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# echo gone wrong

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# Otherness Doesn't Mean not Caring. An interview with the artist Saskia Fischer

March 13, 2025

Author Rosana Lukauskaitė



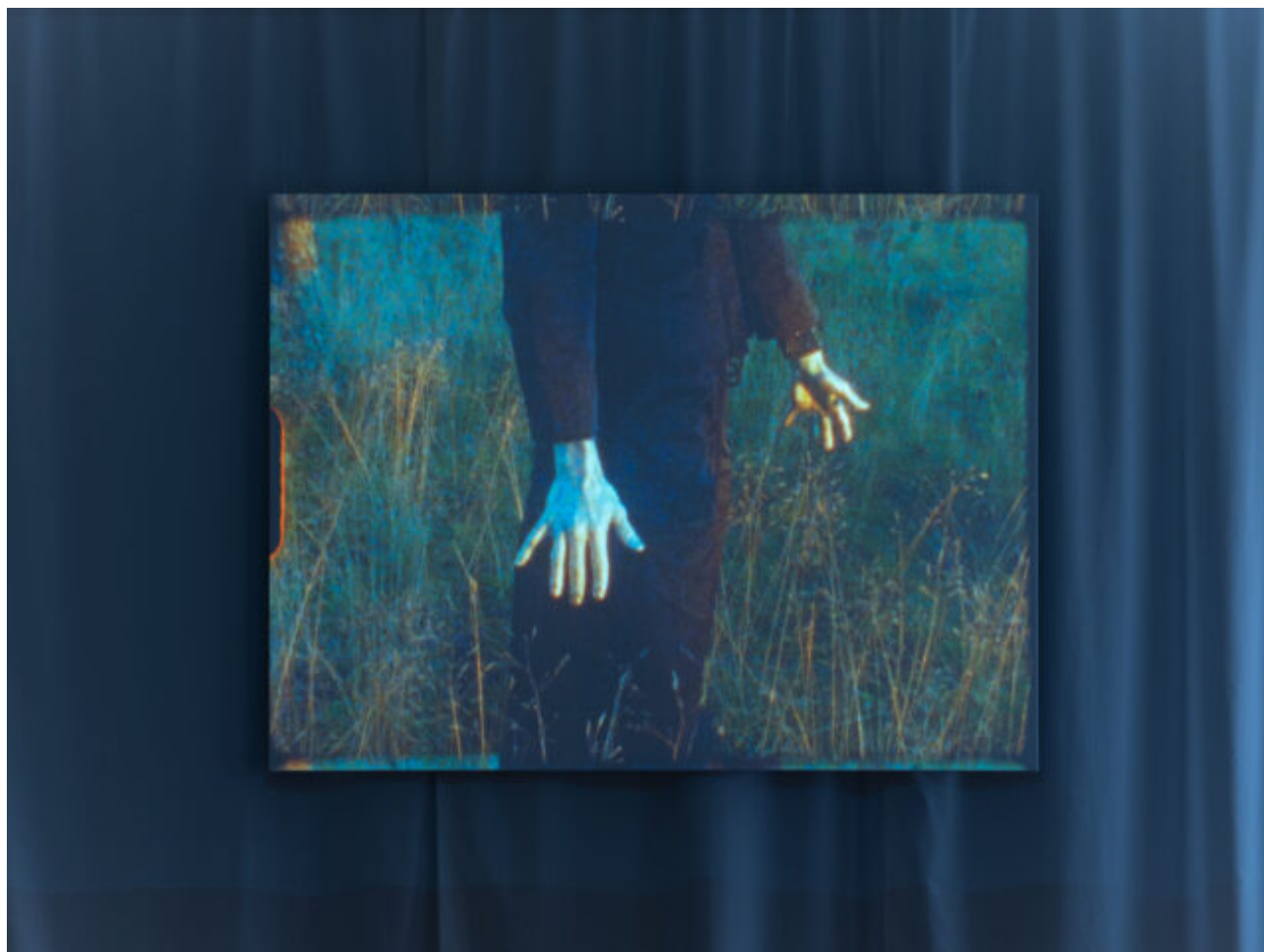
Saskia Fischer by Ilme Vysniauskaitė

*Saskia Fischer's exhibition 'After Dark', currently on view at the Drifts Gallery until 29 March, explores the fluidity of identity, time, and place under the cover of night. In her latest video work The Night Gardener, Fischer weaves together movement, myth and landscape to create a figure both familiar and estranged: a silent presence tending to spaces that are not quite theirs, yet deeply cared for. In this conversation, we discuss the possibilities that emerge after dark, the tension between proximity and alienation, and the ways in which storytelling, whether through film, folklore or memory, shapes our understanding of the world around us.*

Rosana Lukauskaitė: *Walking through this exhibition, I feel like the night becomes more than just a time of day: it's a space of fluidity, uncertainty, and even transformation. What is it about night time that fascinates you? Is it something personal, or is it more about the way societies function*

## *after dark?*

Saskia Fischer: What fascinates me about the night is that it seems to open up possibilities that don't exist during the day. That's especially true when it comes to experimenting with identity, whether through the way we dress or how we express ourselves. There's a kind of freedom at night, a loosening of social boundaries, norms and expectations, that feels less accessible during the day. That's why I find night time so intriguing. It also works as a metaphor: there's an entire world that operates at a different rhythm, a different sense of time. And in a subtle way, or maybe not so subtle, we engage with the idea of time through the medium of film itself. We were very intentional about filming during the blue hours, that brief transition between day and night, or night and day. It's a time filled with gradients, shifting colours, and changing moods, all compressed into a fleeting moment. That transience is something we wanted to capture.



Saskia Fischer, 'After Dark', exhibition view, Drifts gallery, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Laurynas Skeisgiela

*RL: Watching the video right now, it reminds me of contemporary dance, or maybe even Japanese Kabuki theatre. There's a sense of stillness to it, with these uncertain, cautious movements that feel deliberate and controlled.*

SF: The movements of the actor Dani V. Keller were choreographed by the performance artist and choreographer Barnett Cohen. So yes, there's definitely an influence of modern dance in the piece. I also love it that, at certain moments, it has the feel of a silent movie; not always, but in a few key instances. The Kabuki reference is great, though it wasn't a direct influence on this piece. That said, Kabuki is something I've explored, particularly in terms of costumes and expressions. The actor's hands are covered in silver body makeup, along with the face and neck. And in the final scene you can see how the costume emerging from the suit has a subtle glitter to it. The idea was to move away from a natural skin tone to create a different kind of presence.

*RL: Your Night Gardener video reminded me of the famous 1960s hoax photograph where a father, capturing his daughter in a marsh, later claimed an astronaut appeared behind her; when in reality, it was probably just the mother at an unusual angle. This illusion fascinates me: how something intimately familiar can, through distortion, appear alien or unrecognisable. Your film seems to explore a similar sensation: how migration, borders and shifting perspectives can make people estranged from their own landscapes and identities. Do you see your work as engaging with this tension between proximity and alienation, between the known and the seemingly other?*

SF: My main intention with the film was to explore the concept of otherness. Otherness can take many forms, but it always carries a sense of estrangement, distance, or even alienation, whether we perceive someone else as 'other', or feel that way ourselves. In this case, I wanted to create an image of otherness through a mystical figure, someone who embodies that sense of being different, a stranger to the place, and yet still deeply connected to it. Their otherness doesn't mean not caring. There's often an assumption that people perceived as outsiders don't care about a place, and I wanted to challenge that. This figure represents otherness without a fixed definition. They are a caring presence, and yet remain at a distance, something we can observe, follow, and maybe catch glimpses of as they go through their rounds. But they exist in a mystical space, undefined and transient, leaving us uncertain of where they come from and where they will go next.

*RL: It's intriguing how certain symbols emerge independently across cultures, aligning in unexpected ways. Your Night Gardener evokes a figure both surreal and paradoxical, one that also recently appeared in the second season of series 'Severance', where a character fabricates a sighting of a 'night gardener' after leaving a controlled environment. The very idea of gardening at night feels impossible, when plants rest, when light is absent, yet this figure persists. Do you see The Night Gardener as a metaphor for something beyond the literal act of care and cultivation? How does this character reflect the themes of your work, whether in relation to labour, perception, or the unseen forces shaping our environments?*

SF: Ironically, I just started watching this show's first season. As for the title, I didn't come up with it from a common phrase in English or anything like that. It actually goes back quite a few years, when I was still living in London, maybe five or six years ago. I had a dream about a night gardener, or more accurately, a nightly gardener, just going about their work. It was a strange dream, but in a good way, so I made a note of it. I revisited the notes, and while the dream itself was completely different, set in an urban environment and much less defined, something about the title stuck with me. It sparked imagination. Over the past year and a half, as I've been working on this film with that as the working title, I've noticed that people are immediately intrigued by just the name alone. I love that: it takes on a life of its own in the viewer's mind, without me having to define it too much.

I assigned very little to the night gardener as a character. There's the workwear-inspired costume by Melitta Baumeister, the silver-painted skin, the hand gestures, those exaggerated, choreographed movements, and the glass key that hangs across their body. That's about it. There are a few lines, some of the night gardener's own reflections, but they're woven into the film's third-person narration. At some point, it becomes unclear: is the night gardener speaking to themselves? But beyond that, very little is revealed. Who sent them? What is their actual function? Those questions are left open.



Saskia Fischer, 'After Dark', exhibition view, Drifts gallery, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Laurynas Skeisgiela

**RL:** *You filmed The Night Gardener on the Curonian Spit, which has such a layered history of human presence and displacement. Was there something specific about this place that drew you in? Did it change the way you think about landscape?*

SF: There were two key moments. On a broader level, the nature-culture divide is something that fascinates me, and I don't know of a better place to explore it than Nida. What I find so compelling about this place is how it appears completely natural, yet it's very much a human-shaped landscape. It challenges many of our assumptions about what nature is, and what we consider 'natural'.

On a more personal level, I chose this location because, in a way, I'm an outsider there. And yet I care deeply about the place and wanted to explore how I could relate to it. The Curonian Spit, in particular, spoke to me the most: its history, its connection to Curonian culture, and the broader migration history of the region. It's a place shaped by movement, where languages have intertwined over time through waves of migration. That, in many ways, reflects my own experience. English isn't my first language, it's actually my third. I've lived in different places, and every place you stay for a while leaves an imprint on you. You take things in, and at the same time, you let go of pieces from previous places.

That was my personal motivation for making this film. But I don't want my work to be explicitly about me. I want it to be informed by my experience, but not autobiographical. It's not about auto-fiction. There are, of course, moments when my personal perspective comes through, like when the Night Gardener says 'I am a foreigner to this land.' That's a line I could say myself because it's true. Or when the Night Gardener mentions spending their childhood in the mountains: that's directly from my own life. These small details are in there, and if you know me well, you might recognise them.

But beyond that, the film isn't about me.

*RL: This figure also reminds me of the Lithuanian legend of the giantess Neringa. It's interesting to compare how giants are portrayed in different cultures. In many myths, especially in Ancient Greek legends, giants or titans are often seen as negative figures, beings from the past that battle the new gods. But in Lithuanian folklore giants tend to be benevolent. There's often an orphaned giantess or a couple of old giants who help people rather than threaten them. Maybe this has something to do with Lithuania being the last pagan nation in Europe: perhaps there was a different relationship between the old gods, or a transition between matriarchal and patriarchal structures.*

SF: For me, reading Algirdas Julius Greimas was a major resource, especially the chapter on the magic apple orchard. It gave me a deeper understanding of the symbolism of the apple; not just in a biblical sense, but in a local context. What does the apple mean there? That was something I really wanted to explore. Another key idea from Greimas that influenced me was his statement that mythology didn't develop independently, it evolved alongside language. Mythology is a cultural expression that grew in the same way that language did. If we take that further, and consider that languages develop through migration, shaped by the influence of other languages, then mythology is also shaped by that movement. It informs how people imagine the forces that rule the world.

In today's world, where we have access to endless information, I've noticed a growing return to mythology. I don't necessarily think this has to be an esoteric pursuit, but I do feel a bit uneasy about it. In different cultures, mythology carries different meanings. I grew up in Germany, where mythology was abused by the Nazis, so I've always been hesitant to reference it in that way: it holds a cultural weight that makes it difficult for me to use directly. That's why, rather than reproducing an existing mythological figure, I preferred to invent my own. Using a Lithuanian mythological figure might have felt like a form of appropriation: maybe that's too strong a word, but it wouldn't have felt like mine to work with. I can engage with the language, maybe draw from certain motifs as a nod to the place, but I'd rather create something new, something that doesn't carry predetermined meanings I can't fully claim.



**RL:** *But I guess Carl Jung would still argue that this figure represents some kind of archetype: maybe a magician or something similar. Do you think we still think in mythology-adjacent ways?*

SF: I mean, who doesn't love magic stories, right? I find them just as intriguing as anyone else. But I also think our time calls for a different kind of mythology. Simply reviving something from the past feels anachronistic to me. We don't need, for example, the image of the Moon chasing the Morning Star to explain celestial movements: we understand now why the Moon orbits the Earth. Instead, I think we have new questions that we need to explore and find meaning in.

**RL:** *I guess now we create conspiracy theories instead.*

SF: Oh, God, yes. But that's kind of the antithesis of what I'm talking about. Conspiracy theories aren't real; they're mysterious fiction, often bordering on horror. What I'm trying to explore is pretty much the opposite of that. I wouldn't necessarily call it an ode to otherness, but it's about something we should appreciate and value more. Instead of fearing what's different or keeping our distance because someone doesn't fit into heteronormative expectations, we should engage with that difference in a more open way.

**RL:** *The short stories are such an unexpected element in the exhibition. How did you choose the writers, and do you see the texts as explanations, echoes, or maybe even interruptions of the visual elements?*

SF: The first text you encounter in the exhibition is by Francesco Urbano Ragazzi, a curator and researcher duo, both named Francesco. They are film historians specialising in the work of Jonas Mekas, and have also worked with queer archives in Italy. I thought it would be wonderful to have them write about cinema and the cinematic as memory and utopia.

The second text is by Mirela Baciak, a curator and writer. I love the way she frames her curatorial practice as guided by the notion of hospitality as a process that captures one's ethical relation to the unknown and the strange. There's so much in that short statement that I find compelling: the idea of hospitality, but also the connection to the unknown and the strange. We asked her to write a text about nocturnal creatures, and that's how her piece came to the exhibition.

The third text is by Edita Anglickaitė, who lives in Klaipėda but works at Neringa Museums. Edita was the one who opened up the library at the Thomas Mann House for me, where I found incredible resources on the Curonian language and culture. It was there that I came across a chapter on Curonian dreams and superstitions. This appears quite literally in the film: I took the original text and transcribed it into my own words. The passage describes how the Curonians interpreted dreams as forecasts of the future, with specific motifs linked to environmental changes. I found that incredibly powerful: this idea that they were so deeply connected to the land that their dreams could be seen as omens of what was to come. And honestly, when I was in Nida, I had the strangest dreams. It made me feel even more connected to the idea that people living there in the past would have experienced something similar, that their dreams were intertwined with the land itself. Edita's text speaks to this beautifully, almost like a poem about being in that landscape.

The final text is by Goda Gasiūnaitė, who is a dear friend and the writer I'm personally closest to among those we invited. I know of her deep interest in women's stories and culinary history, so we asked her to write something in response to the idea of cultivation; not just culinary cultivation, but the broader cultural act of cultivating something. She came back with this incredible text that transports us to Geneva, New York, tying the story of apples to colonial history. Her text explores



how apples arrived in North America, what they symbolised, and how they were used to romanticise the idea of bringing 'Europe' to the so-called New World. And when you reflect on the history of the Curonian Spit, that, too, is a landscape marked by colonisation. In a strange way, her text became the one closest to the film, not in a direct, visible sense, but in how broader themes begin to intersect when you reflect on them.

For us, myself and J.L. (Liam) Murtaugh, who curated the exhibition, it was important to include more than just my voice. We wanted to incorporate elements that relate to the film, but not as explanations or commentaries on it. Instead, we wanted the writers to add new perspectives, opening up the work rather than defining it.

Liam structured the exhibition so that visitors move from one lantern and text to the next, with the lanterns guiding them along the way. They lead you into the film, but also guide you back out along the same path. That's something I really appreciate about Liam's curatorial sensibility: he understands that experiences of place and otherness are so multifaceted, and it would feel wrong to try to define them in a singular way. Including these texts in the exhibition was crucial to us. We treated them as artworks in their own right, not just as supporting material. Each text was given equal attention, standing alongside the other elements of the exhibition as an integral part of the experience.



