

16.12.2017–28.01.2018

MARCO LAIMRE

MOTOR

ENG

TALINNA KUNSTIHEINE
TALINN ART HALL

“‘THERE'S A MOTORBIKE IN IT!
I SAID ALOUD.’”

TOM MCCARTHY, REMAINDER

In Tom McCarthy's novel *Remainder*, the first-person narrator one day discovers a perfectly ordinary crack in his bathroom wall. This crack, however, unleashes in him a flow of memories of a specific house and of the people who used to live there — it is a direct route running deep into a lost world and to the very core of existing authentically; to something that he then starts recreate for real.

Laimre's exhibition *Motor* has, in some sense, a similar impetus. Laimre sets about building a bridge between a personal pre-art bodily experience from thirty years ago and an artist's experience stemming from the here and now. Therefore it is not a coincidence that the figure of the bridge has an important position in both *Nurrr* from last year as well as the current *Motor* exhibition. After spending a long time dealing with the abstraction of the art world in general as well as building and demolishing it at the art academy, here Laimre can realise his wish for a different treatment of material, or, to put it differently, to quench a thirst for reality, a yearning to be in contact with the physicality of the world; gravity, wind, temperature and speed — real things.

McCarthy's narrator places various characters in his reconstructed house of memories — one of them is a motorcyclist endlessly dismantling and reassembling his bike in the yard. On the second floor lives a pianist-artist who, likewise, is endlessly practicing a piece of music, and he himself (Laimre) is on the top floor. These characters are almost archetypal and, in this context, it is important what the pianist and motorcyclist have in common. Namely, they are both engaged in repairing. One of them is repairing a machine and the other is repairing himself, by practicing the piano and polishing his skill. In Aristoteles' sense, the Greek word *techné* originally stood for both — handiwork as well as art. In *Motor*, Rotiküla's garage-culture of DIY-workmanship meets Laimre's art practice without either of them scowlingly looking down on the other.

By the way, it might not be trivial that, on to the roof of the house across the street, McCarthy's narrator placed a black cat.

This exhibition guide
accompanies Marco
Laimre's solo exhibition
MOTOR in Tallinn Art Hall,
16 December 2017 –
28 January 2018

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PRINTED BY:
Printall
EDITION:
1000
THANK YOU:
Cultural Endowment of
Estonia, Estonian Ministry
of Culture, Tallinn Office
of Culture, Veinisöber,
Contemporary Art Museum
of Estonia, Kuu Stuudio,
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WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT THE ARTIST MARCO LAIMRE TO SOMEONE WHO IS NOT TOO FAMILIAR WITH HIS WORK?

In the context of this exhibition, I could easily start off by stating, in jest, that Marco Laimre is an Estonian motocross hobby rider who in curious circumstances became a prominent contemporary artist in the early 90s. In response to this, the artist would probably wish to remind me that he is not some damn athlete but simply an artist who is studying the possibility of combining art with sport. Therefore, I might put it like this: Marco Laimre is a strikingly uncompromising and critical artist,¹ who, since his solo exhibition *Nurrr* at the Hobusepea Gallery in 2015, is active in so-called sport art.

What did he do before that then? Over the years, he has worked in painting, kinetic art, video art, performance art, photography, and maybe something else as well.² For example, at his first solo exhibition *Art and Me* in 1994, he presented a series of photographs of himself with artworks that were on display at *Unexistent Art*, the annual exhibition of the Soros Centre of Contemporary Arts, Estonia. That series by Laimre could be understood as him breaking into the art world — here I am: me, the art of others, and my art too.³ He is a very prolific artist in general — *Motor* is his twenty-first solo exhibition, not to mention the participations in group and curatorial exhibitions. The creatively intense 90s concluded with an appearance at the so-called Olympics of the art world — the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001.

Laimre has said that, at best, an artist is some sort of critic and shifter of things; someone who puts things together and breaks them apart.⁴ In 2004, Laimre held a solo exhibition at the Rotermann Salt Storage called *Questions and Answers*, which dealt with international burning issues, the fear and trepidation of day-to-day Estonia, as well as theoretical problems of meaning,⁵ yet what became the most enduring memory in (art) folklore was Marco Laimre's quarrel with the Estonian Artists' Association. It is clear that the artist-repairer had outgrown the format of the art exhibition as such, and needed new platforms of activity.

In 2007, Marco Laimre was chosen to be the professor of the photography department of the Estonian Academy of Arts,⁶ where he encouraged his students to, above all, make art.⁷ In essence, this meant that, without abandoning the department's focus on photography, the students also had the opportunity to concentrate on other techniques, be it installations or performances. In the fall of 2006, Laimre, together with Anders Härm, Elin Kard and Neeme Külm, founded the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (*Eesti Kaasaegse Kunsti Muuseum*, EKKM). Housed in a building of the abandoned heating plant

near Linnahall, until 2011 the museum focused on displaying the work of young artists who were still students (mainly at the department of photography).

