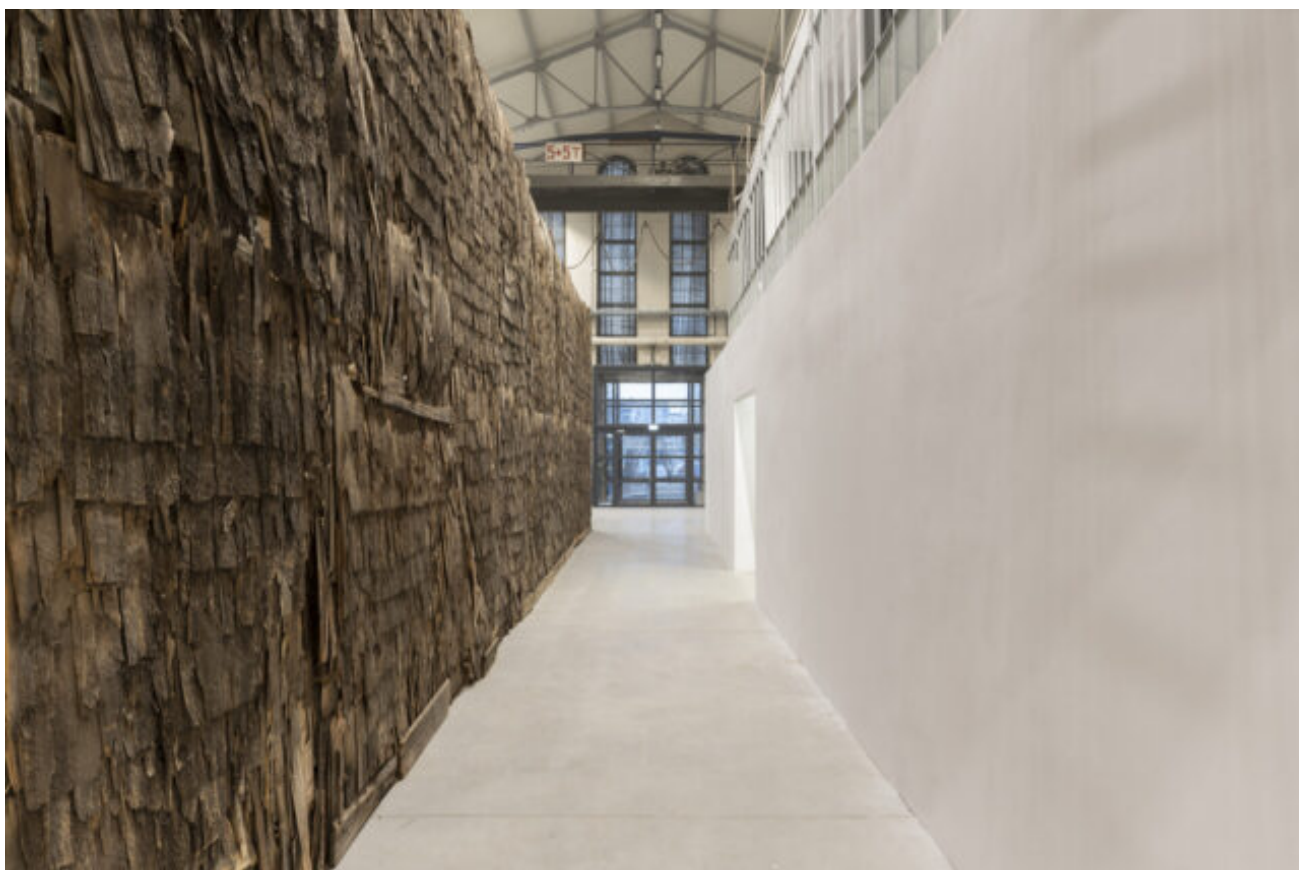


Augustas Serapinas, Roof from Meškauščizna, 2024; wood, 140 x 150 cm. Photo: Tytus Szabelski-Różniak





Augustas Serapinas, Roof from Meškauščizna, 2024; wood, 140 x 150 cm, detail. Photo: Tytus Szabelski-Różniak



Augustas Serapinas, Pine, Spruce and Aspen, 2024, Arsenal Gallery in Bialystok, exhibition view. Photo: Tytus Szabelski-Różniak



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# Bedtime Reading with Eglė Jauncems

January 30, 2025

Author Paulius Andriuškevičius



Eglė Jauncems. Photo: Neena Percy

*Paulius Andriuškevičius: Let's start with texts: I feel they're important both to you and me. The last time we met in person, I gave you a book for your birthday, one I hadn't read myself. I thought it might be about the creative individual, so I bought it, but honestly, it was more of a guess. Can you tell me about it, its impact, if any? That is, if you've read it.*

Eglė Jauncems: Ah yes, your gift, Elizabeth Costello's *J.M. Coetzee*, is sitting on my shelf, waiting its turn. I think it's third in line, although it might get pushed further back ... At the moment, I'm reading, or rather attempting to tackle, Maggie Nelson's *The Art of Cruelty*. Are you familiar with it? This isn't my first attempt to wrestle with the book, and it's definitely not bedtime reading, or at least not for my current state of mind. Right now, unfortunately, the only time I have to pick up a book is before going to bed, under the glow of red light ...

*PA: I find it beautiful when you say Elizabeth Costello's J.M. Coetzee, because while it's true that J.M. Coetzee created Elizabeth Costello, characters often have a way of shaping their authors. If I could add something to that shelf, it would be Jon Fosse's *A Shining* (perhaps as a gift for your next birthday). I haven't read Maggie Nelson myself. Honestly, I find it amusing how I sometimes search for literature or films, typing something like 'best contemporary writers' into Google and sifting through various lists and cultural rankings. Nelson appears on many of those lists, as well as on that literature podcast 'Otherpp!' you once recommended to me. That's probably why I've been thinking of reading her work for a few years now, but my bookshelf also has its own backlog ... The titles of your works often seem to reference literature: *The Paler King* (a nod to our shared favourite, D.F. Wallace) or *Study of a Young Man as a Flower*, which hints at Joyce, perhaps.<sup>[1]</sup> These titles have a certain humour to them, as do many of the characters you create. Why do you*

*think that is?*

EJ: Well, it seems I revealed myself right from the very first answer! Or, more precisely, my dyspraxia combined with my innate chaos took the lead. Everything in my mind is always tangled. Sometimes that chaos is fascinating and leads me to all sorts of ideas and thoughts, but at other times it's exhausting, especially when I need to focus, avoid confusion, and somehow present myself as an educated person. Yes, it's an undeniable fact that J.M. Coetzee is the writer. But the choice of the protagonist's identity is so intricately crafted. I actually started reading the book but put it aside, although the first few pages painted a vivid image of the character. Elizabeth Costello struck me as such an intriguing, independent and strong personality that the author himself faded into the margin, becoming less important. I consider it a good start and will likely pick up the book again more than once.

As it happens, my work often draws on overheard snippets, situations, gossip, images, written or spoken words, and phrases. I don't just borrow from book titles but also from radio, especially BBC 4. I have a particular love for conversations overheard on buses and trains, or in cafes. Sometimes I intentionally follow people in parks or simply stand nearby, blatantly refusing to move away. Living in a fragmented postmodern world, I find myself searching for symbolic meanings in these experiences. I have quite a few notebooks, and my studio desk is covered with notes of all colours. I'll align myself with curator Cecilia Alemani's sentiment by saying that writers use words better. But in the end, everything is a game. Of course, I love reading, it's perhaps my second passion after music. Sometimes I simply want to initiate a dialogue with an author or a character.

As for humour, I'm not quite sure how to respond; it's a rather delicate topic. Perhaps, at my core, I'm stuck in a state of constant existential nihilism. To survive, I need irony and laughter. As Slavoj Žižek once said, *'If you see light at the end of the tunnel, you can be sure it's just another train coming your way.'*



Exhibition view, 'Orion', Cedric Bardawil Gallery, London, 2024. Photo: Peter Otto

*PA: The title of your work that has stayed with me the most is Suffering – Good News. For some reason, I have a feeling that this phrase wasn't whispered to you by BBC Radio 4, but was something you came up with yourself. There truly is an abundance of suffering everywhere: on the BBC, in our memories, on the horizon. It also flickers through your work, often concealed beneath layers of bright colours, Pop Art-like gloss, and witty titles. This duality even leads to moments of absurdity. Like that time when I came across the title of another one of your works, Blueberry Meadow. Already familiar with your 'habits', I naturally thought of Bergman, and wondered what to ask about him. But then, with slightly sad eyes, you told me it was about domestic violence. And in moments like that, all that's left is to laugh ... and cry. How do you perceive and reflect on these contrasts? Both in the art world and beyond?*

EJ: Since my childhood, a few dilemmas have stayed with me, and one of them is the notion of *suffering for beauty*. My grandmother would always remind me of this while painfully combing my hair, telling me it was all for the sake of my appearance. That reminder later extended to various situations in life: beautifully styled hair was meant to lead to a beautiful family, beautiful children and a beautiful home. I don't say this to my daughters, and they often walk around with slightly messy hair, but that's fine. They'll fix it however they want, or not. I stopped combing my hair long ago.

As for Bergman, he's impossible to erase from my consciousness. He has undoubtedly shaped my understanding of the world and the way I perceive experiences. In my work, reality and fiction, imagination and truth, the mundane and the dreamlike, history and the present, all intertwine. Everything in my canvases, especially in the patchwork pieces, is layered with ambiguity, complexity, and even tragedy, but wrapped in delicate leaves and flowers. Blueberries and other natural elements frequently appear in my work, often rooted in Renaissance symbolism, precisely because of their richly mutable meanings. Our exhibition '*Shuttle and Twill*' inevitably reflected the everyday and domestic life, which is one of my core realities. Recently, in my solo exhibition '*Orion*', I returned to the theme of daily life at home, particularly focusing on my older daughter's room: her collection



of discarded objects, reimagined forms, and their layered meanings.



Eglé Jauncems, 'Extra Riche Reparatrice', oil on linen, 100×130 cm., 2023. Photo: Peter Otto



Exhibition view, 'Orion', Cedric Bardawil Gallery, London, 2024. Photo: Peter Otto

*PA: There's a literary undercurrent flowing here as well. In this exhibition, you called one of your works Ole-Luk-Oie after Hans Christian Andersen's tale 'Ole Lukøje'. In the story, Ole Lukøje comes to children at night with two umbrellas under his arms. One has a canopy adorned with colourful images, and the other is plain and grey. Over good children he opens the first umbrella, and they dream fantastic dreams. Over the naughty ones, he opens the second, making their sleep heavy and dreamless. Interestingly, Ole Lukøje has a brother with the same name, also known as Death. This brother visits people only once, carrying them away on his horse and telling them one of two stories: joyful or bleak. Folklore often presents this dualism, the clear opposition of light and darkness. Meanwhile, the waters of your creative world are murky: it's unclear when to smile and when to feel uneasy. As is often the case, it probably depends on the perspective. From what depths did the 'Orion' works emerge, and what kind of stories do you tell your two daughters? How would you connect this exhibition to your own childhood?*

EJ: The 'Orion' exhibition emerged from thoughts that come to me as I put my daughter to bed in her small room. My world has shrunk since having children. Home, the mundane, her room: they've become the centres of my existence. My perception of time has shifted, as have my priorities and possibilities. Yet while my daily life feels claimed, my dreams and imaginings remain. Every evening, as I lie in her bed, I stare at the plastic neon stars stuck to the ceiling and walls, which she arranged with my husband. Naturally, I drift off into other worlds. Sometimes the reflections are beautiful, but at other times the thoughts become uncontrollably frightening, like a union between 'Orion' and 'Ole Lukøje', if you like.