Saskia Fischer, 'After Dark', exhibition view, Drifts gallery, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Laurynas Skeisgiela

*RL: How do you see the role of an artist in times of political turbulence, both globally and in the contexts of Germany and Lithuania? In an era that often feels chaotic, how can artists navigate these tensions while maintaining a sense of clarity and purpose?*



SF: There's no good answer to that. I think one thing that grounds me is that I'm a very political person, and I see all art as inherently political. I'm conscious of the context in which I create my work, but at the same time I'm hesitant to actively politicise it, because that's already happening anyway. The idea of otherness, for example, I prefer to leave it open without over-defining it. The politicisation of otherness is already taking place, but to me, it's simply a reality. Otherness exists. It always has, and it always will. Instead of constantly framing it as a debate, I'd rather move past that and focus on the actual issues at hand. So while I don't shy away from the fact that my work is political, I also don't feel the need to force that point. It just is.

I think there's this common misconception about social media, that it's a space where real discussions can happen. I appreciate social media for what it can do: keeping up with friends and colleagues, seeing what people are working on. I love that aspect of it. But political conversations? I don't engage in them any more, because I don't think they can really exist in that space. Meaningful discussions require actual dialogue, a real exchange where people acknowledge each other as more than just usernames. Without that, conversations tend to get reduced to polarising taglines.

*RL: You mentioned the political climate, and it's interesting to see how these shifts play out. For example, in 2023, the director of the Venice Biennale, Pietrangelo Buttafuoco, an Italian journalist and writer, made headlines. In an interview, he said 'I'm not a fascist, I'm something else.' That phrasing made a lot of people suspicious and uneasy. But then, the following year, he appointed a Black woman Koyo Kouoh as the artistic director of the next Biennale, the first Black and female curator in its history.*

SF: Yeah, but you know, in Germany, we just had general elections and the far-right party AfD got over twenty per cent of the vote. And here's the thing: the leader of that party is a lesbian woman, married to a Sri Lankan, living in Switzerland, with two adopted children. That's the complete opposite of what you'd expect from someone leading a fascist movement. So I'm not sure the traditional image of the white male fascist still holds. If we look around, fascist tendencies are everywhere, and today they're no longer exclusive to a specific demographic. And if you look globally, you see similar contradictions. It just reinforces the idea that fascism has evolved into something else. It's no longer coming exclusively from the people we traditionally associate with it: it's emerging from unexpected places, from individuals who seem to contradict its very ideology.

Coming back to your previous question, there's a German word *Sendungsbewusstsein*. It roughly translates to having 'a missionary consciousness', this urge to preach a political message, or tell people how things should be. I don't have that. I can make my position clear, but I don't feel the need to convince anyone of anything. I'd rather keep my stance open and leave space for interpretation. *Sendungsbewusstsein* has a strong negative connotation: it was often used to describe the fascist idea of imposing a singular truth on others. It sounds neutral at first, but it's quite a charged term. On a lighter note, my favourite German word is *Luftschloss*, literally, an 'air castle'. It's this beautiful idea of a dream, a vision that might never materialise but still holds meaning. This is a lingual concept I feel is relevant in holding space for our utopian dreams.



Saskia Fischer, 'After Dark', exhibition view, Drifts gallery, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Laurynas Skeisgiela



Saskia Fischer, 'After Dark', exhibition view, Drifts gallery, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Laurynas Skeisgiela



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Saskia Fischer, 'After Dark', exhibition view, Drifts gallery, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Laurynas Skeisgiela

# And then it fades (away)

March 21, 2025

Author Elaine ML Tam



*Have you noticed that what seemed to work yesterday might not work so well today?*

So writes artist Agnė Jokšė in a letter to an unidentified recipient in the early pages of the book, one dedicated to contemporary Lithuanian photography. With this, the book introduces a host of concerns plaguing the discipline of image-making, formerly known as the discontents of photography. That of mitigating expectation, critical un-seeing, strategies of obfuscation, latency, negativity. Wistful at times, frank at others, this missive's letter foregrounds the many ambivalences of the publication: thoughts and feelings that are stewarded towards concretion in the editors' introduction by Geistė Marija Kinčinaitytė and Paulius Petraitis. Despite the book's reasonable proportions and heft, I sense sparing and discretion. The design by Monika Janulevičiūtė is unintrusive, weightless, airy. For the book's cover, Janulevičiūtė airbrushes the words 'And then it fades (away)' onto a piece of paper and then scans it – a two-step process comprised of air and light

that, by their very nature, speak of photography and the evanescence of images. Though lavishly illustrated, the spreads leave wide gaps and berths for marginalia and associative thinking and were arranged and sequenced by the editors. It is as if the generosity of space orients us towards a field of absences; towards the enigma as Roland Barthes had put it – that ‘a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see.’

The project evolved over an intensive period of research spanning 6 months, wherein discussions were held with those shortlisted from the open call, with respect to photography’s ambivalent status as artwork and medium. This marks another absence, for never do we learn of these conversations; the publication never cedes its virtue as artistic proposal, is never given over to the annals of heady research. The book is conceived in such a way that the artists were forced to relinquish authorial ego – entrusting the spreads’ arrangements to the editors, they submitted their work to transversal readings. Interspersed and interwoven throughout, images do not ‘belong’ by name to their maker except for in a simple legend in the front-of-book. Sans hierarchy, images of objects and bodies partialled and piecemeal float unmoored and, like so much flotsam and jetsam, frustrate full grasp. The looker is, in effect, immersed in a visual cacophony: a sprawl reminiscent of the installations we know well by Wolfgang Tillmans, or the endless scroll of our image-fluid slipstream: what in the contemporary we may also think of as new geometries of relation. For me, the book thus retains an aspect about it that configures impenetrability as felicity: the impossibility of *knowing* that safeguards the delicate being of aesthetic pleasure.



A spatio-temporal zone unto itself, the project teems with the potential of new dialogue, odd junctures, awkward mixity and visual frisson. Such a project – from the open call to the early-stage ‘studio visits’, through to the publication’s spatialisation and partial dispensing of authorship – may be familiar to the curatorial discipline as something akin to a group exhibition. A better but different analogy comes to my mind: Marcel Duchamp’s *La Boîte-en-valise* (1935–66): a work editioned multiple times, a box of tricks, a dolls’ house: all Duchampian insouciance and obscurantist witticism. Taking the form of a suitcase which folds out myriad artwork miniatures – most including his *Fountain* and *Large Glass* – Duchamp flatpacks himself to the convenience of the artist-as-

travelling-salesman. It's a sort of jocular curriculum vitae: the hoarded wares of an itinerant, somewhat premature, artist's retrospective. Repertoire and time capsule, Duchamp's *valise* is now an archive: it petrifies an exhibition in a way that institutions, with their continually changing programs cannot. It turns artworks over to the archive even before it is given over to the museum. Likewise, *And then it fades (away)* occasions a collection of artists who may never exhibit together, which I lament, and therefore so cherish as speculative proposal. Indeed, many books exist to document exhibitions that have been made, but it is images – far more than sculpture, installation or performance – that lend themselves wholly to the site of the publication. The publication, in its turn, so willingly hosts the image without reducing or reifying it as documentation, such that these images intended *as images* stand within the publication, to me, as genuine works of art.

I re-read Barthes treatise in the first part of *Camera Lucida* (1980), which names the aspect of photography that is responsible for both its banality and uniqueness: its 'lamination' with the referent. It is precisely this that will forge a link between the photographic record and the idea of the archive as witness. But we must also consider what Hito Steyerl says of 'the archive as a realist machine, a body of power and knowledge' – those hidden machinations that require a critical un-seeing, to allow their omissions to come to light. Of the archive: we always make disclaimers about its scope and resourcing, at the same time, does every aggregate not immediately confesses its incompleteness merely by existing? There is explicit reference to the concept of the archive, as the book's introduction will attest; certain of the photographers put this reflexivity to work, exposing the meta-textual registers of the project. Images of storage units, like so many strange housings with their surfaces barricading matter from the dogged eye (Ona Julija Lukas Steponaitytė), confront us with one strategy of obfuscation. Elsewhere, fungal growth defile books, and mottled, water-logged found images teem with new orders of sense (Ieva Maslinskaitė, Pavelas Šalaikiskis). In making portable the referent, photography and by the extension the archive, are inextricably if not fatally bound to latency, material decay and the onslaught of time.





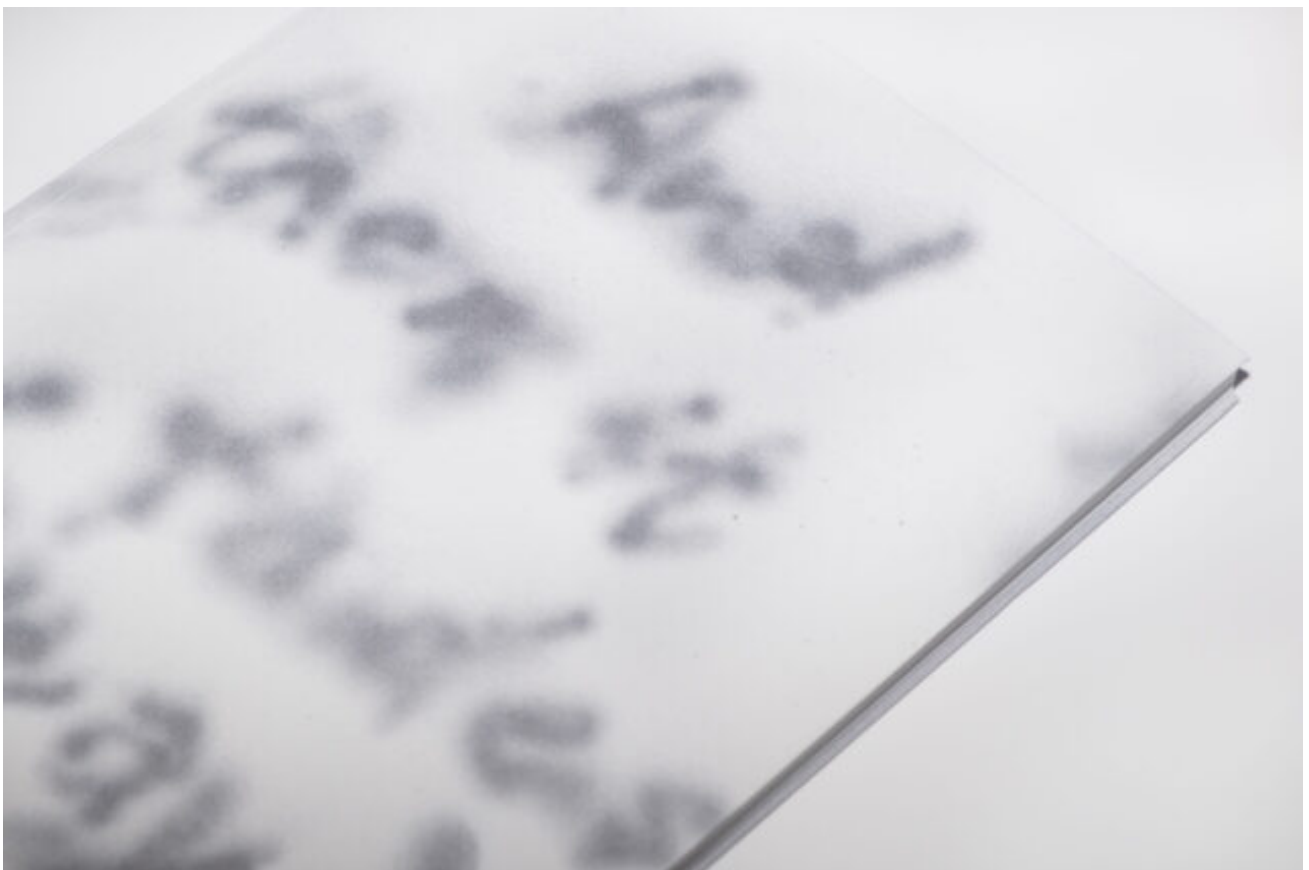
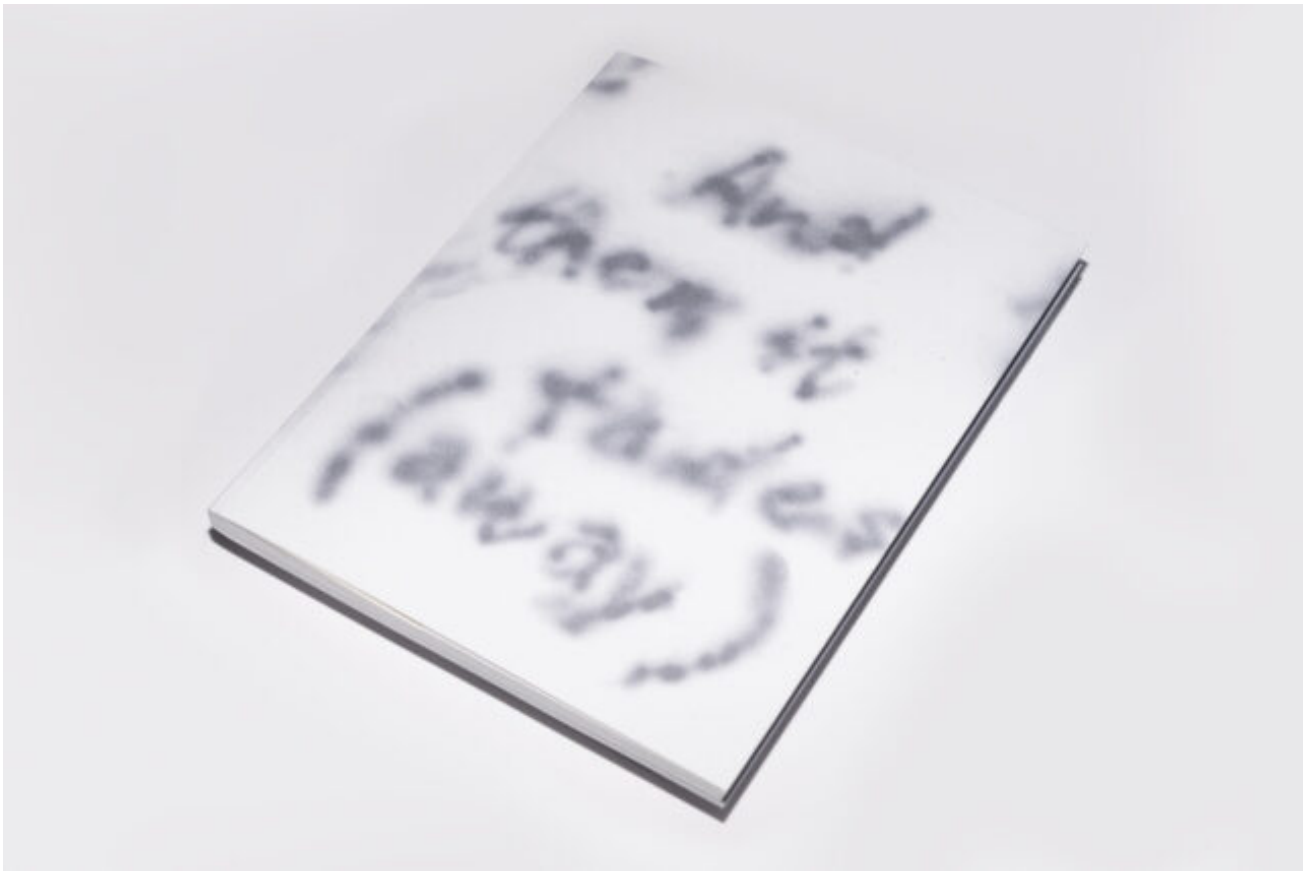
On portability: when asked about their findings through the course of their research, the editors offer a common denominator among their sample: an unshakeable sense of placelessness and non-belonging. Engaging with the ex-timacy of *local attachments* proper, it could be speculated that Lithuanian photographers have been fragilised by the historical and present-day political climate in the region. And yet any reader will see that the Lithuanian photographers collected in this book are, as much as their photographic contemporaries, universally interested in reforming the medium of photography and image-object relations (Vytautas Kumža). They are equally shaped by the idea of the image in jeopardy, its proliferation and mobilisation in the context of the news on war. Here, I am back in the realm of absences – I might also ask what it means to delete things repeatedly, to be forced to exorcise an event over and over again, just to survive. The issue then, is no longer about photography in terms of a subject-object dyad, but rather a media literacy, an acknowledgement that the ‘democratic’ image has already long been sacrificed to mass appropriation beyond any possible hemming in by tradition.

Still, the publication *And then it fades (away)* can be said to be a response to ‘tradition’, however obliquely. Further to experimental proposition and aesthetic joy, the publication occasions re-looking at the humanist tradition with which Lithuanian photography is identified with and known. For the identitarian exercise of supporting a national breed and brand of humanist photography has had a two-fold, mutually-reinforcing tension: the *export* of ‘Lithuanian’ photography has conversely entailed the *internal* privileging of it, figuratively and literally displacing those here, clearly not of the canon. The result, as we can see, is varied: there are those in the publication that dis-identify with the tradition, and there are those that dis-identify with not only the place but the medium of photography itself. Such are the discontents I alluded to in the introduction, hardly answerable in a review, at best a suite of questions posed by the editors of this publication. A wayward Henri Cartier-Bresson translation may warrant brief mention here: the English *The Decisive Moment* reads emphatically of image-maker-autonomy – find his 1952 French copy and title reads *Images à la Sauvette*, which translates to ‘Images on the Run’. A diasporic child myself, I celebrate the noble cause of ‘re-homing’ the non-sequitur in any capacity, and the way in which the publication is simultaneously restless and resting place. Insofar as the act of photographing is conceptualised as a



great chase, let us consider the elusiveness inherent to photography: the image is fugitive, 'it is not it that we see'.