Therefore, by the time Laimre opened his 2007 exhibition *Bad Joke* at the Hobusepea Gallery, he was active in the art world as a creator, educator as well as a purveyor. This provides a clearer context for that exhibition, as it set out to map the most idiotic artist position statements, the most absurd press releases, and the sheepish censorship commonplace in Estonia.⁸ It was not a cynical protest but a sincere, subjective interim report by an art agent about how things were at the time.

What now then? In a way, EKKM took a decisive step towards becoming a "real institution"— in 2011, on Laimre's initiative, the museum established the Kõler Prize and its exhibition of nominees, which has become one of the most anticipated events of the local art scene, but at the same time, there was a noticeable professionalisation of the exhibition programme, with the student exhibitions now being relegated into the cold off-season. In the spring of 2017, Laimre's time as the professor of the photography department came to an end as well, as he decided not to resubmit his candidacy. So here we are: Marco and his three bikes.

In light of the recent sport art direction, there is the inevitable temptation to discuss a 180 degree turn in Laimre's work, especially if you are very young and having a cup of sugary milk coffee with the artist, who then tells you that he is finally doing the thing that he is actually interested in. Briefly looking back, however, it becomes clear that during his creative pursuits, Laimre has not for a single moment dealt with topics, techniques or platforms that he is not interested in (or if he has, then not for very long). For him to even be able to "immerse himself in the hobby-world of motocross"⁹ for this exhibition, he first had to carry out an immersion into the world of contemporary art. In order to discuss the sport art direction, he first had to talk about BH art,¹⁰ and so on.

For Marco Laimre, an artist who has consistently questioned, taken apart, demolished and put together again both art as such as well as what it is to be an artist, *Motor* is the next logical step in his practice. And besides that, it is of course an exhibition about riding motorcycles, about repairing and creating, about life in the garage, but also about landscapes and animals.

SIIM PREIMAN,
CURATOR AT TALLINN ART HALL

1 As Laimre is described by Indrek Grigor in his article „Laimre on toru“ — *Kunst.ee* 2012/4

2 Marco Laimre's lecture „Pealisülesanne“ for *Õõllikool* — Vikerraadio 14.05.2005

3 By the way, Laimre participated already at the very next Soros annual exhibition. You could say the plan worked!

4 Laimre interviewed by Maris Meiessaar — *Eesti Päevaleht* 23.08.2008

5 Oliver Orro's article „Laimre häälekas kunstiajalugu“ — *Sirp* 9.04.2004

6 In fact, he had worked in that position as a professor *extraordinarius* already since 2005.

7 Johannes Säre on the radio programme *Delta* — Klassikaraadio 23.11.2017

8 Maria Kristiina Soomre „Positsioonisõja aeg“ — *Sirp* 18.05.2007

9 A phrase from a pre-introductory text for *Motor*.

10 Black humour art, which "is based on random events adhering to each other, with no special emphasis on refinement, and the topics put together can be very different, even incompatible." — from the press release for the exhibition *Bad Joke*.

*“IN THIS WAY, WE ALL BECOME
BRICOLEURS, EACH OF US WITH*

HIS AND HER LITTLE MACHINE”



'S.'¹

*"THE BEST ONES
NOWHERE*

*ALWAYS CONNECT
WITH NOWHERE."²*



*"HE THINKS I'M
WORKING ON PARTS.*

*I'M WORKING
ON CONCEPTS."³*

*MARCO
LAIMRE*

THE POSITION

I was working as a professor of contemporary art.⁴ The everyday struggle to impose myself on the educational bureaucracy and to find hope in the creative industries gradually ingrained an “art-life-free” space into my consciousness. I was looking for that concept of a freedom where the results of an analysis can be applied immediately and a specific result can be seen. The worst thing about school is that the product of art-pedagogy becomes apparent only after a very long period of time, sometimes up to five years after the end of school or a course. And even then no one can say with certainty whether the result was achieved thanks to those earlier studies or despite them.⁵ Be that as it may, twelve years of building and demolishing and dealing with abstraction had made me long for a more tangible treatment of material.

Lately, the emergence and robust hype of both reactionary art forms as well as archaic art practices had raised some doubts in me and forced me to discursively find new solutions in both creating art and in symbolisation practices as a whole.⁶ I bought a motorcycle, my sixth, if I count the ones at the very beginning. An Aprilia. Now I could get a move on, ride again.

