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An Archive of Feelings

April 10, 2025

Author Laura Kell



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

A review of the exhibition ‘Daily Play and Bread’ by Karl Joonas Alamaa at the EKA Gallery, 7–30 March 2025

‘To share a memory is to put a body into words.’^[1] In their solo exhibition ‘Daily Play and Bread’, Karl Joonas Alamaa explores narratives of having to leave one’s home through metaphors and materials, combining archival elements with personal stories, memory with society, and everyday elements with tools for fighting oppression. These are recurring themes in Alamaa’s practice, who often engages with the notion of the mundane, and explores the potential of everyday phenomena and small actions to create change. A young artist and designer from Estonia, they have a background in fashion and costume design from the Estonian Academy of Arts and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. This current exhibition, grown out of Alamaa’s MA project, displays a diverse use of textile sculpturing and interactive installation, and gives the visitor an opportunity to delve into Embodied Introspection, to connect with whomever they choose: themselves, previous generations, or the people who have offered their stories for the show.

Two circulating concepts become apparent from the title of the exhibition, one more meaning-laden than the other. Play and bread are derived from the aphorism of the Ancient Roman poet Juvenal, ‘Give them bread and circuses and they will never revolt.’ In one part of the space Alamaa has created a postmodern dramaturgical situation with a gaming table. You can throw a circular wooden dice that gives you a number to correlate with a card of the same number in the drawer of the table. The cards carry different game questions you can answer, dramatise and stage, according to your interpretation and desires, using the building blocks made of wood and dried bread dough: ***go back***

to your six-year-old world / who do you miss the most? / visualise situations to which we have grown numb / go back to your grandmother's living room / take advantage of someone / you can't go home / step closer, you are welcomed!, etc. The cards allow you to be 'as personal or general as you like', affording the visitor the choice of level of intimacy they want to engage in. The structure and gameplay make up the outlines of a psychodrama, a theatrical *Spiel*, where a person in the play is given a social role which they then have to perform, solving the problem and ridding themselves of trauma. Play is deconstruction, play is hysterical, childish, infantile: a mature person should be afraid of liminal situations, afraid to transcend borders, afraid of *play* that can pierce the mask of mundanity. But play, in the exhibition space as well as outside it, forces you to take a deeper look, whether the look becomes harder, more scrutinising, or contrarily, gentler, more forgiving. 'Living is "a situation to be experienced and interacted with" rather than "a problem to be solved",' as Clementine Edwards^[2] writes.

An energy of life, of stories becoming embodied, courses through the exhibition. The muted tonal scheme, a mélange of wood and ochre, evokes a sense of stillness that should not be confused with lifelessness. Passing through the space feels similar to the experience of hearing music coming from another room or through walls: muffled, pulsating and eerily familiar. There is life moving inside here, but you can't touch it with your hands, nor can you ontologically name it. Whether through the loaf of bread enclosed in a glass box, going mouldy, decomposing, losing its utilitarian qualities in real time, through the testimonies of the people interviewed by the artist, bound in simple booklets, carefully placed in hard wooden binders like a catalogue of trauma, or through the khaki-coloured ambiguously shaped textile figures that allow you to play with their imagination. They are at once your great-grandparents on the train to Siberia, huddling close to one another, the hard-shelled chrysalis of self-consciousness from which you have to emerge at some point in your life, and the burlap potato sacks stored in your basement over the winter. The seemingly infinite tissue paper curtains hanging all around the shapes feel like archival paper used to interleave photographs in your grandmother's dusty family albums, filled with faces you don't really know or remember but which carry your genetic code.

What are these formations, if not bodily archives? Of histories, of labour, of repression and of hope, of those who came before you, as well as your own personal experiences. According to Judith

Butler, 'The body is less an entity and more a living set of relations.'^[3] People with transgenerational trauma carry the trauma of their foremothers and forefathers on their bodies, even if they haven't been the target of explicit assault. There is a search for intergenerational and transnational connection woven through the fabric of the exhibition, with a central notion of hope as a personal act of resistance.

The trauma induced by leaving one's birthplace due to war, genocide, an oppressive government, political extremism or a general state of heightened precarity, is evident. But the memory of trauma is implanted not just in the stories of these people from places like Palestine, Ukraine, Venezuela and Belarus, but in material objects. Bread as the red string woven through all the interviews becomes, from one person's testimony to another, a symbol of hope, a source of income, a birthplace heritage, hospitality, hunger, Christ's flesh, a colonial legacy, a mother's embrace. The colonnade of personal chronicles leads to a carousel slide projector displaying photographs of bread in its every possible state of being, like the apogee of it all.

The exhibition space becomes an 'archive of feelings', as Ann Cvetkovich^[4] puts it: by looking at the accumulation of narratives and objects as 'repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception', such as the ritual of play, the simultaneously celestial and mundane nature of bread,

the shared pain and joys in the stories. Cvetkovich sees sites of trauma particularly as radical spaces of possibility, by possessing the potential to redesign common understandings of what even constitutes an archive, as well as constructing new visions for the future. The lens of trauma allows for an exploration of a kaleidoscopically diverse spectrum of feelings, from love to rage, intimacy, grief, shame, etc, all filtering through the personal memories, hopes and dreams of the people who have been forced to leave their homes.

About a week after I first saw the show, I had a dream about my grandmother over a really long while. When she was young, she fled to Moscow to pursue her medical degree (she could not study in Estonia due to family ties that were dangerously anti-Soviet), living in a train station and using public baths. After successfully getting her education, she went on to become a renowned surgeon in Estonia throughout her life, the twists and turns of which led her, among other things, to meeting my grandfather, who was initially a patient of hers. My grandmother is an essential part of the formation of my identity, and part of a line of strong women in my family that forge a sense of resilience in me.

Alamaa's exhibition is a tender but firm reminder of elements in life that often become trivialised but should not be divorced from their manifold meanings, such as the bread on your dinner table. Simultaneously, it sketches an interconnectedness between us all, whether intergenerationally or transnationally. 'No individual experience is beyond context.'² Being alive requires the recognition that we are all relational beings whose pain does not exist in a vacuum, but rather intersects and coagulates into a potential of unified resistance. The aching creates an archive of things that should never be forgotten, and furthermore, sporadically examined: What or who is hope to you? How will you resist and prevail in the face of it all?

[1] Ahmed, S. (2017). Feminism is Sensational, in *Living a Feminist Life*.

[2] Edwards, C. (2023). Art and Radical Imagination, in *The Climate Justice Code*, Casco Art Institute.

[3] Butler, J. (2015). Gender Politics and the Right to Appear, in *Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly*.

[4] Cvetkovich, A. (2003). *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality & Lesbian Public Cultures*.



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



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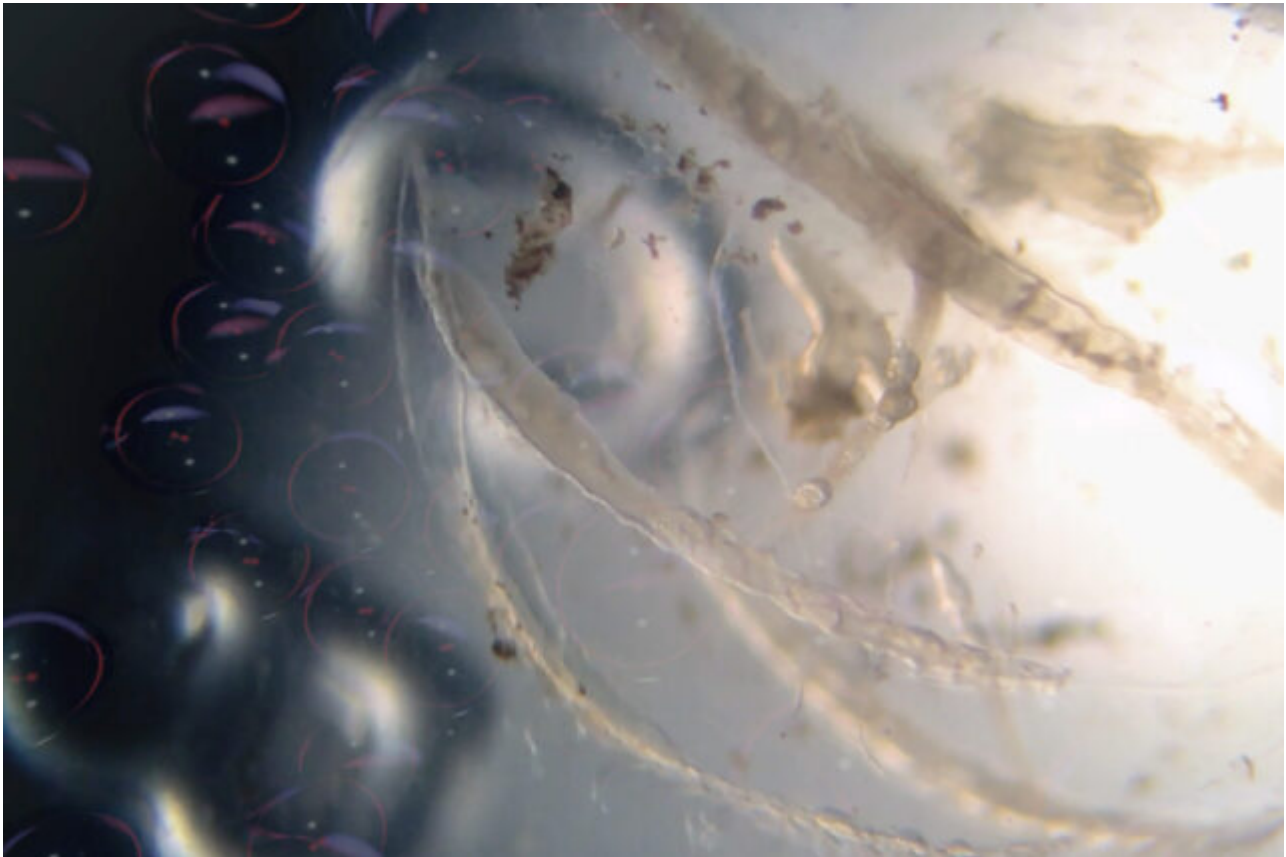


View from the exhibition “Daily Play and Bread”, EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, 2025. Photo by Ako Allik

Waters Close and Far. A conversation with the artist Sabīne Šnē

April 14, 2025

Author Sofija Anna Kozlova



Sabīne Šnē, 'There Are Tides in the Bodies', video still, 2025. Part of the mixed-media installation 'Tidal Tear Sediment'

In her solo exhibition 'Tidal Tear Sediment' at the RIXC Gallery in Riga, Sabīne Šnē explores the fluid interrelations between water, humans, more-than-human, and shifting environments. The philosopher and publicist Sofija Anna Kozlova spoke with the artist about how water shapes and unites all forms of life, and its significance in ecological, social and political contexts.

Sofija Anna Kozlova: *Speaking of water, the topic of your exhibition and the topic of our conversation today, what does it mean to you?*

Sabīne Šnē: It means being alive. It's about this element or entity, or, as some call it, this organism that sustains us, and because of which we are here. We can ascribe this characteristic to many more-than-human entities, but water is necessary for all forms of life on Earth. For me, it is also a force and a motion, something that is always in a constant state of becoming.

SAK: *Do you think that the local context plays a role in how you connect with water? In the video that is the centrepiece of your exhibition 'Tidal Tear Sediment', you mention the Baltic Sea. And I wonder whether water is an abstract entity for you, or is it more situated and localised?*

SŠ: I first developed an artistic interest in water when I was far from different bodies of water, in the middle of a big city, and far away from the Baltic Sea. I began to miss the horizon and walks along the beach. That was the first impulse. Then I stumbled on an article by Rachel Carson entitled 'Undersea'. It was published in 1937, but it still feels incredibly relevant. It attempts to approach

water from the perspective of the different creatures that live in it. I was absolutely fascinated by it. I've always been interested in more-than-human intelligence and perspectives on the world. After reading more and more about water, I eventually discovered Astrida Neimanis and her ideas on hydro-feminism. I was hooked.