Photography: Geistė Marija Kinčinaitytė





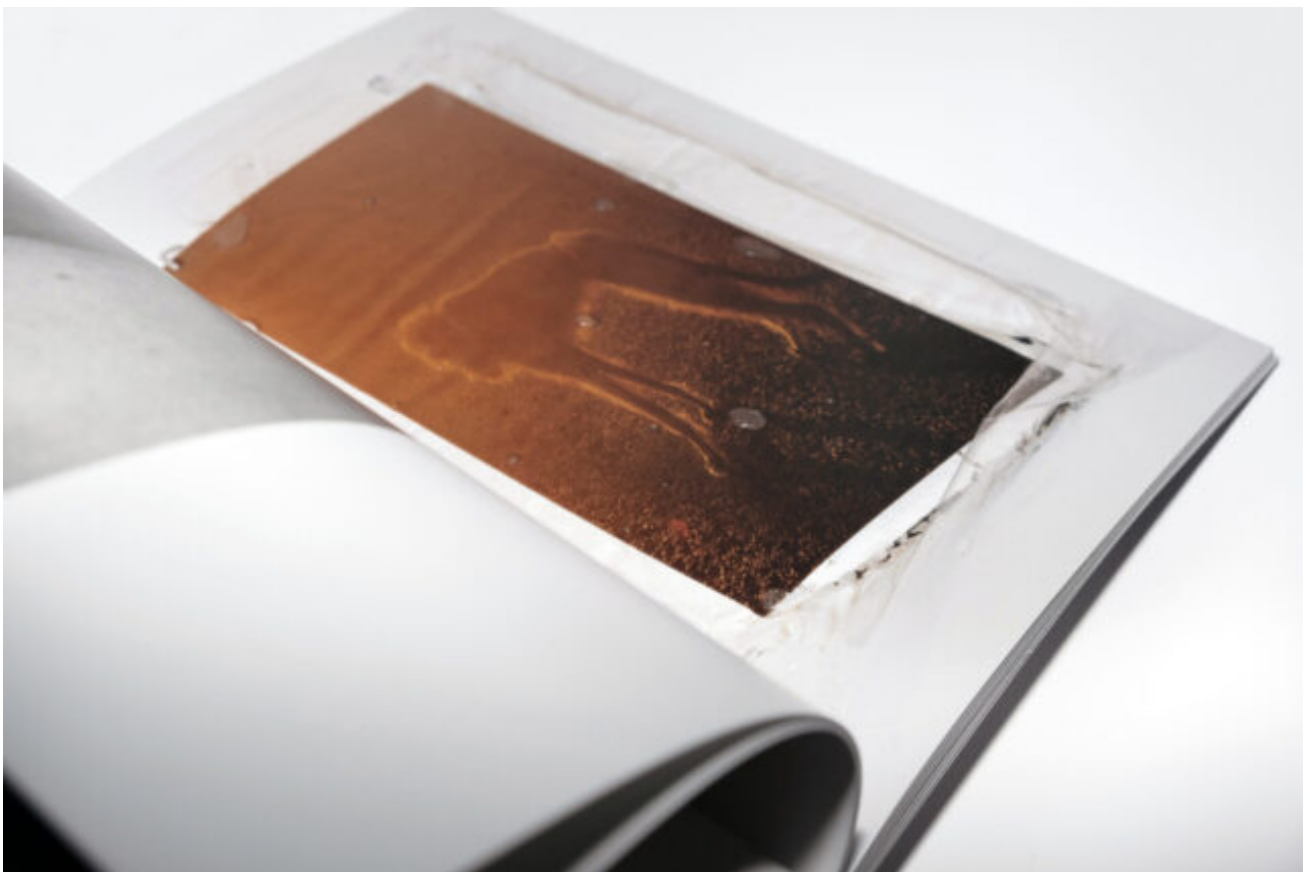
















O TADA VISKAS (IŠ)BLUNKA

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SAULĖ GERIKAITĖ  
KOTRYNA ŪLA KILIULYTĖ  
KOTRYNA KIRILOVAITĖ  
VYTAUTAS KUMŽA  
IEVA MASLINSKAITĖ  
VISVALDAS MORKEVIČIUS  
GERDA PALIUŠYTĖ  
JANINA SABALIAUSKAITĖ  
ONA JULIJA LUKAS  
STEPONAITYTĖ  
PAVELAS ŠALAIKISKIS  
GEDVILĖ TAMOSIŪNAITĖ

# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Walls Have Ears: Emotional Resonance' at ARS Art Factory

March 2, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The exhibition 'Walls Have Ears: Emotional Resonance' was part of the 2025 festival, which explored the intersection of sound art and psychological well-being. Running from 14 to 28 February 2025 at ARS Art Factory, Tallinn, Estonia, the exhibition examined how sound influences emotional states and fosters deep connections.

We believe that sound art can evoke and reflect the emotional states of listeners, making them feel understood and inviting them to explore their own inner experiences more deeply. During the festival, the ARS Art Factory is transformed into a multidimensional space where art exists not only as an auditory experience, but also resonates through the physical, emotional and cognitive realms of the audience.

We invite artists to work with the space and the theme of emotional resonance by providing a platform to explore the emotional impact of sound in a creative, experimental format. We are interested in artworks that explore how emotions can be processed or articulated from the perspective of both the audience and the artist. Artworks that express intimate, personal or even complicated emotions with the aim of opening up new perspectives on psychological well-being.

The festival explores how sound art can spark conversations, change perceptions and reshape the way we feel.

## ARS SOUND ART FESTIVAL

ARS Art Factory is organizing the sound art festival “The Walls Have Ears” for the second time, bringing together over twenty international artists presenting interactive, participatory, perception-based, site-specific, and conceptual works.

In the middle of the festival period, two evenings are dedicated to a sound art performance program, focusing on how artists create conditions for reinterpreting the perception of sound. Each performance approaches sound as both material and phenomenon, enabling the creation of new narratives, engagement with space, and unique sensory experiences. The program unites various practices and authors from diverse backgrounds who explore the nature of sound and its relationship to spatiotemporal contexts.

This year’s festival opens with a performance by vocal artist Eleonora Kampe (EE/LV) titled “Where to Report About a Stolen Soul?” and closes with the participatory performance “Hörselgång” by artists Charlotta Ruth (SE/AT) and Daniele Pozzi (IT/AT).

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Graphic Design:

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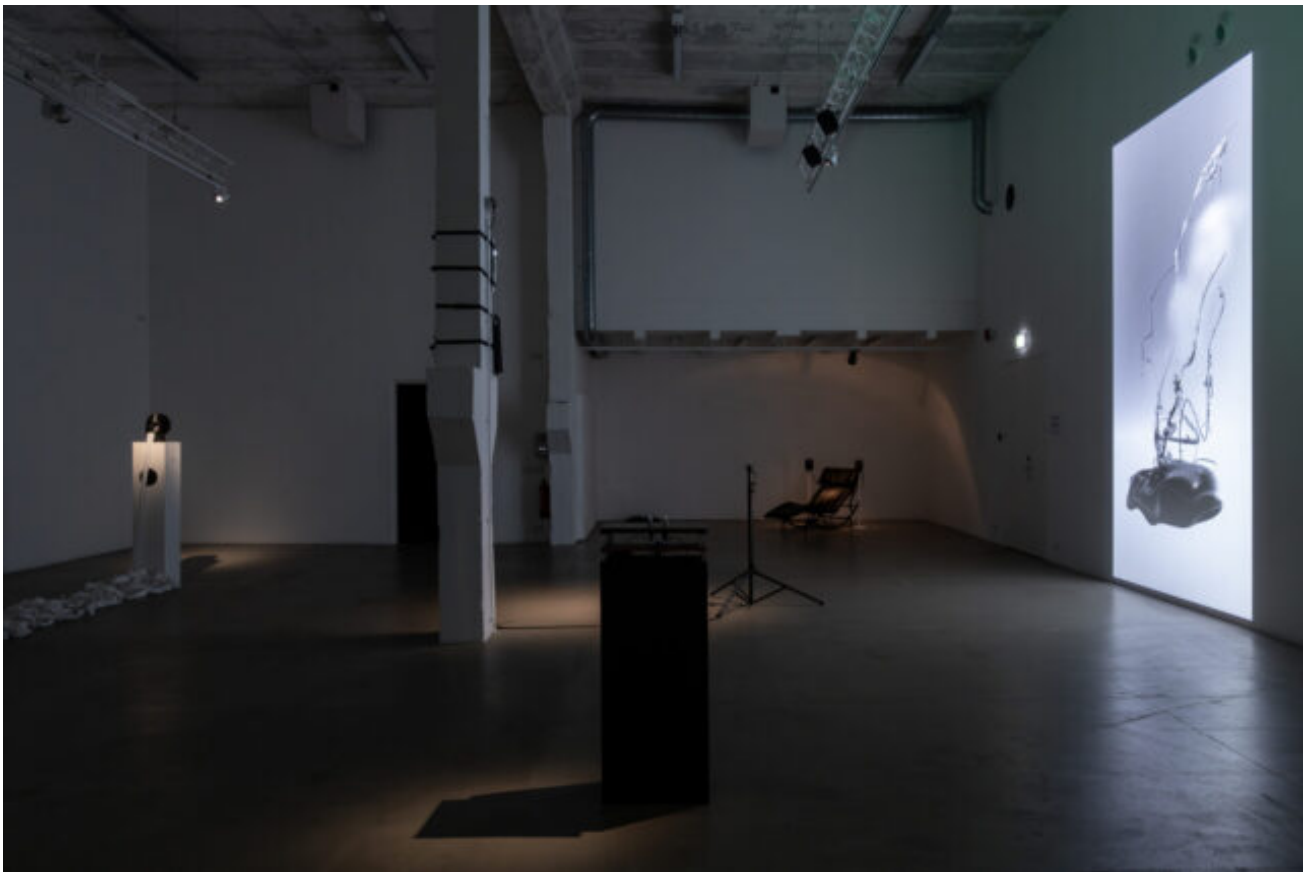
Ian Simon Märjama

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Photography: Roman-Sten To nissoo

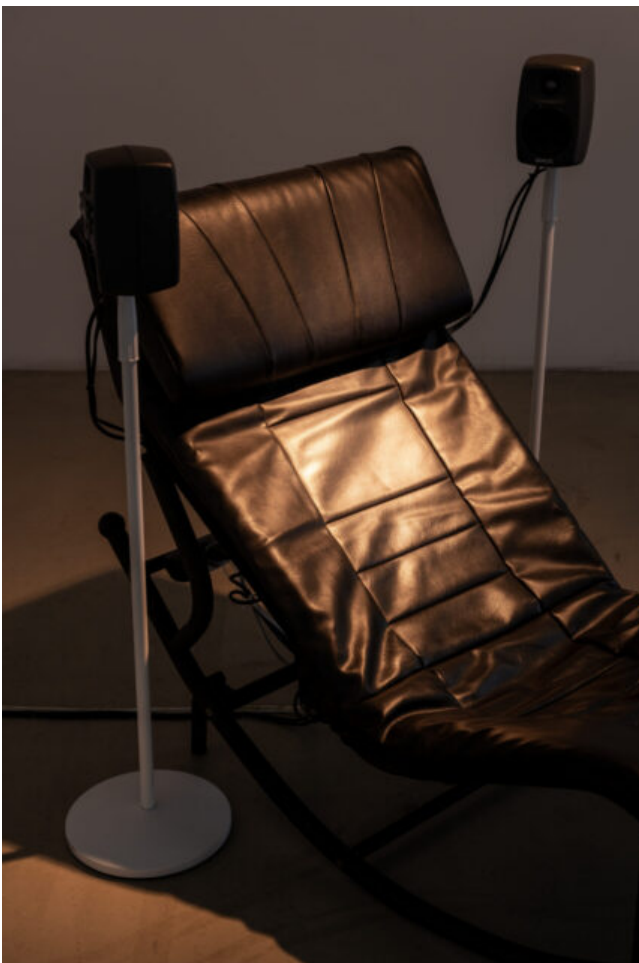
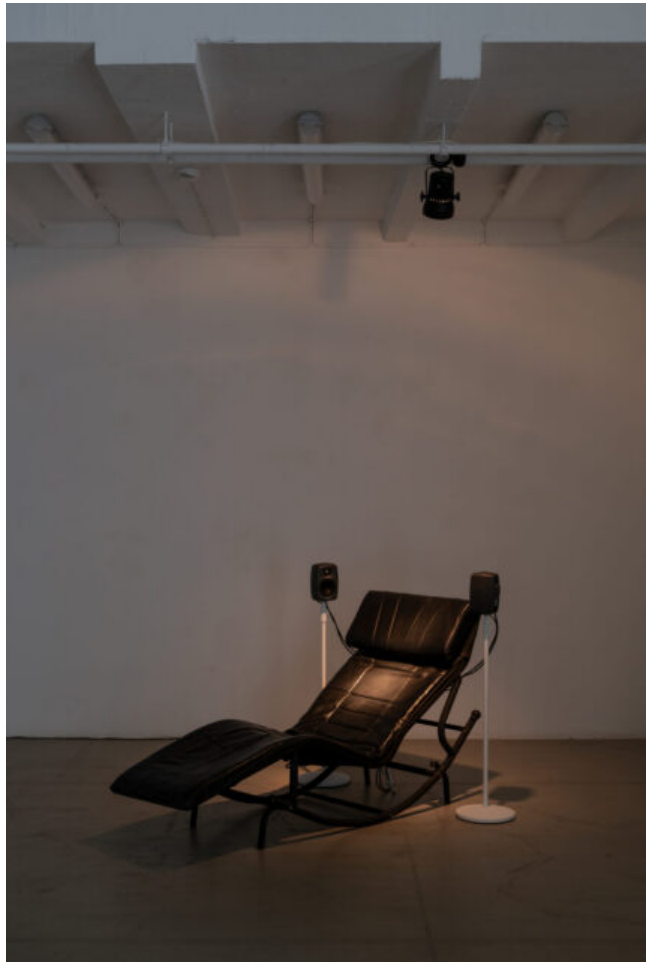


