

16.02.—29.04.2018

THE STATE IS NOT A WORK OF ART

Tallinn Art Hall
Art Hall Gallery
Tallinn City Gallery
Vabaduse Gallery



TALLINNA KUNSTIHOONE
TALLINN ART HALL

EWA AXELRAD
LOULOU CHERINET
MARTA GÓRNICKA
LISE HARLEV
FEMKE HERREGRAVEN
FLO KASEARU
THOMAS KILPPER
SZABOLCS KISSPÁL
STÉPHANIE LAGARDE
ELLA LITTWITZ
THOMAS LOCHER
CRISTINA LUCAS
DAMIR MURATOV
TANJA MURAVSKAJA
MARINA NAPRUSHKINA
KRISTINA NORMAN
DANIELA ORTIZ
KATARZYNA PRZYZWAŃSKA
JAANUS SAMMA
IVAR SAKK
LARISSA SANSOUR
KRISTINA SOLOMOUKHA,
PAOLO CODELUPPI,
ELFI TURPIN
STUDIO JONAS STAAL

THE STATE IS NOT A WORK OF ART
Katerina Gregos, curator

In recent years, fuelled by the mass migration of people fleeing war zones, authoritarian regimes and political or environmental crisis, the alarming spectre of nationalism has returned to Europe, endangering European cohesion. The inequalities produced by globalisation and the increasing cultural homogenisation it has spurred have caused people to yearn for a return to seeming certainties – the sense of ‘belonging’ to a specific nation or national community. The product is a paradoxical situation, resulting in a tension between rising nationalism and xenophobia in Europe and at its borders, and the reality of supranational institutions like the EU and their pan-European political visions, transnational perspectives and cross-border economic agendas. It is a clash of two differing worldviews: an often-haughty cosmopolitan internationalism versus an insular nationalism, which advocates ethnic and cultural unity.

The exhibition *The State is not a Work of Art* examines the problematics, contradictions and ideologies underlying nation and nationalism in the constantly transforming European socio-political landscape. Offering a more nuanced view, beyond stereotypical definitions and polarised, simplistic narratives that divide the world into nationalistically driven binaries of ‘them’ versus ‘us,’ the exhibition aims to highlight that these are highly intricate issues with complex historical and socio-political roots.

Defining nation has always been a tricky business: it is impossible to reduce ‘nationality’ to a single dimension, and neither subjective nor objective definitions are satisfactory as nation and nationhood are constantly in flux, governed by ambiguity and subject to the elements of artefact, myth-making and social engineering.

The nation is an important modern tool in the organisation of life. At this point it is important to make a distinction between the terms ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’, with the former being a structural, constructed entity and the latter referring to an ideologically-charged

set of beliefs about the nation. Similarly, it is important to distinguish between *civic* and *ethnic* understandings of nationalism. The former can be understood as a non-xenophobic form of nationalism in which people of different backgrounds can coexist, and which is compatible with values of freedom, tolerance, equality and individual rights. The latter can be understood in terms of a common ethnic ancestry and, usually, faith. This can be the most dangerous form of nationalism, as it is based on binary classificatory distinctions, which polarise society, and a blind faith in the nation. This type of nationalism fosters cultural homogeneity, isolationism, suspicion of the ‘other’, xenophobia, exclusion and even hate. It ignores the needs of people not belonging to its ethnic sphere and advocates superiority of one value system over another. When then does ‘civic’ nationalism turn into something toxic and dangerous? Can we or should we further the idea of an inclusive, civic nationalism?

Shouldn’t we also look into the fact that the nation-state – the subject of so much critique – actually does ‘work’ in certain respects and, imperfect as it is, does afford citizens valuable rights and protections, before we discard it altogether as many historians have done. Given the demise of many of the socially-binding institutions of modernity, such as the family or religion, as well as the downfall of trade unions and distrust in political parties, the nation may well have a role to play in the future.

It seems an opportune moment, on the one hundredth anniversary of the independence of Estonia (historically, the result of Estonian’s ‘national awakening’ in the nineteenth century), to discuss and re-think these issues – which are of critical importance for the future direction of the countries of Europe and the cohesion of the continent – in a considered, critical way and from diverse viewpoints. In today’s multicultural Europe, however, it is very difficult to formulate objective criteria for nationhood, since identity, language and ethnicity are increasingly shifting and fluid concepts.

However, those who predicted the demise of the nation-state seem to have been proven wrong. Yet the 19th century model of the nation-state, and its exclusive understanding

of nationalism, are evidently problematic in view of a world vastly different from what it was 200 years ago. On the other hand, it is not as though the ‘nation-state’ were an antiquated concept. As historian Tony Judt has pointed out, it is, in fact, the ‘most modern of political institutions’. It would therefore follow that, as an idea and as a structure, it still has potential for development and improvement.

How then can we imagine the nation-state anew? In light of today’s realities, new models of community and belonging need to be found. How can we re-think the nation-state in response to today’s post-national realities? Can we imagine other models of social organisation and statehood that don’t require identification with a particular flag or passport? What other forms of belonging and community outside of the nation-state might come into fruition? Can we or should we further the idea of an inclusive, civic nationalism? Can national sovereignty be reconciled with pluralism, an open society and today’s networked, integrated globalised societies?

The State is not a Work of Art brings together 25 artists, including 13 newly commissioned works, especially for the exhibition. The artists in it explore the contested issues of nation, state and nationalism, analysing their complex historical and socio-political roots. They compel us to look at these issues from differing angles and to re-think them as we navigate changing and uncertain times in Europe.

Note:

The title of the exhibition is derived from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*. An important aspect of Hegel’s philosophy is the specification ‘an und für sich’ (in and by itself, or, for itself). For example, ‘The State in and by itself’ expresses the unity of the world (thesis) and the unity of mind (anti-thesis). Both unities are speculatively fused (synthesis) into an ethical whole, the state. ‘The state is mind on earth and it is consciously realising itself there. Only when it is present in consciousness, when it knows itself as a really existing object is it The State’. We must not confound the Idea of ‘The State’ with particular states or institutions. The Idea of the State has to be considered ‘in and by itself’. Any state may be shown to be bad, and many defects may be found in it. Yet, any of the mature existing states have in them the positive elements that are essential to the existence of ‘The State’ (in and by itself). ‘The State’, as Hegel says, ‘is no ideal work of art; it stands on earth, and so in the sphere of caprice, chance, and error, and bad behaviour may disfigure it in many respects’.

Moreover, Hegel in his *Philosophy of Art* defines the purpose of art as the creation of beautiful objects in which the true character of freedom is given a sensuous form of human self-expression and

self-understanding, and to represent divine and human freedom. Art, he believes, enables us to reveal the truth about ourselves, to discover who we truly are, to show us the true character of our freedom. Art is without the defects characteristic of ‘The State’. Art is about perfection, and ‘caprice, chance, and error’ are not to be found in it. From this it follows that ‘The State is not a Work of Art’.

In the Hegelian sense, the state, indeed, is not an artwork in itself. It is always in need of improvement, in a perpetual state of becoming. Art (which we also now understand to be incapable of perfection) can however draw attention to the contingencies and contradictions of the state, its faults and failures, its preconceptions and injustices, its deceptions and misinformation, its insensitivities and cruelties, but it can also point to its possibilities – to turn it not towards the direction of perfection, in the Hegelian sense, but towards potential improvement and renewed understandings of itself.