Sabīne Šnē, 'Tidal Tear Sediment', 2025. Exhibition view at RIXC Gallery, Riga. Photo: Lelde Gūtmane

SAK: *Have you found exactly what the hook in hydro-feminism was? I mean, from one point of view, it's super-scientific. Translating the theoretical foundations of hydrofeminism has made me appreciate the technical details of the work. For me, coming from a background in philosophy, all the geography, biology and chemistry vocab just wasn't there. At the same time, somehow, this theory resonates with people, despite its complexity. Where do you think its appeal lies?*

SŠ: I think it's in the very simple thought that all of us are linked with one another through water. It might sometimes be hard to comprehend that the water someone is drinking in China right now could be in my water glass a while later, due to the planetary water cycle. Water travels constantly through the Earth, the atmosphere, and our bodies. It has been imprinted in my brain since primary school that about sixty per cent of the human body is water. So water is always close to us. We drink water, we wash ourselves with it, we clean things with it, and we are connected to each other through the flow of water. I think that's the power of hydrofeminist ideas. As you said, there's much more in Neimanis' works. But I don't think we should be scared of biology and chemistry terms and facts. It is part of hydrofeminism's success, as it grounds the theory in scientific findings and methods, making it something very real.

SAK: *I think you're right. Water is supposed to be both a figuration, an imaginary through which we can interpret the world and the relations that constitute it, but also something very tangible that is literally just us. You mentioned the fact that sixty per cent of our body is water. It's a basic fact that we can literally feel within ourselves. Similarly with water-related illnesses and pollution: we can feel them, but we need someone to point to the origins of these problems. And this is something hydrofeminism does very well. It shows how water is the key to understanding many different financial, social, health-related and environmental issues. But the heart of hydrofeminism is the*

move from the local to the planetary. It's a huge step, isn't it? To move away from what is around you, and where you can directly feel the effects, to the unknown waters of China or wherever.

SŠ: I think I approached it step by step while preparing for the 'Tidal Tear Sediment'. I wanted to explain the hydrofeminist ideas through my own practice. First, I read a lot about the planetary water cycle, or the hydrological cycle. I first heard about it at school, or maybe even in kindergarten: a water molecule falls from the cloud, reaches a river, evaporates, condenses, and does some other things. Then the journey takes it into the human body, where it travels through us, evaporates again, and goes back into the atmosphere. Looking at the planetary water cycle helped me simplify the core idea of shared planetary waters. Its constant movement unites everything in this world and connects to every single body of water individually.

Then, I started thinking more about connecting the water in my body with other bodies of water. That's when the Baltic Sea came into the picture. I wanted to incorporate something from my favourite beach in Latvia, so I collected water samples and brought them to London, to a friend who works in a lab. I looked at the water through a microscope, observing all the small entities that live in it. Honestly, it was slightly disturbing. That's when I realised that this massive planetary water cycle is made up of small, microscopic organisms. Then I read about water in our bodies, in the bones, the brain, and all the magical things that are constantly happening in our bodies. I guess I had never been fully aware of it. After that, the task was just to put these different discoveries together and create the work.

We always tend to think from our individual perspective, which means we start by thinking about our surroundings. That's also why water is so fascinating. If we understood how much our bodies are connected to, say, the most polluted river on Earth, I think we would try to live more sustainably. We would think more about the Earth and its ecosystems, because we would understand ourselves as part of it.



Sabīne Šnē, 'Tidal Tear Sediment', 2025. Exhibition view at RIXC Gallery, Riga. Photo: Lelde Gūtmane

SAK: One thing you mentioned is simplifying the idea of hydro-commons, which sometimes makes me wary. I understand that we know the hydrological cycle from childhood, but, as you said, there is so much more in that water, like the molecular relations and the chemical constitution. So simplifying the complexity of the worldly constellations might threaten theories like hydrofeminism that are so simplistic on the surface. Did you see it as a challenge when expressing the ideas through visual media?

SŠ: Not really. At some point I realised that hydrofeminism is a lifestyle. Maybe that sounds a bit pretentious. It's not just an idea, it's a way of living with the understanding that you are part of something bigger. You're just part of the chain of life. Simplifying it might do the theory a disservice, but if you view it as something that shapes you and your approach to the world, you shouldn't be afraid to make it personal.



Sabīne Šnē, 'Tidal Tear Sediment', 2025. Exhibition view at RIXC Gallery, Riga. Photo: Lelde Gūtmane

SAK: It makes me think of another aspect of water that is addressed in hydrofeminism: the unknowability of it. Hydrofeminism invites us to understand the limitations of our own understanding and be okay with that. The deep sea is the best example, it's the terra incognita of our contemporary scientific world-view. I'm super fascinated by deep-sea creatures; reading hydrofeminism has probably planted this interest in me. I'm ready to be surprised by the deep sea. Maybe there is a limit to how far our explanations can go. In the end, it's you and your own experience. I noticed that in the centrepiece video you sort of give a voice to a water molecule. How did you come to this way of telling the story?

SŠ: I really wanted to create the work from the perspective of something in the water. My first thought was a fish or a seal. But then, under the influence of hydrofeminism, I started to look into the world of water molecules, their amazing qualities, and how they bond with each other. Through these bonds, they determine the structure of water, and, indirectly, other biological entities. That was the final impulse to make the main narrative of the video piece from the perspective of a water molecule. This also allowed for more speculation. I didn't have to focus so much on how it is in real life, like in the actual Baltic Sea. It could be more abstract, but still connected to the place, to the body.



Sabīne Šnē, 'There Are Tides in the Bodies', video still, 2025. Part of the mixed-media installation 'Tidal Tear Sediment'



Sabīne Šnē, 'Tidal Tear Sediment', 2025. Exhibition view at RIXC Gallery, Riga. Photo: Lelde Gūtmane

SAK: Building a first-person narrative might impact how we perceive ourselves. Were there moments in this process when you associated yourself with the molecule?

SŠ: Yes, it meant moving toward the ghostly realm I'm not so comfortable with. There were moments when I was in my studio late at night, thinking about water, when I suddenly vividly realised that watery movements were happening inside me. It was unpleasant.

SAK: Thinking in this way about identity is difficult. First, to a certain extent, there is nothing that remains static. Water comes and goes; it flows and becomes different; it becomes other bodies of water. We cannot rely on it. Second, there is nothing else in you. You're just an assemblage of different bodies of water, like molecules. Has this had an impact on how you see yourself?

SŠ: Absolutely. But this started before the exhibition, a couple of years ago, when I was working on my first solo exhibition 'Partner, Parasite' at the Kim? Contemporary Art Centre. It was a reflection on human parasitism, and how we could create a partnership with the ecosystems that sustain us. That's when I discovered the Gaia Hypothesis by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis. Margulis, especially, talks a lot about bacteria, different micro-organisms, the origins of life, and how these tiny organisms came together in water, and decided that, instead of eating each other, they would become partners. She was a microbiologist, so it's her area of expertise. That must have been the moment when I realised how many bacteria there are in my own body. After that, with each artwork, I became more and more interested in these alliances. Hence, this belief grew stronger: that we are truly part of nature, and we need other organisms to survive. There is no other way. We can't exist without them, even if they can exist without us.

Eventually, this led me to think about how we treat our bodies, and whether we are kind to them. Everyone should appreciate that they are a marvellous world of other worlds, intimately connected with other bodies. So we are individuals with our own place in a wider ecosystem.



Sabīne Šnē, part of the mixed-media installation 'Partner, Parasite', 2022. Solo exhibition view at Kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga. Photo: Ansis Starks

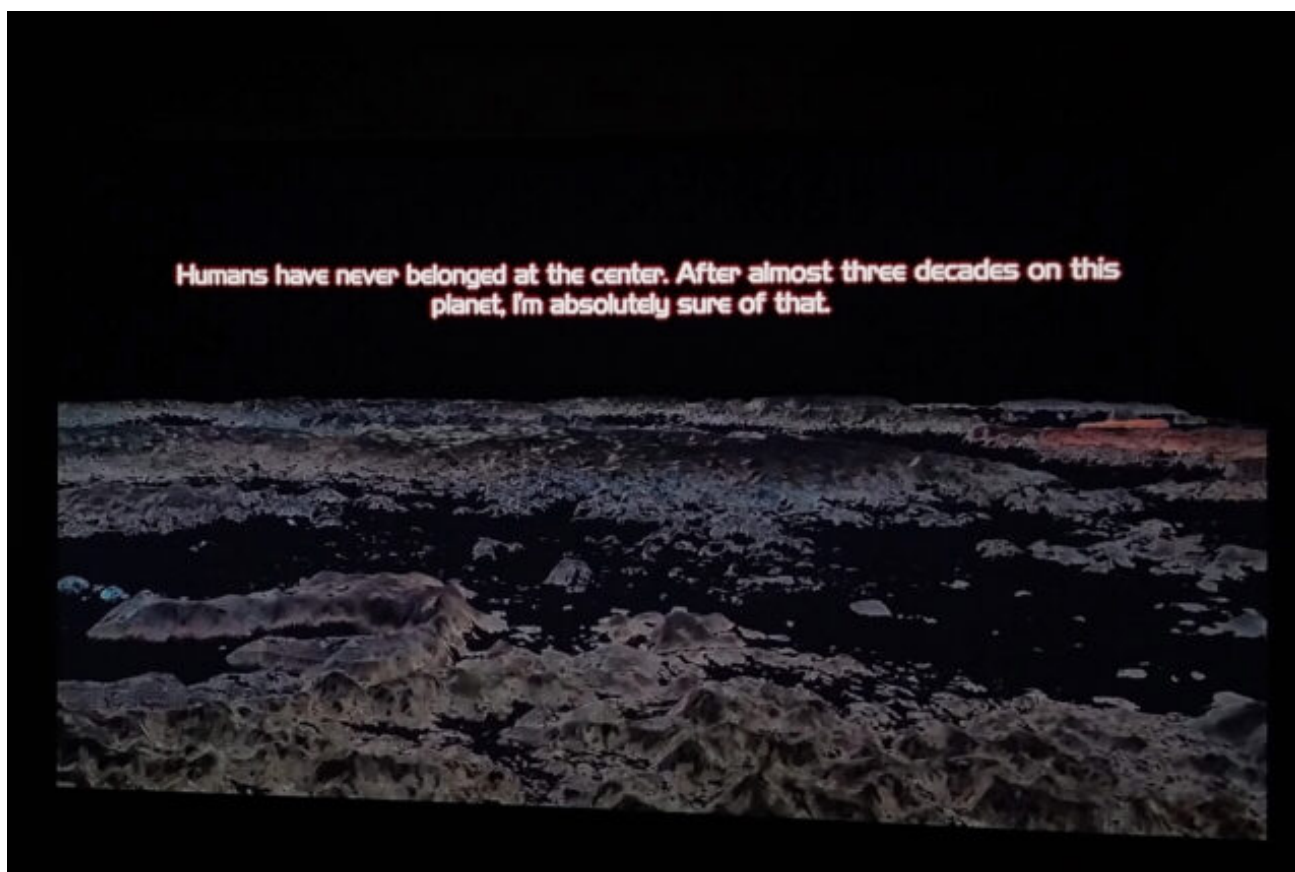
SAK: Another interesting notion that plays a role in hydrofeminism is the notion of membrane. The idea is that even though everything that we are flows in and out of us, still, for this impossibly brief moment of time, it is one, contained within the porous borders of the body. We shouldn't be

indifferent towards the differences of our situatedness. First of all, we speak from our human perspective. Whatever post-human theory you choose, the question always is, are we really capable of abandoning the human? This relates to your water molecule. Don't you see the danger in making the molecule human and returning to the human-centered perspective again?