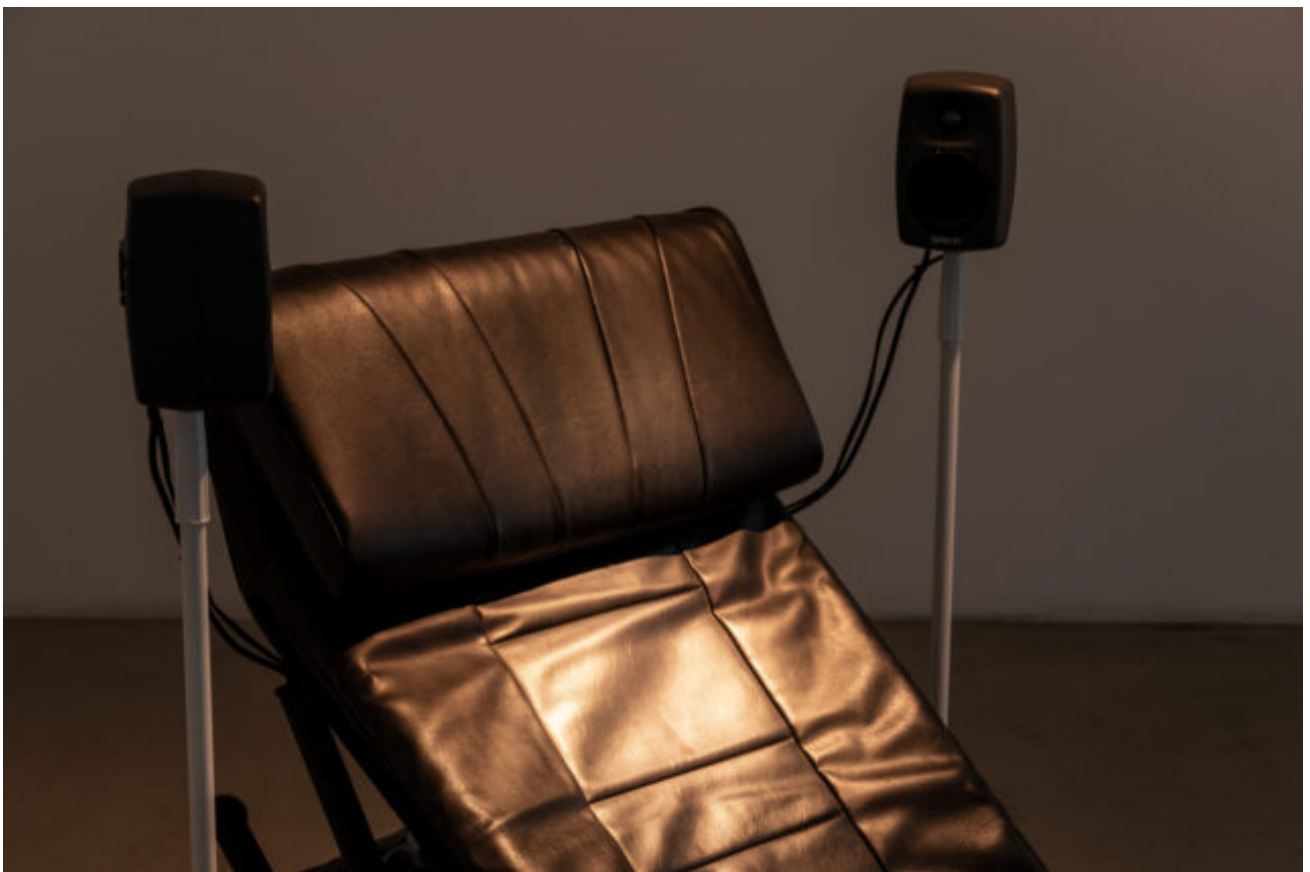




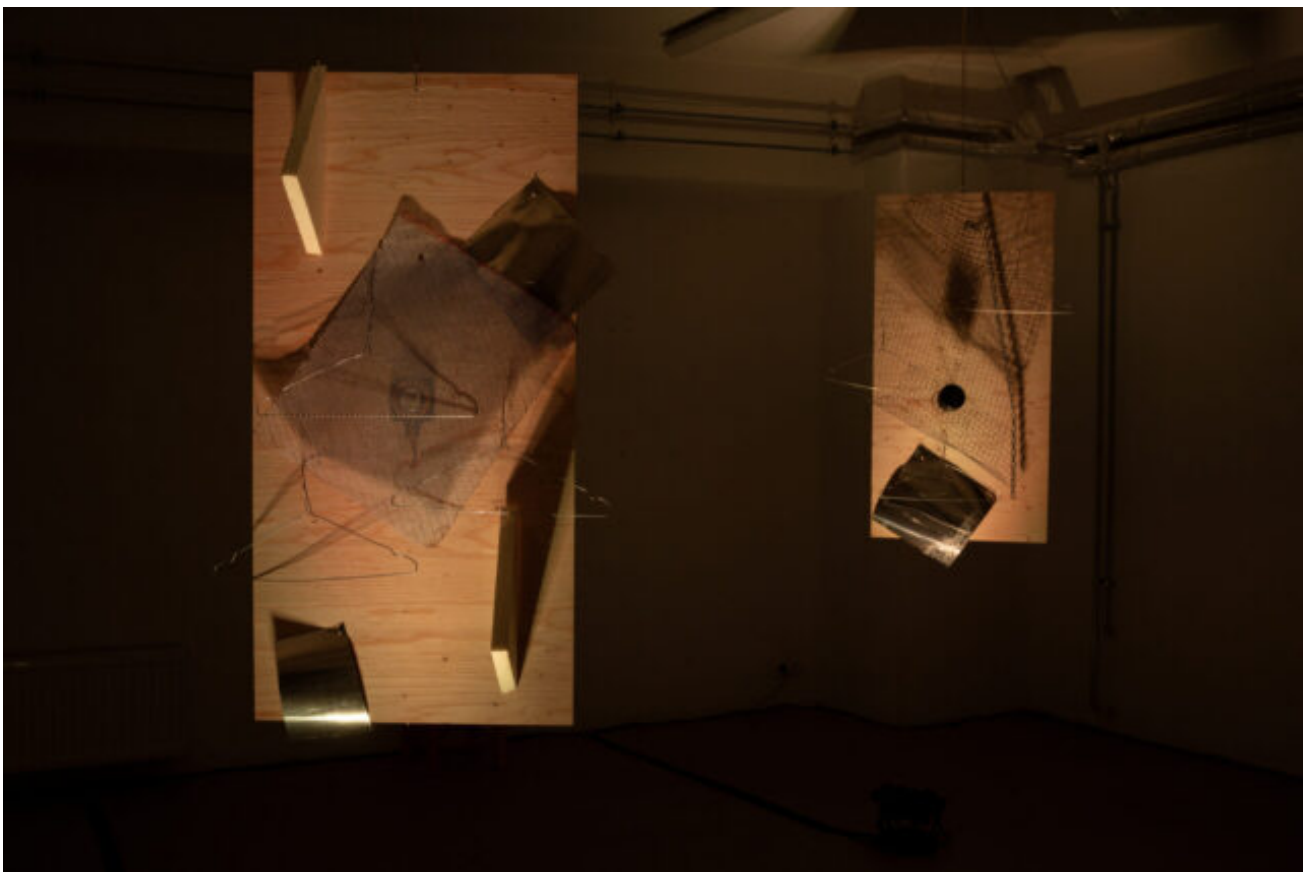




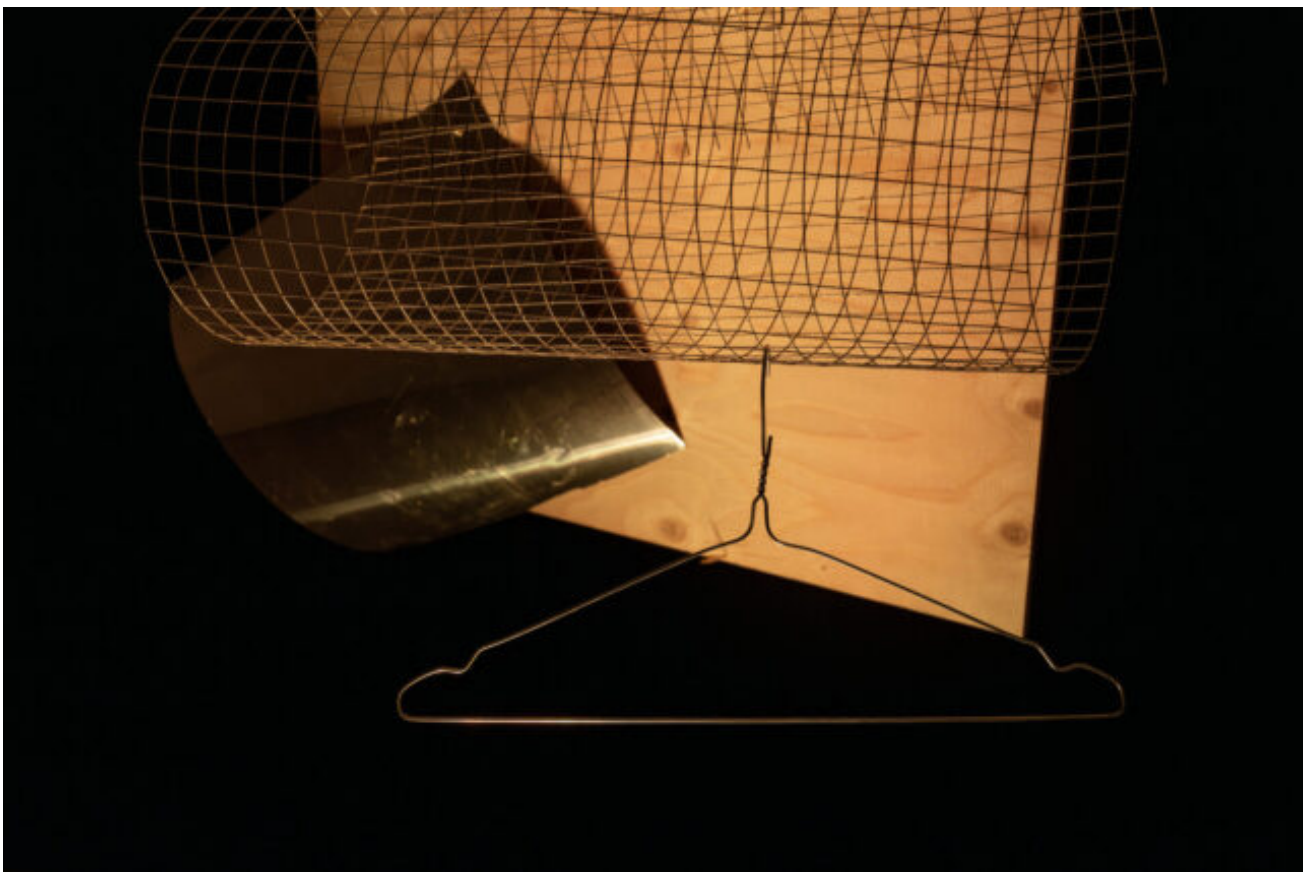


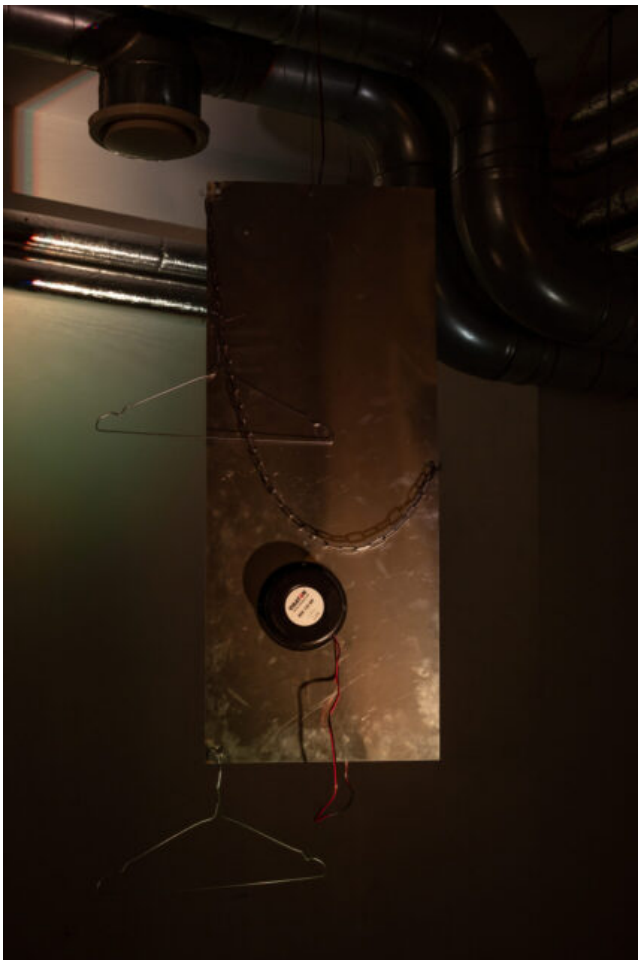
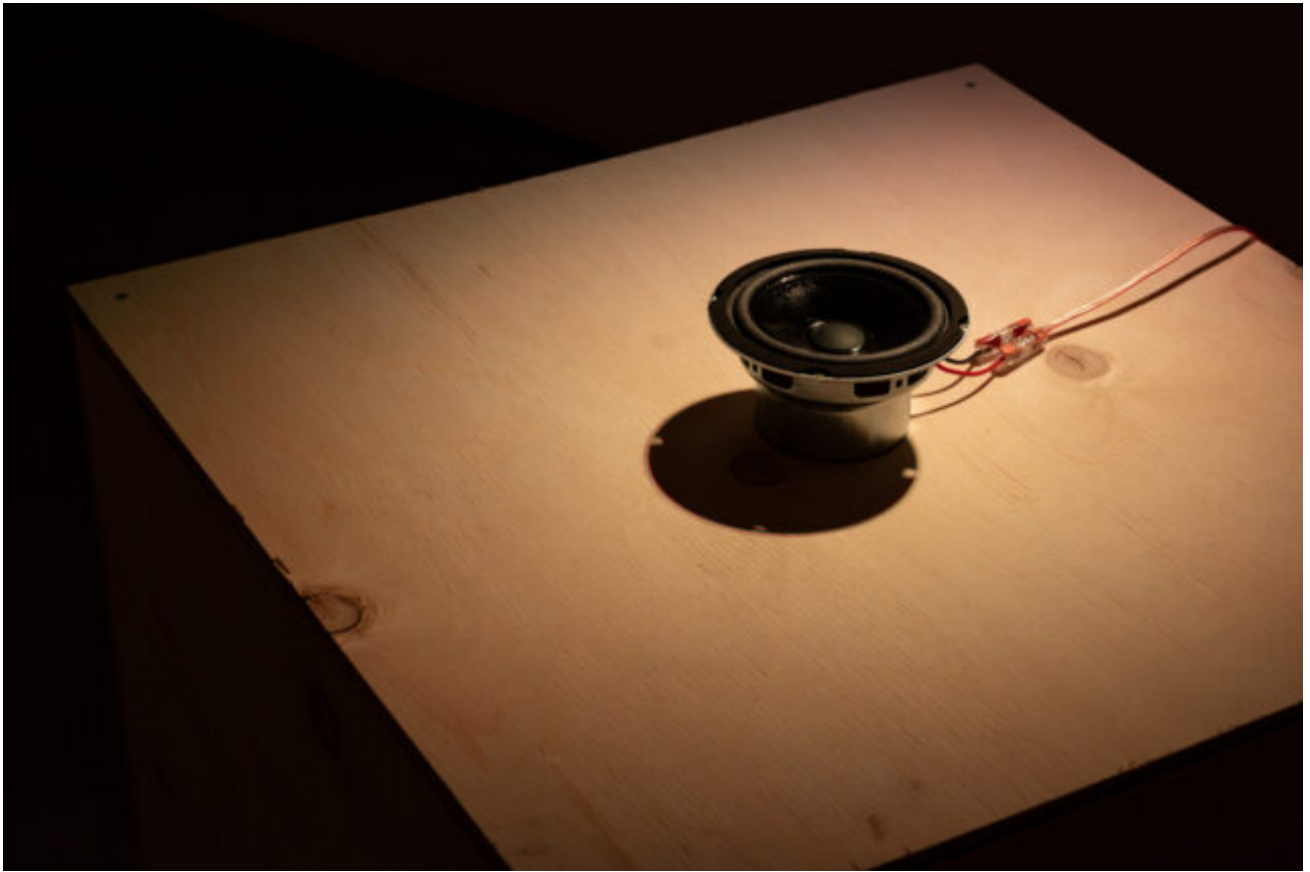




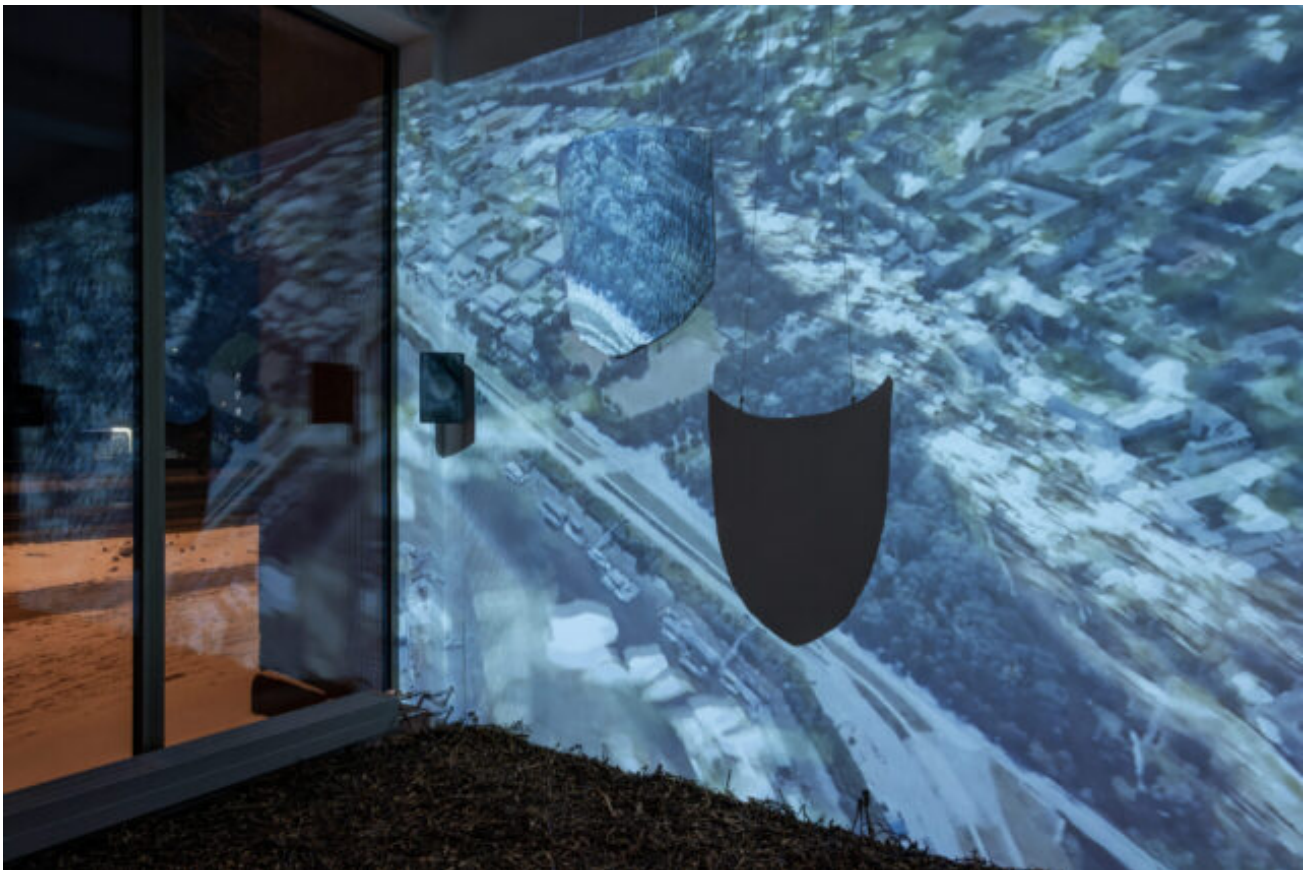






















# Photo reportage from the group exhibition 'Encrypt' at SODAS 2123 project space

March 5, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The exhibition 'Encrypt' by Elza Lapiņa, Uģis Albiņš, Eugenio Marini, and Ingrid Helena Pajo at SODAS 2123 project space was open until March 4.