LISE HARLEV



Mõtleme oma emakeeles
(You think in your own language), 2018
Fabric banner, 1250 × 1207 cm

People Who Speak Your Language, 2018
Series of six different posters, 59,4 × 84,1 cm

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

My Own Country, 2005
2 offset prints, 59,4 × 84 cm

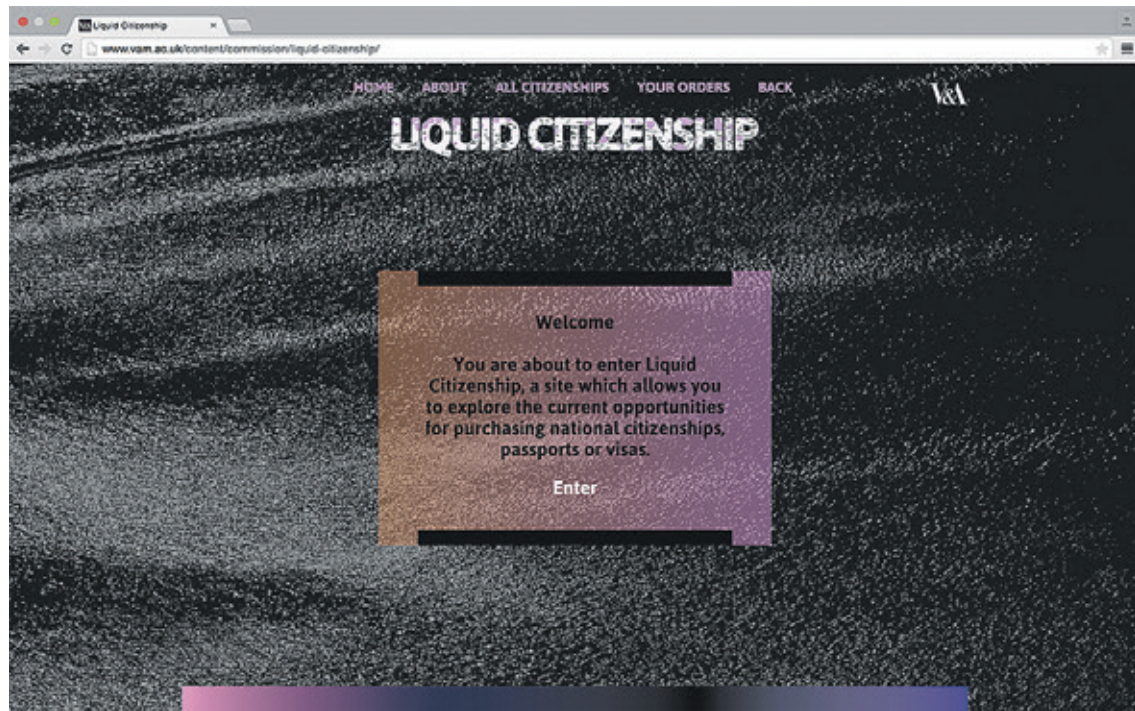
Courtesy of the artist

Lise Harlev’s work presents bold and often ambiguous sentences, utilising symbols, motifs and typography of the kind found in contemporary graphic design media, such as public signage, banners, billboards and advertisements. For *The State is not a Work of Art*, Harlev has created a banner covering the entire central section of the façade of the exhibition building, alluding to the temporary hoardings that are used to conceal building works. The banner reads “*MÕTLEME OMA EMAKEELES KA SIIS, KUI SELLES EI RÄÄGI*” (YOU THINK IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE EVEN WHEN YOU DON’T SPEAK IT). The work touches on various ways of practicing a language – thinking, hearing, reading, writing and speaking – and the difference between inward thought and expressive, written statement.

Estonian is one of only three Finno-Ugric languages that are officially recognised by nation states as national languages. Due to broader demographic trends across Europe, the number of native Estonian speakers is in decline. Moreover, 29% of Estonia’s population continues to speak Russian as their primary language. Harlev’s work gives rise to a multitude of questions regarding this situation, and touches on the tensions that may arise. In addition to the banner, a series of six posters entitled *People Who Speak Your Language* (2018) will be posted around the city of Tallinn.

Lise Harlev, born in 1973 in Odense, Denmark, is an artist based in Berlin.

FEMKE HERREGRAVEN



Liquid Citizenship, 2015
Online work

Commissioned by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Courtesy of the artist

Liquid Citizenship, 2018
Installation, citizenship packages, lanyards

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

Being born in a country has always been the main way of acquiring citizenship, but other ways are becoming increasingly common. Femke Herregraven's work *Liquid Citizenship* starts from the fact that national citizenship has become "liquid": it has become a commodity that can be purchased, traded or revoked. It began as an online game and has been further developed into an installation for *The State is not a Work of Art*, where it is presented as a physical 'app store' enabling participants to explore and purchase national citizenship, a passport or visa from whichever country they may choose.

Liquid Citizenship shows the gap between the haves and the have-nots. The first being elite consumers, such as multinationals and the very rich who can afford to obtain so-called "Economic Citizenship" through buying real estate in a foreign country, or making a donation toward its government. The latter being those people who have neither the legal status nor the financial capacity to gain citizenship of another country. They are the political and economic refugees who pay thousands of dollars to cross borders illegally, risking their lives for the goal of a new and more promising legal status. *Liquid Citizenship* provides us with unsettling evidence concerning the status of contemporary citizenship, emphasising its questionable development toward an economic and consumer-oriented commodity.

Femke Herregraven, born in 1982 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, is an artist based in Amsterdam.

Tallinn Art Hall

SZABOLCS KISSPÁL



From Fake Mountains to Faith (Hungarian Trilogy), 2016
Installation: mixed media, video, variable dimensions

Produced with the support of Edith Russ Haus
for Media Art, Oldenburg and Stiftung Niedersachsen
Courtesy of the artist

From Fake Mountains to Faith (Hungarian Trilogy) is a docufiction project by Szabolcs KissPál. At the centre of his investigations is the authoritarian, illiberal Hungarian state policy. The project aims to analyse, describe and translate into an international perspective the anatomy of the political and cultural philosophy that operates as its ideological basis. KissPál's installation comprises two docufiction videos (*Amorous Geography* and *The Rise of the Fallen Feather*) and a fictitious museum setting (*The Chasm Records*).

Amorous Geography, the first part of the *Hungarian Trilogy*, deals with one of the most persistent, albeit repressed, motifs of Hungarian historical memory: the national trauma caused by the Treaty of Trianon (1920). The associative chain of historical references in *The Rise of the Fallen Feather* looks at how the symbolism of a totem bird – the mythological Turul – affected twentieth-century Hungarian history through an amnesiac, yet magical, collective memory from very early times, through the founding of the Turul Fellowship Association in 1919 and up to the present ideology of "blood and motherland".

The Chasm Records takes the form of a museum display, presenting items from a fictitious archaeological find. Through references to historical objects and relics dating from Hungary's interwar period, the political formation of the nation is revealed – a process still being completed in contemporary Hungarian society.

Szabolcs KissPál, born in 1967 in Marosvásárhely, Hungary, is an artist and lecturer based in Budapest.

Tallinn Art Hall

STÉPHANIE LAGARDE



Déploiements, 2018
Single channel digital video,
colour, sound, 16'00''

With permission from the French Air Force,
the Patrouille de France and VSTEP
With the support of DRAC Ile-de-France

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

Bloc Ballad, 2018
Rubber, foam, wood,
speakers, 200 x 120 x 18 cm

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

Stéphanie Lagarde's singing sculpture *Bloc Ballad* departs from the observation that in recent years participants of protest movements have developed new strategies to protect themselves by dressing in thick black clothes, ski masks and motorcycle helmets with padding. This diminishes their risk of physical injuries, individual identification and prosecution. These groups of protesters have been called the 'black bloc' and they are usually associated with anti-fascist or anarchist ideas. *Bloc Ballad* represents the human body in a protest situation as a fragile subject, not only being exposed to the violence of the state, but also as a force in its own right, opposing the state. The sculpture sings poems by one of the numerous heteronyms of Fernando Pessoa, Alvaro de Campos:

*Whose herald was I born to be?
How was I fooled
Into thinking that what I had was mine?
Who gave it to me?*

*Cardiac slaves of the stars,
We conquer everything before we get out of bed;
But we wake up and it's opaque,
We get up and it's alien,
We go out and it's the entire world*

*How do I know what I'll be, when I don't even know what I am?
Should I be what I think? But I think about being so many things!*

These poems evoke issues related to identity, existence, the sense of belonging, possessing legitimacy as a human being and as a citizen.