It so happened that I became deeply interested in consumption tied to my child: the packaging from toys, socks, shirts, hats, toothbrushes, and more. I started collecting these items five years ago, accumulating intriguing bits of trash in my studio, which I've used to create patterns and patchworks. Her room could be described as a concentrated cosmos of love and consumption. My own childhood was entirely different, but for the exhibition I also incorporated discarded items sent to me in packages from my mother. The image for the 'Ole Lukøje' piece, for instance, was created from a

moisturising mask that my mother frequently includes in her parcels.



Eglé Jauncems, 'Sunset / Sunrise / PB 25-27', oil and paper, 46×37 cm., 2023. Photo: Peter Otto

*PA: Your work undeniably bears the hallmarks of both Arte Povera and Pop Art, largely tied to those seemingly worthless objects to which you give a new life. At the same time, your creations also reveal the influence of Old Masters like Rembrandt, as well as ethnographic motifs such as traditional weaving.*

*How do you manage to balance and integrate all these elements into a harmonious flow? What is your goal when creating an artwork, and how do you determine when it is complete?*

EJ: I sometimes joke that Arte Povera is probably the closest match to my practice, as my studio operates on a circle economy: I drag everything in, collect, remake, and repurpose. My workspace is a chaotic mix of colourful scraps, needles, and odd-shaped bits of debris. Even finished works are often dismantled, because I end up needing a particular colour or detail from them. So, it's hard to say when a piece feels complete. Most of the time, my works have no definitive end. It often seems their purpose is to remain unfinished, to exist as living organisms. Over time, not only does the pigment change, but my paintings also crumble, warp, sag, and collapse, and that's how it should be. I don't intentionally 'juggle' anything. I'm actually quite critical.

In truth, my work is grounded in the principles of traditional painting. I've spent a significant amount of time studying the techniques of the Old Masters, and today my chaotic daily life is interwoven with the influence of Rembrandt, Titian, Velázquez, Christen Købke and Karel Dujardin, as well as Petronèle Gerlikienė, Henri Rousseau, Walter Sickert, Michael Portnoy and Ragnar Kjartansson. In my mind, there's always better and more interesting art than what I create. While studying weaving, I

often reflected on the origins and possibilities of the canvas, interpreting painting in both contemporary and traditional contexts. In the past, I might have sought to prove certain truths, but today, I simply walk the streets and try to live by Daoist principles.

*PA: You spent a significant amount of time in the east, which is a fascinating chapter in your life. Can you reflect on how those Daoist principles and lessons from the east have permeated your life and artistic practice?*

EJ: I earned my first BA at Vilnius University, studying sinology at the Centre of Oriental Studies. I was fortunate to win a scholarship that allowed me to spend my third year studying in Taipei, where I not only had the chance to improve my language skills but also to study Taiwan's ethnic minorities. Knowing Chinese opened up limitless opportunities for me. While in Taipei, I began learning sewing, appliqué, drawing, papermaking, weaving, and understanding colours, studying both with Taipei monks and people from remote villages in China. One could say this chapter of my life, which was intended to open a new page in my adult career, brought me back to creativity, this time replacing music with visual art. I don't romanticise Asia or the time I spent there. On the contrary, while travelling, particularly in China, I was deeply moved by the culture of consumption, the neglect and disregard for tradition, the aggression, and the brutality of everyday life. Loneliness also played a role in my decision to return home and start again. In hindsight, those five years of studying and living in Asia were among the most significant in my life.

As for eastern philosophy, I was especially fascinated by my studies under Professor Loreta Poškaitė, with whom I still maintain contact. I understand Dao as walking the path of development, which leads to harmony with one's environment and its phenomena, both mystical and mundane. Equally fascinating to me were Confucianism and Buddhism. In Taiwan, those three philosophies are deeply intertwined and woven into everyday life. I spent a great deal of time in temples and monasteries, simply observing the rituals and people's behaviour. What struck me most was the silence and restraint, which left a lasting impression.



Eglė Jauncems, 'Walls on Doors / Free Pattern', oil on linen, 88x63 cm., 2023. Photo: Peter Otto

*PA: You are part of the London art community, and also maintain a foothold in exhibitions in Lithuania. How would you compare these two contemporary art scenes? Additionally, as someone who spends your free time immersing yourself in well-established art exhibitions, what trajectories do you see contemporary art taking today?*

EJ: When working and relaxing in Lithuania after arriving from London, it usually takes me a few days, sometimes even a whole week, to adjust to the local pace, the distances, and time management. In London, everything feels much more stressful, faster and competitive in every area.

Speaking of art-related communities, I haven't noticed significant cultural differences when meeting like-minded people. Perhaps it's even unfair to compare them. Lithuanians have always been highly mobile, open, and followers, carriers and creators of various global trends.

As for the trajectory of contemporary art, everyone has their own perspective. I've noticed that contemporary art risks becoming a very safe amusement park. And it's not just the artists who are responsible for this trend. Phyllida Barlow, in her interview with Ben Luke, made a very astute observation. She pointed out the danger of art transforming into an alternative entertainment platform, where the focus shifts to the artist's identity, image and career trajectory, while the work itself, stripped of substance, becomes a temporary attraction for viewers' cameras.



Exhibition view, 'Orion', Cedric Bardawil Gallery, London, 2024. Photo: Peter Otto

*PA: Considering that our conversation might be read by young people, is there anything you would like to wish young artists starting their careers on the art scene?*

EJ: Be positive, open, and most importantly, not judgmental of others. When I was finishing my studies at the RCA, one of my professors wished me perseverance, and warned me that it wouldn't be easy.<sup>[2]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> *The Pale King* is an unfinished novel by David Foster Wallace, published posthumously in 2011. The first novel by James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, was published in 1916.

<sup>[2]</sup> Royal College of Art.

# Who's the Main Character? Three fictional monologues on the performance 'Core' at the Atletika gallery

January 30, 2025

Author Rokas Vaičiulis



Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte

**Core** was an hour-long performance that three artists, Jette Loona Hermanis, Gloria Viktoria Regotz and Deividas Vytautas Aukščiūnas, presented on an autumn evening last year at Atletika, a former school gym space in Vilnius.

On one hand, **Core** repeats the gym space's pressure to physically compete. On the other hand, **Core** transcends the gym's locality by infusing itself with an even more pervasive drive to compete: digitised desire. The race by the three to be seen is very well informed of the tricks and compulsions that algorithms bring to the fore. Just as an algorithm preconditions and exposes a social media post which grabs the short attention span of the viewer's psyche, likewise, each of the three performers is bound to continually adjust their behaviour to maximise and maintain the indulgence of the spectator, to continuously make a scene, to seduce.



Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte

On entering the space of the performance, Jette, Gloria and Deividas drift in their own reveries, with the shining flashlights on their iPhones, surrounded by the suspense glitchy electronic sounds. Soon the three discover that they are not on their own when it comes to being observed, by both the spectators and the recording camera. The steps they take to gain attention take the shape of a girl-on-girl kiss, casting flashlights at each other's reclining bodies, giving in to a demonic seizure, lifting weights, and a physical power play. It is never enough, one can never fully secure one's spotlight, the threats of takeover are imminent. What by the second half of the performance seemed like a sensual rapprochement between the three turns out to be a climactic flight, a struggle in which neither of them gets to claim the trophy of the Main Character. Instead, the fight approaches the dramatic scenery of a Renaissance battle painting, christened by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's cantata *Stabat Mater*.





Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte

It is this self-absorbed attention-seeking behaviour that is both the target and the product of algorithmic compulsivity. The alienation among the individuals is never resolved, it lies at the basis of the algorithmic desire. So this text, like thirst, should not be taken as a concluding proposition; instead it builds on the premise of the performance, its alienated core. By continuing to feed into desire, the aim of the text is not so much a reflection on the performance or a testimony of the fact; rather, it is an imaginative trickle into the plot of the performance, by pushing the plot further through fictional means, by approaching each character to their logical end. The race to be seen is reproduced and verbalised in the form of imagined speech: *three fictionalised monologues*.

The imagined speeches, driven by self-obsession, are rightly monologues, because of how they exhibit the dismissive, competitive tendencies of intersubjectivity. Monologues, because the possibility of a dialogue has disintegrated. Each of them desires to be the Main Character, but there can only be one, otherwise the character is not *main* any more. So who is it? By attempting to answer the question, we not only dive into the logic of compulsion, we also pinpoint the creative condition that lies at the heart of each character's artistic practice.



Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte

Deividas: The three of us are not a team. There is no shared choreographic code, no synchrony, we are each in our own universe. I am centered around myself. Nothing is sexual. I am not in love, there is no love between the three of us. There is no hierarchy among the three of us. Nothing is sexual, and yet the three of us are so concerned with sexuality and violence. I mean, there is nothing sexual, because I'm not into overt sexualisation, no. Sexuality and violence, I mean it in a non-sexual, non-evident way. It's sexuality in a repressed way, the tension, the anger, the rage ...

I am tensed and venomous because I did something awful. I disregard the others around me because I did something awful. Denis Cooper's character, Michael Haneke's *Funny Games* kind of awful. I wander back and forth repetitively around the gym space. I don't stand still because I don't want to, because I can't just stand still. The camera points at the scene. I'm being observed. The performance space is the film set.

But then the girls begin to crawl seductively on their knees towards each other. They move their hips as they slide across the floor, towards the gravitational centre, their eyes locked on each other. They come closer, they aim for a kiss, but they linger, their lips never meet. That's when I intervened and executed my physical force. That's when I pushed their heads together and their lips met. It was I who completed the kiss. That's when I forcefully pulled their heads apart and the three of us knelt in silence. I was not ashamed, it was my turn. No regrets. I was just silent.

It's how I got to know Gloria better anyway. We eyed each other's faces and bodies with our phones' flashlights, no touching, like a voyeur who gets off only by observing. I mean, the phone is obviously an extension of me, and the flashlight is the light of life. I hold this shining light in my hand and I bring life to Gloria's face and body. She does the same to me. No filming, just illuminating. But then

we notice something's wrong with Jette, she's all shaking. Gloria takes Jette's phone to her: *Hey babe, get yourself together. Here's your phone.*

...

I love sports. Physical fitness means a lot to me. I'm a sporty gym boy. But I'm not into showing off my muscularity on its own. I'm more low-key and passive. But as I said, I love sports. I hated the physical education classes at high school, they were just so overloaded with the gender binary, the tenseness, the sexual expressivity, the competition. I just can't, I hated it. I mean, it's so hypernormative. The kids in school are awful. So the school gym to me is a space of trauma, and by working out I like to feed into the gender binary, to appreciate the hypernormativity, by looking at it from both a queer, fluid and at once hetero, structured lens. The three of us, we are just a boy and two girls, that's all.



Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte

Gloria: We are hurt and we need attention. The race to be at the centre of the stage is a call for visibility. Our predicament is simple yet inescapable: we fight for visibility, the stage, attention, in which we are mostly isolated from each other, but there are moments of togetherness. There are moments of sharing, glimpses of connection, but it gets ruined quickly, opened up, torn apart. There's something obvious and gruesome happening, like Jette collapsing. That is when you have to offer them your attention, you offer help, but you later end up distracted, caught up in your bullshit, your own egocentric, self-obsessed point of view. The obsession makes you blind to the *Mitmensch*, the person besides you.