SŠ: It's very tricky. I'm fully aware of that. Especially because I use language as a means of expression in my artworks. While there are different types of communication in the world and across different organisms, language is specifically human. So I immediately position these different entities in our human world, out of their natural habitat, which is probably not fair to them. That being said, if we use language responsibly, trying to make sense to ourselves and to others, it can be one of the best tools we have. I don't think language is problematic *per se*; rather, it's the meaning we assign to it. For example, more-than-human or non-human: terminologically, I find them deeply problematic. Maybe not so much in English, but in Latvian these terms carry a negative connotation, as if they were somehow less than us humans. If all of us, 'us' meaning humans, acknowledged that, like every other organism on this Earth, we are products of an event that happened 3.8 billion years ago, we would appreciate other organisms more. We should stop seeing ourselves as the pinnacle of evolution, and instead immerse ourselves in the environment around us. We are not smarter than ants or better than bees; each of us has specific qualities. We should celebrate our differences, look for commonalities, and learn from other entities as much as possible.

SAK: The notion of the body of water does exactly that. The 'body' of the body of water, in Latvian, we commonly use the literal translation, but actually it refers to containers of water, like ponds, cisterns, bottles and seas. For me, that makes a difference. If we think about the human and the non-human, then a negative aspect of otherness is associated with beyond-human bodies. But if we approach the question from the other side, taking the other as the starting-point and understanding ourselves by reference to not-even-living entities like ponds, as assemblages of water, it's not them that are made like us; rather, it is we that are made similar to them in certain respects like our material constitution.

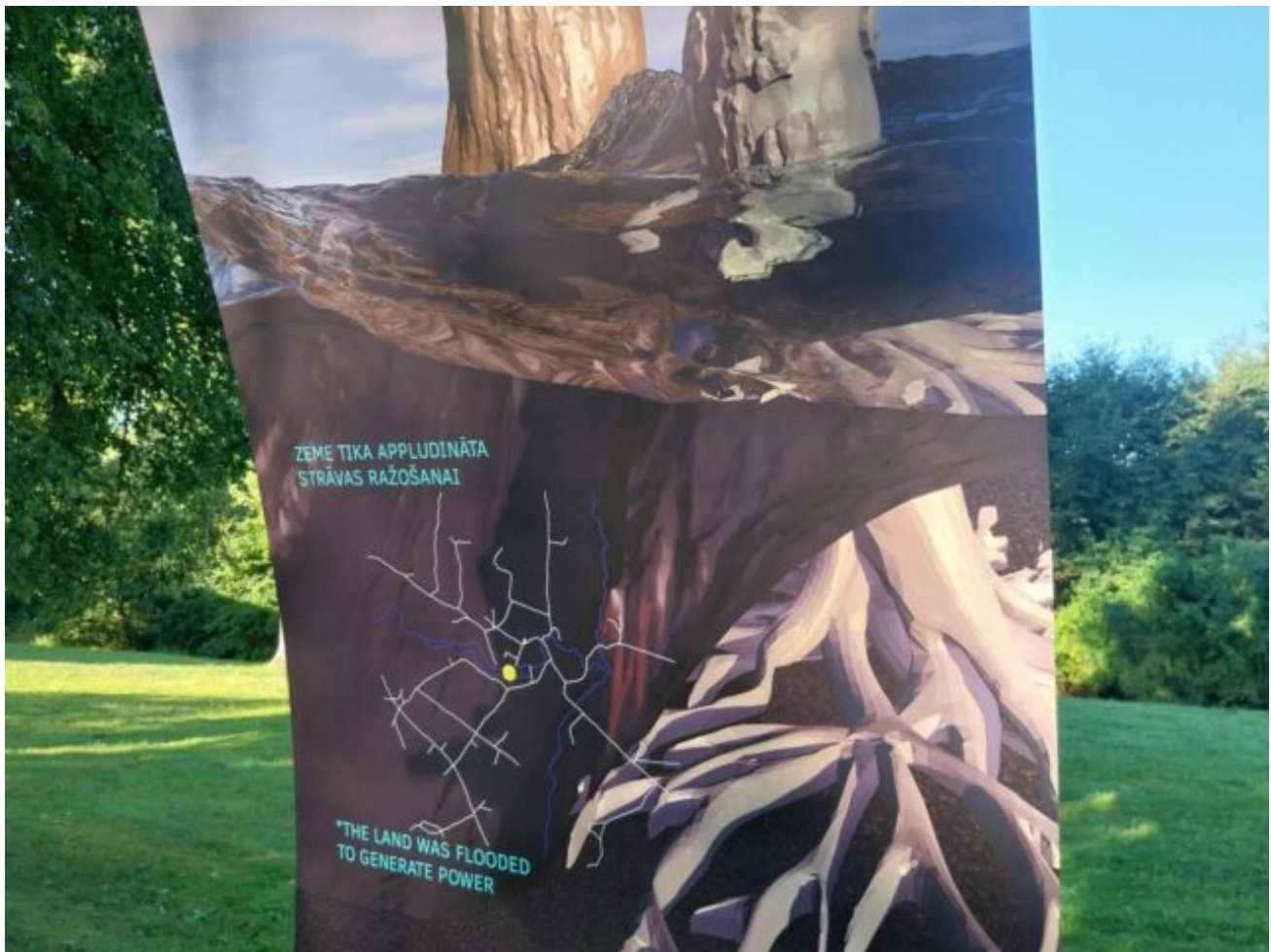
SŠ: Absolutely. There is this human-centered perspective. Many issues come together with it. The sooner we move away from it, the better off we will all be.



Sabīne Šnē, video 'Caves of Our Insides', 2024. Screening at the event 'Granny Ludski's Wild Gardening' at RIO Cinema, London



Sabīne Šnē, part of mixed-media installation 'Terrain We Traverse', 2024. Exhibition view at Kupfer Gallery, London. Photo: Rita Silva



Sabīne Šnē, part of the artwork 'Stolen Verdure. Soviet Legacy', 2024. Exhibited in a public outdoor space next to the municipality building in Padure, Latvia

SAK: *You mentioned in a previous exchange that you hate the word Anthropocene. Neimanis has a long critique of the word as not radical enough because it takes the human, Anthropos, as the starting point. Even if now, within the discourse of the Anthropocene, the human is not seen as the Crown of Creation any more, the discourse is still centered on human activities. There is a lot of truth in it, but I think we should realise that humans have a different level of responsibility. In that sense, maybe it makes sense to speak from our own point of view, and not to deny the specificity of the human condition. Even if I'm a body of water, there is still something very particularly human in how I can influence the world, which determines the responsibility I have to bear.*

SŠ: I agree. Going back to the Anthropocene, one of the reasons why, as I told you, I hate the word is because it unjustly places all of us on the same level. You and I will never cause as much damage as a giant oil company. And because of that, we are not as responsible as they are. Similarly, although I really don't like the term Global South, because of its strong ties to colonialism and exploitation, it's important to recognise that the people living there, who are already facing water shortages, don't bear most responsibility, even though they suffer the most.

SAK: *What do you make of it? I sometimes fear, especially in the context of theories, it's common to just criticise. But that doesn't change the way we act. Do you think there is a positive take on these issues? There is another keyword, care, which represents the structure in which I believe we should address these issues: not by judging one another, although there are clearly dissimilarities and inequalities that should be paid attention to, but by focusing on how each of us could benefit water from our own position.*

SŠ: Absolutely. Judging isn't helpful to anyone. It's important to understand what's happening, although that often leads to judgment, especially in the current economic and social climate. But as you said, care is more important. It's hard to implement in daily life, not because we don't care, but

because it's sometimes difficult to find the right way to care. For me, one of the first steps was listening. Listening to people with first-hand experience of things that, luckily, I don't have to face, like climate migration. But it's also about listening to other organisms. This brings an awareness of what people and living beings are actually going through. From there, we can begin to figure out the next steps. The more we know, the more it urges us to act. And then we just have to find the way to act that feels most appropriate for each of us.

SAK: *You mentioned not only listening to other humans, but also to the more-than-human. How do you do that?*

SŠ: Have you read 'Quantum Listening' by Pauline Oliveros? It's a beautiful book, and I highly recommend it. She explores ways we can imagine what other beings might say, and understand the world, by slowing down, being present, and perceiving what's happening around us. The living world speaks in tongues of scent, flourishing, rooting, burning and flooding. We can listen to it, and we can also imagine what more-than-human beings hum to each other. There's something very bold about imagining things. Once you imagine something, you're shifting something in your mind, aiming to make a difference.



Fragment of '445 Million Years Ago to Today', 2023. Part of the mixed-media installation 'To Be We Need to Know the River'. Solo exhibition view, Lot Projects, London. Photo: Chris Denoon

SAK: *In terms of water, there is this slogan: make matter matter differently. It captures this form of communication very well. One thing is listening, but water also gives us the ability to communicate in the other direction. By doing something with our own water, the water that we are right now, we can communicate something, especially care or neglect, to other organisms. By just caring or neglecting our own matter, you can say a lot to the world. It does take a bit of imagination, but it's also very tangible. Of course, if we want to do it the human way, we have to attach some meaning to it, and that's where imagination plays a role. But at the same time, there is a direct physical message that we're sending out every moment. What's your message?*

SŠ: I'm taking better care of myself. That's for sure. Interestingly, I've worked a lot with topics like organisms and the elements that surround and inhabit us. But for some reason, this particular exhibition and these works have had the greatest impact. I think it might have to do with the fact that water is so common, and because of that it's easy to grasp how important it is for water to remain clean. So my message is to maintain both metaphorically and physically clean water inside and outside our bodies.

SAK: That's interesting. For me, one of the big success elements of hydrofeminism is exactly this possibility of affecting the world by acting on oneself. It might make it sound like a super-selfish and self-contained practice. But it is also empowering, as it gives the individual the capacity to make a difference. As you said, you have to start somewhere, and you start with yourself. In these terms, having an impact on the world means realising and acknowledging the long-term consequences of your local actions, working with yourself and the bodies that surround you.

However, being a body of water not only means that we are related to all the other bodies of water that exist right now. Water has a long history, and hopefully will have a long future. And as bodies of water, this is our past and our future. Adopting this perspective has had a huge impact on some people with whom I have discussed this. Especially in the context of understanding and coming to terms with your own mortality. By being a body of water and part of this hydro-common, we will never die.

SŠ: That's beautiful. I must think about it.



Sabine Šnė, 'Tidal Tear Sediment', 2025. Exhibition view at RIXC Gallery, Riga. Photo: Lelde Gūtmane

SAK: It's one thing to realise that you have a direct impact on the world and take responsibility for it by caring. But it's something even more intimate when you realise that that water just is you after you die, or maybe all that is left of you.

SŠ: I find this idea appealing for many different reasons. But mostly, it calms me in a strange way. Perhaps we shouldn't delve too deeply into this thought: no one wants to think about their grandmother as a body of water while washing the dishes. But if you focus on the poetic notion that

our bodies are connected to deep time, and that we will, in some way, live on this Earth in the future, it creates a profound existence. It gives you a sense of how small we are as beings, and at the same time, how intricately arranged everything is on the planetary scale of events.

SAK: I have to disagree with the point that we should not think about the dead while washing the dishes. I find this physical intimacy through water very powerful. I feel we should emphasise, whenever possible, that this water might be your grandma, to build a more intimate relationship with it, transmitting the way we know some person to water, our more-than-human companions, and the planet. Perhaps we should abandon our human-centered perspective. At the same time, that's the way we know how to care and act, and one thing we can do is train ourselves to use the patterns we know from inter-human relationships or relationships with our loved ones to care for others.

I have always felt rather sorry that I'm not much into climate activism. Sometimes when I'm presenting on hydrofeminism, I feel I should be holding posters in front of the parliament instead, rather than debating it in academic or cultural circles. Because we still have the Baltic Sea and so many lakes and rivers, we just don't appreciate the urgency sometimes.

SŠ: I agree with you about that feeling regarding activism, but I know myself well enough to admit that I'm not a person who will be on the front line holding a poster. At the same time, I support and admire those who do. But I disagree with your take on small-circle discussions. The more we exchange ideas and opinions, the more we move towards appreciating what we have, and finding ways to support those who are less fortunate. That's the power of books, ideas and artworks, they offer a safe place where you can find something new and see the world from a different perspective. And then you can go back out into the *real* world and try to make a difference with this knowledge.

SAK: I guess we can all only do what we can in the best possible way. And if making a show about water is the way to go for you, then, I guess, why not?