Lagarde's video *Déploiements* shows how a state may perform systems of control and occupation of space, in the air as well as on the ground, symbolic as well as effective. It shows us the *Patrouille de France*, the aerobatics team of the French Air Force, rehearsing the choreography of its air show through a series of intriguing hand gestures and the use of precise instructions. These images are interspersed with images of a crowd control simulation during a protest demonstration, made with software specifically developed for police training purposes. The software enables the police to test new control techniques and learn to fight like an army in a warzone, utilising a strategy of deployment and occupation, saturation and disorientation of the senses.

Stéphanie Lagarde, born in 1982 in Toulouse, France, is an artist based in Paris.

Tallinn Art Hall

ELLA LITTWITZ



The Unknown Land of the South, 2017
Steel, soil, 200 cm (diameter) x 1 cm

Courtesy of Marguerite Steed Hoffman Collection (Dallas) and
Harlan Levey Projects (Brussels)

Ella Littwitz's sculptural work *The Unknown Land of the South* is based on the legendary *Terra Australis Incognita*, a hypothetical continent first imagined in antiquity by Ptolemy. He based its existence on the hypothesis that the continents on the Northern hemisphere should be balanced by an equal landmass in the South, something already speculated by Aristotle. The sculpture is a new piece of land composed of the soil from the 24 countries that deny Littwitz's entry because of her nationality. As the borders between these countries follow the longitudinal lines of a globe, in the sculpture they each lie side by side forming the circular shape of a pie and its component slices. Up until now Littwitz can only show the soil from 17 countries. For technical or legal reasons it has been impossible to gather the soil from seven countries. The collaborators who have supplied her with the soil have often had to put themselves at risk to get it out of the country of origin. Littwitz will continue her attempt to acquire the soil from the absent countries and turn her utopian "Unknown Land of the South" into a poetic reality.

Ella Littwitz, born in 1982 in Israel, is an artist based in Berlin, Ghent and Israel.

Tallinn Art Hall

CRISTINA LUCAS



ECUATORIANS



EGYPTIANS



EMIRATIS



ENGLISH



ERITREANS



ESTONIANS

Vexillology, 2015
211 colour prints in
white frames, 18 x 24 cm

Courtesy of the artist and
Juana de Aizpuru gallery, Madrid

The 211 photographs of *Vexillology* represent the exalted football fans from each of the 211 football nations that are members of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Each fan is adorned in facial and body paint typically denoting the national flag of the country they support. The title of the work, *Vexillology*, refers to the study of the history, symbolism and usage of flags. Flags can tell us much about the origins, culture and values of a society. In addition to turning oneself into a flag, painting one's own body is a dynamic activity performed to distinguish oneself from one's enemy and to secure one's affinity with the likeminded.

In the excitement of a major international football tournament, such as the World Cup, several concepts coincide: the football match is not simply a sporting showdown, but also entails sentiments of a nationalistic nature, feelings of shared identity and a strong national representation. The disturbing and occasionally hilarious manifestations of the act of embodying the national flag presented in Cristina Lucas's series of found photographs denotes an almost hysterical identification whereby the lines between entertainment and fun, and latent violence fuelled by nationalist sentiment, are often hard to discern.

Cristina Lucas, born in 1973 in Jaén, Spain,
is an artist based in Madrid.

Tallinn Art Hall

DAMIR MURATOV



U. S. S. (United States of Siberia), 2017
3 paintings, oil on canvas, 110 x 85 cm (each)

Molotov Snowball, 2018
Acrylic on canvas, 74 x 57 cm

Royal Fir Tree, 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 74 x 57 cm

Northern Fan, 2018
Acrylic on canvas, 58 x 101, 5 cm

Moon Rover, 2018
Acrylic on canvas, 52 x 74 cm

Satellite, 2018
Acrylic on canvas, 52 x 74 cm

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist
and 11.12 Gallery, Moscow

The world has witnessed a growing number of local independence movements in recent years, including Kurdistan, Cameroon, Catalonia, the Basque country and Scotland, among others. In Russia, as early as the mid-19th century, a political movement emerged with the aim of forming an autonomous Siberian state, one that would, ideally, lead to the collapse of Imperial Russia. Begun by Siberian students in Saint Petersburg and aspiring to the foundation of an independent Siberian state not unlike a member state of the United States of America, this dream has continued to be kept alive until the present day, though it is now supported mainly by artists.

Damir Muratov, one of the leading figures of the Siberian artistic renaissance of the mid 1990s, depicts the absurdity of current and historical events on canvas, cardboard and paper, reviving the Soviet tradition of illustration and poster design. In his hands, the American Star-Spangled Banner becomes a Siberian snowflake-spangled banner. In other works, he comments on romantic clichés of landscape, here combining the vast Siberian landscape with strange artefacts such as the first Sputnik from 1957, which crashed in a pine forest, and a snowball wrapped in barbed wire flying over the treetops – his "Molotov snowball".

Damir Muratov, born in 1967 in Tobolsk,
Russia, is an artist based in Omsk.

Tallinn Art Hall

TANJA MURAVSKAJA



Ours, 2017–2018
Series of 20 photographs (pigment ink prints),
90 × 67 cm

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

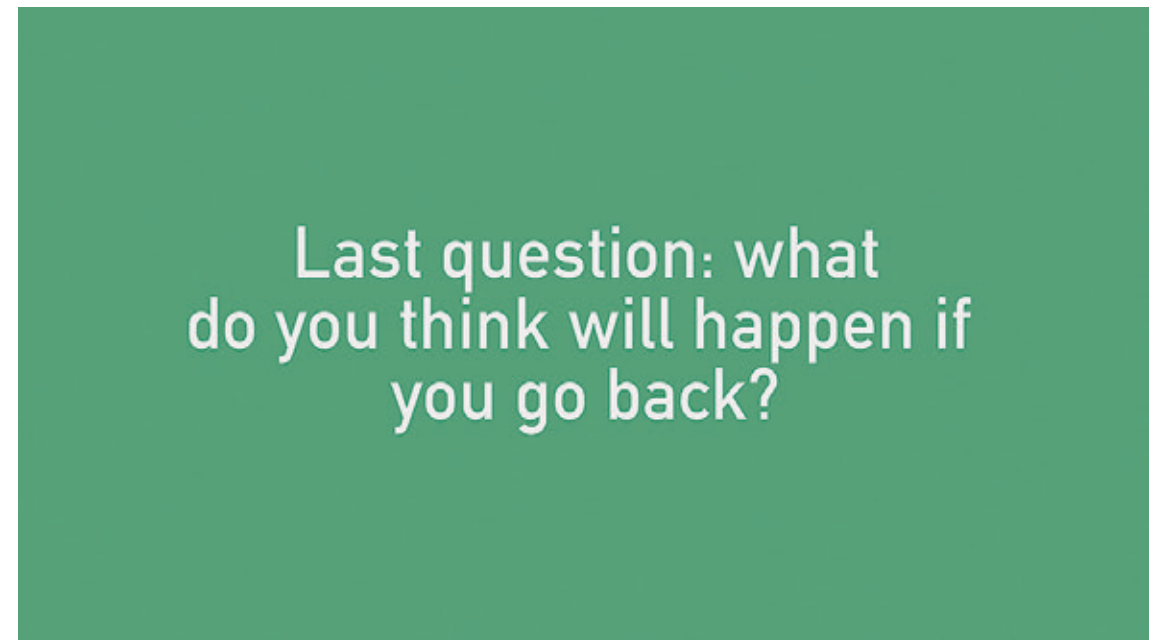
Over the years, Tanja Muravskaja's photographic practice has explored the issue of national identity. The work *Ours* continues to touch on issues of national security, the influence of political conflicts on personal identity and the construction of contemporary identities in the context of shifting geo-political realities. The closely observed subjects of the photo series are NATO soldiers and "Home Daughters": young girls taught patriotic values and trained how to respond if Estonia's independence is threatened. The title emphasises Muravskaja's positioning of the girl scouts and soldiers in a shared dialogue that diminishes the distance between the two, presenting them as contemporary heroes in an era of worldwide instability and conflict and having a common objective.

Exploring the relationship between national identity and national defence, the artist infers that the region is seeking new narratives in the absence of its Soviet past. Muravskaja highlights the important role of NATO soldiers in the Baltic region, since the presence of NATO bases is seen as a necessary tool to protect the national sovereignty of the Estonian nation.