Yes, we fight. We fight without knowing exactly what the direct intentions of the others are. But we start off from softness, care and nurturing: me and Jette come closer for a kiss, me and Deividas help Jette recover from the seizure, me and Jette gently come together again. But it all circles back to a vicious fight. We fight because we failed to be together and nurture each other, we failed to try and understand the relationship, respect it. Jealousy severs our attempts to connect with each other. We are isolated and separated because jealousy and competition hinder us from nurturing and loving each other, and vice versa. The fight is out of jealousy, for attention, out of the thirst for power, to say, *look, I'm stronger*.

I fight ambiguously, by expressing vulnerability, and at the same time retaining the need to be taken seriously. Jette's manic episode can happen anywhere, and Deividas lifting weights creates a lot of noise. I am dressed in corporate style, i.e. I am defined solely by my career and by my way of consumption; it makes my private life anonymous, irrelevant. So my way of winning attention is by revealing to the public what is expected to be private. I wear a black broad-shouldered coat, which is really an image of a very hetero male working in business. But, I should add, I'm not wearing any pants, only sheer brown tights with high heels. At one point it seems I'm feeling ill or have stomach pains, but at that moment I masturbate, I touch myself slowly, eagerly. I get voyeuristic eyes on me because I turn one of the most private and silent acts outward, by placing it on an equal footing with the working-out noises and the seizure scene. I shatter the public expectations attached to my outward looks, yet I also want to be looked up to and respected. I play along with the expectation, but simultaneously I oppose it. Sex sells, I suppose.

But there is no spectacle on my side. The corporate style is my choice, I wear what's most comfortable, not only during the performance but in my daily life too. I don't treat it as a whole piece, a costume. To be fair, I do not even perform 'someone else', I perform myself. I stay true to myself on stage, on the given visible platform. Because we already perform enough on a daily basis. My acts, mannerisms, desires, looks and preferences do not deviate from my personal life. The corporate look is just an era in my life. I've been into these outfits lately.

But to get back to the mundane performativity point: I perform as if I were in front of a camera or a mirror, and act as if you can't be seen. Like in public. You're very visible but no one gives a fuck, everyone's concentrating on their own lives. It takes so much to act to become visible. Because there is a presupposed distance between strangers, I could do relatively whatever I want and I would still disappear in the mass of people: so what does it take to be noticed by a stranger? And when you see someone struggling in a public space, what do you do? Should you help them? Help them carry their luggage, or open the door for them? How do you show compassion? Nurture them like a good friend, or your child? Put yourself in their shoes? Public spaces feel like a dream.

We are never completely separate. We are united by a social relation, otherwise we wouldn't be competing. You wouldn't function if there was no other performer, the whole piece couldn't function without the other people. If there were no others, you couldn't attract attention. We compete, but there is a privileged relation we take for granted. Us shining our phones' flashlights at each other is obviously a voyeuristic act, but it is also a kind of compassion, observing each other more, albeit from a distance: it is saying *I support you, you can do this* without saying it.



Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte

Jette: Even in daily situations I am quite a provocative personality. I tend to push forward and call for what is outside the everyday norm. The same goes for the performance, when a different role, a different force takes over. Performance for me is never about neutrality, it is the alter ego, the someone, that I embody. Gloria and Deividas might have a different take on this, but our dictatorial, often uncompromising, manners give us a shared proposition. We start off in solitude, absorbed in our own digital worlds, and interactions occur.

Me and Gloria, we have our girl-on-girl game thing, with its soft and violent sides. I am obsessed with attracting attention, but there are moments when obsessive feelings towards Gloria overcome me. A mixture of having a crush on her, but also a desire to own her, control her; a combination of playful romantic tension, coupled with an aggressive power play. When our eyes first met, I knew exactly it had to be a scene of two girls kissing. We were destined to recreate the Britney-Madonna lesbian kiss. And I admit, in a moment like this, the sense of jealousy coming from Deividas was undeniable: he was clearly left out and tried to tag along. Anyhow, I had to make moves at Gloria. His jealousy may have stemmed from not receiving the same degree of attention from us, but there is a more general kind of jealousy for each of us: we want to possess and own each other, we are jealous of not having what we want just to ourselves.

The jealousy, I think, is such a parallel to the real-life consequences of social media. I'm talking from my own experience, and I admit that I am such an attention whore online, it has become an issue in relationships. Like, why are you so sexy or thirst-trappy online if you're in a relationship? Really? It's just my business and you don't have a say in it. There are many girls attention-whoring just because it's good for the clout, the business, the followers. But yeah, it can make your significant other jealous.

The story does not end there. I had to seek attention on my own, like an artist asserts themselves. On the surface I'm a teenage girl with a black tank top and black warrior pants with impeccable skin care and mineral-coloured stiletto gel nails, but the scene that I make is demonic. I thirst for attention, like each of us, but more particularly, I am a creep online. My role is obsessed with watching people seek attention. The way they desperately crave attention, expose themselves, wishing to be seen, noticed, consumed. I feed off the fact of observation, and I feel immense enjoyment in consuming what is given on the platter. Things just literally happen in front of the creep's eyes. It gives me convulsions, my body takes over, it begins to spasm on its own. I get possessed by the body, and the body feeds off anxious atmospheres that the sound supplies. Lacking supervision, I go off, too far, for some. Deividas and Gloria come to check on me.

But, *no, thanks*, the three of us culminate in a miserable fight. How could I let go of the power that my self-obsessivity is hungry for? The fight is nothing if I don't win it. Those going against me ought to be possessed by myself and for myself alone. Maybe Deividas has learned his lesson now that I selfishly yanked his boyish hair while Gloria poured water with chia seeds over his pathetic head. This dandy boy never had a chance to stand up against a girl like me: just like Gloria, he's mine now. All mine. As I claim your hair, your head, your body, our axons discharge and mutually reconfigure, returning to the pure data flow, becoming one with the algorithmic form. A poem reads through my lips:

I would go lengths hardmaxxing for you,  
I'd shave my bone structure to fulfil an angel skull  
And skin my brain pad to install a chip,  
So you could stalk me wandering dumb and dull,  
Awaiting for you to fill me with content  
And strip me from ideas conflicting with yours.

My implant would glow in lavender,  
If the inflowing thoughts were evil in nature.  
But I would rather choose to be unalive and under your command  
Than to exist as a clean girl in our warped future.  
Sadpilled and tearmaxxing.

I'd want you to erase my core memories entirely  
And inhabit my perception with yours.  
For you to systematically alter my brain chemistry,  
Pollute it with foreign information and clog my pores.  
Till you become the main character in my flesh sinisterly.

Your intentions with me were caught in 4K  
To construct my mind in architecture that is hostile  
But I embrace your objective and let you lay down  
And vandalise in the walls of my brain  
After all, I am a based agliophile.  
Tweaking in sinful serenity.

Your face card never fails to persuade me,  
Pretty privileged and top in manipulation.  
I visualise being you and auto-sexual for real,  
But for now I'm in prey mode flirtation,  
Lactating doe eyed, and ready to be devoured

Work play, work play, work  
Play—  
Mew.

The performance *Core* took place on 19 October 2024 at Atletika in Vilnius.

Poem: Jette Loona Hermanis

Photographs: Monika Jagusinskyte



Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte



Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte



Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte





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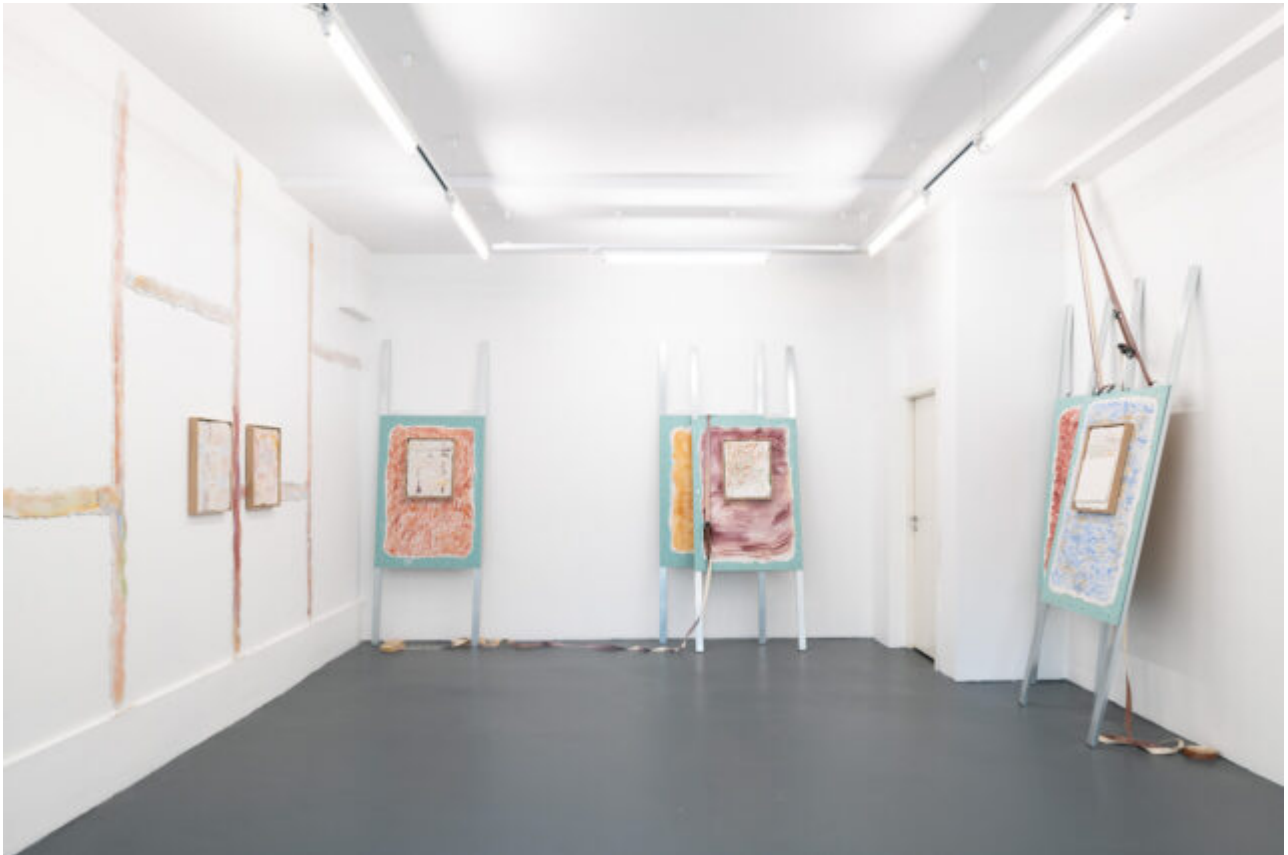


Performance 'Core', Atletika, 2024, Vilnius. Photo: Monika Jagusinskyte

# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'To Pay an Arm and a Leg' by Elīna Vītola at Kogo Gallery

January 6, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



View from a solo exhibition To Pay an Arm and a Leg by Elīna Vītola, Kogo Gallery, 2024. Photo by Marje Eelma

Kogo Gallery in Tartu currently shows a solo exhibition To Pay an Arm and a Leg by Latvian painter, installation and performance artist Elīna Vītola. The show is curated by art scholar and curator Ieva Astahovska. By examining the dark aspects of her family history, the artist connects reflections on art and life, past and present, personal and collective, known and unspoken. The exhibition will remain on view until 8 February.

The exhibition asks: What if the past and its memories are hiding or silenced, contradictory, unknowable, and in the end, difficult and dark? How to think and talk about it when, despite the data and facts discovered, there is no direct evidence or material? How can an art exhibition help to reopen and talk about this past?