Moveo, movere, movi, motus: Latin for “the one who moves”.

Living in Pärnu but working in central Tallinn, I had to ride quite often on the Tallinn–Pärnu route, which is one of the most monotone and unvaried roads in Estonia. As in the beginning I did not have my motorcyclist’s licence, there was the additional special fun-factor of possibly getting caught by the traffic police. For two years I did in fact ride illegally. And, dragging myself up and down that road, I developed a peculiar ritualistic behavioural norm. Every time I crossed the Vardi River bridge, it was absolutely crucial that I looked at or saw the reflective surface of the river. It was like a promise that “Everything will be fine!” I still do this, even when it is dark and you cannot see the river.⁷

1 Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, chapter “Desiring machines”, Viking Penguin 1977.

2 Pirsig’s thesis on riding motorcycles and the road network — Robert M. Pirsig. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

3 Pirsig’s thesis on repairing motorcycles — *Zen and...*, p. 92.

4 From 2005 to 2017, I was a professor and director at the department of photography of the Estonian Academy of Arts.

5 According to Jan Verwoert’s elegant thesis: “The most characteristic thing about art academies is that no one there can really tell you what they are doing.”—“Lessons in Modesty. The Open Academy as a Model” *Metropolis M*, 4/2006.

6 It would probably be important to note here that the ‘noughties’ were when the unconditional surrender of the art world took place — the so-called “creative industries logic” was adopted and any sort of resistance to it is almost non-existent or very weak.



GARAGE-WORKSHOP,
LIGHTBOX, 300 x 200 CM,
INSTALLATION, 2017

THE MOTOR

I became a motorcyclist again. I became the kind of motorcyclist who builds and repairs their own bike, i.e. a committed DIY practitioner in the garage-workshop.⁸

According to Robert M. Pirsig's noteworthy discovery, people who come into contact with technology can by and large be divided into two categories.⁹ I am, no doubt, a "diagnoser-repairer". A tuner.

My background is such that actually I did not discover or invent anything new. All the work I did in the garage thirty years ago, on engines, motorcycles and other things, just came back into my life. That distant childhood experience found all the materials, smells and tools that had been temporarily pushed aside and took its place as a quite natural universe above my art practice, and in 2013, when I started preparing for my personal exhibition *Nurrr*,¹⁰ it took the form of a completely conscious position. It was as if I had started talking again, as if I had rediscovered a forgotten language.

Oh the nuts and bolts!

7 At the exhibition *Motor*, this ritual is conveyed in the stereo video loop *Vardi-Vardi* (a collaboration with Raul Keller).

8 'Garage-workshop' as a term is a bit clumsy at expressing the precise meaning. It is simultaneously a term of place for a lifestyle, an environment as well as an activity. At the exhibition *Motor*, *Garage-Workshop* is presented as an installation-lightbox.

9 Robert M. Pirsig. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, 1974. E.g. p. 15–18.

10 Marco Laimre's personal exhibition *Nurrr* was held in 2015 at the Hobusepea Gallery in Tallinn. *Nurrr* was the first time that the phenomenon of riding motorcycles and visions of motorcycles' possibilities were used by the artist in exhibition rooms.



MECHANICS:
SUSI AND I TUNING KAIMU'S
"RACETRACK MOPED", 1984



4 STROKES. EXHAUST
(PART OF AN INSTALLATION) 2017
R. KELLÉN'S OIL PAINTING ON FIBRE-
BOARD, UNFRAMED 35 x 27 CM, 1943

At the start of the *Motor* project, the ghost of Marcel Duchamp must have paid me a visit. The myth of an artist who stops making art and energetically takes up a sport (in M.D.'s case, chess) is enticingly grand. It has the radical charm of arriving somewhere. In reality, sudden transitions like this are very rare. Rather, artists tend to choose their characteristic instruments based on their personal preferences and structural anchors. In the same way, I never “truly” abandoned my garage-workshop and instead I treat my thirty-year-hiatus from motorcycling as some sort of “mental confusion”.

At this point, we should distinguish between just motorcycling and, for example, competing on motocross tracks.

MX, or motocross, demands quite a lot of endurance and special preparation on a physical level, even when competing in the veteran's class as a hobby. Before the injury, my daily training load was a 5 km run in the forest plus 200 squats. If you have not been the most regular sportsman for some years and have instead spent more time with tobacco and yeast-based products, then achieving a systematic routine like this is quite the challenge, both physically and in terms of willpower. It did in fact become apparent that the most difficult part would be to rise to the psychological challenge. To make it to the starting line at all. In any case, at the first three events of the 2017 season, a kind of “Homeostatic Universe” interfered in my plans.¹¹ My minimum objective was to manage to start one of the veterans' hobby class races,¹² the maximum objective was to make it to the chequered flag.¹³ I accomplished both goals at the Kihli motocross track in Türi, at an EHKK event held on July 8th. Over the two races, I achieved 27th place in the 40s and 50s age group (28 riders finished the race).