Tanja Muravskaja on 1978. aastal Eestis Pärnus sündinud kunstnik, kes elab ja töötab Tallinnas.

Tallinn Art Hall

MARINA NAPRUSHKINA



You are obliged to tell the truth, 2017
Single channel digital video, colour, sound,
4'00''

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

Everyone Votes Here, 2017
Posters for the public campaign Hier Wählen
Alle (Everyone Votes Here) by the initiative
Neue Nachbarschaft (New Neighbourhood) in
Moabit, Berlin

Courtesy of the artist

Since 2013, Marina Naprushkina has been observing the asylum procedures at a Berlin court. In her video *You are obliged to tell the truth*, the artist combines the questions that judges pose to refugees with images of Brandenburg landscapes. The nature of these questions raises doubt about the reliability of the procedure and the way in which European states handle these matters. Are the judges ever in a position to determine what has happened to people in their countries of origin? Are their judgements based primarily on their individual ideas, social background and experiences? Why are refugees forced to justify their escape? Naprushkina's video reveals an absurd and cynical system that has far-reaching consequences for the applicants, many of whom who have already suffered immeasurable trauma, and also for society as a whole.

Alongside the video, Marina Naprushkina presents a series of posters for the public campaign *Everyone Votes Here* ("Hier wählen alle") initiated as part of her project *New Neighbourhood* (Neue Nachbarschaft) in Berlin's Moabit. The non-profit initiative has been set up to support refugees by providing various services such as translation, and diverse cultural and social events for refugees and asylum seekers. The poster campaign is part of Naprushkina's overall activist practice and direct political action.

Marina Naprushkina, born in 1981 in Minsk, Belarus, is an artist based in Berlin. She founded and runs Neue Nachbarschaft (New Neighbourhood), a non-profit community centre for refugees and asylum seekers in the Moabit district in Berlin.

Tallinn Art Hall

KRISTINA NORMAN



Bring Back My Fire Gods, 2018
Single channel digital video,
colour, sound, 12'00''

Music: Märt-Matis Lill
Singer/Performer: Sofia Jernberg
Original lyrics: Maarja Kangro
Director of photography: Erik Norkroos
B-camera: Epp Kubu

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

Bring Back My Fire Gods comments on recent discussions about the impossibility of including a Russian-language song in the repertoire of the Estonian national song festival. Norman's intervention plays with the three most important elements of the national song festival: music, fire and the Song Festival Grounds. The Tallinn Song Festival Grounds have attained an almost sacred status in the Estonian national imagination, being associated with Estonia's historical 'national awakening', the Singing Revolution, and regaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Kristina Norman's work appropriates the main symbols of the song festival and creates a new multi-layered narrative that the majority of Estonians would probably consider unacceptable in the context of the song festival.

Norman combines a Russian folk song – also known in an Estonian-language version – with lyrics by Maarja Kangro and performed by Ethiopian/Swedish opera singer Sofia Jernberg. Using the folk song 'Transvaal' to refer to the connection between Estonian and Russian cultures, Norman also indicates the ways in which it becomes possible to relate to the distress of the people of a distant nation (the song is dedicated to the Second Anglo-Boer War). *Bring Back My Fire Gods* shows the increasing impossibility of public discussion about concepts as national 'purity' and indicates how, on the contrary, countries in fact borrow diverse elements from each other in forging of their identities.

Kristina Norman, born in 1979 in Tallinn, Estonia, is an artist and documentary filmmaker based in Tallinn.

Tallinn Art Hall

KATARZYNA PRZEWANSKA



Early Polishness, 2017
Paper, resole foam, metal, wood, epoxy resin, acrylic
Dimensions of diorama 130 x 159 x 318 cm
Dimensions of construction 196 x 167 x 318 cm

Courtesy of The ING Polish Art Foundation

If one wants to see what is really left from 200 million years ago in the area that is now Poland, one has to dig deep into the earth. During the carboniferous period many different plants and trees grew and died, becoming coal, which is Poland's most important mineral resource. The area also has significant quantities of lignite and natural gas and a major offshore oilfield in the Baltic Sea. There are large reserves of sulphur and other mineral resources include bauxite, barite, gypsum, limestone and silver. In so far as present-day Poland is rooted in its mineral economy, these resources are what remain of "early Polishness".

In the diorama *Early Polishness* (2017), made in collaboration with scientists and geologists, Katarzyna Przewawska has imagined Poland, and more specifically Warsaw, 200 million years ago, as a swampy and sandy area, covered with pinewood trees, gingko, horsetail and various kinds of ferns. Small dinosaurs and huge dragonflies roam about, and in the sand the footprints of larger dinosaurs are visible. From this perspective, the idea of nation and nationality appear not merely irrelevant, but absurd. Przewawska concludes: "The capital of Poland was better off when Poland did not yet exist."

Katarzyna Przewańska, born in 1984 in Warsaw, Poland, is an artist based in Warsaw.

Tallinn Art Hall

JAANUS SAMMA



New Year's Boy, 2018
Straw, steel

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

Every Saturday at around 4 PM,
after the regular exhibition tour
a performance by the
New Year's Boys will take place
in the exhibition space.
Choreography by Siim Tõniste.

New Year's Boy examines the constructed nature of folk culture, focusing on a marginal tradition that has long since subsided from the collective memory of Estonians. The work is inspired by a photograph of a young man wearing a straw costume taken in 1935 at the studio of the brothers Parikas. The photograph belongs to a series of staged ethnographic photographs that were commissioned by August Pulst, a folk-culture activist of the interwar period, and sold as postcards to raise money for the Tori Museum, a small county museum he had established in 1934 for the preservation of Estonian national heritage.

The tradition of the New Year's Boys usually involved groups of young men who would walk from door to door on New Year's eve, wishing people a happy new year. The origins of this tradition are unknown, but similar rituals and customs can be found in many different cultures. Folk culture practices and customs were an important means of preserving traditionalism in Estonia during the Soviet period. However, the young men in straw clothing have disappeared into the past. Samma's objective is to show that the canon of national traditions is largely arbitrary and that many pieces of the puzzle have been chosen simply to construct an idea of an "archaic past". His call-to-action asks us to choose our own means and images for the narratives we live by.

Jaanus Samma, born in 1982 in Tallinn, Estonia, is an artist based in Tallinn.

Tallinn Art Hall

IVAR SAKK



Borrowed identities, 2018
Digital print

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of Ivar Sakk

Archetypal symbols – the coat of arms, national colours, the national flower and bird – all have an important role to play in the history of the Estonian state and people (and Estonia is not unique in this respect). The existence of these symbols has been taken for granted, with little reflection on their origins and formation. Throughout Estonian history, for example, the heraldic lions and shields have been reproduced with a blithe lack of inhibition.

Sakk presents a wide-ranging gallery of nationalist symbols, juxtaposing those that belong to 'us' and those that belong to 'them'; for example, 'our' (Estonian) three lions versus the Danish three lions, 'our' cornflower versus the German Kaiserblume, 'our' barn swallow versus the Austrian swallow, and 'our' Runic letters versus Swedish runic inscriptions. Studying the semantics of signs raises a number of questions: When do borrowed visual elements become ours? When do they become so sacred that it becomes a 'crime' for us to riff on them and make liberal modifications? How important are chance and visual illiteracy in the shaping of nationalist symbols? As society maintains a strained sense of decorum in advance of the 100th anniversary of the Estonian republic, it may seem awkward to ask such questions, but they remain vital for understanding how a national consciousness is engineered.

Ivar Sakk, born in 1962 in Kiviõli, Estonia, is a graphic designer and lecturer based in Tallinn. Since 2003 he is the professor of the graphic design department of the Estonian Academy of Arts.

Tallinn Art Hall

STUDIO JONAS STAAL



New Unions, 2018
Installation, video, carpet

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

New Unions is an artistic and political campaign founded by artist Jonas Staal that confronts the current political, economic, humanitarian and environmental crisis of Europe with the aim of assembling representatives of transdemocratic movements and organisations to propose scenarios for new future unions. The term “transdemocracy” signifies both a transnational and transformative understanding of democratic practice. Staal considers the crisis of Europe to be also a crisis of the imagination. He rejects both ultranationalist parties that demand separation from the European Union and seek to return to a mythical notion of the nation-state, and the political-economical functionary elite that uses the EU as a vehicle to enable its austerity politics.