There is something unique about not understanding each other's languages. In such cases, the importance of visual interpretation and comparison takes precedence, while text becomes secondary. What is shared exists beyond words—non-verbal and detached from letters. Perhaps thought processes sometimes follow a similar pattern, where information does not move directly through text but through an older, more intuitive way of communication.

Hunters of Komi tell their hunting stories in a way that leaves the listener unsure whether the tale is true or false. In fact, it is preferable for listeners to become lost in misunderstanding—because that is far more entertaining. This creates a magical contradiction between secrecy and truth-telling. Hunters are not allowed to tell the truth outright, nor can they remain silent, as both would bring bad luck, displeasing the forest spirits. The only acceptable option is to speak in a roundabout way. According to the hunters, misunderstanding is a form of understanding. The way knowledge is expressed should invite broader, less direct ways of comprehension, where meaning is not simply laid out as a flat truth. (Art Leete. Kokkupuuted soomeugrilastega. – Sirp 20. XII 2024)

A similarly encrypted form of communication exists among the Baltic states, shaped by shared experiences and a common geographical position, despite belonging to different language families.

Data encryption operates in much the same way, relying on two distinct keys—public and private—to encode and decode information. A parallel form of visual encryption can be observed among Baltic artists, who use shared visual codes to unlock publicly accessible artistic expressions. The four artists will encrypt and decrypt the given information through different mediums.

Elza Lapiņa and Uģis Albiņš are artists based in Riga. With a background in restoration, Elza investigates the ambivalent relations of fragments and the whole, the copy and the original. Uģis practice looks into the multilayered material culture, the shape and use of the objects surrounding us through a play with the contrast of raw materials and various techniques and mediums, like 3D-printing.

Eugenio Marini and Ingrid Helena Pajo are artists based between Tallinn and Rome, who in their practices explore the possibilities of the found materials. Being guided by what the environment offers, their installations become something between a visual diary and an archeological museum.

Artists wish to thank Agnė Bagdžiūnaitė, Sophie Durand, Adomas Žudys, SODAS 2123  
Exhibition is supported by Lynxmonadas  
Photography by Ingrid Helena Pajo

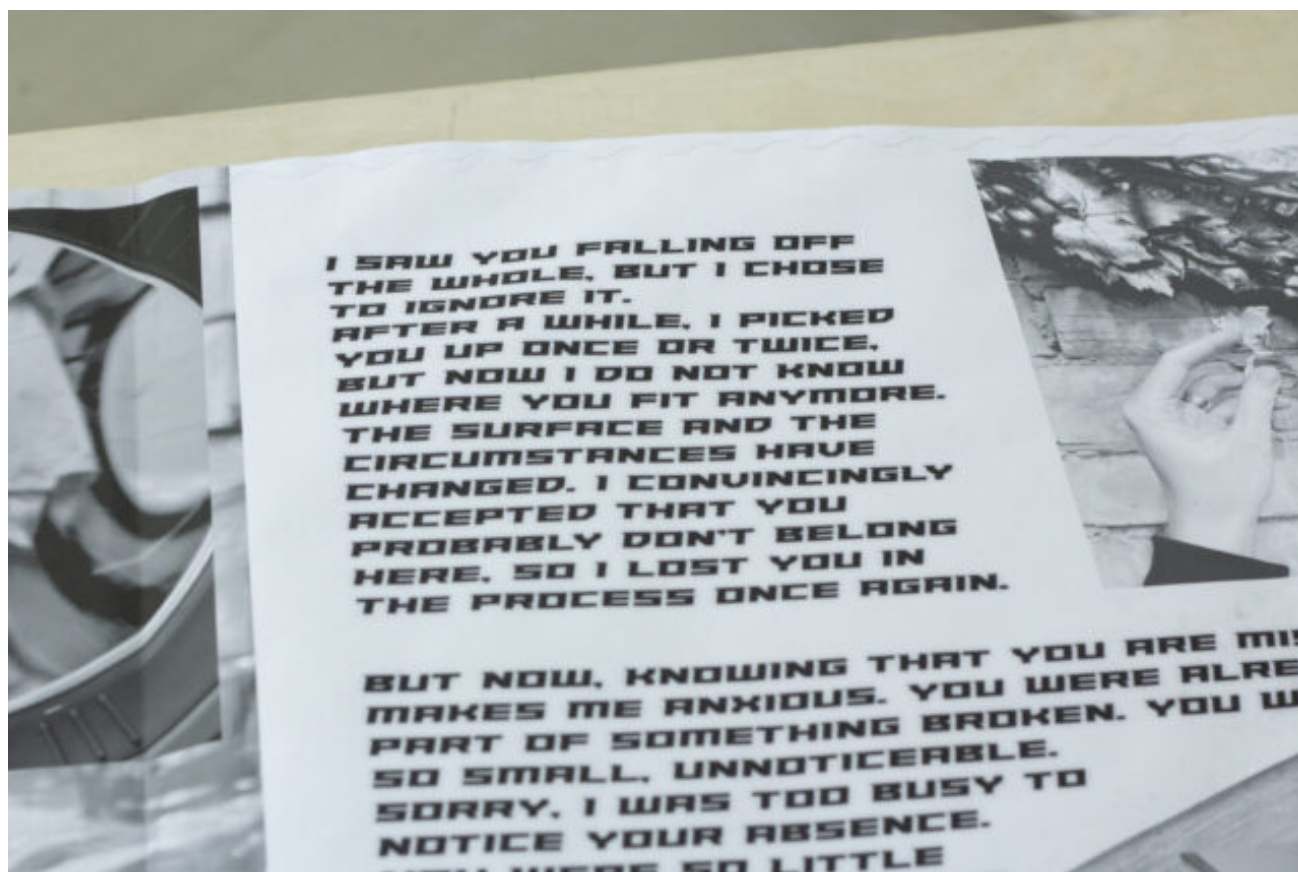
Photography: Ingrid Helena Pajo























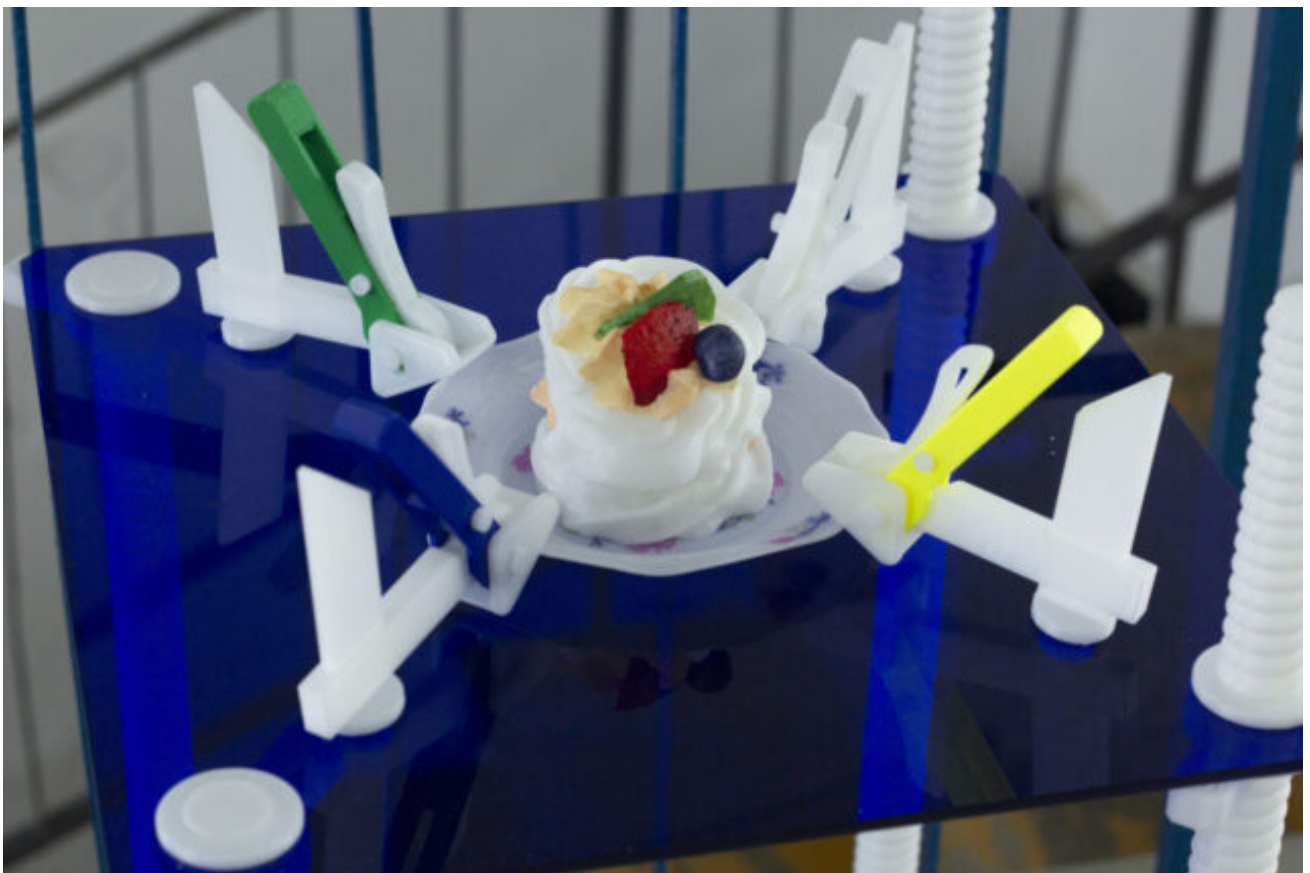
















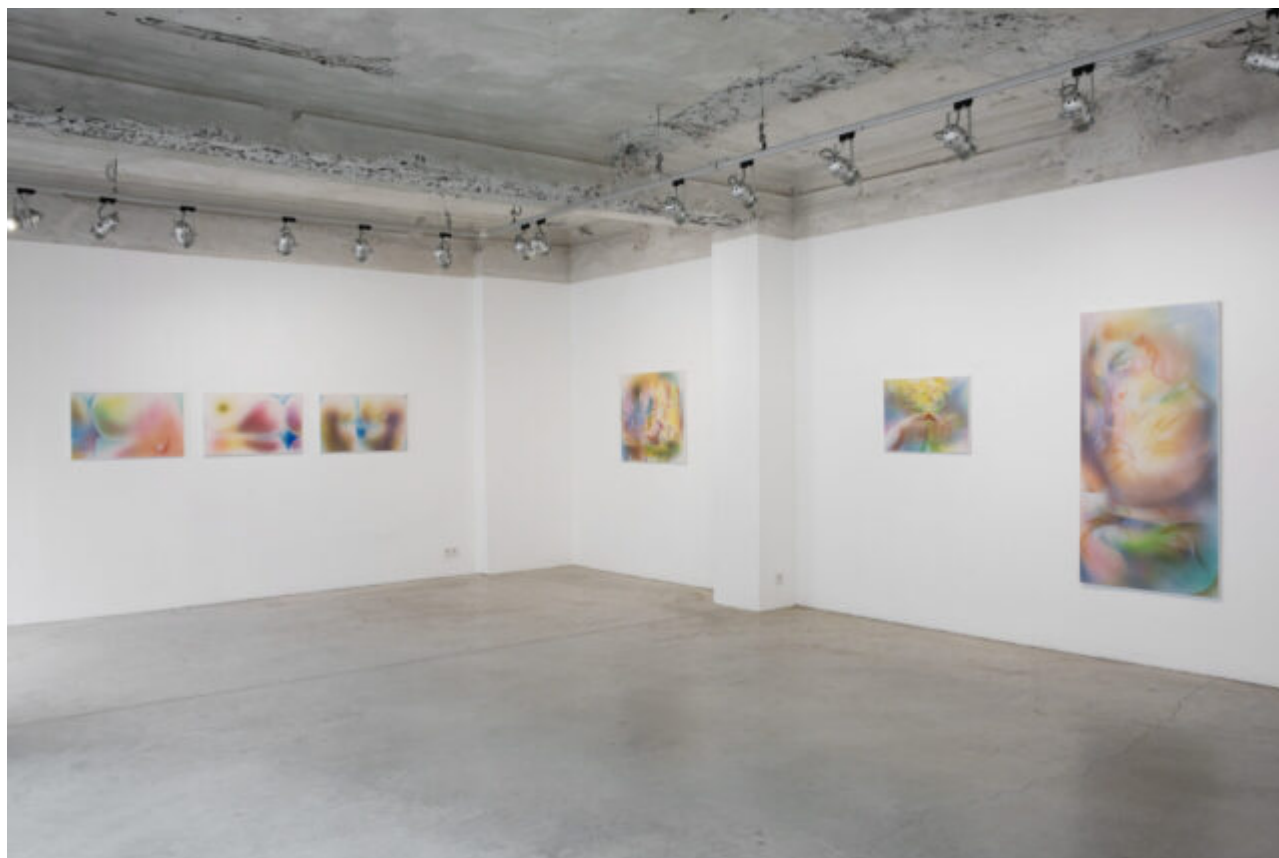




# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Space in Between' by Dāvis Ozols at ASNI gallery

March 12, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



Dāvis Ozols is a Latvian painter of the new generation, a graduate of the Master's program in Painting at the Art Academy of Latvia. In his artistic practice, he explores the airbrush technique—this democratic and ambivalent tool, which in art history has often been associated with so-called “bad art.” In his most ambitious solo exhibition to date, Ozols deliberately reflects on the aesthetics of kitsch and the visual language of lowbrow art, challenging the boundaries between “high” and “low” art. His works captivate with masterful use of light and shadow, where romantic landscapes merge with sensually exaggerated contours of the human body. This interplay creates a tension between the idealized and the grotesque, between the seductive and the alienating—existing in a space where the boundaries between beauty and cliché become blurred.

Just like the German Romantic master Caspar David Friedrich revealed the grandeur and mystery of nature in his landscapes, Dāvis Ozols—living by the banks of the Daugava in Ikšķile, a place long favored by Latvian artists for plein air painting—approaches the landscape not merely as a visual motif but as a space for deeper exploration. In his works, the landscape becomes a field of thought, where questions arise about the relationship between humans and nature, as well as the presence of bodily experience within this interaction.

A closer look at Ozols' paintings reveals a delicate interplay of forms—landscapes merge with corporeal contours, which, in turn, subtly transform into the silhouettes of everyday objects before dissolving back into their surroundings. This metamorphosis of things creates a continuous transition between figure and space. The nostalgic tonal shifts imbue the works with a dreamlike

atmosphere, where figures emerge as symbols of exalted beauty. Their presence hints at the pictorial language of Maija Tabaka's paintings, as well as the elegant, surreal silhouettes of Polish artist Tamara de Lempicka.

Text: Elīna Drāke

Dāvis Ozols graduated from the Janis Rozentāls Art High School and obtained a master's degree in painting from the Art Academy of Latvia in 2022. During his studies, he expanded his knowledge through the ERASMUS exchange program in Leipzig, Germany, and Ljubljana, Slovenia. Recent solo exhibitions include: "Laiks Bija Laiks Izbija", 427 Gallery, Riga (with Vincenzo Ferlita); "Reibums", Ag Gallery, Riga / "Ebriety", Ag Gallery, Riga; "Smiltis", Look Gallery, Riga / "In the Sand", Look Gallery, Riga; "Zālē", Savvaļa, Drusti / "In the Grass", Savvaļa, Drusti. Recent group exhibitions include: Andris Eglītis – "Exhibition. Some Cases of the Meeting of Imagination and Matter", SAVVAĻA, LNMM; "TIPS&TRICKS. Survival Advice", Look Gallery, Riga; "427 Collection", 427 Gallery, Riga (2024); "Unparalleled Surrealities", ASNI, Riga, among others.