This could have concluded the practical MX-phase of the *Motor* exhibition project and I could have concentrated on analysing, presenting and finalising my experience, but...

This is sport and, in the end, it is different from making art.

Having said that, there are also very many formal similarities, such as the methodical routine and the possibility of encompassing the field discursively.¹⁴ However, this symbolisation process is reversed—your position in sport results is mostly final, yet in contemporary art there are many different rankings. Or, to be more precise, this ambivalent pluralism is in fact one of the motors of contemporary art.¹⁵ To put that sentence in motorcycling terms, the contradictory pluralism of contemporary art¹⁵ is the intake of a four-stroke Otto engine – the injection of the potential for a subsequent explosion, or, simply, fuel.



THE ARTIST AT WORK II,
PIGMENT INK PRINT, 90 x 60 CM, 2017
PHOTOGRAPHER: MARI ARMEI

THE ARTIST AT WORK I,
PIGMENT INK PRINT, 90 x 60 CM, 2017
PHOTOGRAPHER: MARI ARMEI

THE TERRAIN

Despite my success at the Kihli event (27th place!), I now had a better understanding of which aspects of motocross I needed to improve in (mainly, the physical exercise), and I also saw the potential to achieve a higher position. The adrenaline of extreme sports got to me, and around the corner, there was the view of an unexpectedly varied hilly terrain.

To be completely focused on taking into consideration the track surface (gravel, clay, dirt, sand or cinder) as well as the parameters of gravity and the coefficient of friction – this is the kind of tactical sensibility with which infantry, skateboarders and infants look at terrain. And motorcyclists too.

In the eyes of a motocross or enduro rider, any kind of terrain is first and foremost a track on which to ride, it is an architecture that can be broken down to motogeneous¹⁶ elements.

- 11 According to the mathematician Vecherovsky, the Homeostatic Universe is a universe-consciousness that (who), in order to prevent being defined, interferes in mankind's progress in the most absurd and unexpected ways—Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. *Definitely Maybe*, English translation published in 1978.
- 12 Riders in their 40s and 50s compete together in a separate classification. At the events of the Estonian Hobby Motocross Club (*Eesti Hobikrossiklubi*, EHKK), there are up to 30-40 riders at the starting line.

- 13 In the EHKK series, every event consists of two races, each lasting for 12 minutes plus the first two laps. In addition, there is a training-qualification round where the individual fastest laps determine the starting positions for the race.
- 14 By “encompassing the field discursively” I mean the peaceful description of art or sport, or observing the field by being familiar with the key agents.
- 15 Boris Groys. *Art Power*, MIT Press, 2008, p. 4
- 16 *logic of contradictions motogeneous* — here: rideable by motorcycle



THE ARTIST AT WORK III,
PIGMENT INK PRINT,
90 x 60 CM, 2017
PHOTOGRAPHER: MARI ARMEI

THE SLEEP MACHINE

A month later, on August 5th, on the third lap of the qualification round of the event at the Tuhamägi in Kiviõli, I landed wrong from a jump and fell headlong. I spent the next week in Puru Hospital in Ahtme with a broken shoulder blade. That was the result of making six mistakes all at once.

First, I was nervous about the race and could not sleep the night before; second, it was an unfamiliar track—I had not ridden at Tuhamägi before. Third, the track was slippery due to the rain, and fourth, I lacked confidence at the moment I went for the jump, which is not the best thing in that situation.

Fifth, a harmless fall at the previous turn had made me seriously angry, which got the adrenaline going and forced rationality to take a back seat—I revved it up too much. Sixth, I could have adjusted the shock absorbers to be “stiffer” for this track.

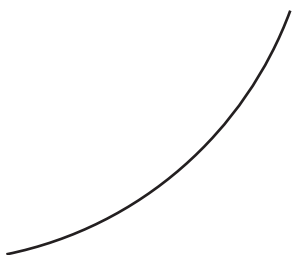
The painkillers did a good job, but a fall like this always hurts. I am quite convinced that in contemporary art as well, five of the six aspects of the final result are related to the artist's/athlete's self-techniques, and the sixth to technical capabilities.