Sabīne Šnē. Photo: Pietro Molinaris



Sofija Anna Kozlova. Photo: Kristīne Madjare

12 Steps above the Earth: or Straight into It

April 23, 2025

Author Jelena Škulis



Barbora Fastrová & Johana Pošová, 'Breasts, Children, Creatures, and Waste', exhibition view, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Andrej Vasilenko

Twelve steps. That's how far I walked from one end to the other of the tapestry *Breasts, Children, Creatures, and Waste* (2022) by Barbora Fástrová and Johana Pošová. I could have run, but not along the path of motherhood.

The handcrafted nature of the piece reminded me of my grandmother. She didn't weave, but she crocheted round rugs from strips of jersey similar to those used in Barbora and Johana's textile work. My grandmother would put those colourful, circular rugs, symbolic in that they came from 'my mother's mother', a kind of metaphorical journey, on the wooden floor just inside the entrance of her garden house in Salininkai (a suburb of Vilnius). Those rugs always felt special to me. Not because I couldn't (and still can't) crochet like that, but because I witnessed them being born from old textiles, so vibrant and unplanned, each one different, shaped by the discarded clothes of our family. And I would eagerly wait for a fresh new little circle, the 'new spring collection' meant for the entrance, in which we would see ourselves again, or more precisely, what I, my mom, dad, or sis had once worn.

This practice, along with others passed down by my grandmother, resonated deeply as I took those twelve steps the length of the long, collaborative tapestry, handmade by the artists from discarded textiles that once belonged to someone, and which now, through the artwork, belong to all of us. In today's textile-saturated world, the act of creating textile art may raise questions, just as the act of giving birth can raise questions in an overpopulated world. Yet the raw, physical engagement with the theme of motherhood began to resonate with my own journey into it, a state that is inseparable

from the body, both grounding and binding, a deep connection, even a kind of dependence, all at once.

And since connection, especially tactile, textile connection, is so intrinsic to motherhood, I felt a strong urge to speak with the artists themselves. I won't hide the fact that the topic of 'mothering' is personally relevant to me. Not in the way we often hear it asked: 'How do you manage to combine motherhood with your professional life?' To me, it's not about 'combination', no patching together of separate pieces, but rather a tactical and tactile coexistence, an integrated state of being that naturally encompasses all of life and a creative field as well.

I've always been interested in exploring motherhood as something dynamic, multifaceted, and not romanticised or merely represented visually ('visualised motherhood'), but lived, in relations. It makes me ask: What does 'mothering' or 'parenting' activate when it comes to sustainability, not only physical, but emotional, relational sustainability? In a world brimming with anxiety, absurdity and violence, these questions feel urgent, and even painful. So I asked the artists a few questions that were on my mind while walking by the work they created.



Barbora Fastrová & Johana Pošová, self-portrait

What does it mean to you to be both a mother and an artist?

Barbora: One of the few things that hasn't changed since becoming a mother is my deep desire to create and work. My children are often present while I'm working, less so as they grow older, but I still encourage it. At times it was necessary and often more difficult to have them with me, but I couldn't always disconnect from them and simply go off to work. When they were younger, it felt completely natural to take them everywhere with me, and now I think they genuinely enjoy being around when I'm creating. They even have their own projects, and we often work together in

harmony.

Johana: Before becoming a mother, I thought nothing much would change in my artistic practice after giving birth. But the intense nature of my first son made me slow down, and I started to think more consciously about what projects I chose to take on. As he grows older, it's much more possible and joyful to invite him into the process of creating, and everything is just easier. Motherhood, for me, has been about learning to be fully present, and at times surrendering, letting go of artistic or even personal goals. And then, gradually, finding space again for myself and my own needs.

What challenges on this path do you feel are important to address through art (and beyond)?

Barbora: One of the key moments in my career was the 'Cheap Art' project, a radical attempt to create a fully sustainable exhibition. I was pregnant with my first son when I wrote the project proposal in 2018, and looking back, I realise that was no coincidence. The project came from a strong desire to 'save the world' before my son arrived. Motherhood has definitely shifted my focus: it's led me towards more sustainable practices and feminist themes. It awakened a voice in me that I had been ignoring, and gave me greater strength to confront injustice.

Johana: I never realised how hard it is to take care of a fully dependent person. Before motherhood, I was actually very performance-oriented, and my self-confidence depended on that. Suddenly, a whole new aspect of life opened up to me, and I realised how much it had been underestimated. There is little recognition for it in our society, and until then I had also unconsciously overlooked it in my own mind. All those hours, days and months filled with care, and the invisible labour, often go unrecognised. I was already environmentally conscious at the time, but motherhood made me realise how deeply connected caring for our planet is to caring for children, and even for future generations, for those who are not born yet.

There is so much strength, and real pain, involved in bringing a new life into the world. We should genuinely revere and support women for that, for the physical endurance, the scars, the sheer power it takes. Which makes patriarchy and the ongoing suppression of women's rights feel even more senseless and outrageous than ever before.

What challenges did you face while creating the tapestry?

Barbora: At first the work was mainly an ecological message, a visual transformation between the natural and the synthetic. But gradually it also became about our own personal transformation as expecting mothers, and the process of making the tapestry itself.

The piece was part of a major exhibition for the Czech Government Office, to be displayed during the Czech Presidency of the EU Council in 2022. The greatest challenge at that time was navigating the bureaucracy that came with such an official commission, especially dealing with the constantly shrinking timeframe in which we had to start and complete the work.

Johana: Answering from the perspective of my third trimester at the time, it was incredibly challenging to climb the ladder every day, trying to complete as much of the tapestry as possible before giving birth, since we didn't have enough time to make such a large-scale piece at our leisure.



Barbora Fastrová & Johana Pošová, 'Breasts, Children, Creatures, and Waste', exhibition view, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Andrej Vasilenko

This last response from Johana made me recall that weaving is an incredibly slow, time-consuming process, sometimes incompatible with the rapid pace of the contemporary world. Does the world of motherhood face the same challenge, whereby it must always be adjusted to and combined with something else, rather than absorbed into it? Those twelve steps, woven by the artists alongside their children, either on their way into the world or already buzzing around them, represent that slow, regular action, something that cannot be rushed, much like ecological problem-solving, or practices that ensure the sustainability of relationships.

In her *Recrafting Futures: Feminist Practices of Material Engagement* (2023), Karolina Majewska-Güde, a curator and doctor of art history, analyses the practices of various contemporary women artists, activists and curators, and poses the question 'Why craft and feminism, still?' Karolina reminds us of the widespread use of crafts by Western second wave feminist artists who approached it as both a subject and a critical artistic language. She mentions that viewing craft as a legitimate art form became a way to recognise invisible labour, an invisible voice, and desires that are not just understood as a growing ecological material form but as something more dynamic. However, for any practice to be understood, it requires continuity of action.

The opportunity to engage sensorially and emotionally with the world of motherhood, connecting it to a longer, more continuous and embodied history, touches on a theme that may be difficult to grasp quickly without an experiential perspective. My initial association with my grandmother's handmade rugs is a direct example of this.

Whether intuitively and unconsciously, as Johana suggests, or even seeking equality, we often avoid, and at times it feels uncomfortable, discussing professionalism in relation to parenthood. This tension may stem from a value system we have inherited, one rooted in patriarchal structures, where

a person is expected to succeed as a professional detached from her or his parental identity. But is the personal not inherently political?

This framework of evaluation may simply be a legacy of past systems, yet still falling short in supporting true equality, especially when it comes to time, space, or bodily autonomy. And this is not a call to privilege one identity over another. Rather, it is an invitation re-engage sensorily, or 'refeel' how society can co-live with parenthood, through deeper empathy and a willingness to listen to its needs, without turning it into a race or competition, within contemporary cultural and professional life. How might such a dialogue take shape through the body, through space, and through the presence of peace, with each other, and the Earth.

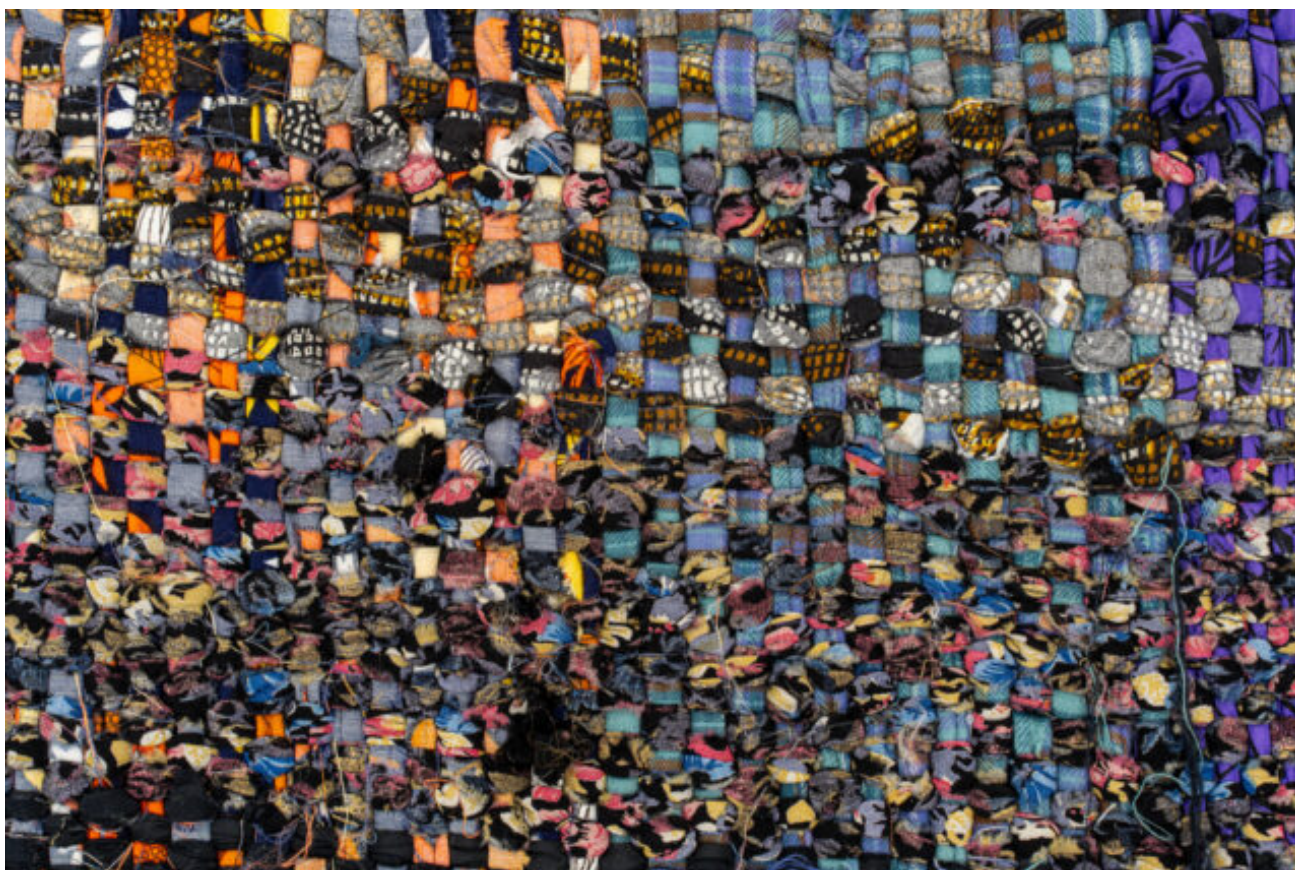
Thank you to Barbora and Johana for the chance to follow the many threads intertwining creation and motherhood in colourful steps. I invite everyone to experience the themes of body, slowness, time and connection in the exhibition ***Breasts, Children, Creatures, and Waste*** at the Contemporary Art Centre, running until 11 May. The installation is not for mothers or about mothers, it is for anyone who is in any way connected to them. Who isn't?