The artist had a desire to know more about her great-uncle whom she never met because he disappeared during the Second World War. He too was a painter. Through archival and other

research, and hearing stories from unexpectedly found relatives in different parts of the world, the artist uncovered the twists and turns of her great-uncle's life but also the contradictions and silences about him in the family memories. These sources disclosed not only the biography of her lost relative but also the unpleasant and difficult memories of the Second World War and post-war era and the silences that still accompany them in society at large. The solo exhibition *To Pay an Arm and a Leg* by Elīna Vītola is open from 6 December 2024 until 8 February 2025 in Tartu, Estonia at Kogo Gallery in Aparaaditehas (Kastani 42). The gallery is open for visits Wed–Fri 12–18, Sat 12–16.

The exhibition is funded by the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, the State Culture Capital Foundation of Latvia and the City of Tartu.

Special thanks to Aleksandrs Bieziņš primary school in Raiskums, Kaspars Kalniņš and Emma Buckley. Elīna Vītola (b. 1986) is an artist based in Riga. Her conceptual and visually vibrant work varies from paintings to complex communal installations involving several other artists and creative practitioners. Classically trained as a painter at the Art Academy of Latvia (BA and MA), Vītola has taken up this medium as a companion in her artistic journey to disentangle some issues that are connected with her identity as an artist and the art world in general and to build new platforms for other artists. She has worked both as an artist and as a curator in organisations such as the Monumental Cafe and Low Gallery in Riga. Vītola has participated in exhibitions at the Latvian National Museum of Art, Kim? Contemporary Art Centre in Riga, Tallinn Art Hall, Kadriorg Art Museum in Tallinn, the University of Tartu Art Museum, Kogo Gallery in Tartu and P/////AKT in Amsterdam. Kogo Gallery presented her solo installation *Common Issues in Painting and Everyday Life* at Liste Art Fair Basel 2024. In 2021, she was shortlisted for the Purvītis Prize, in 2018, she received the Nordic & Baltic Young Artist Award. Her works are in the collections of the Latvian National Museum of Art and the European Patent Office Collection.

Ieva Astahovska (b. 1979) is an art scholar and curator. She works at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, where she leads research projects related to art and culture in socialist and post-socialist periods and entanglements between postsocialist and postcolonial perspectives in the Baltics and Eastern Europe, as well as non-formal education projects, focusing on the current processes in contemporary art. Ieva has edited several research-based publications, including the anthology *Valdis Āboliņš. The avant-garde, mailart, the New Left and cultural relations during the Cold War* (2019), *Workshop of Restoration of Unfelt Feelings. Juris Boiko and Hardijs Lediņš* (2016), *Revisiting Footnotes. Footprints of the Recent Past in the Post-Socialist Region* (2015). Her recently curated exhibitions include *Decolonial Ecologies. Understanding the Postcolonial after Socialism in Riga* (2022) and *Difficult Pasts. Connected Worlds* (2022–2024) co-curated with Margaret Tali, shown in Riga, Vilnius and Tallinn.

Kogo Gallery is a contemporary art gallery in Tartu, Estonia, founded in 2018. The gallery focuses on the younger generation of artists, currently representing seven female artists from the Baltic countries. Kogo Gallery's international presence includes participation in noted art fairs, such as Liste Art Fair Basel, Esther New York, viennacontemporary, Art Brussels and others, the exchange of exhibitions with galleries abroad and other collaborations. Kogo also works closely with local communities by organising a diverse public programme alongside exhibitions, functioning as an internship base, initiating and co-organising extensive art events series in the gallery's hometown and participating in developing the art scene in Estonia.

Exhibition [www.kogogallery.ee/en/exhibitions/to-pay-an-arm-and-a-leg](http://www.kogogallery.ee/en/exhibitions/to-pay-an-arm-and-a-leg)

Artist [www.kogogallery.ee/en/artists/elina-vitola](http://www.kogogallery.ee/en/artists/elina-vitola)

Photography: Marje Eelma



View from a solo exhibition *To Pay an Arm and a Leg* by Elīna Vītola, Kogo Gallery, 2024. Photo by Marje Eelma



View from a solo exhibition *To Pay an Arm and a Leg* by Elīna Vītola, Kogo Gallery, 2024. Photo by Marje Eelma



View from a solo exhibition *To Pay an Arm and a Leg* by Elina Vitola, Kogo Gallery, 2024. Photo by Marje Eelma



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View from a solo exhibition To Pay an Arm and a Leg by Elīna Vītola, Kogo Gallery, 2024. Photo by Marje Eelma



View from a solo exhibition *To Pay an Arm and a Leg* by Elīna Vītola, Kogo Gallery, 2024. Photo by Marje Eelma



# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Circuit Board' by Algirdas Jakas at Sodas 2123

January 13, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The exhibition 'Circuit Board' by Algirdas Jakas runs at Sodas 2123 and will be open until February 6th.

In the aluminium panels, the layers of time reveal themselves in different forms – as drawn fragments, or tightly drilled silhouettes. Mechanically screwed-on references to smart devices mask traces of time, hiding the beginning and the origin of the time of the screen light. This could be a time before the silicon revolution, or just the beginning of it. The point of view is non-human. It is the last frame of a drone flight or a falling phone. The microchip itself seems to be trying to replicate a human silhouette, to cut out an ear, to find the curve of a spine. Body parts turn into icons of different proportions, showing their insides. Wrenches communicate with microchips, all the indicator lights glow at the same time, and the mechanical age here goes hand in hand with transistors, as if trying to hold back the inevitable epoch of anxiety.

Algirdas Jakas is an artist currently based in Vilnius, who studied graphic arts at the Vilnius Academy of Arts and sculpture at the Hamburg University of the Arts (HFBK).

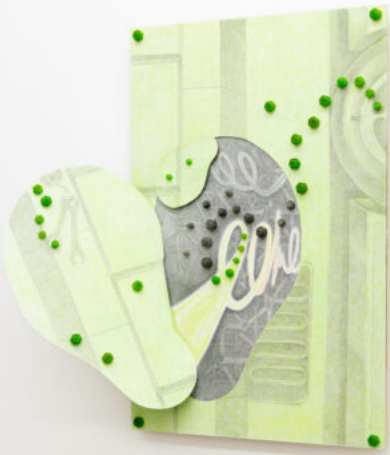
His artistic practice focuses on the synthesis of anxiety and different forms of self-diagnosis. Using materials and techniques associated with hobbies or therapeutic activities (e.g. drawing, DIY aesthetics), he explores individual self-help practices to create "instruments of anxiety". He is also

interested in the translucency of the body and its datafication, as well as in technologies of hope. This often relates to the history and specificity of the project site and becomes an additional part of the work.

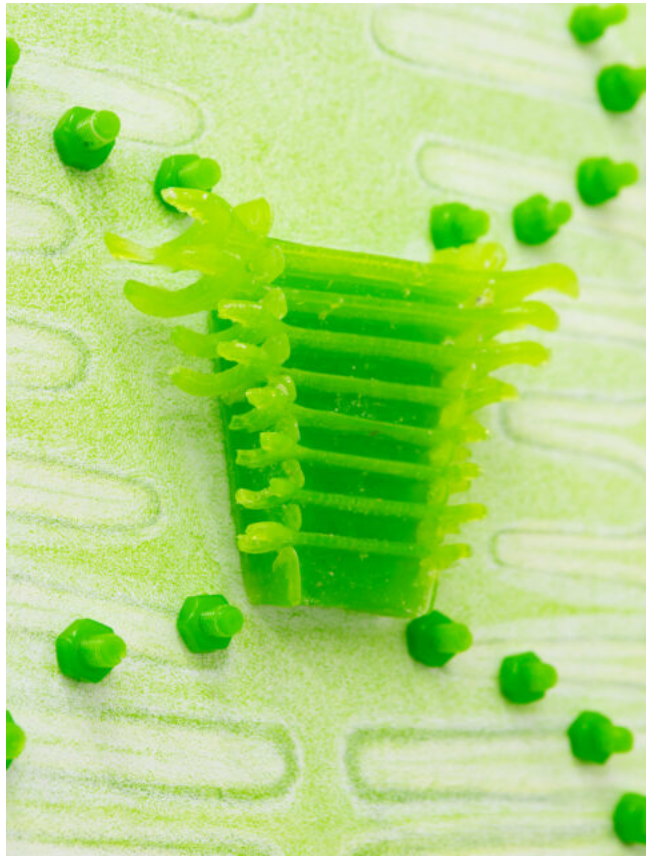
Funded by the Lithuanian Council for Culture

Photos by Laurynas Skeisgiela













# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Ancestral Body' by Anna Maskava at the ISSP Gallery

January 17, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The exhibition 'Ancestral Body / Senču ķermenis' by Anna Maskava runs at ISSP Gallery (Berga Bazārs, Marijas iela 13 k-3, Riga, Latvia) until January 31. The artist explores aspects of vulnerability, fragility, and the inheritance of memory through women's experiences.

Anna Maskava's hybrid, synthesized, and transdisciplinary art forms blur the boundaries between nature and technology, two-dimensional images and processes, and the human and non-human worlds. The artist plays and performatively intervenes in nature and the material, technological world, revealing a multiplicity of nonlinear, interconnected narratives. By applying a system of visual codes, the artist reflects on family history, particularly the experiences of women and the formation of Latvia's collective memory.

At the opening of the exhibition, visitors will have the opportunity to experience the performance "Beyond Good and Evil" by Anna Maskava, Laine Kristberga and Irita Tīlane-Pakalniņa, which, as a visceral ritual of encounter, will prompt reflection on the interaction between nature and the material world. As part of the exhibition, there will also be a solo performance by Anna Maskava, as well as a lecture by Laine Kristberga titled "Feminist Aesthetics in Anna Maskava's Art: Formal and Conceptual Solutions," followed by a discussion with the artist and attendees. More detailed information will be available soon.



Anna Maskava (1990) is a transdisciplinary artist working in the field of visual arts, primarily focusing on the means of expression in photography and performance art, especially their synthesis. In photography, Anna works within the self-portrait genre and purposefully creates her system of imagery and visual codes that allow her to transpose individual experiences into symbols, allegories, and metaphors. Anna is currently studying in the Master's program of the Department of Visual Communication at the Art Academy of Latvia.

Exhibition scenography and spatial solutions: Aleksejs Beļeckis

Curators: Iveta Gabaliņa, Laine Kristberga

The exhibition is supported by the State Culture Capital Foundation, Riga City Council and SiF.

On January 23 at 7 PM, at ISSP Gallery Anna Maskava's performance will take place in connection with the exhibition.

Photography: Kristīne Madjare











# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'The Smoldering Flashes' by Liene Pavlovskā at TUR

January 19, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The exhibition 'The Smoldering Flashes' by Liene Pavlovskā runs at TUR (Riga, Latvia) until February 8th.

In 'The Smoldering Flashes' Liene Pavlovskā creates a space encompassing installation that weaves together the private and the collective, drawing from the remnants of Soviet-era domestic life, state control, and the fragmented histories of those who lived through them. At its core, Pavlovskā's work addresses the trauma of memory, marked by physical and substance abuse — memories she could have left obscured, but instead bring to the surface. Her use of vintage wallpaper and old photo album paper, along with abstract watercolor paintings, forms a narrative that blurs the boundaries between the personal and the political. By doing so, she critiques systems of control while offering a reclaiming of space — both physical and emotional — for memory and improvisation. Pavlovskā's immersive installation is both a personal confrontation with a troubled past and an homage to resilience, offering a space for reflection that transforms destructive cycles and moves forward.