THE SLEEP MACHINE II,
90 x 60 CM,
PIGMENT INK PRINT, 2017



THE SLEEP MACHINE I,
90 x 60 CM,
PIGMENT INK PRINT, 2017



ANIMALNESS,

Just like a tree branch found by the sea is a snake and that greyish-green rock in the middle of a field resembles a rabbit, motorcycles too have a personifiable nature. And I am not talking about logos, even though Aprilia's has a stylised lion and Honda has the wings of Nike.

Motorcycles purr, belch, roar and snarl; meaning motors make noises similar to animal sounds. And what is more—as motorcycles are directly imitating horses and horse riding, the different types of riding positions already contain a semiosis related to horses. For example, the strained crouching position of a jockey vs a cowboy dangling his legs forward (the European motorcycling tradition vs the American one). At the *Motor* exhibition, plenty of similarities to animals can be found. As a metaphor, a life-size wooden tiger with a saddle is a highly emblematic and poetically good form to describe what it really feels like to ride a sportier motorcycle.¹⁷ The motorcyclist is therefore like a tiger-rider. Quite often, the clichéd notion of flying is used instead.

Then again, motorcycles obviously are not animals but animal-like; they are technical devices enabling movement on real-life terrain that are sometimes personified in one way or another.

Motors have a face, they can be represented on portraits. A well-tuned motorcycle engine “purrs” like a cat, a V2 has the “snarl” of a lion—an R4 “squeals” like a pig.¹⁸

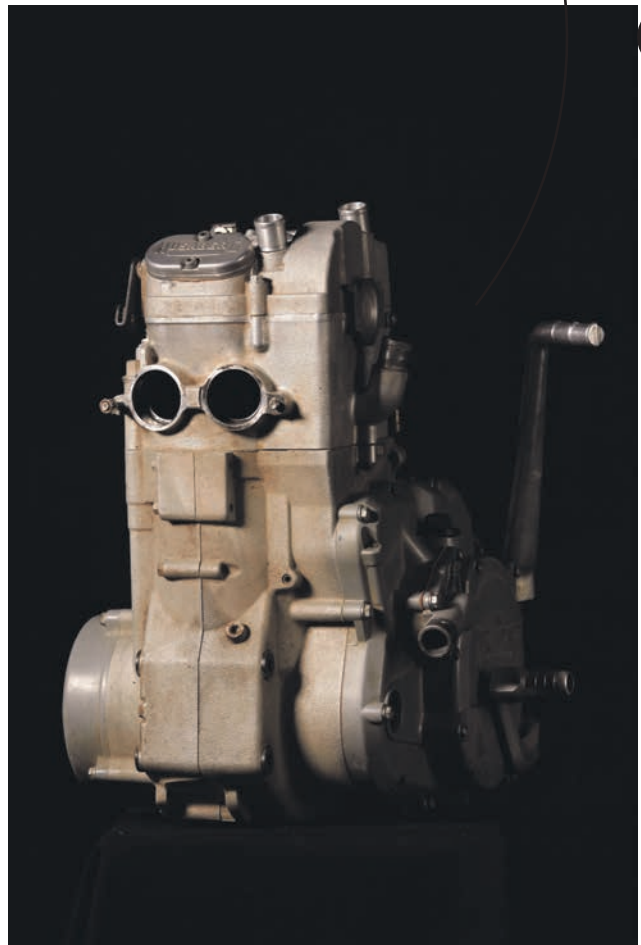
But in the ears of the motorcyclist, there is “the drone of the wind”.¹⁹

17 The installation titled *There is No Doubt!*

18 V2 and R4 are the names of different types of four-stroke motorcycle engines, depending on whether the cylinders are arranged in a V-shape or in-line.

19 The drone of the wind—a continual harmonic noise music that is the result of the wind hitting the corner of the helmet's visor (AGV) from a certain direction, at steady speeds of over 110 km/h. Consists of long, rising and falling, vibrating plangent chords.

ANIMALLIKENESS



“PORTRAIT ENGINES. HUSABERG”,
PIGMENT INK PRINT,
90 x 60 CM, 2017

THE RATIO OF OIL AND

In the main assembly of the motorcycle—the combustion engine—the torque is produced by the spark, the fuel, and the air, which constitute the holy triad of power. This is a world created a thousand times or more in a minute, and always so that first there is the pressure and combustion, and then the vacuum. The mixture has a precise ratio and proportion in which case it burns optimally in the cylinder when it is ignited at the right pressure level. It has a particular hue. The spark plugs are deciphered like little porcelain-white puzzles—red-hot plugs are taken out of the blackened depths of the cylinder head and gently rolled around in the palm until they cool off. A spark plug is a thermometer that indicates whether the motor is healthy or not, and what treatment should be prescribed.