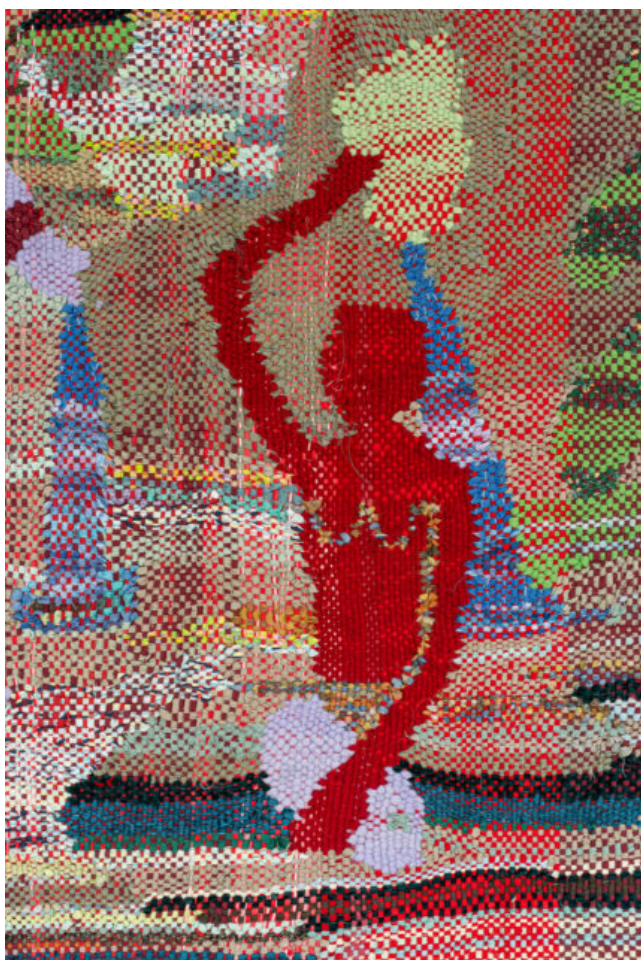
Barbora Fastrová & Johana Pošová, 'Breasts, Children, Creatures, and Waste', exhibition view, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Andrej Vasilenko



Barbora Fastrová & Johana Pošová, 'Breasts, Children, Creatures, and Waste', exhibition view, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Andrej Vasilenko



Barbora Fastrová & Johana Pošová, 'Breasts, Children, Creatures, and Waste', exhibition view, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Andrej Vasilenko



Barbora Fastrová & Johana Pošová, 'Breasts, Children, Creatures, and Waste', exhibition view, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Andrej Vasilenko



Barbora Fastrová & Johana Pošová, 'Breasts, Children, Creatures, and Waste', exhibition view, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, 2025. Photo: Andrej Vasilenko

Dr Jelena Škulis is a researcher, lecturer and artist, focusing on connection with the material and the community. A graduate in social sciences (psychology) and doctoral studies in visual art, she creates her practice from handwork, slow weaving, everyday language, different materials paraphrase, performative action, and trying to be a part of the community.

Barbora Fastrová (b. 1988) and Johana Pošová (b. 1985) have been collaborating since 2014. In their artistic practice, which spans a range of media, the duo explore the relationship between nature and (Western) culture. In the autumn of 2018, they launched a long-term project entitled 'Cheap Art'. The artists place a strong emphasis on recycling and waste, as both a creative method and a conceptual theme. Through experimentation, they aim to understand how their conscious and ecological approach influences an exhibition's preparation, the final form, and the audience experience.

Fastrová and Pošová have held solo exhibitions at the Čepan Gallery in Trnava, Slovakia (2023), the Entrance Gallery in Prague (2020), the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (2018), the Temporary Parapet Gallery in Bratislava (2018), the Třinec City Gallery in the Czech Republic (2018), the Ferdinand Baumann Gallery in Prague (2017), the INI Gallery in Prague (2017), the Syntax Gallery in Lisbon (2016), the TIC Gallery in Brno, Czech Republic (2015), and the Berlinskej Model Gallery in Prague (2014).

We Come in Packs. The exhibition 'Fandom' by Anastasia Sosunova at the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius

April 28, 2025

Author Rosana Lukauskaitė



Anastasia Sosunova, 'Xover', 2025, HD video, sound, 12'52 min (still).

An unfortunate coincidence or a twist of fate? On the final evening of the calendar winter, when Anastasia Sosunova's exhibition 'Fandom' opened its doors to visitors at the Contemporary Art Centre, the artist likely couldn't fully immerse herself in the festive bustle of the opening or share the echoes of her creative journey with colleagues. Instead, reality came crashing down with all its brutality: the political drama unfolding in the White House reached a new level of grotesqueness. J.D. Vance's mannered tone of disdain toward Zelensky, Trump's trademark theatrical bravado, and rhetoric amplifying the effect of a distorted reality. This wasn't just another routine political intrigue; the whole scene, the flickering of smart screens, the panic-stricken voices of political analysts in studios, and the collective focus on a single dramatic event, inadvertently became a real-life counterpart to the ideas explored in Sosunova's exhibition 'Fandom'.



'Fandom', exhibition view. Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), 2025, Vilnius. Photo: Jonas Balsevičius

The central video work of the exhibition, *Xover*, opens with speculative, fictional landscapes that the artist describes as interpretations of narrated images, an attempt to reconstruct places that never existed, yet live on as constructs of collective imagination. One unexpected crossover, worthy of both fan-made video montages and a post-Internet political tragi-comedy, occurred just days before the exhibition opening: the artist saw the president of the United States sharing an AI-generated video of 'Gaza Rivera' on the platform X. And suddenly, a surprising bridge emerged between the speculative, fictional landscapes at the beginning of Sosunova's video and the hyperreal, fabricated geopolitical 'reality' presented by an algorithm as fact. In the context of contemporary art, this tension between fiction and supposed reality echoes Hito Steyerl's piece *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, which illustrates how the images we consume can be both invisible and instrumental in shaping an omnipotent narrative, underscoring how today's art not only documents but actively distorts and constructs our collective imagination.

Today's political movements are often fuelled by the energy of populism, which structurally mirrors the phenomena of mass fan culture, the so-called *fandom*. Much like devoted fans who build their own mythologies around figures of popular culture, political supporters increasingly behave like radical fanatics, blindly following their 'idol', defending their narrative, and embodying their persona. Several moments in Sosunova's exhibition can be read within this context, as a sensitive commentary on how the aesthetics, narratives and symbolic logic of mass culture seep into political reality, transforming it into a spectacle where emotion often triumphs over rational argument, and reality begins to function as a visual system. This invites reflection on the extent to which contemporary imagination, both political and cultural, relies not on facts but on symbolic narratives that operate through engagement, intuition and visual power, even when the stakes involve survival strategies or apocalyptic visions of the world's end.



Anastasia Sosunova, 'Xover', 2025, HD video, sound, 12'52 min (still).

One of the more intriguing examples of how speculative thinking seeks to transcend the boundaries of time, language and culture is the so-called 'ray cat' concept, the idea of creating genetically modified animals that would change colour in response to radiation, becoming living warning signs for future generations in the event of civilisational collapse, when our familiar systems of signs might lose their meaning. This theory, operating between biology and mythology, proposes not a technical but a cultural solution, encoding danger not in an information plaque, but in a living, visually charged creature. Embedded within the 'ray cats' concept is a desire to abandon rational modes of signification that are comprehensible only to a specific epoch or culture. This notion resonates with the artist's own inquiries: in her practice, the circulation of images, iconographic layering, and even the prophylactic remixing of fan-made visuals become methods not only of transmitting information but of generating intuitions, attitudes, and a kind of atmospheric knowledge. Yet a fundamental difference emerges at the level of function: the myth of the 'ray cats' is deliberately constructed as a tool to regulate future behaviour; whereas in the artist's work, myth or narrative functions as an autonomous, wandering form, without a clear purpose, operating as friction, as time beside us, rather than as a warning.

The artist's exploration of fandom, DIY culture, and their ties to collective storytelling highlights a compelling relationship between community-generated meaning and individual belief, even, one might say, a kind of quasi-religious symbolic excess born from collective emotional needs. I'm reminded of Jordan Peterson, the Canadian professor of clinical psychology and mouthpiece of the alt-right, bursting into tears during a livestream out of fear that collectivism leads straight to the Gulag, as if any form of communal spirit instantly triggers a totalitarian alarm. The irony here is unavoidable: Peterson, in all his rhetorical efforts to uphold the sanctity of individualism, becomes a meme akin to Kermit the Frog, a phenomenon of collective culture, endlessly circulated, transformed and reinterpreted through the lens of Internet folklore. In other words, whether he likes it or not, Peterson contributes to the very kind of collective imagination he so deeply fears.



'Fandom', exhibition view. Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), 2025, Vilnius. Photo: Jonas Balsevičius

Peterson seems to represent an epistemological purity of conservatism: order over chaos, logos over myth. But Sosunova's practice, especially when she refers to the spiritual teachings of a home improvement store founder as a pseudo-religious doctrine that fuses nationalism, Christianity, liberal capitalism and a touch of theosophy wafting in from the Soviet mist, is a poetry of disorder, a dream of meanings, like images, always slipping away. Her approach is anti-Petersonian: narrative not as a hierarchical structure, but as a pile of dislodged security cameras thrown into a metal merchandise bin, fragments of collective memory that imperceptibly generate a new mythology and way of seeing. And what does the 'ray cats' theory suggest? That even when we think in 'scientific' terms, we still rely on myths, symbolic imagery, and instinctive collective imagination. We create radiation cats as a warning because the rational model is too weak to withstand the erosion of time. And what if the artist, working with the material of fandom, is essentially doing the same thing today? She reflects on a contemporary mythological thinking that no longer originates from the state or the Church, but from Reddit threads, YouTube comments, and fanfictions. The artist analyses that magic through visual means, through play, through gentle irony. She doesn't propose an alternative doctrine, but reveals how such doctrines are born, not as acts of force, but as a synthesis of everyday objects, fragments and beliefs.

In the thermal camera footage used by Anastasia Sosunova, individual features are seemingly erased, bodies become patches of heat moving through darkness. The artist reflects on a kind of 'Martian energy', the need for aggression, release and transgression, which continues to find symbolic expression even within civilised society. Even where fireworks are officially banned, their allure persists. This becomes especially ambiguous in the context of the war in Ukraine, when rockets are exploding in real life, settlements are being destroyed, and people are dying; a festive explosion, taking place thousands of kilometres away, suddenly feels naive. Within this tension between celebratory euphoria and global tragedy, the thermal imagery captured by Sosunova becomes almost an anthropological study: she does not observe individuals but collective action, a ritual need to release, to celebrate through fire and explosion. It's a compelling yet uncomfortably

familiar landscape, where civility collides with archaic instinct. A completely different poetics of the thermal camera can be found in the work of the British artist Caroline Broadhead. While Sosunova uses the technology to explore aggressive impulses, collective behaviour, or psychogeographic terrains, Broadhead turns thermal imaging into a tool of intimacy, a means of capturing traces of warmth, points of touch, the body's fragility in time. Her gaze is quiet, almost meditative, focused on the personal moment of being rather than on social spectacle. Thus, the same technology reveals two opposing states of human experience, external chaos and inner warmth.



'Fandom', exhibition view. Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), 2025, Vilnius. Photo: Jonas Balsevičius



'Fandom', exhibition view. Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), 2025, Vilnius. Photo: Jonas Balsevičius

One of the most subtle and striking layers of the exhibition lies in the resonance between its display architecture and the concept of so-called rage rooms: spaces where everyday objects become legally sanctioned outlets for aggression. In Sosunova's installation, old printers, screens and surveillance cameras are lined up as if carefully selected not only for their aesthetic qualities but also according to the logic of impact, objects that seem to invite being smashed. This relationship with objects, somewhere between cultural artefact and sacrificial offering, reveals a contemporary need to release energy in a way that is both civilised and instinctual. If fireworks in the video works function as ritualised discharge, here it's technological remnants, long past their usefulness, that become a kind of 'digital era bone relics'. We cannot destroy what we still consider valuable, so we destroy what has fallen outside the bounds of progress. There is less nihilism in this destruction than there is a gesture: of release, of losing control, of restoring power. And here, unexpectedly, the opening scene from Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* comes to mind: the ape discovering the bone as a tool. Only this time, the bone is a Wi-Fi router, a scanner or a discarded monitor. Evolution here is not a forward movement, but a cyclical return to the beginning, this time with a post-industrial landscape in the background. Smashing the object becomes not an act of destruction, but a meaningful gesture, a way to feel, to express oneself, to exist. And perhaps this, among all the explosions and artefacts, is one of the few sincere acts we still allow ourselves.