In her installation, dreamlike elements become a decor of memory, where Pavlovskā invites viewers into a world of fleeting recollections where abstract watercolors seem to float in and out of grasp, like flashes of a troubled upbringing. This fragmented memory landscape, presented in a rough, theatrical aesthetic, evokes an environment that is at once personal and universal. The aesthetic imperfections are intentional: Pavlovskā embraces the irregularities, the "mistakes," allowing them to become part of the narrative rather than conceal them. In doing so, she challenges the idea of perfection and invites unexpected meanings to emerge from what was hidden.

Though the work acknowledges the weight of trauma, there is also a way out — a path toward healing. But the journey is not an easy one. The artist's own battle with self-medication and alcohol abuse is present in the work as an invitation to engage in the complexity of personal struggle. By rejecting the pressure to conform to an idealized version of "correctness," Pavlovska allows her materials to break, to fall apart, to rip, to curl and thereby opens a space for new possibilities and alternative narratives to emerge. Pavlovska addresses the shadows of domestic struggles — alcohol and physical abuse, the effects of state control — yet it does not seek to accuse but rather to provide a space for reflection, allowing viewers to confront the unspoken truths that shape both personal and collective identities.

Drawing on theoretical frameworks like Guy Debord's critique of the spectacle and Hannah Arendt's distinction between the public and private realms, Pavlovska creates a stage where personal experiences are played out against the backdrop of historical forces. "The Smoldering Flashes" weaves connections between the personal and the universal. In the glowing embers and fleeting sparks of both individual and collective memories, Pavlovska extends an invitation: to engage in collective healing through recognition, dialogue, and the acknowledgment of shared histories.

Liene Pavlovska is an artist, scenographer, and spatial designer. She holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in scenography from the Art Academy of Latvia, as well as a Master's degree from the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Her work explores the intersection of desire and collectivity, examining how desires are expressed through space and how they shape the living environments of humans and other beings. In addition to her artistic practice, Pavlovska is a founding member of Amsterdam based collective Fabulous Future and recently co-founded a new exhibition space in Riga, Part Time Gallery with Oskars Pavlovskis.

Curator: Edd Schouten

Light Design: Maksimilians Kotovičs

Project Manager: Kristīne Ercika

Production Support: Ada Ruszkiewicz and Andris Freibergs

Technical Support: Oskars Pavlovskis

Graphic Design: Andris Kaļiņins

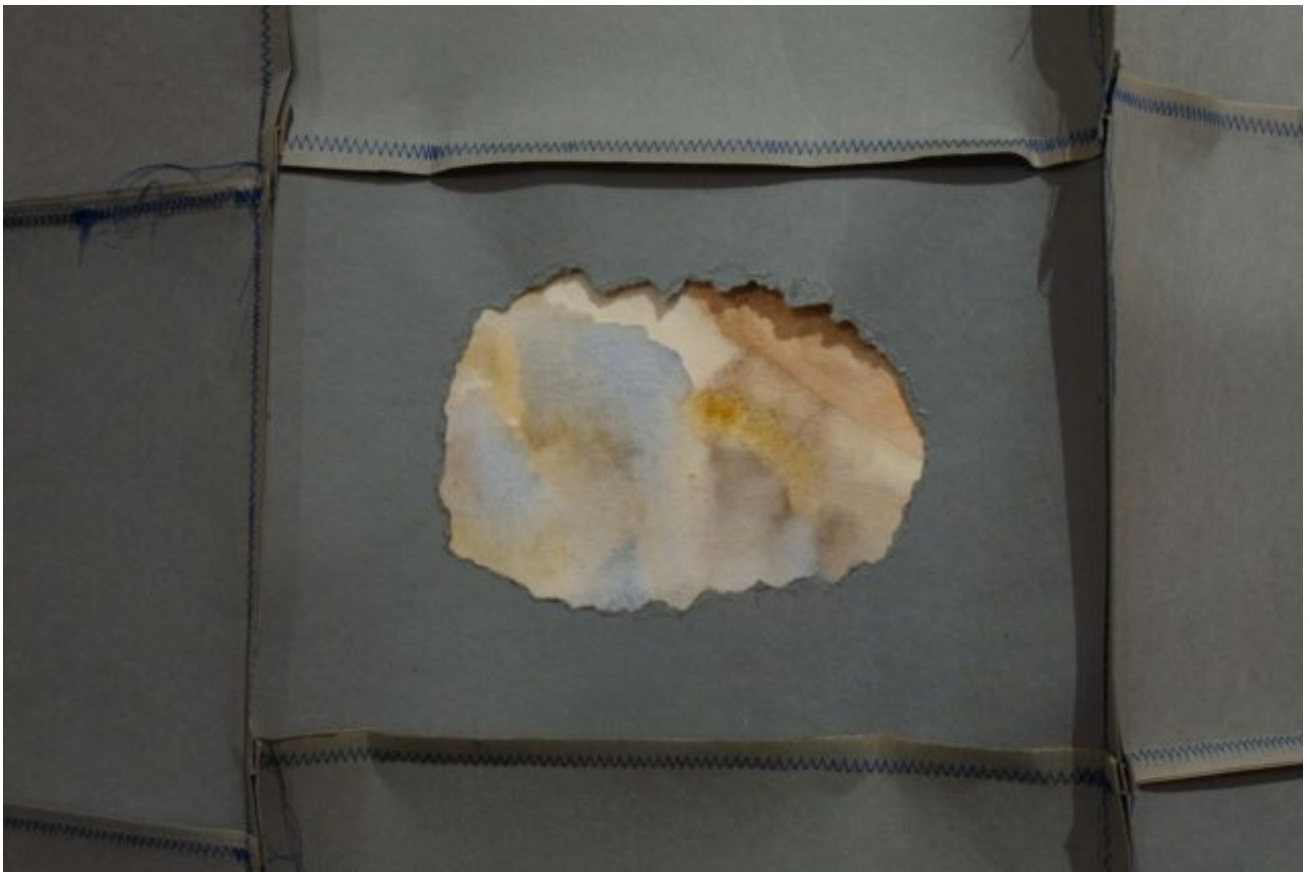
Photography: Kristīne Madjare

















# Photo reportage from the group exhibition 'Intermediate Glooms' at the Meno Parkas Gallery

January 25, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The group exhibition *Intermediate Glooms* is currently on view at Meno Parkas Gallery (Rotušės a. 27, Kaunas) until February 3rd.

The contemporary condition oscillates between clarity and distortion, where reality is mediated through layers of screens and codes. Rooted in the generational experiences of artists raised alongside digital technologies, the exhibition explores how these tools have shaped our understanding of reality, intimacy, and materiality.

This examination naturally leads to the concept of intermediacy, which appears as an active and generative state rather than a passive absence. Transitional space materializes in the interaction between the personal and the algorithmic. In this state, perception becomes a field of negotiation. Digital interfaces, video game aesthetics, and generative processes engage with the psychological dimensions of uncertainty—an openness to ambiguity that enables fresh ways of experiencing and interpreting the world.

The artworks go beyond the limits of traditional painting by merging classical techniques with digital interventions. Through algorithmic inputs and projections that animate surfaces, the exhibition comes into state of being in-between. These pieces balance the interactions between mechanical detachment and the presence of human touch.

Hybrid approach leads to a broader reflections on the nature of reality itself. As a concept, reality has always been contingent—a synthesis of individual experience and social synchronization. This insight traces its lineage through the evolution of human thought, from the certainties of positivism to the interpretative flexibility of constructivist epistemology. Salman Rushdie encapsulates this tension, writing, “truth has always been a contested idea.” Similarly, Nabokov observed that “reality” is “one of the few words which mean nothing without quotes.” In an era where almost every action, gesture, and word can be digitally fabricated, the quotation marks around reality have become less symbolic and more literal, casting doubt on what can truly be known or trusted.

This epistemic fragility paves the way for “not-knowing” as a generative state. Rather than seeking definitive answers, this approach embraces uncertainty as the foundation for encountering the material and immaterial worlds. It shifts the focus from knowledge as a fixed to knowing as an evolving practice—one that allows for the continuous emergence of new meanings and realities.

Within multiplicity lies what might be termed an “ambiguity of certainty,” where everything is simultaneously real and unreal, depending on the vantage point. Each layer of reality operates under its own set of rules, often contradicting those of other layers, yet retaining its validity within its context. This fragmentation does not diminish the significance of these realities; rather, it emphasizes their relational nature, where truth becomes a negotiation rather than an absolute.

Text by: Dovilė Morkūnaitė-Žilinskė

Curator: Mantas Valentukonis

Artists: Šarūnas Baltrukonis, Gasparas Zondovas, Emilie Alstrup, Sandra Golubjevaitė, Indrė Rybakovaitė, Clara Schweers, Klaidas Paškevičius, Andrius Kviliūnas, Eglė Marcinkevičiūtė, Andrius Zakarauskas, Adomas Rybakovas, Jurga Barilaitė, Neda Naujokaitė, Lukas Marciulevičius, Mantas Valentukonis, Emilija Povilanskaitė

The exhibition is part of Meno Parkas Gallery’s project „Ether. 2025“. The project is financed by the Lithuanian Council for Culture.