The installation is organised around an inverted map of the European continent. Surrounding the map are the stars of Europe, executed as large sculptural objects sinking into and emerging out from the floor. No longer situated in their familiar circle, these stars represent a union that is both in crisis and in a stage of fundamental transformation: a process of re-unionisation. The installation is complemented by videos of the *New Unions* assemblies organised so far, including in Berlin (HAU Theater, 2017), Amsterdam (Paradiso, 2017), Athens (Sporting Basket Arena, 2017) and Brussels (Bozar, 2017).

Jonas Staal, born in 1981 in Zwolle, the Netherlands, is an artist based in Rotterdam. He is the founder of the artistic and political organisation New World Summit and the campaign New Unions.

Tallinn Art Hall

LOULOU CHERINET



Statecraft, 2017
Dual channel digital video, colour, sound, 48'00"

Courtesy of the artist

During the Swedish election campaign of 2006 two mutually exclusive concepts appeared in the political debate: *innanförskap* and *utanförskap*, referring to ‘insidership’ and ‘outsidership’ in relation to Swedish society. One year after the elections, the new government announced that there were one million, sixty-three thousand, two-hundred and twenty persons “in outsidership” in Sweden. The concept and its associated statistics have been criticised for being unscientific, lacking clear definition or criteria to determine “outsidership”, and different sides in the debate have used the term to signify different things.

Loulou Cherinet’s video installation *Statecraft* records a group discussion on “insidership” as contrasted with “outsidership”. The participants in this discussion are from all layers of society – newcomers, immigrants, homeless people, the well-educated, people with a physical disability or mental illness, men, women, young or old – but all seem to have fallen out of the system in one way or another and are trying to find some rationale behind it.

Loulou Cherinet, born in 1970 in Göteborg, Sweden, is an artist based in Stockholm and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Tallinn City Gallery

THOMAS LOCHER



A Hundred Thousand Billion Societies, 2017
16 cubes, colour printed cardboard,
90 x 90 x 90 cm (each)

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS Article 15.

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality, 2005/2006
Framed C-print on Diasec,
121 x 98,4 cm, Ed. 2/2

Courtesy Gallery Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law, 2004

Framed C-print on Diasec,
236,5 x 180 cm, Ed. 2/2

Courtesy of Lisa Ungar

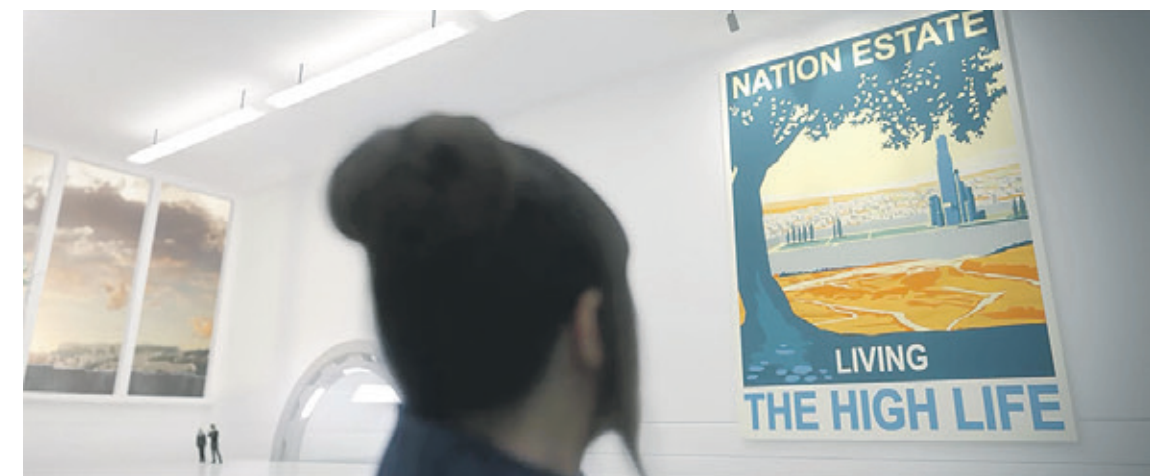
Thomas Locher, born in 1956 in Munderkingen, Germany, is an artist based in Berlin. Since 2017 he is the Rector of the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig.

In *A Hundred Thousand Billion Societies*, Thomas Locher adapts the concept of 'ars combinatoria' to create an alphabet of human interaction under the guise of a game of dice, an age-old way of generating random combinations. Drawing from the tradition of surrealist parlour games, like the *cadavre exquis*, in which each new player adds a sentence to a sequence whose previous entries he is barred from reading, and borrowing its name from *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*, a book developed by Raymond Queneau in collaboration with mathematician François Le Lionnais, which combines a set of ten sonnets printed on card, each line on a separate strip that can be arranged and re-arranged into 100,000,000,000,000 different combinations, Locher's dice also allow for potentially infinite composition and potentially ungraspable (non)sense.

The works from an older series, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, are enlarged photographs of two articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) on which Locher has inscribed his own handwritten and typewritten notes: questioning, analysing, and deconstructing the language used in the Declaration to point out linguistic slips, inaccuracies, fallacies or the often random or thoughtless inconsiderate use of words when it comes to defining issues of nationality, nationhood, citizenship and rights afforded by the nation state. With this group of works, the artist invites us to consider the social and political implications that this language may have on the lives of citizens, whether as groups or individuals

Tallinn City Gallery

LARISSA SANSOUR



Nation Estate, 2012
Single channel digital video, colour, sound, 5'24"

Courtesy of the artist

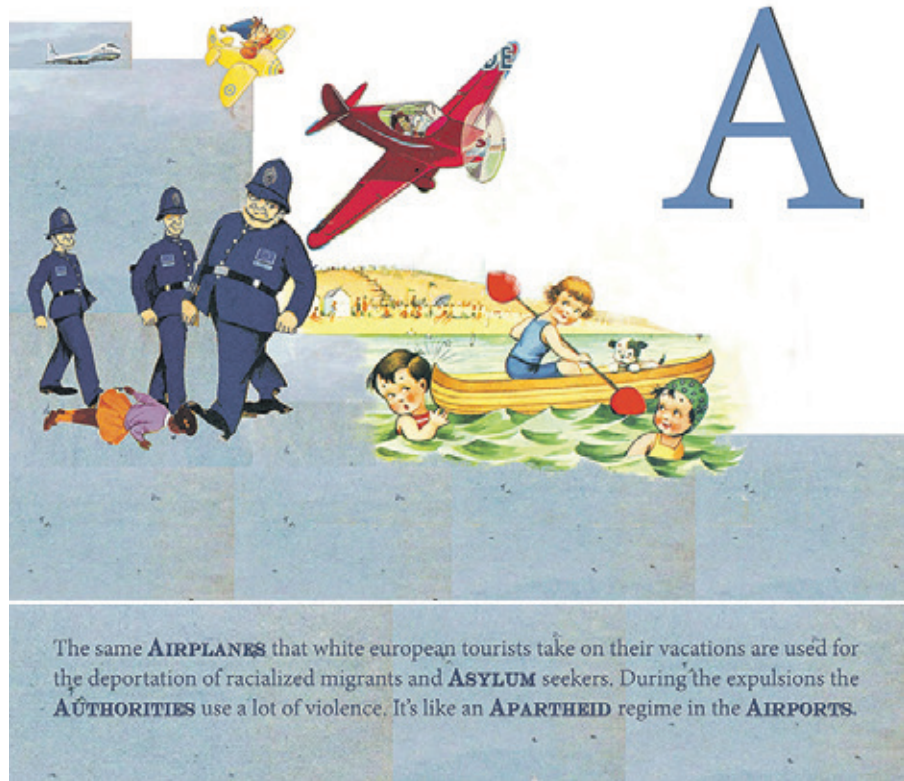
History generally consists of the heroic stories that people tell each other about the glorious past of their nation, creating a common – often-fictional – background and a shared identity. Larissa Sansour is interested in questions about the meaning and importance of historical facts as well as the fallacies that are equally present. She investigates the role of myths in history, and shows the significance of both fiction and fact for the development of a national identity. Being Palestinian-born she is predominantly interested in the politics of the Middle East.