The motorcyclist lies down by the bonfire, and before falling asleep, thinks about how the motor and the wind sounded together when he was driving on the motorway, about what he saw in the mirrors (such as the shimmering patches of light reflecting on his face from the red sunset), and about whether, if the plugs are matte black with soot, should he turn the carburettor needle up or down, adjust the float, or does he instead need to change the fuel jet size for the new air filter and exhaust? Or perhaps it is just from the mountains and the different air pressure. Before the world dissolves and flies away, he has decided, in the flashing light of the fire dying down, that he should check again that the luggage rack is attached properly, and also that he probably should bleed the rear brake before heading out so that he would not lose that brake again like he did last time, for a stretch after a turn. And maybe he should have another look at the front wheel, as something there made a momentary sharp metallic sound during an earlier ride. And then, peaceful sleep until morning.

Of course, all of this depends on him having an element in his nature and in his being that would allow oil and blood to mix. Let him look at his hands and tell us whether there are calloused patterns of oil on the sides of his fingers that do not come out even if he washes them, or whether his knuckles are

ragged and a bit red here and there. If they are, then you can trust him to be one of those people who spin the tyres onto the rims themselves, and dismantle and reassemble the gearbox, with all the parts in a neat row on the floor so nothing is left out. When he removes the camshaft cover to adjust the valves, he does it under a raincoat. He tightens and lubricates the chain, he removes broken bolts, and he can fix the clutch with a piece of wire he carries with him. After all of this, he will, probably, not end up with sepsis.

And yet, give him a motorcycle with fuel injection and sensors, with liquid cooling where there is a hairdryer in front of the radiator—a smart one that costs a lot of money, as if everybody has become oblivious to the old one—and he will still be looking back on a time when cylinders were cooled by the air, when the mixture was adjusted with screws, jets and wires, and when it seemed that the common sense of one man was exactly enough to make a world revolve a thousand or more times a minute, and to keep it like that. It seemed that the model this system taught you could perhaps even be applied to other, non-mechanical situations in life. And it quite possibly could have been, and it worked.

On the other hand, if just the fact that the motorcycle is moving—with oil and blood in different vessels—is enough to make someone happy, then good for them and let them ride happily. If they can ignore that nagging voice in their heads that something is obviously gnawing the motor away, or that there is an odd crackle coming from the drive shaft, then great. Eventually, however, it can get to them. Then they have to find some motorcycle whisperer and hope that as long as money has changed hands, everything will be sorted. Meanwhile, there are other important things to do, and perhaps for the next meet-up, it is better to just take the bike there in a trailer—less hassle. In today's world, everybody has their own bit and it is enough just to do that one thing well. If someone else has learned how to repair motorcycles, then let them sort it out. As simple as that! Be that as it may, the road is wide enough for both of them—do the ton!

1 An expression used in the motorcycling subculture, mainly by café racers, about going 100 mph.

WHEN THE ANIMALS

WERE NOT TALKING YET

humans have many laws. laws are symbolic order. other animals have not bothered with laws, they live according to natural order.

the symbolic order and the natural order do not fit together very well. what one of them allows, the other often forbids. this set of circumstances is quite troublesome, but as man is the first test subject to have to deal with a compound reality like this, then for now we are without a properly working practice of some sort.

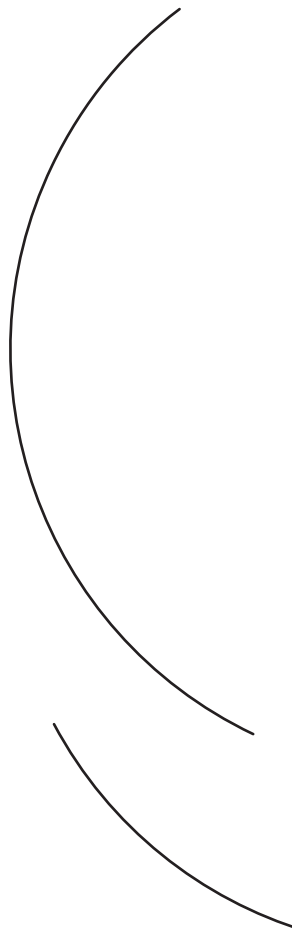
the symbolic order relies on talking, the natural order on doing. when there has been too much talking, the humans who are good at it quite often move over to doing. they need to get back their animality. they need to grab the handles of a plough. or a handlebar. both the motorcycle and the plough put humans in contact with the earth. and the earth is the biggest possible machine wherein the force field lines of natural order move and explode as endless rhizomes. they appear as schools of fish, as roots, as animal herds. they all have some trajectories of movement that inscribe themselves on the earth's interior and surface. a motorcyclist has this kind of trajectory as well.

of course, the motorcycle is a result of symbolic order. bears do not ride motorcycles (even though that russian cartoon would tell you otherwise). natural order is not known to have produced any motorcycles. and yet the motorcycle is a transitional zone—a human who gets on a motorcycle has to allow for a certain animalisation, because everything needs to be done quicker, more precisely, more intuitively, and all of that is dangerous. the life of an animal in the wild is always dangerous. only pets can live a comfortable life and be infantile. there are no such privileges in the forest or on a motorcycle.

laws, of course, remain. the speed limit, right-of-way, and so on. but still, on a motorcycle, a human can remember how it was when the animals were not talking yet.

it was quiet. only the wind howled. and sometimes you had to run fast.