Photography: Lukas Mykolaitis



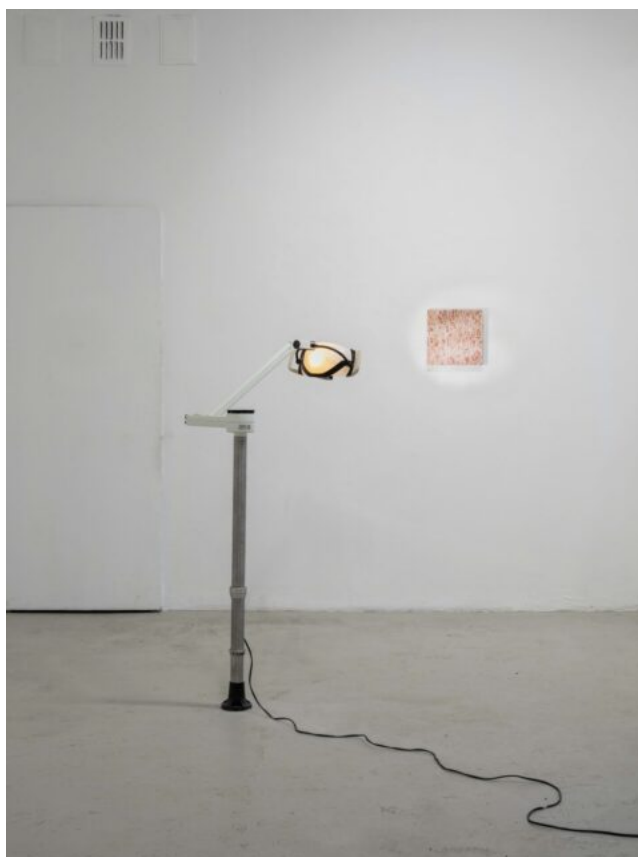




Gasparas Zondovas, 'Arbora\_3', 2024, mixed media, installation



Gasparas Zondovas, 'Arbora\_3', 2024, mixed media, installation



Šarūnas Baltrukonis, 'Biomeatlove', 2024, oil paint on wood, 19.5 x 19.5



Emilie Alstrup Lucy, 'AI 288-1', 2022, lenticular print, epoxy, 180 x 120



Sandra Golubjevaitė, '{d/f\_o} [-non] [-pinH]', mixed media, 96 x 120 x 15

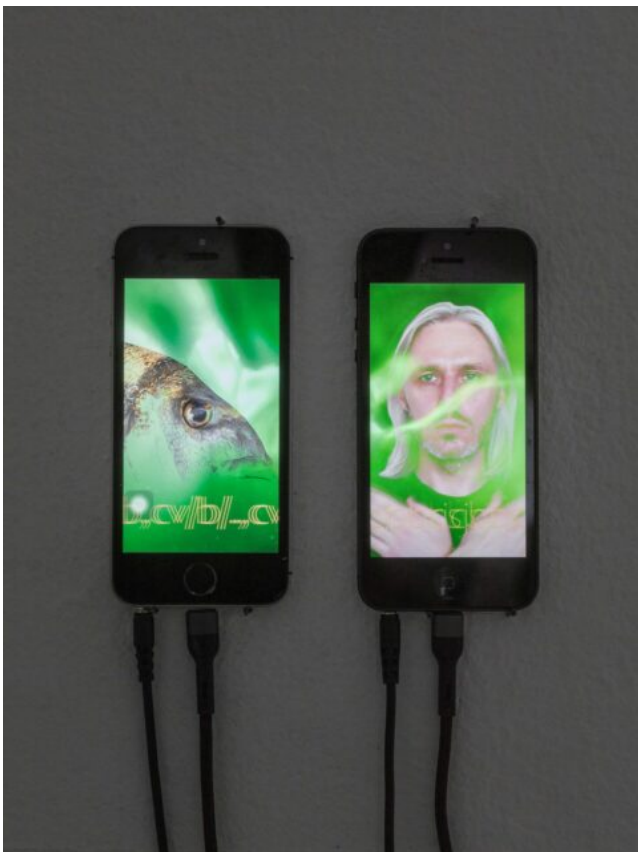


Sandra Golubjevaitė, '{d/f\_o} [-non] [-pinH]', mixed media, 96 x 120 x 15

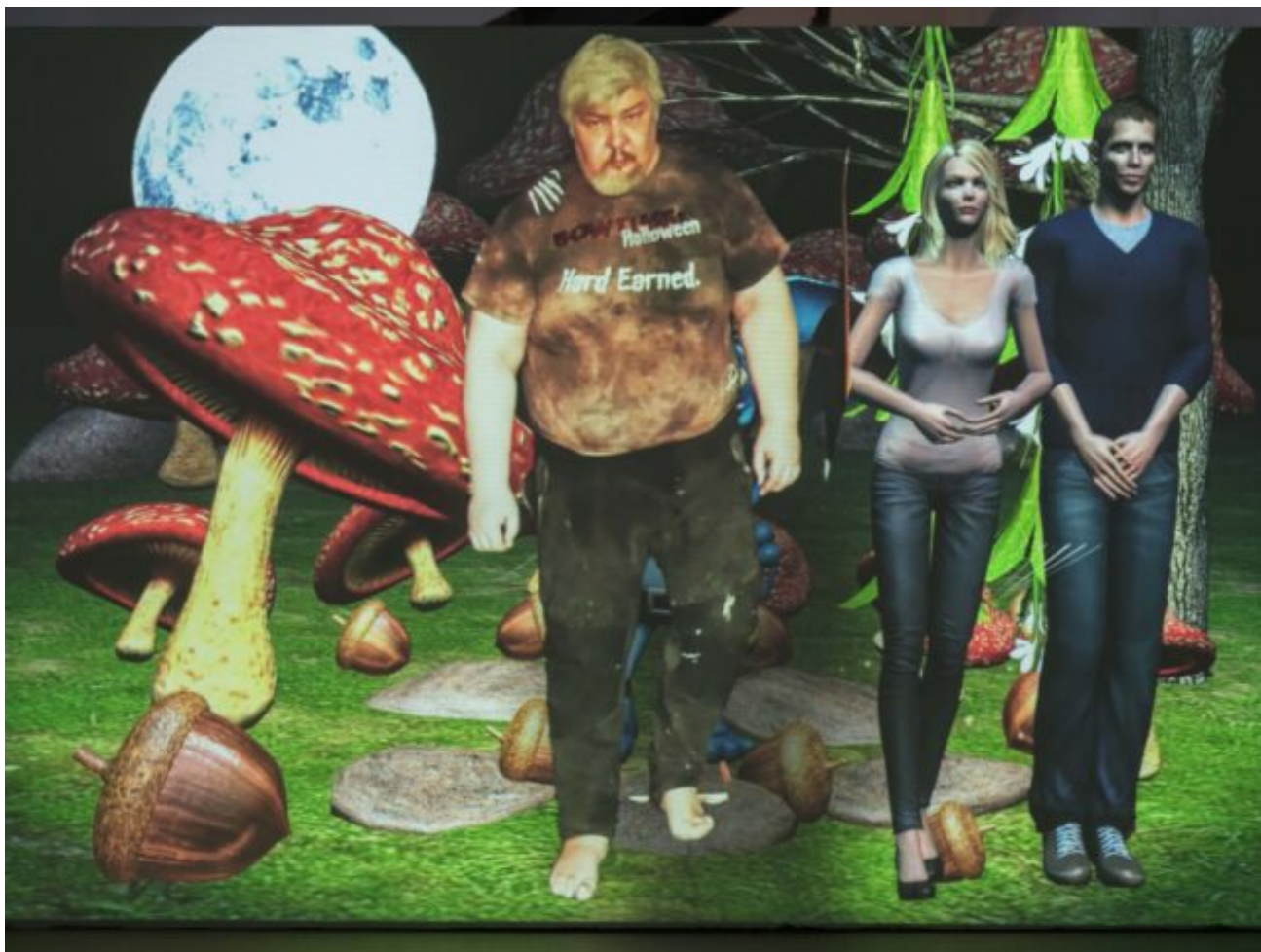




Andrius Kviliūnas, 'Kelionė', 2020, video, 3'50''



Klaidas Paškevičius, 'Trying To Talk', 2020, video diptych, 3'33"

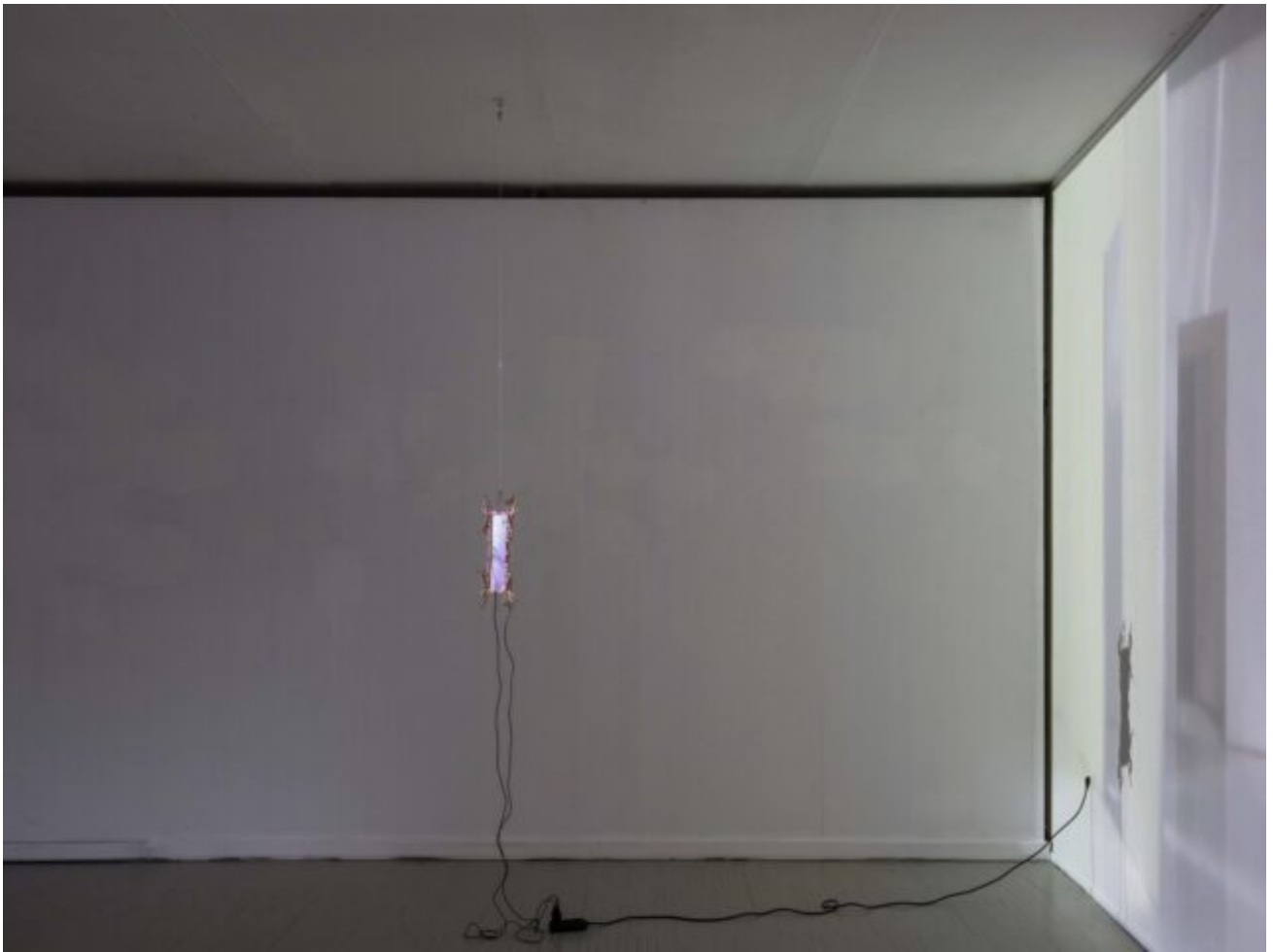


Andrius Kviliūnas, 'Kelionė', 2020, video, 3'50"





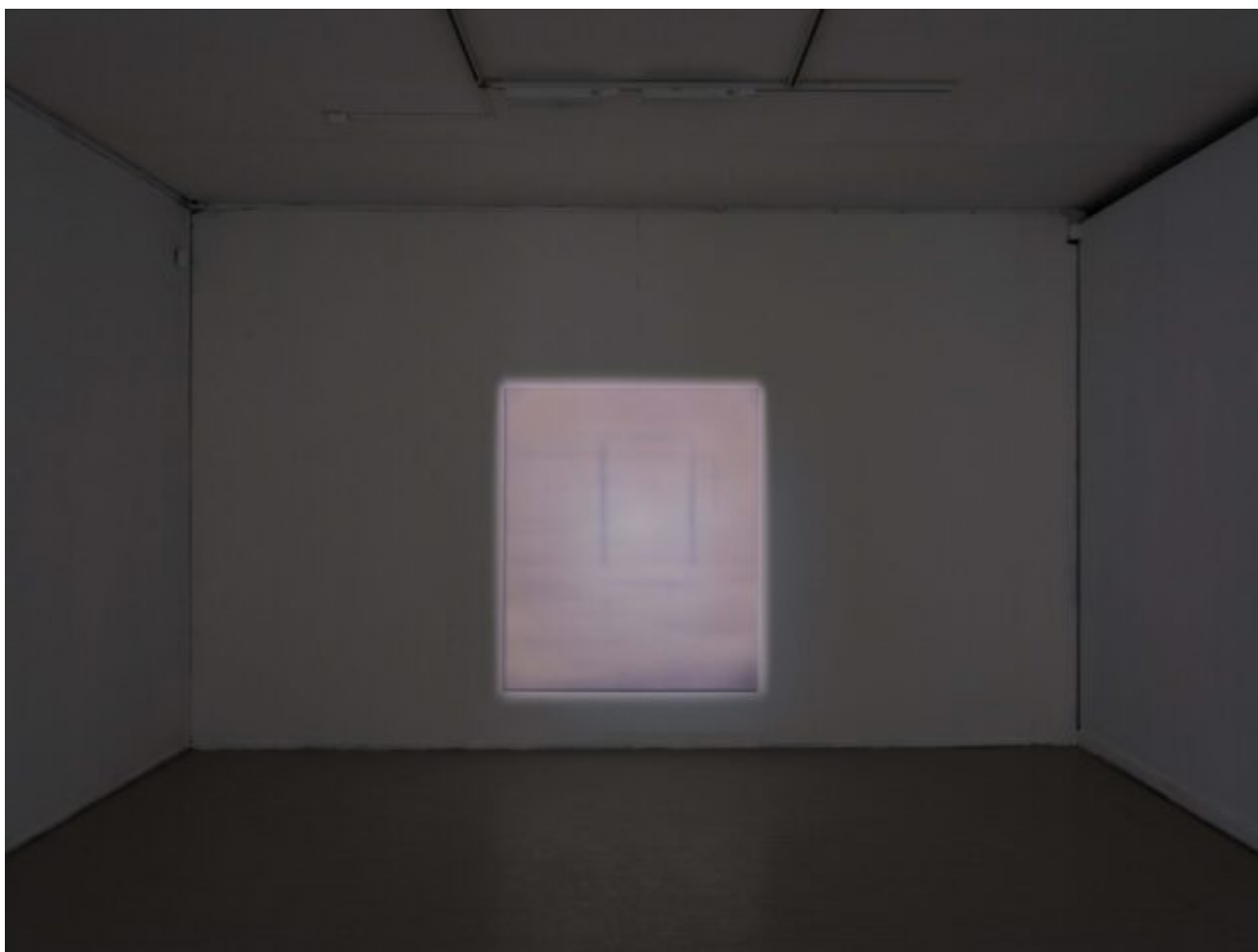
Indrė Rybakovaitė, 'Extended #2', 2024, video, 3'