Departing from the situation that all proposals for the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have led to a deadlock (one-state, two-state, three-state, no-state), Larissa Sansour has thought of a dystopian, yet humorous fifth solution: *Nation Estate*. Palestine is imagined in the form of a high-rise, with a city on each floor. Jerusalem is on the 13th floor, Ramallah on the 14th, Sansour's native Bethlehem on the 21st and so on. *Nation Estate* is a sci-fi short film with a mixture of computer generated imagery, live actors and arabesque electronica, exploring a vertical solution to Palestinian statehood.

Larissa Sansour, born in 1973 in Jerusalem, Israel, is an artist based in London.

Tallinn City Gallery

DANIELA ORTIZ



ABC of Racist Europe, 2017
28 digital prints, 31 x 31 cm

Courtesy of the artist and ángels,
Barcelona

Large numbers of people from countries around the Mediterranean and Africa have been fleeing their homeland in the hope of starting a new life in what remains a relatively affluent and safe region, Europe. The prosperity of the European Union is itself largely a consequence of European imperial and colonial policies during the 19th and 20th centuries, which fuelled the economic growth of European countries at the expense of impoverishing colonised regions, and so the present mass migration can be seen as a natural mechanism for correcting that historical injustice and imbalance.

With her *ABC of Racist Europe*, Daniela Ortiz explores the universalist concept of the alphabet, refashioning it as an elaborate collage of images and text. Simple and innocent sounding words like 'airplane', 'border', 'document', 'Mediterranean' and 'tourist', are brought together in a new and unexpected context that is as disturbing as it is demeaning. Her collage reveals an anxious, closed, nationalistic and spasmodically racist Europe that has chosen to forget its colonial history and is in search of scapegoats for its own internal problems.

Daniela Ortiz, born in 1985 in Cuzco, Peru,
is an artist based in Barcelona.

Tallinn City Gallery

EWA AXELRAD



Shtamah # 1, 2017
Single channel video, colour,
sound, 4'35"

Shtamah # 2, 2017
Ash wood flag poles, steel pole
holders, 280 x 525 x 155 cm

Shtamah # 3, 2017
Giclée print on dibond in
wooden frame, 125 x 100 cm

Shtamah # 5, 2017
Resin spillikins, dimensions
variable

Courtesy of the artist, Copperfield,
London and BWA Warszawa Gallery,
Warsaw

The Polish word *sztama*, pronounced "shtamah", can be translated as "a relation between friends or companions, entailing mutual help." It is a street word used to show solidarity, the etymology of which comes from the German *der Stamm* – a tribe. This work tries to unveil the mechanisms that urge people to unite in forms of aggression towards others not belonging to their own group. In the process of unification, one diminishes one's individuality and adjusts one's moral standards. Integration into the group is often achieved by introducing uniformity in the appearance of members through clothing or hairstyle. Perhaps the most telling picture of *sztama* is *Shtamah #3*, a photograph of a group of men standing in a circle and holding on to each other. Their bodies and the surroundings are painted black, except for their uniting arms and hands, and together they look like a tightly knit, ominous, human wreath.

Shtamah #5 is a group of various 'spillikins', a reference to the children's game "Spillikins" or "Pick up Sticks". The sticks all possess different characteristics, referring to ancient symbols such as runic signs and the Celtic Cross used by groups whose identity is largely built on fighting others. The idea behind this work is to question how violence can easily be normalised through play.

Ewa Axelrad, born in 1984 in Gliwice,
Poland, is an artist based in London and
Silesia.

Art Hall Gallery

MARTA GÓRNICKA



**Constitution for
the Chorus of Poles, 2016**
Single channel digital video,
colour, sound, 26'31''

Courtesy of the artist and
Nowy Teatr, Warsaw

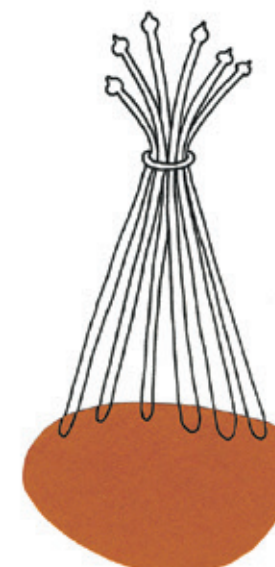
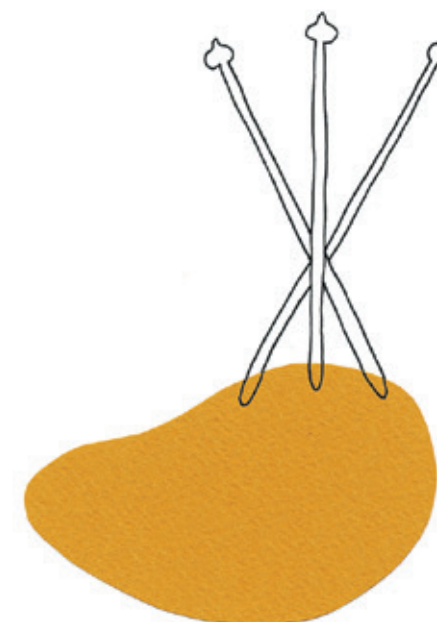
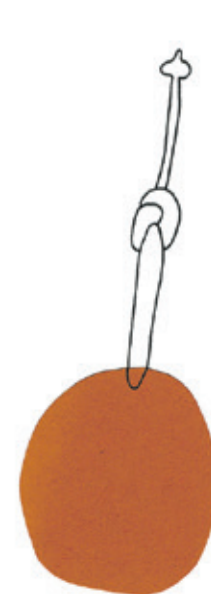
Nationality is supported by artificial nationalist symbols and structures such as the flag, anthem and constitution. But are these elements ever sufficient to define a country and keep its people together? The video, *Constitution for the Chorus of Poles*, by Polish theatre director Marta Górnicka documents a musical and performative interpretation of Poland's present constitution. For this performance, Marta Górnicka gathered people from both the left and right wings of Poland's political spectrum: actors, football fans, members of the Strzelec Shooting Association, Christians, Vietnamese, Jews, the *Chorus Of Women*, Muslims, refugees, people with Down's Syndrome, pensioners and children.

The choreography is deliberately simple and confrontational. Massive, loud repetitions of words and phrases and a pounding rhythm create a threatening effect, but the array of conflicting voices also suggest a national, pluralist parliament. In this way, the performance probes the idea of the Polish nation and the volatile concept of "Polishness", emphasising that neither can be defined by a singular, limiting, categorical definition.

Marta Górnicka, born in 1975 in Poland, is a theatre director based in Warsaw and creator of new forms of chorus theatre. She is the founder of the choral company The Chorus of Women.

Art Hall Gallery

FLO KASEARU



Basic Pride, 2017
30 drawings, 30 x 42 cm

Commissioned by Tallinn Art Hall
Courtesy of the artist

Flo Kasearu has often addressed the issues of tradition and national identity in her work. The series of drawings titled *Basic Pride* depict an object resembling a potato – a symbol that has become closely connected to Estonian nationality. During the Soviet occupation, Estonia was one of the leading countries for potato production and became known in the Soviet Union as the "Potato Republic".

In Kasearu's drawings, the sprouts of the potato become flagpoles of different shapes and configurations, suggesting various ways of 'being' or 'behaving' as a state. The potatoes depicted with many flagpoles refer to a strong union of many nations, each being different yet somehow able to contribute to the whole. Through these different imaginative configurations, Kasearu associatively explores the many different outlooks a nation or state can adopt and reveals its literal 'constitution' in terms of its primary belief systems – from being open to dialogue and cross-fertilisation to being a hermetic, self-protective and defensive entity.

Flo Kasearu, born in 1985 in Tallinn, Estonia, is an artist based in Tallinn. Since 2013 she is the director of Flo Kasearu House Museum.