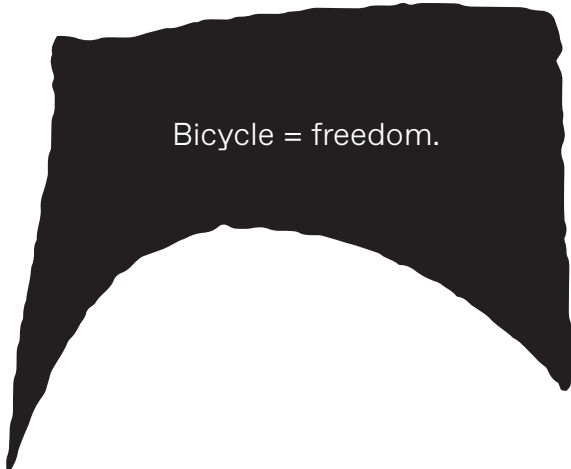
ANDRUS LAANSALU,
BIOSEMIOTICIAN



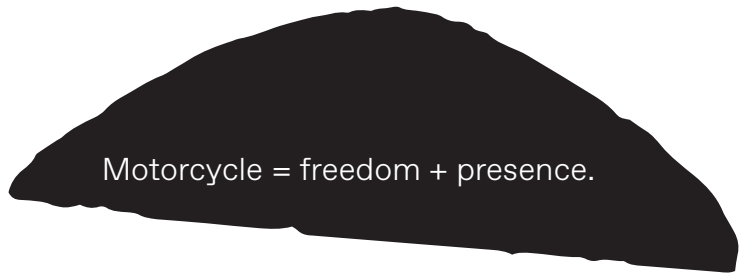
THE MAIN MISSION:

I have quite vivid childhood memories from summer holidays spent in the countryside. One of the activities that kept me busy during the long (and yet, too short) summer days was racing around on a bicycle. The Ereliukas, which had become too small for a relative of mine, was the first two-wheeler that I learned to ride truly on my own, and as soon as I knew how to, I tried to stay in the saddle as much as possible. The bike gave me the freedom to relocate myself in space as I saw fit, and to do it relatively fast at that. Being small and flexible, the bicycle allowed me to ride on pathways where cars could not go, yet at the same time it was a considerable enough piece of machinery in traffic, so I could occupy the sides of the road for myself. There was a place for competition as well, as we could test our mettle in speed, skill or even slowness—depending on what we happened to be up to.

I am reluctant to start the bike up without good reason and to just joyride aimlessly, I need to have a purpose for riding it. Preferably farther away, preferably along a route that avoids the big roads. When I need to drive (far) to arrive at a set time, like a race against the clock, then I would rather not take the bike. If you cannot take the time to enjoy the (motorcycle) ride, then the trip is not worth the ride. Riding as a process is important, the journey is important, the contact with the environment, the smells, feeling the surface of the road, and the profile of the road and the landscape are all important. The cold, the wet, the muck and the insects between the teeth are uncomfortable alright, but definitely not daunting. It is all part of the experience. Getting there is important (a sign of the times, perhaps?), but not the most important. Modern conveniences like GPS (on the phone) are nice and handy, but if it is possible to ride by feel and/or by memory, relying on a paper map only every now and then, then you get the illusion of (false) independence. Despite that, I do not see motorcycling as a form of escapism — for me it is not a chance to escape from reality, on the contrary, it is a chance for ultimate reality, for real presence.



I came to motorcycles at a rather late age. Meanwhile, there was no real reason to cycle either (there's public transport in the city and later I got a car from work) and I had forgotten what the joy of riding is. For some reason, I have never really appreciated driving cars—I like it, but it is not a delight, a pleasure. Driving a car is practical. When I rode a motorcycle for the first time, I felt that similar sense of freedom and pleasure as I felt on a bicycle as a kid. It captivated me to the degree that I straight away acquired a driver's licence for it and bought a motorcycle. And even though I no longer have any logistical reason to ride it daily, I haven't really wanted to sell the bike. Every year, the very first ride is like a re-enactment of my childhood.