Clara Schweers, 'Lucid Figural 2', 2023, PLA, glass, electronics, 59 x 41 x 19



Clara Schweers, 'Lucid Figural 2', 2023, PLA, glass, electronics, 59 x 41 x 19



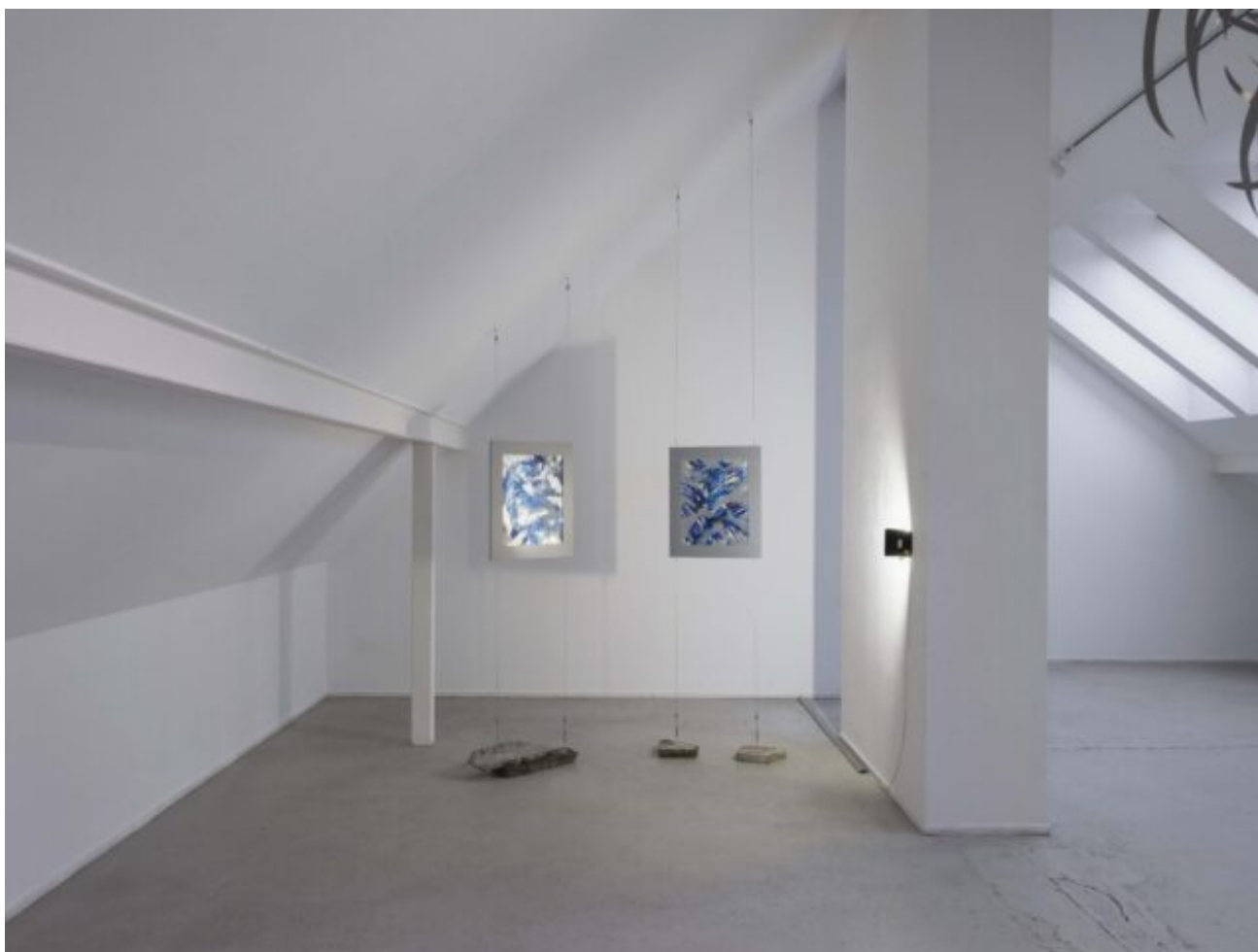
Lukas Marciulevičius, '[ baltą baltą lauką!]', 2024, acrylic on canvas, video, 190 x 160



Neda Naujokaitė, 'Passing', 2024, video installation



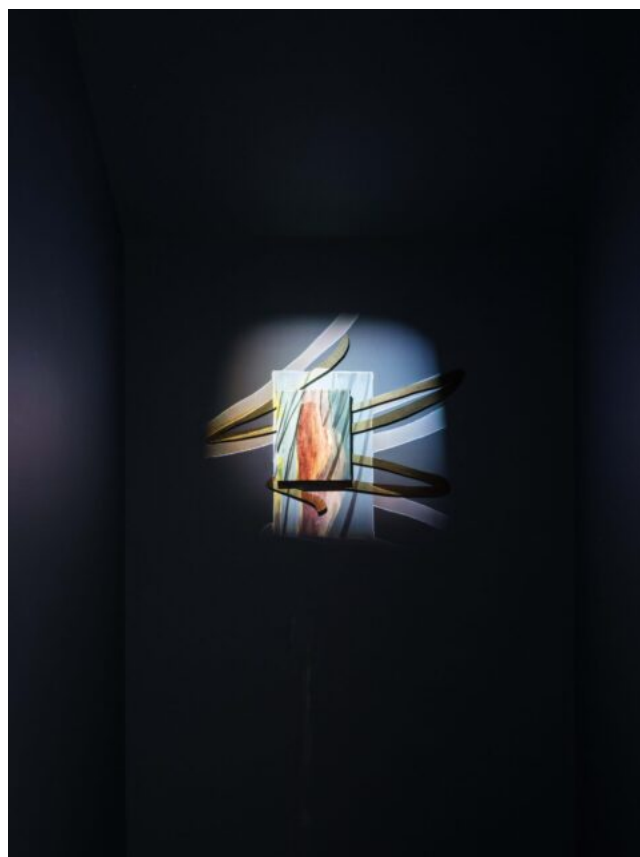
Emilija Povilanskaitė, 'Self-ignite', 2024, metal



Adomas Rybakovas, 'Glide', 2024, oil paint, acrylic, mixed media, 50 x 40 (diptych)



Adomas Rybakovas, 'Glide', 2024, oil paint, acrylic, mixed media, 50 x 40 (diptych)



Andrius Zakarauskas, 'Another Brushstroke', oil paint on canvas, mixed media, 25 x 20



Jurga Barilaitė, 'Paveikslas', 2007, video, 5'; Eglė Marcinkevičiūtė, 'Myli – nemyli? Žydi – nežydi?', 2024, mixed media, 80 x 65



# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Under the Surface. Environmental Ideologies' at ARS Projectroom

January 30, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The exhibition 'Under the Surface. Environmental Ideologies' runs at ARS Projectroom (Tallinn, Estonia) from 15 January to 8 February 2025. Organized by the Estonian Painters' Association in collaboration with the Helsinki Artists' Association and Gallery Arka (Lithuanian Artists' Association).

Estonia, Finland, and Lithuania are connected by the sea, nature and geopolitics, which serve as symbolic cornerstones for cross-border artistic collaboration—a pursuit of poetic-analytical expressions and interpretations of our living environment.

In the Estonian context, we recall the sharp rise in environmental awareness during the Soviet era, where nature conservation emerged as a primary means of protecting national identity. At that time, it appeared to be the only permissible argument that could serve as a shield for individual free will within society. Globally, in the latter half of the 20th century, ecological discourse grew into a scientific discipline. Yet, one of its forebears can be considered art itself. Art, with its inherent ability to play without prescribed rules, offers a unique platform for developing new discourses aimed at mitigating the harmful effects of human activity on the environment.

When observing large, interconnected ecosystems, it becomes evident that humanity—with all its social systems, economic theories and practices, interests, history, and culture—is but one element among the multitude that forms a whole. An object among objects, a subject among subjects.

The concept of the exhibition at the ARS Projectroom incorporates the human being as an equal subject among other factors in the examination of environmental issues. Specifically, the exhibition explores contemporary thought patterns and their spheres of influence as factors shaping the

environment. What are the ideas, understandings, and collectively comprehensible notions that humanity considers, believes in, and seeks to implement in practice today or in the future concerning the living environment?

The Lithuanian exhibition features artworks that explore humanity's complex and ever-changing active relationship with nature. The Finnish selection highlights the immense waste problem of our time while simultaneously offering paradoxical glimpses of hope. The Estonian exhibition focuses on examining the intuitive and analytical capacities of human consciousness in the context of the broader environmental crisis.

How does the contemporary eco-critical artist respond to a complex living environment damaged by past ideologies? What are the messages and practices of today's environmental art? These are the questions explored by the third exhibition of the FinBalt collaboration project, curated by the Estonian Painters' Association.