Art Hall Gallery

THOMAS KILPPER



Burnout, 2016–2017

Series of drawings, charcoal on paper, dimensions variable.

Courtesy of the artist and
Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin/Cologne.

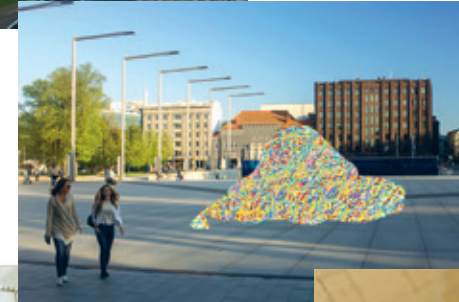
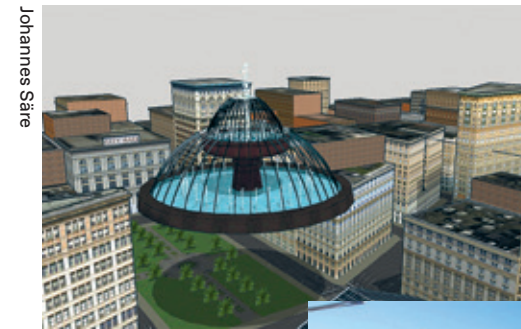
Burnout is a suite of 90 charcoal drawings depicting the sites of extreme right-wing attacks on refugees and asylum seekers in various places in Germany. There is an alarming resemblance between photographs of the *Kristallnacht* of 1938 and recent newspaper pictures of attacked refugee centres in present-day Germany. Both depict acts of arson and rage fueled by angry nationalism and blinded by narrow-minded xenophobia and racism. The artist has chosen to translate these photographs into raw black-and-white sketches of burnt houses, smoke, flames and firemen, mostly at night.

Underneath each drawing is the name of the place where the attack happened, predominantly rural municipalities. Such small and distant communities can easily become fertile ground for the emergence of narrow nationalist sentiments and an irrational fear of the unknown. Apart from fear, feelings of frustration and lack of self-esteem may be responsible for hostile attitudes against newcomers whose arrival the inhabitants were not consulted about and the title “Burnout” implies this *double entendre*.

Thomas Kilpper, born in 1956 in Stuttgart, Germany, is an artist based in Berlin.

Art Hall Gallery

KRISTINA SOLOMOUKHA & PAOLO CODELUPPI

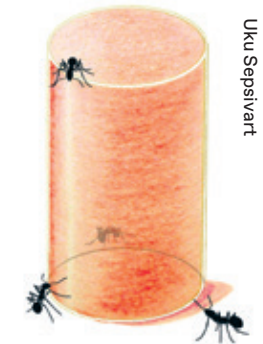


The Monument Contest,
Special Event in Estonia, 2009–2018
With Elfi Turpin
Artistic and curatorial project

Celebration, 2018
Single channel video,
colour, silent, loop, 9'00"

Untitled, 2018
Single channel video, colour,
silent, loop, 2'00"
(Slideshow, 500 images)

Courtesy of the artists



For *The Monument Contest*, a number of artists and architects have been invited to propose a project for a monument, for which no location or purpose has been given. The artists have been given total freedom to conceive whatever monument they wish. Each artist has been asked to present drawings, photographs, or other two-dimensional images, a small text and a small model of their proposal. As budgets are small, so will be the scale of the monuments. The winning monument will be built to “a reasonable scale” and any other selected monuments will be built to “an even more reasonable scale”.

The Monument Contest will comment on the notion of commemoration and the processes that are traditionally involved in it. A monument generally consists of a large structure, meant to keep alive the memory of an important person or historical event, connecting to its past, in space and place, and very often serving master narratives, nationalist rhetoric or hegemonic political interests. However, the original rationale for a monument is often soon forgotten and so it becomes almost invisible. While a monument may still function as a marker – “Turn left just after the monument” – more often, as history is rewritten, its fate is total eradication.

Kristina Solomoukha, born in 1971 in Kiev, Ukraine, and Paolo Codeluppi, born in 1974 in Singapore, have been working together since 2012. They are based in Bagnolet, France. Elfi Turpin, born in 1976 in Paris, France, is a curator and the director of the Centre Rhénan d'Art Contemporain – CRAC, Alsace.

Vabaduse Gallery



Mõtleme oma emakeeles (You think in your own language), 2018. Fabric banner, 1250 x 1207 cm. Photo: Karel Koplimets

EDUCATIONAL & PUBLIC PROGRAMME

100 MATTERS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Estonian History Museum and Tallinn Art Hall
joint educational programme

1 MARCH – 27 APRIL

AGE GROUP: For students in lower secondary school (3rd level) and upper secondary school

DURATION: 60 + 60 min

FOCUS: The story of the birth and development of the Estonian nation and statehood; nationalism, nation, state, objectivity and subjectivity, the language of contemporary art

LEARNING OUTCOME: Students will be introduced to the history of the development of Estonian statehood and national identity as well as the events and individuals related to the formation of the Republic of Estonia. They will learn to describe and compare democratic and authoritarian/totalitarian societies; students will be able to analyse the matters of statehood and nationalism from different angles and develop their personal opinion based on that.

PRICE: 7€ per student, the price of the lunch is available on request.

LUNCH BREAK: If you want to book lunch in the café of the Estonian History Museum, please let us know via the registration form at: www.kunstihoone.ee/en/education-programme/

I PART: AT THE ESTONIAN HISTORY MUSEUM (Maarjamäe palace, Piritä tee 56)

During the educational programme we will unravel the knots of fascinating events together. How old is the Estonian nation and its national identity? Where does the word ‘Estonian’ come from and who used it first? How old is our state? At the exhibition *My Free Country* we will focus on the moments, events and individuals of importance in the formation of the Republic of Estonia. Working in groups or in pairs, students will be assigned fascinating tasks related to the birth of our country.

II PART: AT TALLINN ART HALL (Vabaduse väljak 8)

At Tallinn Art Hall we will continue with the topic of statehood already started at the History Museum and search for new perspectives and approaches in the exhibition *The State is not a Work of Art*. A state is a dynamic entity that is in constant change; there is no single and clear truth. Contemporary art offers a perfect opportunity to address complex and ambiguous topics. These include: What is Estonia, what is nationalism? In which direction is our country going and in which direction would we like it to go? Why do we need a state and what is necessary for a state to exist? What is important to me personally? How to see the grey areas in what seem to be black and white topics?

We will have several playful and humorous discussions during the programme. At the end of the session, students will be assigned a group task to help them analyse the experience of both exhibitions.

THE STATE IS NOT A WORK OF ART

Tallinn Art Hall
educational programme
21 FEB – 27 APRIL

AGE GROUP: Lower secondary school (3rd level) and upper secondary school

DURATION: 60–90 minutes, depending on the preferences of the group

FOCUS: nationalism, nationality, state, objectivity and subjectivity, the language of contemporary art

GENERAL COMPETENCES: culture and values, social and civic, self-determination and communication competence

VOCABULARY: socially sensitive art, installation, video art

PRICE: 3 € per student

NB! The programme can be booked as a single session at Tallinn Art Hall as well as a package that includes a visit to the Estonian History Museum.

Further information:
publik@kunstihoone.ee
www.kunstihoone.ee/en/education-programme/

A state is a dynamic entity that is in constant change; there is no single and clear truth. Contemporary art offers a perfect opportunity to address complex and ambiguous topics.

These include: What is Estonia? What is nationalism? In which direction is our country going and in which direction would we like it to go? Why do we need a state and what is necessary for a state to exist? What is important to me personally? How to see the grey areas in what seem to be black and white topics? We will have several playful and humorous discussions during the programme. At the end of the session, students will be assigned a creative group task to help them analyse the experience of the exhibition.

Gallery sessions can be booked from Wednesday to Friday from 12 pm to 7 pm.

ASK AWAY!