As Virgil wrote, 'My mind is intent on singing of shapes changed into new bodies.' Such a spiritual impulse, a desire to sing and convey what has taken on a new form, feels fitting when attempting to grasp Anastasia Sosunova's exhibition. It is a multifaceted, multilayered narrative in which speculative landscapes, folkloric webs of intuition, technological artefacts and collective emotions interweave into a disordered, yet remarkably vibrant tapestry. A short review can barely define it, at best it may only brush against it, trace the contours of something that is constantly shifting, vibrating, slipping away. In this exhibition, fandom acquires an existential depth. Not as a superficial fascination, but as a form of contemporary mythology that functions like ancient epics: gathering, shaping identity, allowing meaning to emerge from what is inevitable, chaotic or painfully close.

Perhaps this is the exhibition's true essence, not to offer a finished narrative, but to respond to the inner impulse to sing of shapes changed into new bodies, and to show that even the most fragmented forms of collective imagination can become a temporary, yet meaningful, refuge for significance.



Anastasia Sosunova, 'Public Feelings', 2025, scrap metal (fragments of cars), etched zinc, polystyrene, water from Villa Unity and the lake from the night of 18 January, found objects. Photo: Jonas Balsevičius



Anastasia Sosunova, '888_XXX_SSS', 2024, steel, etched zinc and copper, PETG plastic, silicone, polystyrene, epoxy resin, copper and zinc sulfate, temporary tattoo stickers, wire, ink, water, found objects. Photo: Jonas Balsevičius



Anastasia Sosunova, '888_XXX_SSS', 2024, steel, etched zinc and copper, PETG plastic, silicone, polystyrene, epoxy resin, copper and zinc sulfate, temporary tattoo stickers, wire, ink, water, found objects. Photo: Jonas Balsevičius



'Fandom', exhibition view. Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), 2025, Vilnius. Photo: Jonas Balsevičius

Photo reportage from the exhibition 'The Fog Draws a Softer Edge' by Kristīne Daukšte at TUR_telpa

April 4, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The exhibition 'The Fog Draws a Softer Edge' by Kristīne Daukšte ran at TUR_telpa until 22 March.

Kristīne Daukšte's new work invites visitors into a space that feels like it's caught in a moment of change – somewhere between the solid and the fleeting, the natural and the constructed. Her installation emerges from a deep engagement with the space of TUR, where its distinct characteristics have acted as a catalyst for ideas, material, and form to converge. In response to its atmosphere and the layered traces of what came before, the work takes shape as an extension of its surroundings, subtly guided by the creative dialogue that unfolds within it. Her installation feels suspended from a ground layered by previous presence and appears to be growing naturally from the essence of the space. As if, after some indistinct weight of time, a fog has lifted and revealed a landscape that has grown organically from it, exploring material and how it relates to her concepts and artistic practice.

The installation does not impose itself on the space but rather unfolds within and acknowledges it – TUR, with its vast openness, its exposure to the elements, the way nature encroaches through gaps

and seams. The humidity, the cold, the shifting light – they do not merely surround the work but shape it, becoming integral to its form and meaning. Like fog itself, the work resists rigid definition; it hovers, it shifts, it invites multiple readings. Philosophers Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome – an interconnected system without hierarchy – offers a useful lens through which to read this work: a landscape of thought that refuses singular narratives. Rather than being a static object, the installation becomes an unfolding event, an encounter that shifts with the movement of the viewer. The act of navigating the space – walking, pausing, looking downward as one might on a forest path – becomes part of the experience, an embodied form of wayfinding.

Composed of abstract cutouts – leaf-like, petal-like, perhaps fragments of a larger whole – the installation extends horizontally, echoing natural formations while also suggesting traces of human intervention. It oscillates between states: a structure that could be a shelter, a greenhouse, a remnant of excavation. Its presence is both grounded and ephemeral, evoking the precarious balance between material permanence and inevitable dissolution. Like a cartographic exercise in flux, it does not map space as a fixed entity but as a network of relations – fluid, contingent, and ever-changing.

Curator and text: Edd Schouten

Light Design: Maksimilians Kotovičs

Project Manager: Kristīne Ercika

Production Support: Ada Ruszkiewicz and Andris Freibergs

Graphic Design: Andris Kalīņins

Supported by the Latvian State Culture Capital Foundation

Photography: Kristīne Madjare





















Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Light Matter in Dark State' by Aivar Tõnso at the EKA Gallery

April 7, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



Aivar Tõnso's exhibition "Light Matter in Dark State" continues his experiments in the field of sound art that grew out of his musical work. The spatial sound exhibition, created with the Ebakõlar System, which relies on the sound characteristics of various materials, aims to push the boundaries of the listening experience, inviting viewers not only to listen, but also to actively perceive and participate in the sound space. It is possible to move within a sound composition without a definite beginning and end, which can be entered at any moment in time from any freely chosen direction.

Since sound and imagination are the central themes in Tõnso's work, he also considers the character of sounds important, and as one way to achieve unique sounds, he often uses the constantly evolving Ebakõlar System built on the basis of various physical materials. Unlike commercial speakers designed for listening to music, Ebakõlar System does not try to play the widest possible sound frequency spectrum evenly. Each speaker has its own unique raw and undesigned character resulting from the properties of the material. It is also a process where the material visible to the eye acquires new hidden meanings due to the excitation by sounds.

Aivar Tõnso is a musician, sound artist and curator of interdisciplinary cultural events. He has been involved in electronic music creation since the early 90s and has participated in projects such as Hüpnosaurus, Kismabande, Kulgurid and Ulmer. Having long ventured into the fringes of club music and experimental electronic music, he has been active in the field of sound art in recent years both as an artist and as the organizer of the Üle Heli festival.

Graphic design by: Jaan Evert
Light design by: Rene Manivald Tamm
Technical support: Erik Hõim

The exhibition is supported by Cultural Endowment of Estonia, Sadolin Estonia, Tallinn City and Tallinn Music Week.

Opening drinks from Põhjala Brewery.

Aivar Tõnso's solo exhibition "Light Matter in Dark State"

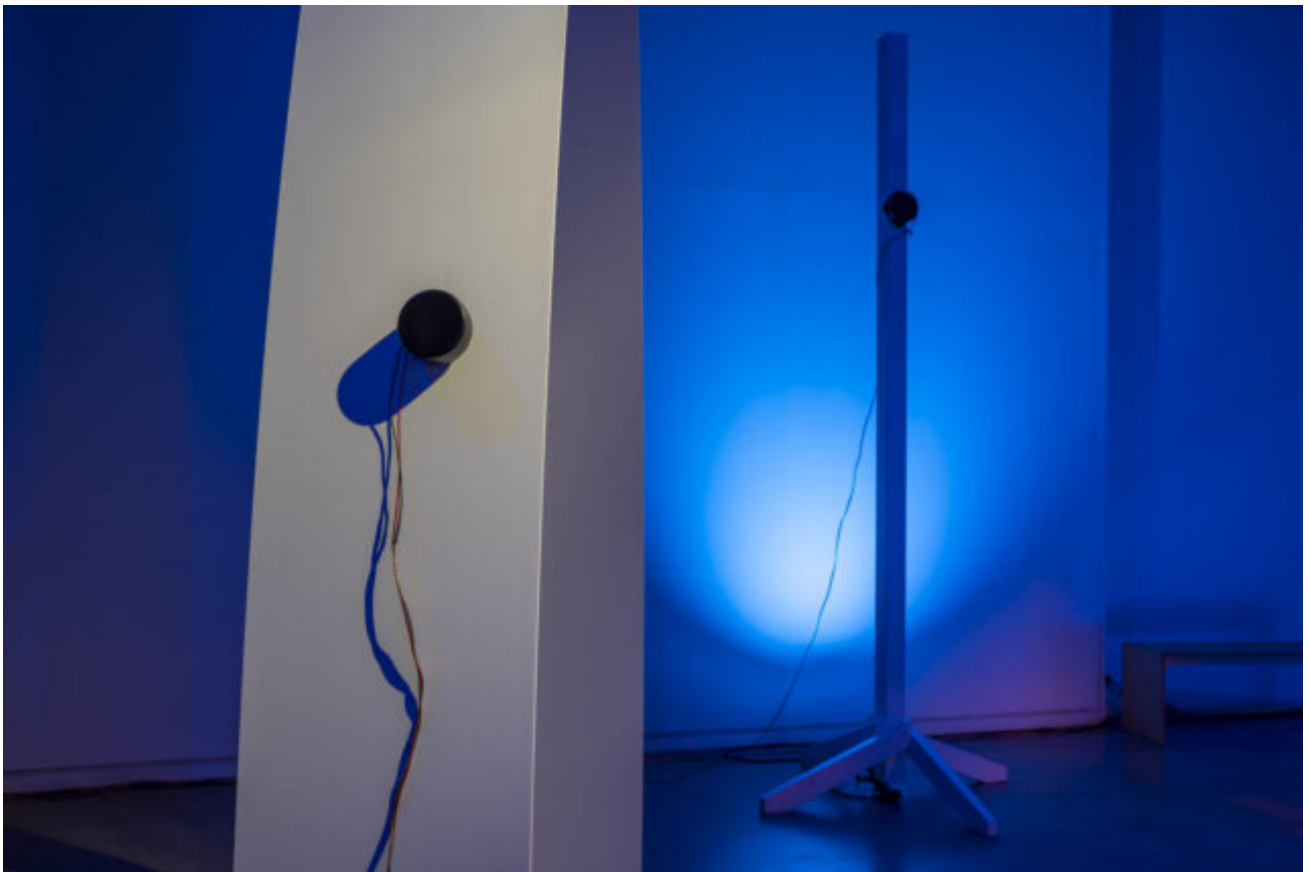
EKA Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia
3.–6.04.2025

Photography: Ako Allik











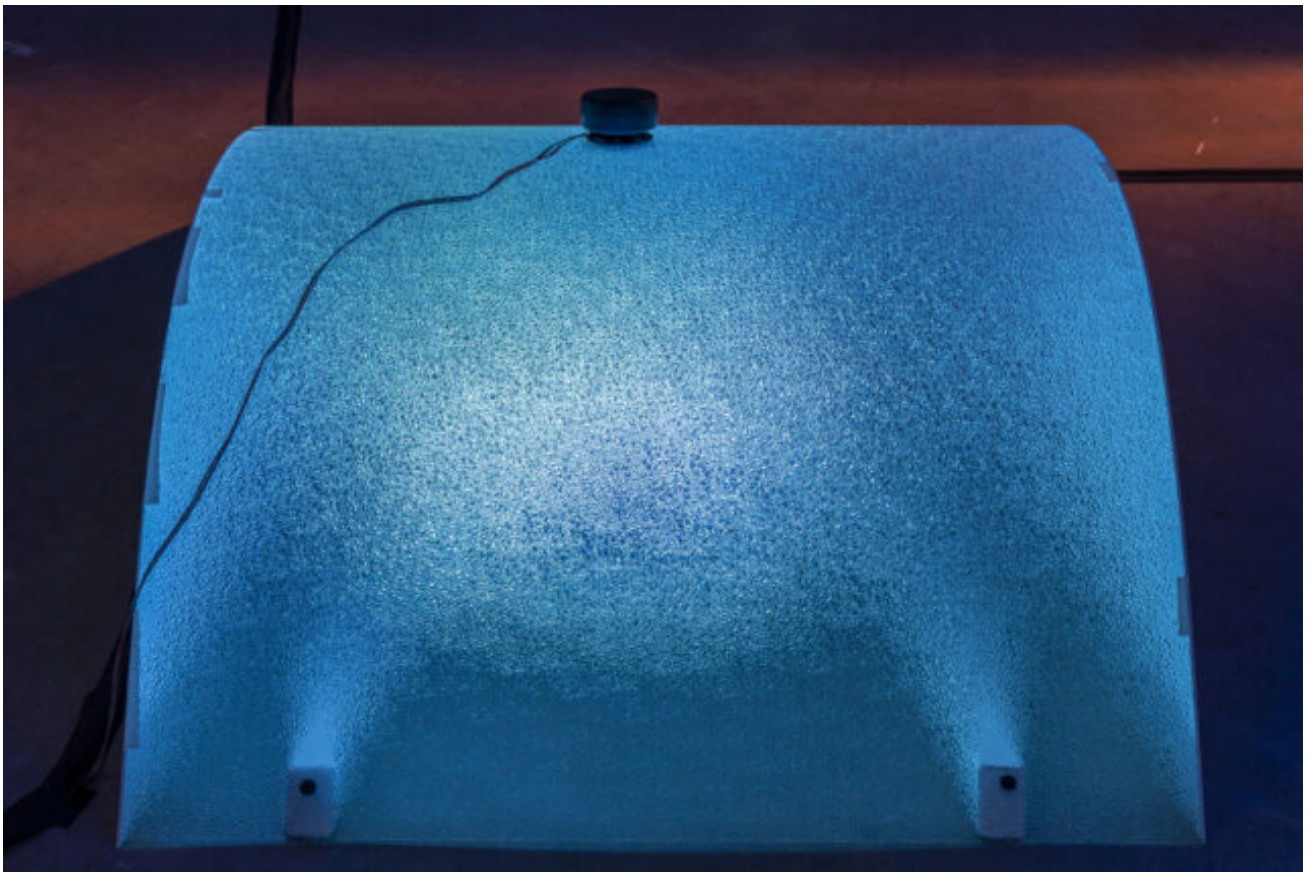








Photo reportage from the exhibition 'Sync' by Jurgis Tarabilda at Gallery Meno Niša