Supported by Culture Capital Foundation

Dāvis Ozols

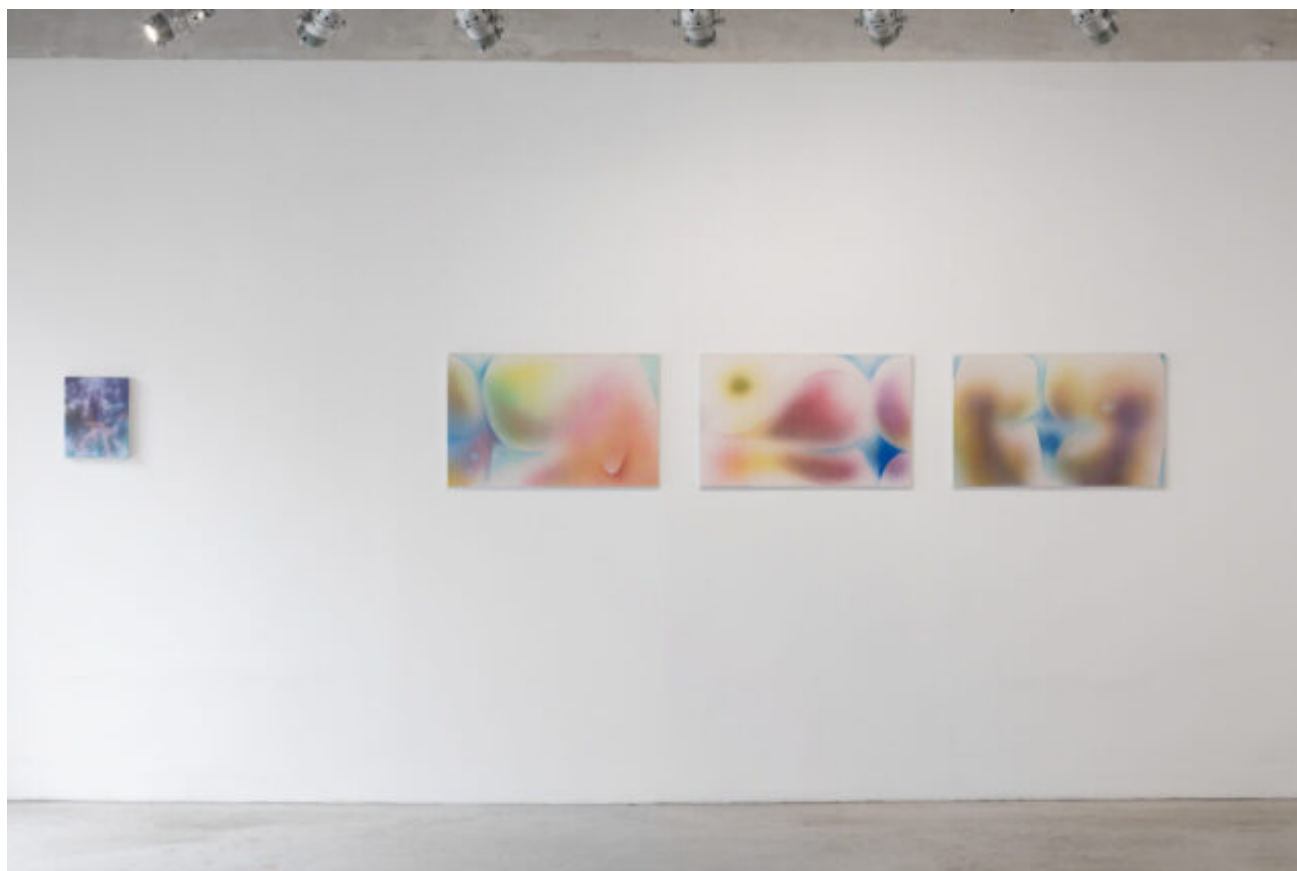
"Space in Between"