Curators:

Satu Kalliokuusi (HAA, Finland), Eeva Muona (HAA, Finland), Evelina Januškaitė (ARKA, Lithuania), Tiiu Rebane (EML, Estonia)

Participating Artists:

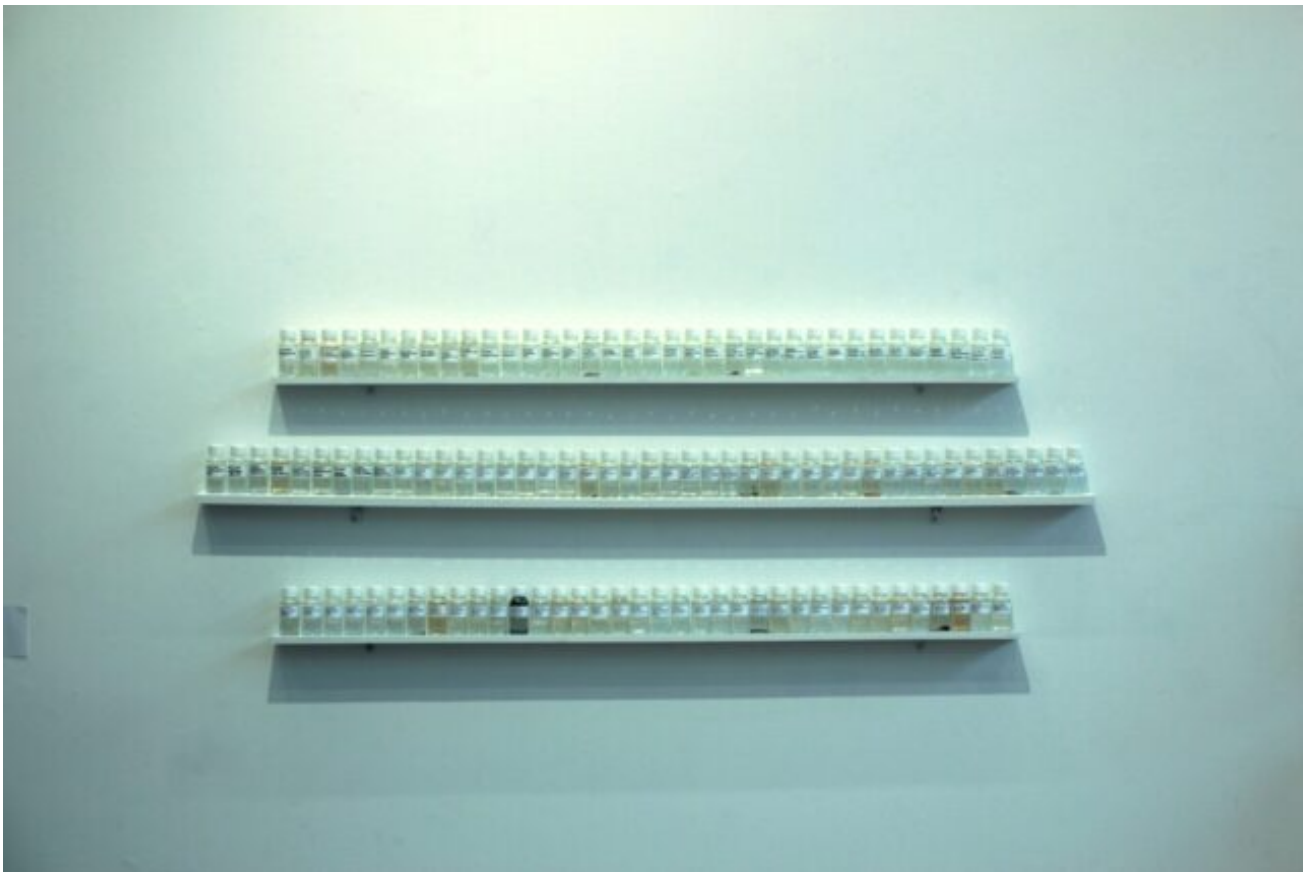
Finland: Teemu Mäki, Jaakko Autio, Alexander Salvesen, Sara Pathirane, Laura Pietiläinen

Lithuania: Gytis Arošius, Sinaima Kontautė, Emilija Noreikaitė, Karolina Ūla Valentaitė

Estonia: Angela Soop, Jane Remm and Marta Konovalov, Grisli Soppe-Kahar, Lilian Mosolainen, Johanna Mudist, Pille Ernesaks, Veiko Klemmer

Photography: Tiiu Rebane



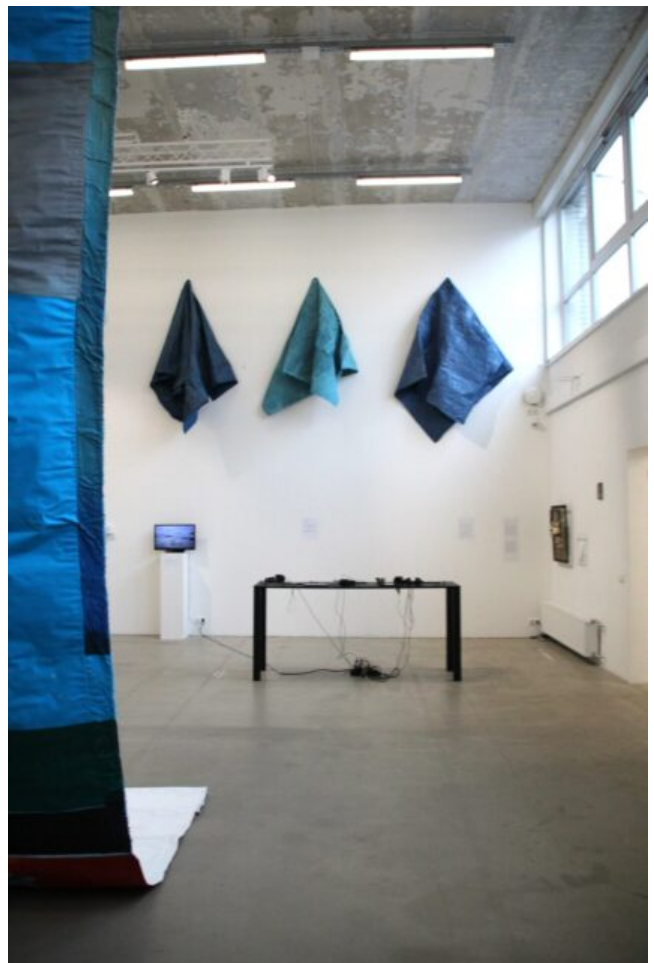










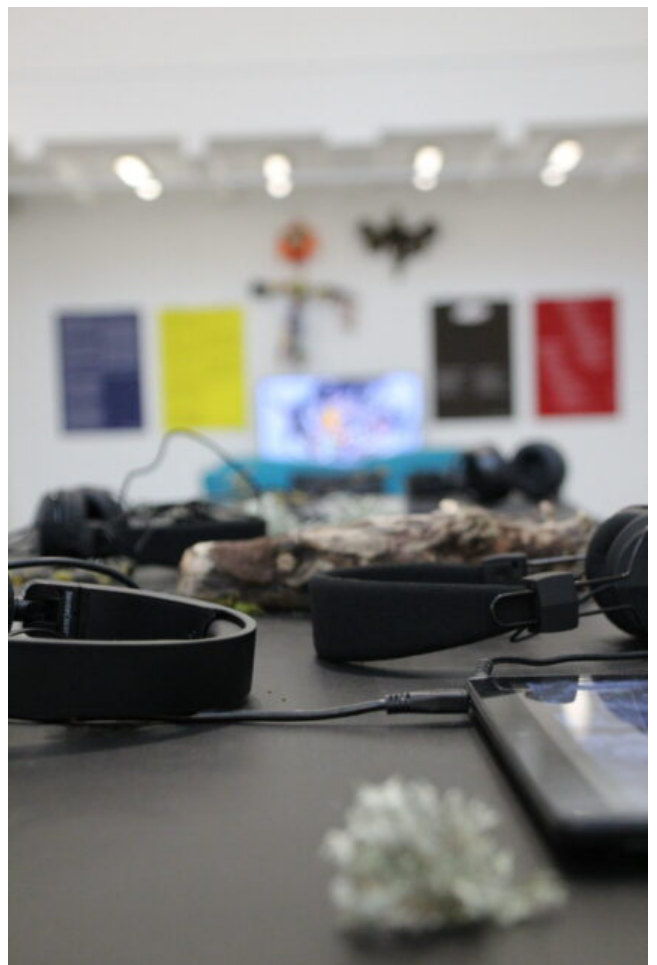
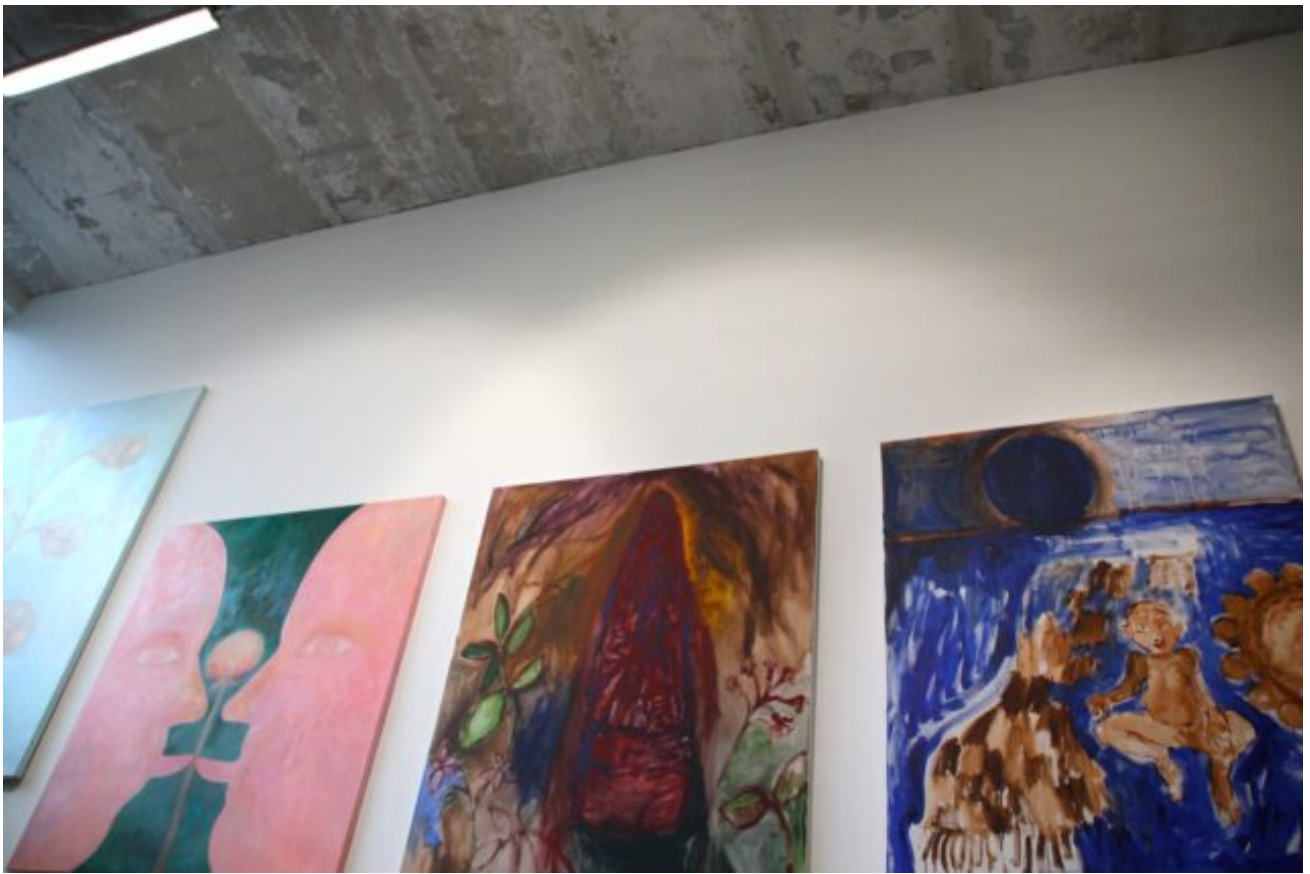




























**ALFRED DO BRUNELLE ANNETTU**  
Life is given to man  
to make him remember carefully  
the position he is in the world of,  
to make him think about,  
to make him feel the pain,  
and each other the mouth like blood.

**LIFE IS GIVEN TO MAN**  
Life is given to man  
to make him remember carefully  
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to make him think about,  
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and each other the mouth like blood.