April 14, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



On April 2 exhibition **Sync** by artist Jurgis Tarabilda opened at Vilnius City Gallery Meno Niša. Transforming the gallery space, the exhibition becomes a visual ecosystem, where canvases merge into overlapping systems, challenging the traditional notion of a painting as an independent, self-contained whole.

Art critic Rosana Lukauskaitė describes the context of **Sync** in the exhibition's annotation: 'The boundary between digital and physical reality is becoming increasingly blurred, transforming into a ductile, ever-shifting interface between signal and perception. Can we feel the fever of a streamer through a screen? Can a cold network of pixels convey the fear of a man in a war zone? Why do those three megapixels in the distance seem more significant than the four nearby? We are constantly searching for a recognisable shape, assigning faces to random lines, and imbuing jerky data with a soul.'

Jurgis Tarabilda's work explores the relationship between the virtual and the material, the interplay of abstraction and meaning, and the blurring boundaries between the real and the digital, which continue to reshape how we perceive and understand images. In **Sync**, the creative process itself becomes an act of synchronizing two different forms of visual existence.

The artist often focuses on the practice of collecting – documenting phenomena that intrigue him, such as isolated clouds, or gathering objects left behind by people, like slips of paper with pen tests from stationery stores. For this exhibition, he brings together intuitive drawings from his own virtual space, which he himself sees as traces of touch on a screen. ‘These are intuitive gestures created on a touchpad, based on automatic drawing techniques – drawings made in virtual space and later precisely transferred onto canvas using paint, paint strips, and a roller,’ Tarabilda explains.

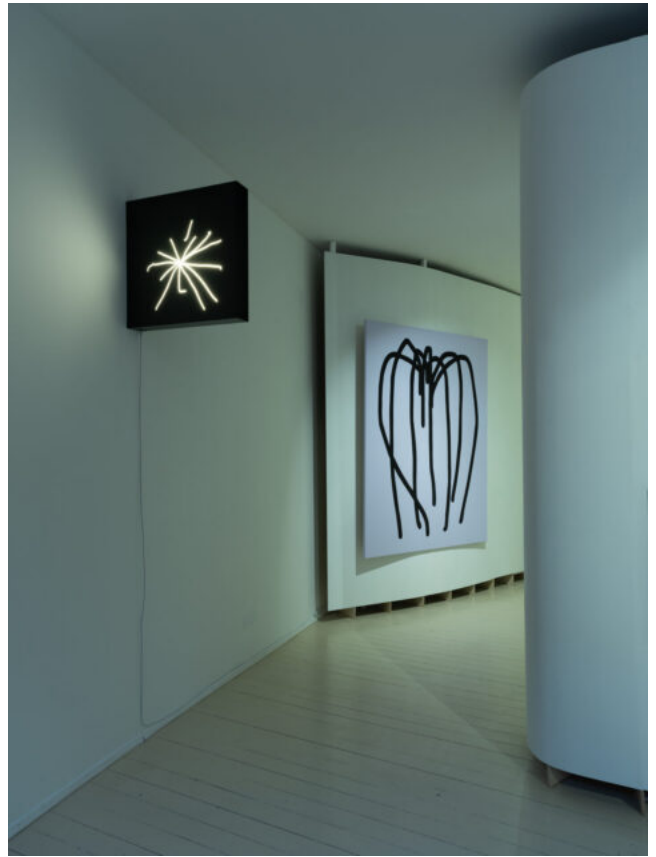
For the exhibition’s architect, Gabrielė Černiavskaja, the idea of transforming the gallery space emerged from an in-depth analysis of Tarabilda’s work, his way of speaking about it, and his artistic interests. From their conversations, she gathered a set of key concepts: **digital atmospheres**, **clouds**, **layeredness**. The way the artist described this process of gathering information, as if it were accumulating upon itself, reminded her of a perpetually loading web page.

‘These conversations made me think of the word ‘syncing’ – like the constant, real-time updating of data in a cloud drive, such as Google Drive. The medium is never finite. That’s why I wanted to ‘cut away’ certain sections of Meno Niša’s space, making them feel like parts of a webpage that haven’t fully loaded yet,’ Černiavskaja explains.

Sync is Jurgis Tarabilda’s fifth solo exhibition. Born in 1992, the artist graduated from the Sculpture Department of Vilnius Academy of Arts. His work has been exhibited in Lithuania and abroad, earning several awards, including the Audience Prize at the Young Painter Prize competition (2017) and the title of Best Artist at the ArtVilnius Art Fair (2020), as voted by visitors. His works have been acquired by private collectors across Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, the USA, Estonia, Denmark, the UAE, Israel, Switzerland, and the UK, as well as the MO Museum in Vilnius. His art has been successfully presented at VOLTA Basel, Positions Berlin, Enter in Copenhagen, viennacontemporary, and ArtVilnius.

Sync will be on view at Vilnius City Gallery Meno Niša until May 20. The exhibition’s architect is Gabrielė Černiavskaja, with graphic design by Marek Volda. The exhibition is financed by the Lithuanian Council for Culture, and Meno Niša Gallery is supported by Vilnius City Municipality.