REIMO VÕSA-TANGSOO,
ARTIST AND MOTOROMANTIC

ROAD

Roads are long and straight, relatively uneventful. Sometimes there is a turn. Alongside the road, forests alternate with fields. Road cycling is monotonous. The distances are long and you will have ridden all the routes near your home in a couple of seasons. All that is left to do then is to repeat the routes. The configuration of the environment is more or less the same and I begin to notice minor variations. Even during an ordinary two- to three-hour ride on familiar roads, quite a lot happens. The direction of the wind constantly changes, and its intensity increases and decreases. The way it blows in your ears varies. The light changes according to location and the time of the day. Different road surfaces judder me and make me vibrate at various frequencies.

After about an hour and a half of riding, my sense of my own body changes. As I take in the orderliness of my surroundings, my body becomes a constant. I transform from an ordinary two-legged *Homo sapiens* into a cyclist – my pedalling is steady and nimble, I make no unnecessary movements, I am exerting only the muscles that are helping me move forward as efficiently as possible. I am not thinking as such, but rather making decisions instinctively. I observe, sense, and act immediately. I do not analyse, as that is too cumbersome a way to operate. My body functions on its own, I do not feel my legs, they are rotating automatically in symmetrical circles. I do not distinguish my body from the bicycle anymore, they share the same purpose. I begin to feel like I have disconnected from my person, the only thing still functioning is an apparatus on autopilot, which is independent and thus more effective and capable.

OFF-ROAD

Turning off the road on to gravel or a forest path is when the action starts. The whole terrain is full of different obstacles like rocks, sand, dirt, tree roots, holes, and bumps. And they come up in my direction at a very high speed and completely uncontrollably. The bicycle is getting hit from beneath, the tyres lose grip and start to slip, the rhythm is lost. The body and the bicycle are once again two different things. The slow, regular, all-encompassing flow that I attained on the road is gone.

Having recovered from the initial daze, I decrease my speed. I deal with the oncoming challenges one by one. I start to sense the point at which the tyres start to lose grip and I try to regain some control over it. I no longer panic if I do lose grip, and I use that element to my advantage instead. For the hits coming from beneath, I make my body light, so I am almost hovering above the bike. The bicycle is banging and jumping under me, but I stay in place and dampen the irregularities of the terrain into myself like a shock absorber. I am the leveller of the whole terrain's asymmetry. Clunk-clank, I apply the gears and brakes quickly when necessary. It is nice when everything starts coming together. Okay, more speed! Riding on loose ground like sand or mud, where you have to let the bike find its own way, is especially cool. I keep a very loose grip on the handlebar, so that the elements of the terrain would move it in the right direction themselves. I am merely pushing on the pedals to move forward. The handlebar changes direction rhythmically, left and right. If I really start to lose it, then I just gently guide it back on track. The bicycle can find its own way through this whole complication. A control freak could not cope in the forest, you have to change.

MART VAINRE,
ARTIST AND CYCLIST

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

MARCO LAIMRE. MOTOR

Focus: DO-IT-YOURSELF, THE LIMITS OF ART, FREEDOM
Art vocabulary: INSTALLATION, READY-MADE (AGES 5-12), CONCEPTUAL ART (13+)
General skills: SOCIAL SKILLS, SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS
General competencies: CULTURE AND VALUES COMPETENCY, SOCIAL COMPETENCY
Duration: AROUND 90 MINUTES

Marco Laimre is not afraid to get oil on his fingers. We are not afraid to get paint on ours. If tuning motorcycles and splashing through mud is an artist's freedom, then this time we shall take the liberty to paint right in the Art Hall exhibition room. Inspired by his garage-culture do-it-yourself spirit, we will grab our brushes and paint, look at the pieces on display, and paint our own pop paintings. Why? Because the Art Hall has not had an exhibition of paintings for a long time and we will organise one in the education room, as a satellite of Marco Laimre's exhibition.

Besides painting, we will find out why there is a saddled tiger at the exhibition, what does it feel like to ride fast, and we will also make some playful jumps beyond the limits of art and back again. In short: let's make the most of it! The programme is suitable for kindergarten children to discover, and is also an art class for schoolchildren and, for adults, an inspiring event among friends.

PUBLIC PROGRAMMES

Public programmes are available from Wednesday to Friday. It is best to pre-book your group visit by writing to publik@kunstihoone.ee.

You could also come to the Art Hall and ask for a tour from the cashier – it is very likely you can be part of a tour without registering beforehand!

(NB! Without pre-booking the tours are available Wed–Fri 12PM–2PM. When booking a tour the choice of time is much more flexible)

ART IS ESSENTIAL!