**28.02.2025- 22.03.2025**

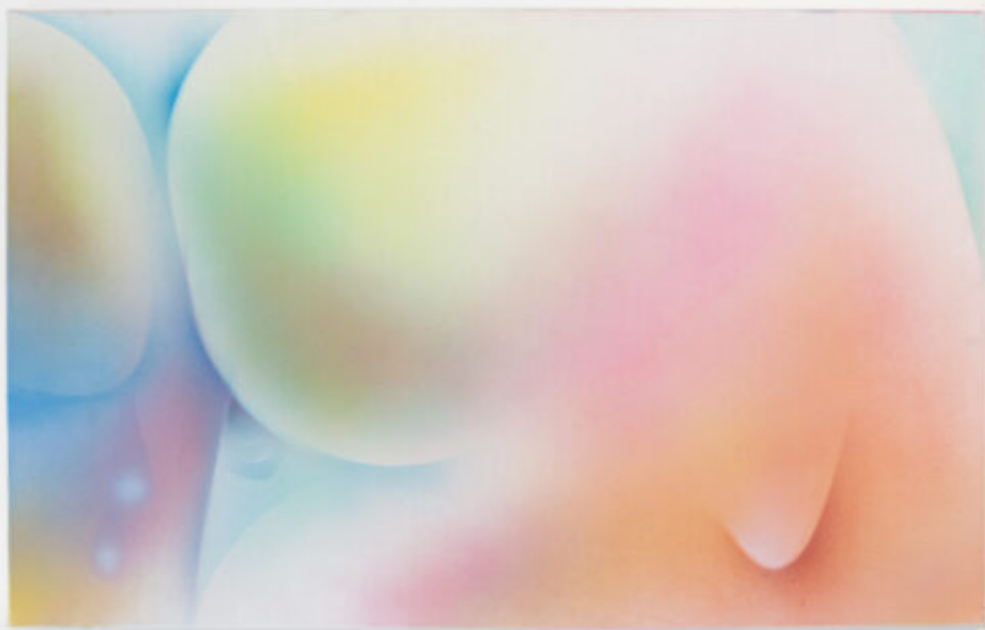
Galerija ASNI

Kr. Valdemāra street 17A Rīga

Photography: Kristine Madjare



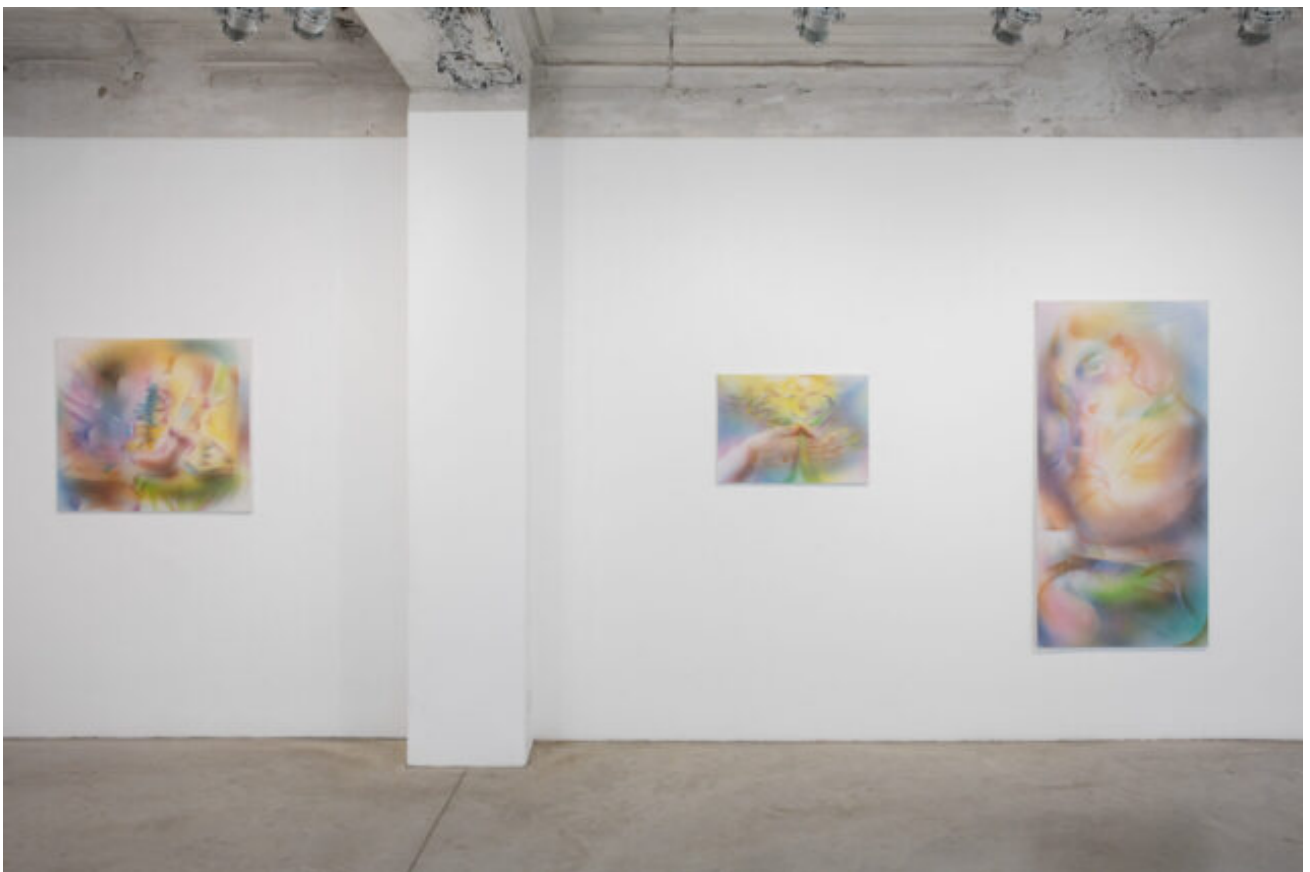


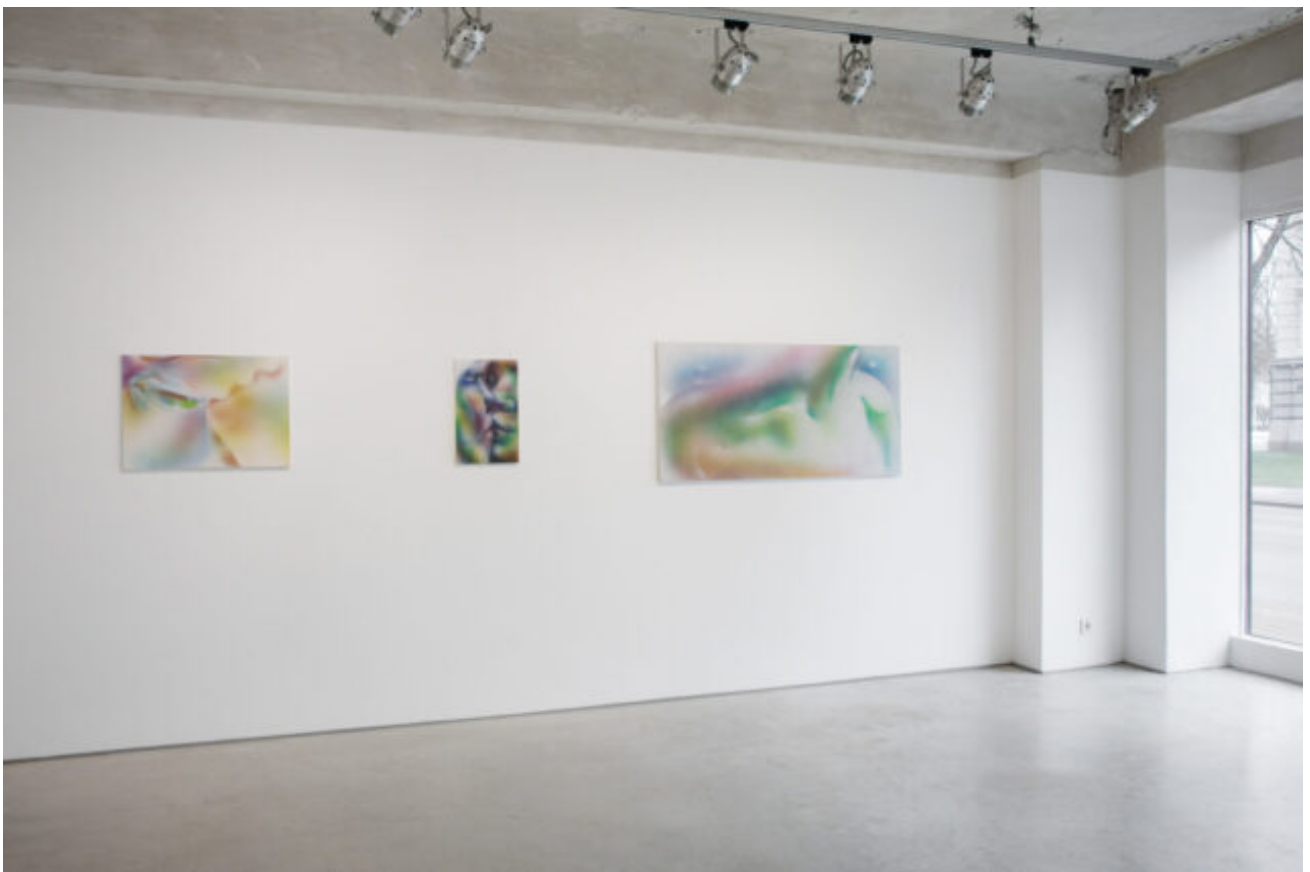


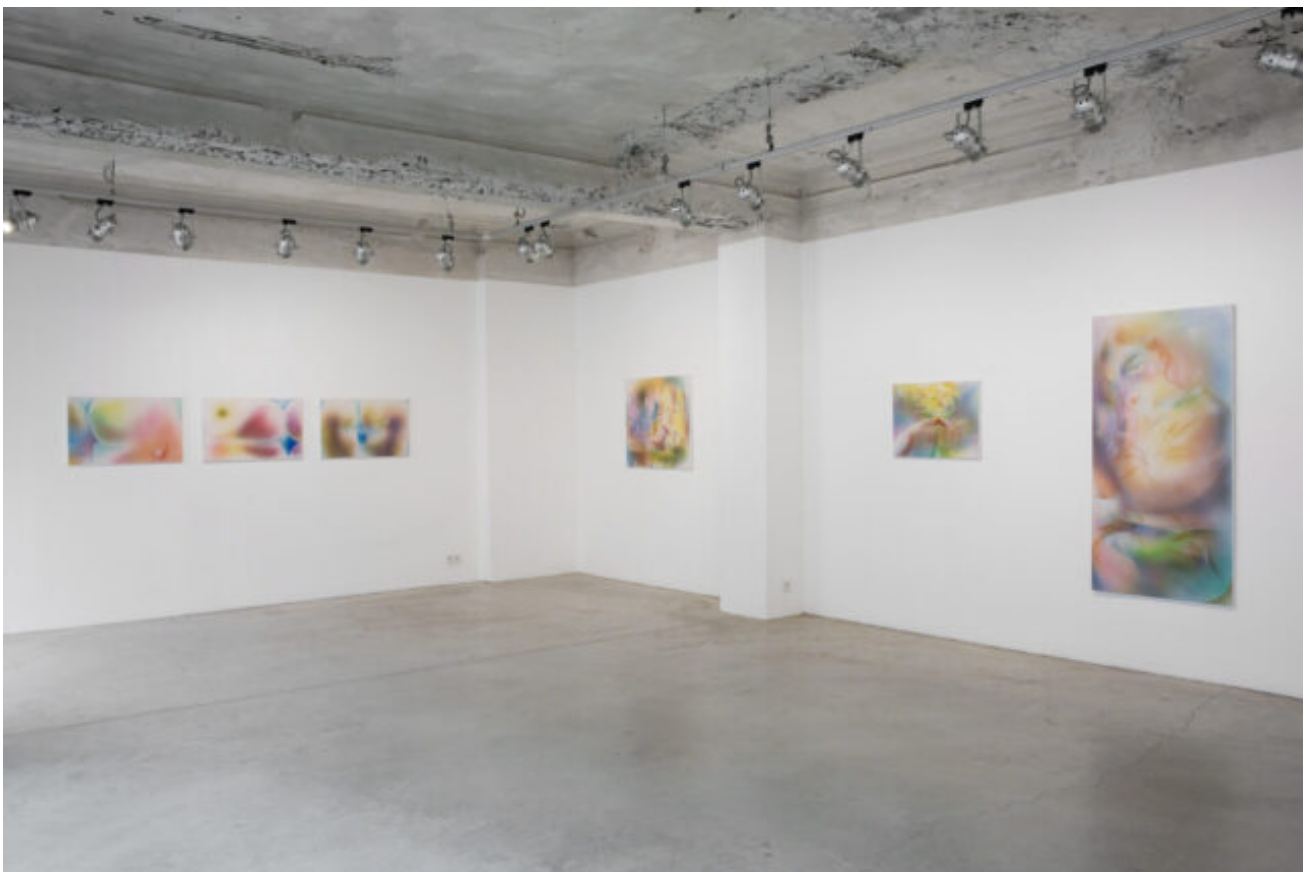




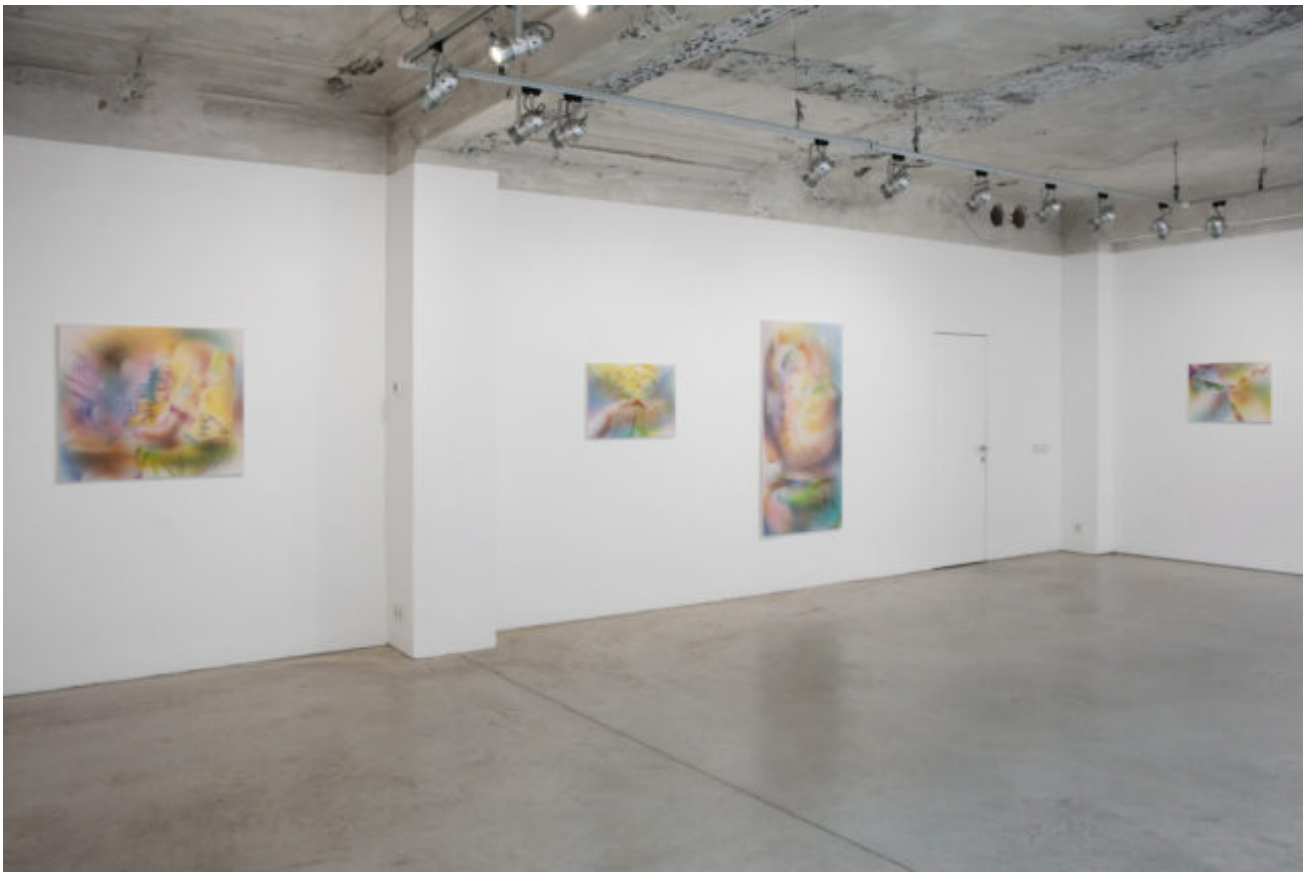


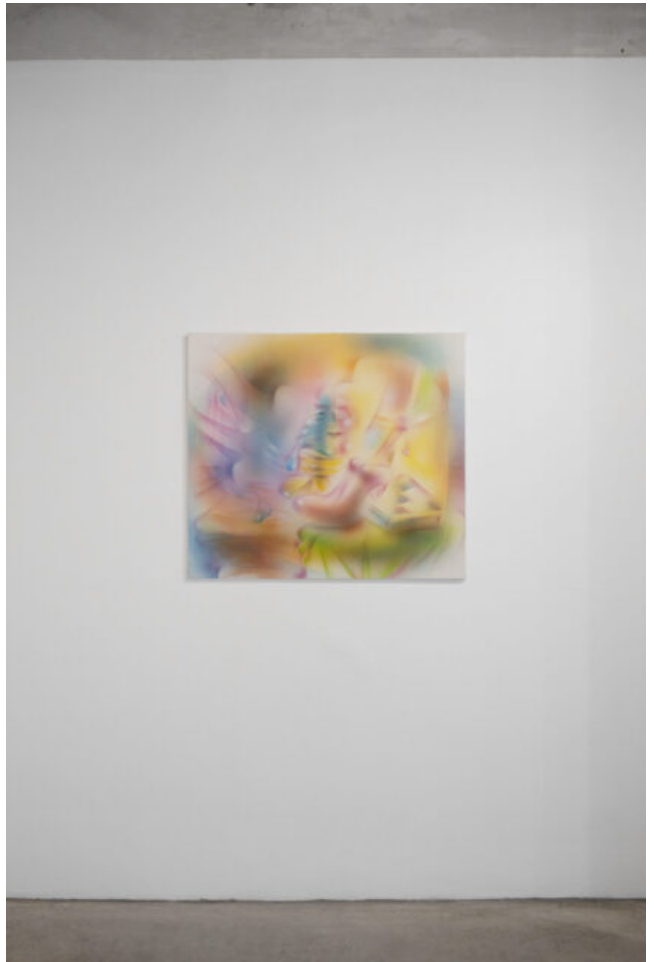
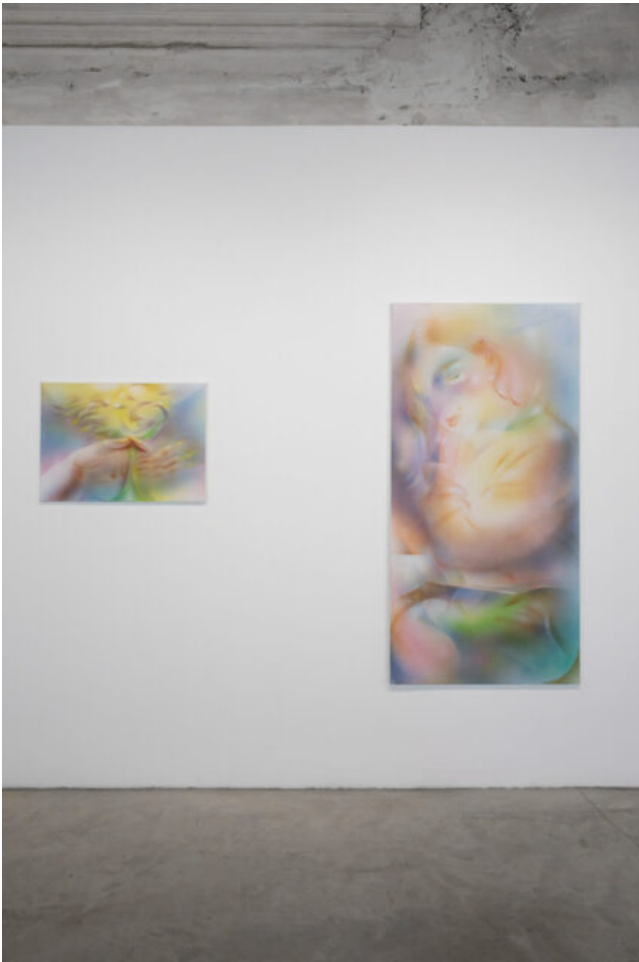












# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Nameless Lakes' by Emilija Čepulė at the Jonas Mekas Visual Art Center

March 17, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



Installation view 'Nameless Lakes'

*Transformation, ephemeral form, archive of temporality, phenomenon of preservation, creation and restoration, cognition, the boundary between black and white, being and not being.*

Nameless lakes recorded: 201

Nameless lakes extinct: 115

Shades of Nameless lakes recorded: 168

Names of Nameless lakes discovered: Raguoliukas, Nemenčinukas, Paliedis, Vičiū, Bedugnis, Kairioji akis, Dubelis, Ežeras, Krakinis.

From my expedition to the Nameless lakes: *At the time, I had a strange feeling that I was where I shouldn't be. The map showed that I was moving around a large body of water, but instead of a lake, there was an empty clearing. I continued towards the Nameless 12131514. As I approached the forest, a barbed wire fence appeared in the middle of it. The thought that the territory could belong to someone was unsettling. The sun, which had shone in the morning, hid; the wind picked up; the pine trees creaked their trunks loudly. I entered the thicket. My skin shivered at the sight of the forest cover, which was dug up by boars, their tusk marks left everywhere. After a while, the forest path disappeared. I pushed deeper. Moisture began to seep from under the ground, the plants thickened, and the sky became black and angry. It seemed that nature was trying to spit me*

*out like some foreign body. I decided not to bother anymore. As I escaped from the forest, lightning struck a few meters away. I took it as a sign and didn't look for the Nameless anymore.*  
(Emilija Čepulė, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

Lithuanian folk legend about the name of the lake: *A lake that came from the sky began to roar so terribly, that its repulsive sound was heard in all the surrounding villages. One man learned in a dream that the lake would continue to roar until he guesses what name it should be given. Finally, the name was guessed by a beggar woman, sitting under a cross, who said, "Let it be Praviršulis (the one who has overcome, gained the upper hand, the conqueror)! The lake liked the name: it immediately stopped rumbling, and it never did again, because now everyone calls it by that name."* (Written by Lithuanian biologist, professor at the University of the Philippines Pranciškus Baltrus Šivickis, late 19th century)

M.K. Čiurlionis: *Returning from the post office, I noticed what a wonderful thing fog is. It is behind me, in front of me; it is only what is with me and within me <...> And nothing more. A magnificent palace looms in the mist — barely visible — I approach it — and it is nothing special — and further on there are miracles in the fog — and again, nothing special — all around there is more and more fog<...>* (Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Vytautas Landsbergis, Letters to Sofia, Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2011, p. 114)

Emilija Čepulė (b. 2001) is a young artist, currently completing her Master's at the Vilnius Academy of Arts Graphic Arts department. In 2024, she was awarded the Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis scholarship for the creation of a new work. "Nameless Lakes" is the artist's second personal exhibition, which presents a project for the M. K. Čiurlionis competition. Both the works in the exhibition and her entire creative practice speak of the artist's courage to explore the unknown. Many creators are born "too early," but Emilija is likely a little too late. She dreams of life some 500 years ago, when great discoveries and impressive expeditions around the world were still ahead. However, sometimes the objects found right in front of your eyes, even a small Lithuanian lake on a computer screen without a name, history or measurements — a true nothingness — illuminate the consciousness... And remind us that even in the closest environment, there are still untrodden paths, undiscovered points, which, like seeds of the Taoist world, can continue to spread in the artist's work.

Exhibition architect: pavel pavel

Exhibition soundtrack composer: Augustė Dūdaitė

The exhibition is part of the presentation of the works by the laureate of the Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis scholarship.

Exhibition will run until March 29 at Jonas Mekas Visual Art Center. Admission is free.

Photography: Anna Chostegian



Installation view 'Nameless Lakes'



Installation view 'Nameless Lakes'





'Lake maps', 2024. Japanese restoration paper 7.3 gsm, Chinese paper, inkjet printing, water



'Nameless Lakes', 2024. Lithography, Chinese paper, inkjet print, water



Nameless Lakes', 2024. Lithography, Chinese paper, inkjet print, water



Installation view 'Nameless Lakes'



'Two Shores', 2025. Japanese restoration paper 7.3 gsm, inkjet ink



'Two Shores', 2025. Japanese restoration paper 7.3 gsm, inkjet ink



'Two Shores', 2025. Japanese restoration paper 7.3 gsm, inkjet ink





'Two Shores', 2025. Japanese restoration paper 7.3 gsm, inkjet ink



'Two Shores', 2025. Japanese restoration paper 7.3 gsm, inkjet ink



'Deeper. Graphic Notation', 2024. Japanese restoration paper 7.3 gsm, Chinese paper, inkjet printing



'Deeper. Graphic Notation', 2024. Japanese restoration paper 7.3 gsm, Chinese paper, inkjet printing



Installation view 'Nameless Lakes'

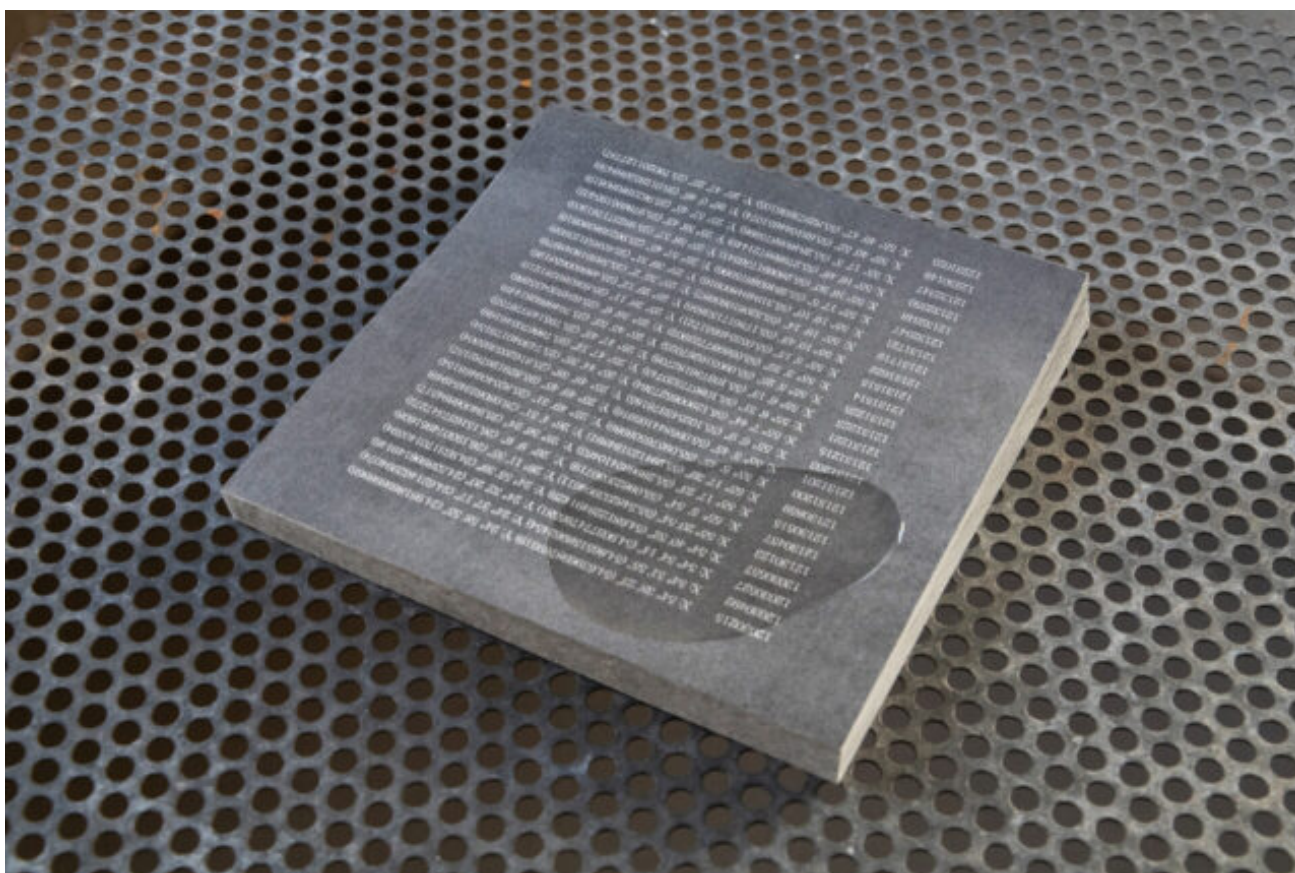


Installation view 'Nameless Lakes'





'Shades of Nameless Lakes', 2024. Digital print, Fabriano paper, transparent paper, coptic binding



'Nameless Lakes Catalogue', 2025. Risograph, Munken Print Cream 100 gsm paper, resin, restoration 9 gsm paper, perforation