Photography: Laurynas Skeisgiela



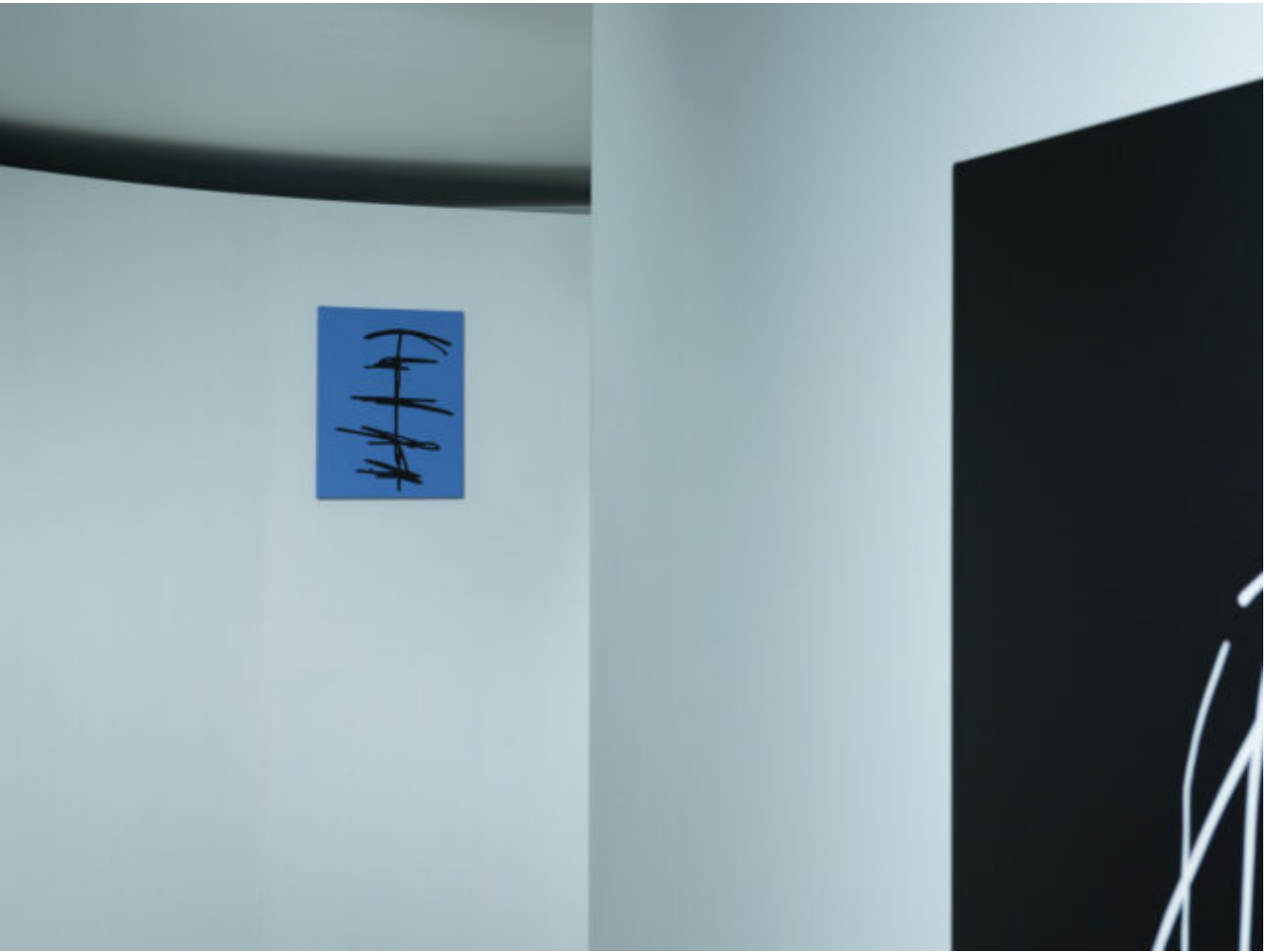




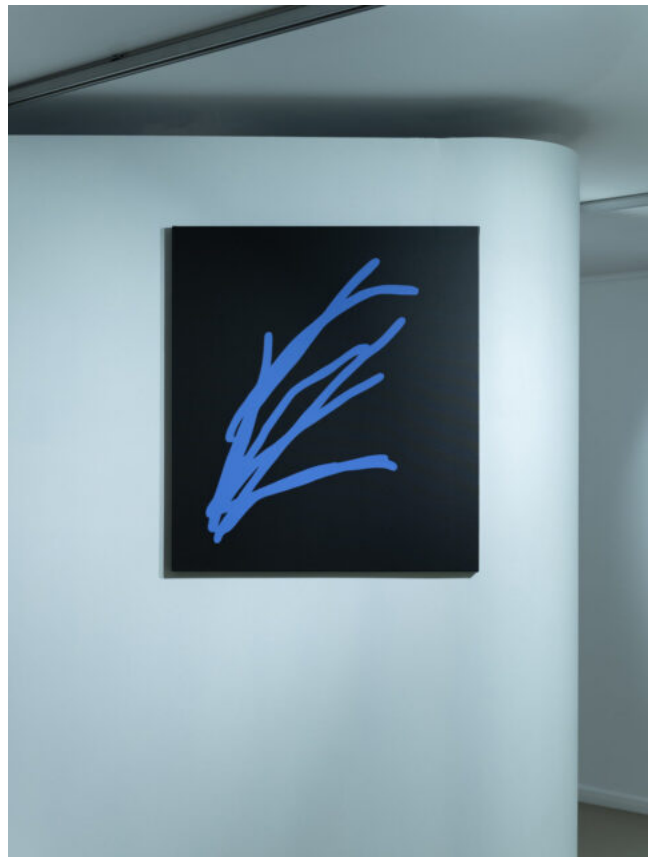












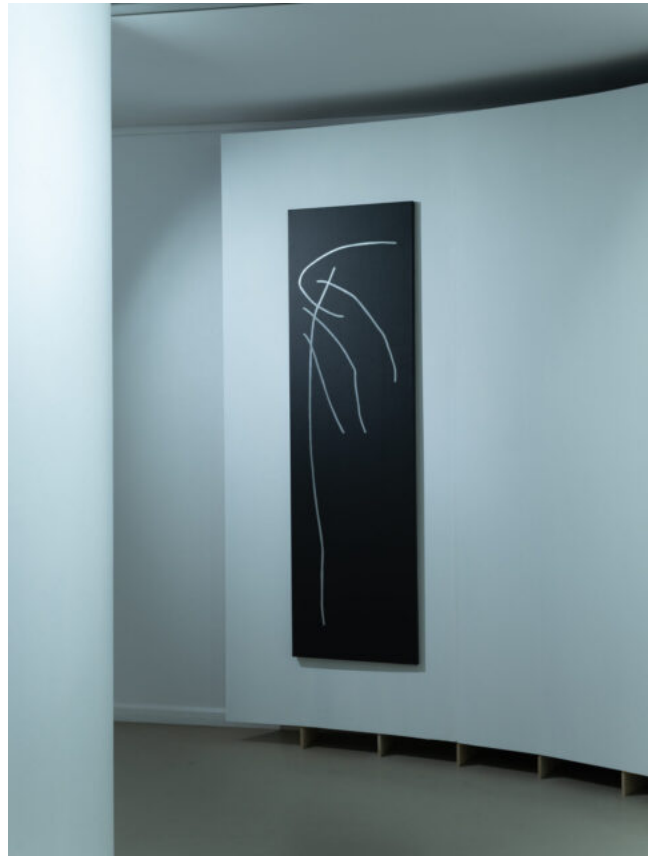




Photo reportage from the exhibition 'FEMALE MONSTERS' by Sabīne Vernere at Galerija ASNI

April 15, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



While studying in the bachelor's program of the Art Academy of Latvia, I presented some small ink drawings depicting overt sexual bodies at a semester show. Grinning broadly, a lecturer from the Department of Painting loudly asked me: "Has someone hurt you?" The other members of the committee, all men, chuckled. Obviously, no one was expecting a serious answer from me. It was a "joke," an attempt to simplify the viewing and evaluation of my work, while depriving me of the opportunity to seriously explain the chosen themes and compositions.

Back in high school, after a wild party, a young man said to me, "There are girls that I am with, and then there are girls like you...". For a long time, I buried this phrase in my subconscious, but over the past three years, while studying the origins of feminine-monster myths, it has come back to nag me.

Thinking about this and many other professional and private insults, I have realised they have given me the strength to continue exploring the subject of sexuality. This initial impulse of defiance has evolved over more than a decade into a process of artistic exploration, culminating in the study of ancient Greek myths and archaeological artifacts conducted as part of a professional doctorate, focusing specifically on Medusa, Pandora and the Sirens. These sexualized monsters are an integral part of the phallogocentric narratives of Western culture and psychoanalysis. I observed with immense interest how the myth travelled from the ancient world to the present, affecting my life as well as many other women.

Investigating how these horrific monsters arose, unsurprisingly, they were most often born from acts of violence and subjugation by men (gods or mortals). The element of being punished for one's sexuality and body is present to some extent in all the myths I have studied. And what these beautiful, strong beings do afterwards to survive or regain their autonomy frightens the male gaze even more, and the demonization morphs into new mythologies of fear.

The legendary beauty Medusa, one of the three Gorgon sisters, is raped in the temple of Athens by the sea god Poseidon. However, it is Medusa herself rather than her abuser who is punished. The goddess Athena turns her beautiful hair into snakes, and her irresistible gaze becomes a deadly weapon. Anyone who looks into Medusa's eyes turns to stone. The horrific power of her gaze extends beyond death as well. When the hero Perseus, looking at the reflection of Medusa in the shield, cuts off her head, it becomes the first "apotropaic sign": Athena wears it on her breastplate to repel her enemies. (*APOTROP* – from the ancient Greek verb *apotrepo* – "to turn away").

An apotropaic sign is created by picking up what you are most afraid of and pointing it at your enemy. Maybe that's what I've tried to do with the help of art – I've been looking for a sign that would break the power of the centuries-old, incriminating hero's gaze.

However, we do not have to forever define ourselves in relation to the condemnation, lust or violence of others, even if civilization has done so from Ancient Greece to the present day. In my final professional doctoral exhibition, I have reflected on escaping from the dark mirrors and shields of the patriarchy in mascara and egg tempera paintings, ceramics and marble. Before you are beings who refuse to be "signs". They dance, sing and grow, laughing their Medusa's laughter*, flourishing in a free, defiant and eternal joy of life.

Sabīne Vernere, March 28, 2025.

*From Helene Cixous' 1975 essay "The Laugh of the Medusa".

Sabīne Vernere (b. 1990, Kuldīga, Latvia) is a Latvian artist living in Riga. She is studying for a professional doctorate at the Art Academy of Latvia. Her formal education includes a Master's from the Painting Department of the Faculty of Visual Arts at the Art Academy of Latvia and additional studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. She has been in the SKETE painting residency at Savvaļā/Savage, Latvia (2022), JCE residence in Paris, FR (2022) and Cite residency in Paris, FR (2024). Recent solo exhibitions include Dealing Temptation. SIRENS at the MABOCA exhibition space (2024), ANGLES MORTS at the Artists' Union of Latvia Gallery, Riga, Latvia (2023); Sirens, Medusa and the Isle of Lotus-Eaters at Kuldīga Artists' Residence, Kuldīga, Latvia (2022); O! at the artist-run space TUR_telpa, Riga, Latvia (2021); and (The) New Works at Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, Latvia (2021). Recent group exhibitions include Triquetra at Kogo Gallery, Tartu, Estonia (2023); and Growing Out, Growing Up? Contemporary Art Collecting in The Baltics at Zuzeum, Riga, Latvia (2022); Don't Cry! Feminist Perspectives in Latvian Art: 1965–2023 at the Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga, Latvia (2023); In the Name of Desire at the Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga, Latvia (2024).

Her works are a part of the collections of the Latvian National Museum of Art, VV Foundation, Signet Bank and SEB Collection.

Sabīne Vernere
FEMALE MONSTERS
27.03.2025. – 26.04.2025
Galerija ASNI
Kr. Valdemāra street 17A, Rīga

Supported by: Signet bank, GroGlass, VV Foundation, State Culture Capital Foundation

Photography: Reinis Hofmanis























Photo reportage from the exhibition 'The House of Asterion' by Zody Burke at Hobusepea gallery

April 17, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The morning sun reverberated from the bronze sword. There was no longer even a vestige of blood. "Would you believe it, Ariadne?" said Theseus. "The Minotaur scarcely defended himself."

– *The House of Asterion*, Jorge Luis Borges, 1964. (*From Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*)

A new series of works shall be introduced to gallery visitors, featuring sculptural high reliefs, illustrations (accompanied by short stories written by the artist), and several 3D floor-based sculptures, many of which contain oblique allegories to the Labyrinth of Greek mythology.

These new works endeavor to challenge viewers to reconsider how modernity reimagines spaces of disorientation and entrapment. Through magical-realist reinterpretations of classical mythology, Burke offers varying glimpses of alternate narratives woven through the labyrinth. The sculpture *Pasiphaë, Queen of the Rodeo* draws thematic references from both the foundational Greek myth that inspired Borges' story and contemporary Americana, bridging two distinct cultures—an ongoing theme in Burke's work. The upstairs space, conceived in the clarity of the white cube, serves as a prelude to the darker, more visceral experience below. The exhibition utilises mythological tools to probe broader questions of power, identity, and the spaces we inhabit—whether spatial, digital, cultural, or existential.

Zody Burke (b.1991, Manhattan) is an American multimedia artist and musician who is currently living and working in Tallinn, Estonia. Informed by her perspective as a New Yorker displaced by the

city's economic inaccessibility, Burke creates cyphers through sculpture and other media through which to cartograph the complexity of American identity within late capitalism, exploring how this mutable identity is refracted and transfigured through the mirror of other cultural spatiality. Often utilizing narrative structures, she is interested in interfacing world-building with geological time, and visualizing a diffusion of boundaries between distinct countries & their national mythologies by the omnipresence of what lies beneath. She recently completed her master's thesis at the Estonian Academy of Art, which attempted to bridge sociopolitical narratives, legacies, and trajectories of industrialization between Estonia & the USA.

Exhibition *The House of Asterion*

Artist: Zody Burke

Curator: Liisi Kõuhkna

Graphic design Taylor "Tex" Tehan

Title Typeface Brian Uhl

Technical support Hobusepea gallery, Gregor Sirendi

Support/Grateful to Cultural Endowment of Estonia, Paavli Kultuurivabrik, Valge Kuup Studio, Estonian Academy of Arts, Kanuti Gildi Saal, Batuudijuss, Pruulikoda Tuletorn, Punch Club, Põhjala Pruulikoda, Dan Edelstein, Nora Schmelter, Taylor "Tex" Tehan, Gert Gutmann, Lauri Raus, Jordan Reyes, Roberta Staats, Nora King, Harry Figueroa, Lara Brener, Nick Klein, Oscar Ramos, Jane Treima, Diandra Rebase, Michael Anthony Farley, Laura De Jaeger, Kerli Kurikka, Kaspar Kannelmäe, Composite EE, Karjase Sai

03.04.-28.04.2025

Hobusepea Gallery, Hobusepea 2, Tallinn.

Wed-Mon 11.00-18.00

Photography: Jane Treima & Anna Mari Liivrand























Photo reportage from the exhibition 'WEARING' by Ulijana Odišarija at the Vilnius Graphic Art Centre

April 24, 2025

Author Echo Gone Wrong



The works in the show draw on a collection of amateur photography saved from reselling websites such as Vinted and eBay as a starting point. Low-fi, blurry, often haphazardly composed images that don't accurately reflect the items they are supposed to advertise act as visual poems that speak to the melancholy of the domestic. Resistant to commercial criteria, these images clash with their intended role as product photography and instead become foreign bodies in the e-commerce spaces reflecting the fragmented everyday.

Odišarija pays great attention to thingness in her work – she is interested not only in the inexhaustible flow and variety of things but also the very conditions of their existence. Observing what makes something real, the artist seeks to liberate the object from its assigned function.

Led by the mood of the image collection, Odišarija creates new objects employing utilitarian materials that are usually intended to remain unseen or in the background: office supplies, repurposed packaging, various types of paper, adhesive tape, photo album inserts, as well as coffee, pearlescent paint and imitation diamonds.

Fragile, abstract sculptural objects and collages – inaccurately scaled paper fragments of clothing and footwear – act as fuzzy reflections of mass production. Intended to exist as equal participants in

reality, these objects ever so slightly slip past it. Highlighting the gap between structured reality and its permeability, the artworks remind us of the shadows in the ordinary field of vision.

Looking at the world through a humorous and tender lens, the artist is searching for a sweet spot between inertia and poetry, burnout and awakening, survival mode and imagination. When the camera focus suddenly shifts and blurs, and a too-bright light burns out and obscures the whole, you are left to surrender to the vibrating surfaces of the world.

Exhibition team: Gediminas G. Akstinas, Gerda Paliušytė, Gailė Pranckūnaitė

Text in the exhibition by James Lowne

Ulijona Odišarija

WEARING

20 March – 12 April 2025

Vilnius Graphic Art Centre

Latako str. 3, Vilnius 01125, Lithuania

graphic.lt

Photography: Laurynas Skeisgiela





