Tallinn Art Hall
educational programme

21 FEB – 27 APRIL

AGE GROUP: 7–12 years

DURATION: approx. 60 minutes

FOCUS: state and nationalism, means of artistic expression

GENERAL COMPETENCES: culture and values, social and civic, self-determination and communication competences

VOCABULARY: symbol, metaphor, installation, sculpture, video art

Price: 3 € per student

It is often important in life and in art to ask a good question that makes people think about or notice things. At this exhibition we will explore why artists have brought soil from different countries to the exhibition hall or drawn an entire series about the growing of potato sprouts. Why is the title of the exhibition *The State is Not a Work of Art*? What is nationalism and why is it topical? What techniques are used by the artists? The fascinating world of contemporary art will be unveiled to us, increasing our constructive curiosity. Come, let's explore, discuss and play!

Gallery sessions can be booked from Wednesday to Friday from 12 pm to 7 pm.

EXHIBITION TOURS

Tallinn Art Hall
public programme

ALLAGES

A guided tour is the simplest form of educational programme. It is meant for everyone who wants to know more about the exhibition. Our programme manager introduces the ideas behind the exhibition and visitors can ask questions. It is an exciting way to find out more about art. Do not hesitate to register and book a guided tour for whenever is convenient for you. We give these tours for groups of at least four people.

In addition to the tours that can be booked here, there are also regular open tours (Wednesdays at 5:30 PM and Saturdays at 2 PM).

For more information, see our website.

This exhibition guide accompanies *The State is not a Work of Art* in Tallinn Art Hall, 16 February – 29 April 2018. The exhibition is part of the Estonia 100 art programme

Artists: Ewa Axelrad, Loulou Cherinet, Marta Górnicka, Lise Harlev, Femke Herregraven, Flo Kasearu, Thomas Kilpper, Szabolcs KissPál, Stéphanie Lagarde, Ella Littwitz, Thomas Locher, Cristina Lucas, Damir Muratov, Tanja Muravskaja, Marina Naprushkina, Kristina Norman, Daniela Ortiz, Katarzyna Przewańska, Jaanus Samma, Ivar Sakk, Larissa Sansour, Kristina Solomoukha & Paolo Codeluppi & Elfi Turpin, Studio Jonas Staal

Curator: Katerina Gregos

Exhibition team: Karolin Nummert, Siim Preiman, Taaniel Raudsepp, Helena Savtšenko

Exhibition design: b210 architects
(Aet Ader, Mari Hunt, Zane Kalnina, Kadri Klementi, Karin Tõugu)

Installation: Valge Kuup

Graphic design: Indrek Sirkel & Jan Tomson

Public programme: Annely Köster, Gerttu Juhkam, Kalli Kalmet, Eva-Erle Lilleaet & Sally Stuudio; Darja Nikitina

Communication: Alexia Menikou, Triin Männik & Margus Palu

Translations: Refiner Translation Bureau, Priit Silm, Darja Nikitina, Julia Polujanenkova, Martin Rünk, Mari Volens

Printed by: Printall
Edition: 1500

Special thanks from the artists:

Tiiu Parbus, Andra Aaloe, Artprint, Kumu Art Museum, Kersti Mardiste, Tori Museum, Estonian Defence Forces and The Defence League's girls' corps – Kodutütred, Febryano Veldy and Yinglin Rong, La Patrouille de France and Lieutenant Antonia Buroni, Tim Rutten, Daan Milius, Hans van Hezik, Francesco Cimino, Andrea Kretschmann, Eric Beynel, Niels Douma, Graham Kelly, Marie Bechetoille, Pieter van der Schaaf, Livia Páldi, Rory Hyde, Wrocław Contemporary Museum, JP Vernes Collection, art residence “Opyata”



EESTI SUURSAATKOND
MOSKVAS



EESTI KULTUURKAPITAL



Estonian Contemporary Art
Development Center
Eesti Kaasaegse Kunsti
Arenduskeskus



KULTUURIMINISTEERIUM



mondriaan
fund



GOETHE
INSTITUT

DANISH ARTS FOUNDATION



BRITISH
COUNCIL



TALLINNA
KULTUURIAMET



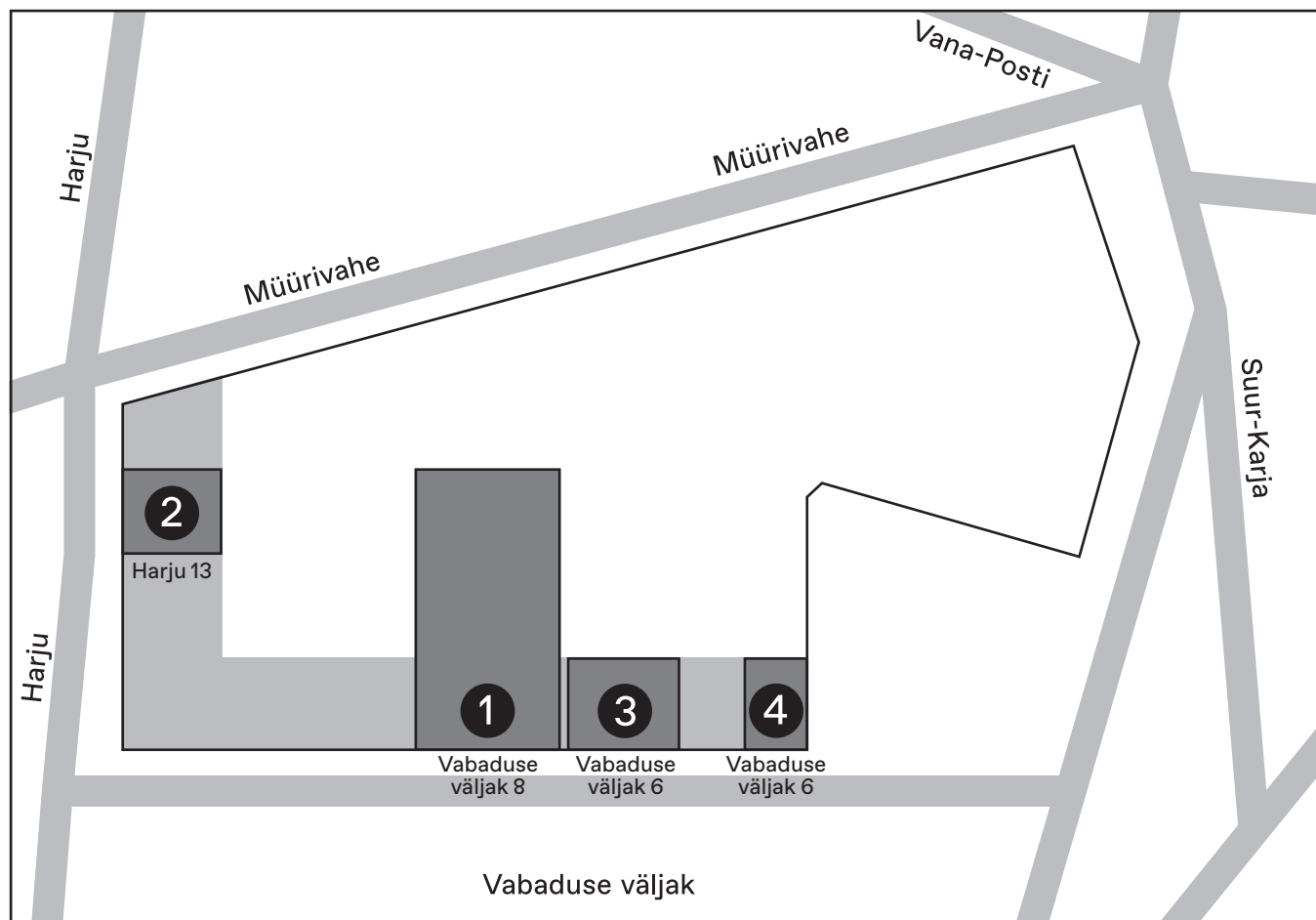
TALLINNA
VABARIIK



visit estonia

THE STATE IS NOT A WORK OF ART

16.02.–29.04.2018



Exhibition open at:

- ① Tallinn Art Hall
- ② Tallinn City Gallery
- ③ Art Hall Gallery
- ④ Vabaduse Gallery

kunstihoone.ee

TALLINNA KUNSTIHOONE
TALLINN ART HALL