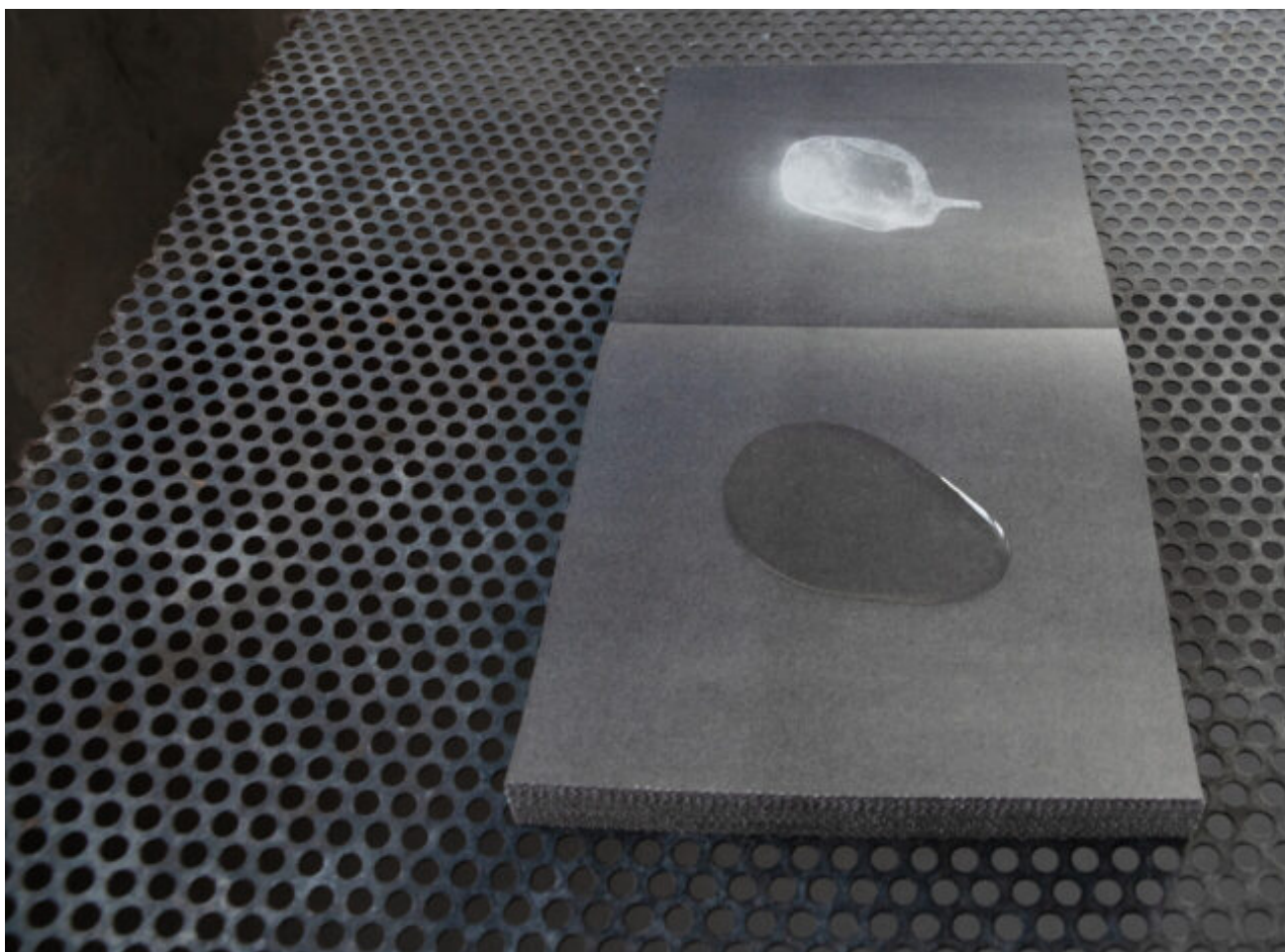




'Nameless Lakes Catalogue', 2025. Risograph, Munken Print Cream 100 gsm paper, resin, restoration 9 gsm paper, perforation



'Nameless Lakes Catalogue', 2025. Risograph, Munken Print Cream 100 gsm paper, resin, restoration 9 gsm paper, perforation



'Nameless Lakes Catalogue', 2025. Risograph, Munken Print Cream 100 gsm paper, resin, restoration 9 gsm paper, perforation

# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Horrrify me, soothe me, horrrify me' by Laimdota Malle at the RSU Anatomy Museum

March 20, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



*There was magic to each of these places. There was grief, unimaginable grief. But in that grief, there was no shame. These were places to meet despair face to face and say, “I see you. And I feel you strongly. But you do not demean me.” Caitlin Doughty, “From Here to Eternity”.*

how many touches a hand has given, received, and stopped giving  
what kind of sounds has the shell of the ear gathered  
what stories are told by countless knots and tangles weaved and renewed by an encapsulated nervous system  
how many times a breath, between fear and soothing, started and stopped in somebody's lungs  
what has been created

The exhibition “Horrrify me, soothe me, horrrify me” by artist Laimdota Malle is a result of six months’ residency in the Anatomy Museum, where she created a visual conversation with its collection, sparking thoughts about the living and the fragile as opposed to the departed, the solidified and encapsulated matter. Also before, Laimdota Malle has worked on the themes of memory and departure. In the exhibition “How to Move a Giant” (2019) and series of exhibitions “OOZE” (2023), as well as other works, she uses techniques of tracing and impressions in thin, translucent and fragile materials, to reflect on the ephemeral nature of human beings, their departure and disappearance; our wish to hold them and the necessity to release. What is left – the memories, bodies, souvenirs – seems to be subject to endless transformations, an eternal reminder that is unable to replace what was lost.

In this exhibition, the artist continues to delve into the process of grief, but in this case the body that is left after life has ended, acquires a new and independent existence. In the museum, researching the body parts that have been reduced to objects and their functions, the artist asks: how easy is it to distance oneself from elements that are unlike us, and how hard it is to separate the visible from the person if the human traits remain.

In the new series of works, Laimdota Malle creates symbolic paraffin shells and impressions of different bodies, balancing between movement and frozen time, a rhythmical repetition and dissolution. These works are consciously oscillating between shapes of different lifeforms, since the key to a fulfilled mourning can be found in the very inseparability of humans and nature. Her work reflects on proto-Indo-European mythology where the cycles of the world and nature revolves around goddesses of Spring and Dawn. The house of Dawn is full of colors, movement, sounds, renewal and light, and it is also a place where transformation and release happened, moving through mourning to healing.

The exhibition has been created together with curator and scenographer Aleksejs Beļeckis, sound artist Sarma Gabrēna, and light artist Romāns Medvedevs; it is experienced as an installation of sculptural objects, images, sounds and light: poetic research on the rites of being where becoming, transformation and fading is a part of an endless cycle of a united ecosystem.

Artist Laimdota Malle  
Scenographer, curator Aleksejs Beļeckis  
Sound composer Sarma Gabrēna  
Light artist Romāns Medvedevs  
Residency and exhibition project curator Ieva Lībiete  
Text Aleksejs Beļeckis, Laimdota Malle, Ieva Melgalve  
Exhibition will be open till 26th of April.

Project is supported by State Culture Capital Foundation, Medicine Museum Support Society, and Riga Stradins University.

Photography: Kristīne Krauze-Slucka

























# Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Daily Play and Bread' by Karl Joonas Alamaa at the EKA Gallery

March 24, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



View from the exhibition “Daily Play and Bread”, EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Ako Allik

The solo exhibition ‘Daily Play and Bread’ by Karl Joonas Alamaa runs at EKA Gallery (Tallinn, Estonia) from 7 to 30 March.

Artist and designer Karl Joonas Alamaa is interested in personal and collective power — how the strength of individuals can oppose authority and politics. The exhibition is based on interviews with people from different parts of the world who have been forced to leave their home countries for various reasons. Working with archival materials and collecting personal stories, their works highlight the power of seemingly small actions to unite people and create social change.

“The basis of the research is the story of my great-aunt Leili, who was deported to Siberia during the Stalinist purges,” explains Alamaa. “In Siberia, Leili was sent to work in a birch forests. On another day of work, she carved her name and family details into the bark of a birch tree. Unexpectedly, that log reached the workshop where her father worked, and he happened to see it after a long time of separation.” This notion of hope amidst extreme repression raises critical questions about the nature of hope, resilience, and resistance in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. How can individuals find hope in the most desperate situations? How do small, personal acts of resistance challenge the carefully designed power structures and contribute to broader social change?

The title of the exhibition is derived from the aphorism of the ancient Roman poet Juvenal “Give them bread and circuses and they will never revolt.” This refers to bread as a cross-cultural symbol, representing everyday well-being and basic needs as well as their use as a tool of oppression. The

exhibition brings together textile sculptures and other interactive and playful works that explore memory and society, delving into the themes of finding hope and purpose in a world that often feels suffocating and restrictive.

**Karl Joonas Alamaa** (2000) has studied fashion at the Estonian Academy of Arts and costume design at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp. In their practice, they often engage with the notion of the mundane, exploring the potential of everyday phenomena and small actions to create change, working with historical archival materials, personal memories, and experiences. The exhibition has grown out of their master's project, for which they have received the Mathilde Horlait-Dapsens Prize, the JAT Prize and the Future Proof Award.

Cheerful trio: **Karl Joonas Alamaa, Linda Mai Kari, Mikk Lahesalu**

Language editor: **Olivia Soans**

Lighting designer: **Mikk-Mait Kivi**

Technical support: **Erik Hõim**

Graphic designer: **Fatima-Ezzahra Khammas**

The exhibition is supported by **Cultural Endowment of Estonia, Mathilde Horlait-Dapsens Foundation, Sadolin Estonia** and **Tallinn City**.

Opening drinks from **Põhjala Brewery**.

Photos by **Ako Allik** and **Kaisa Maasik**





View from the exhibition "Daily Play and Bread", EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Ako Allik



View from the exhibition "Daily Play and Bread", EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Ako Allik





View from the exhibition “Daily Play and Bread”, EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Kaisa Maasik



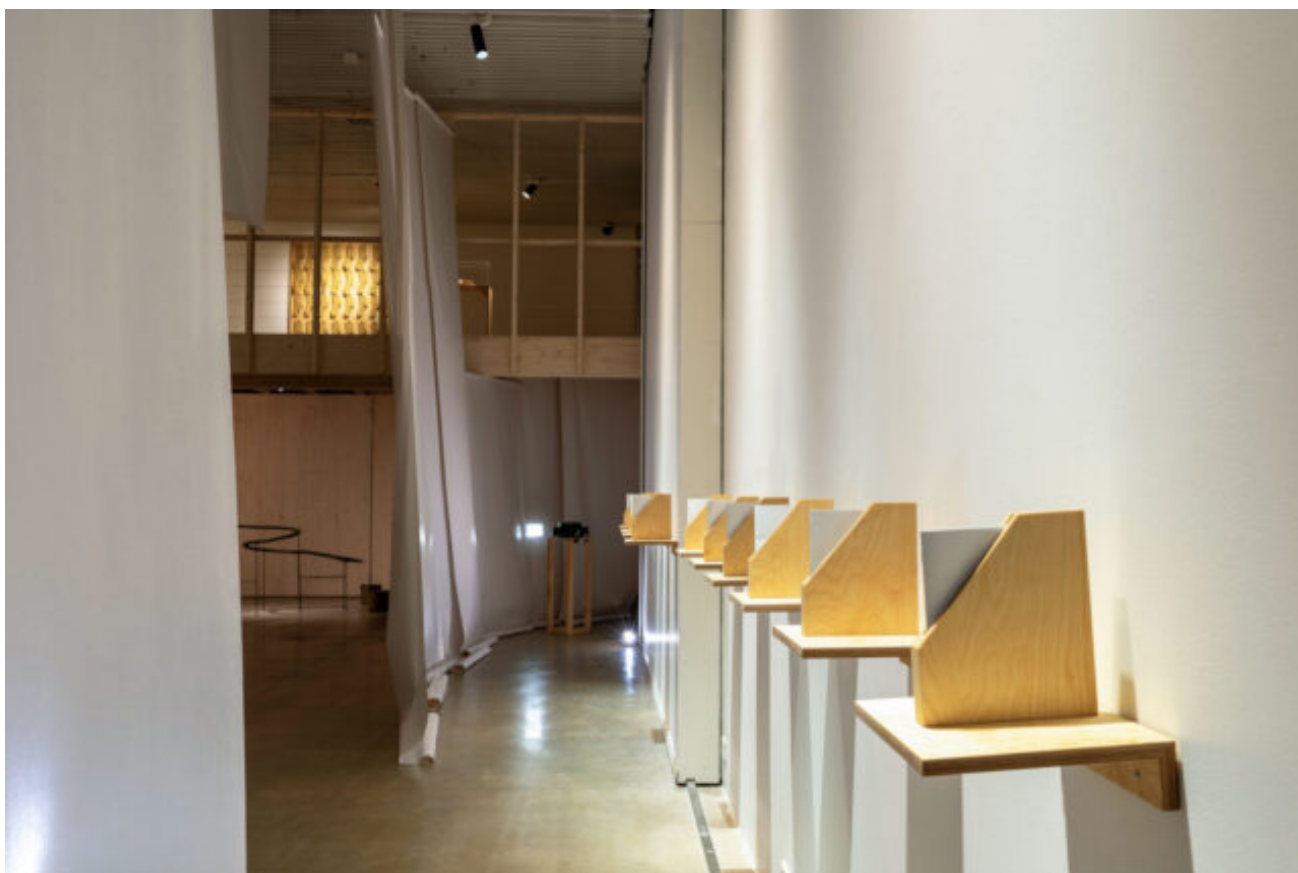
View from the exhibition “Daily Play and Bread”, EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Ako Allik



View from the exhibition "Daily Play and Bread", EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Kaisa Maasik



View from the exhibition "Daily Play and Bread", EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Ako Allik



View from the exhibition "Daily Play and Bread", EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Ako Allik



View from the exhibition "Daily Play and Bread", EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Kaisa Maasik





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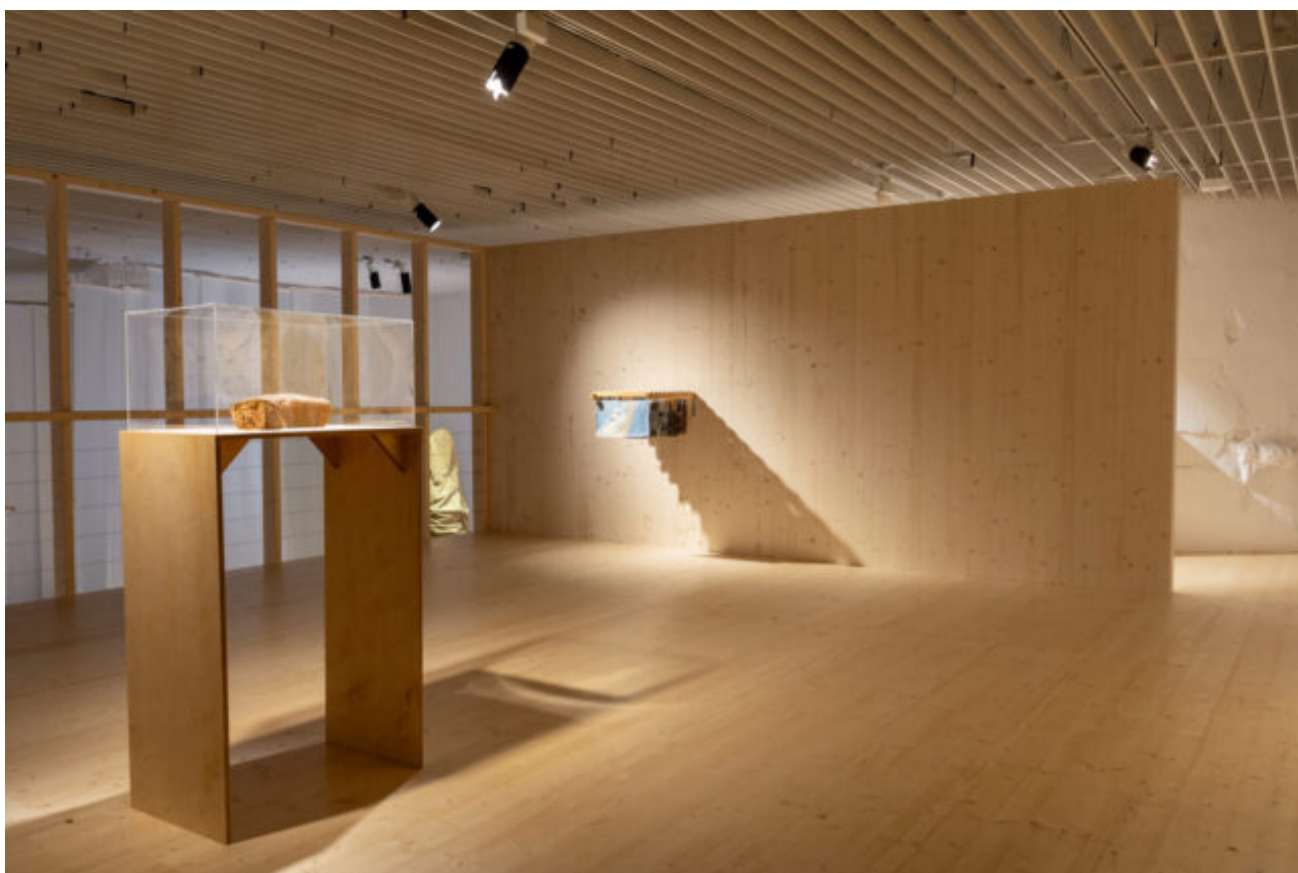
View from the exhibition "Daily Play and Bread", EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Ako Allik



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