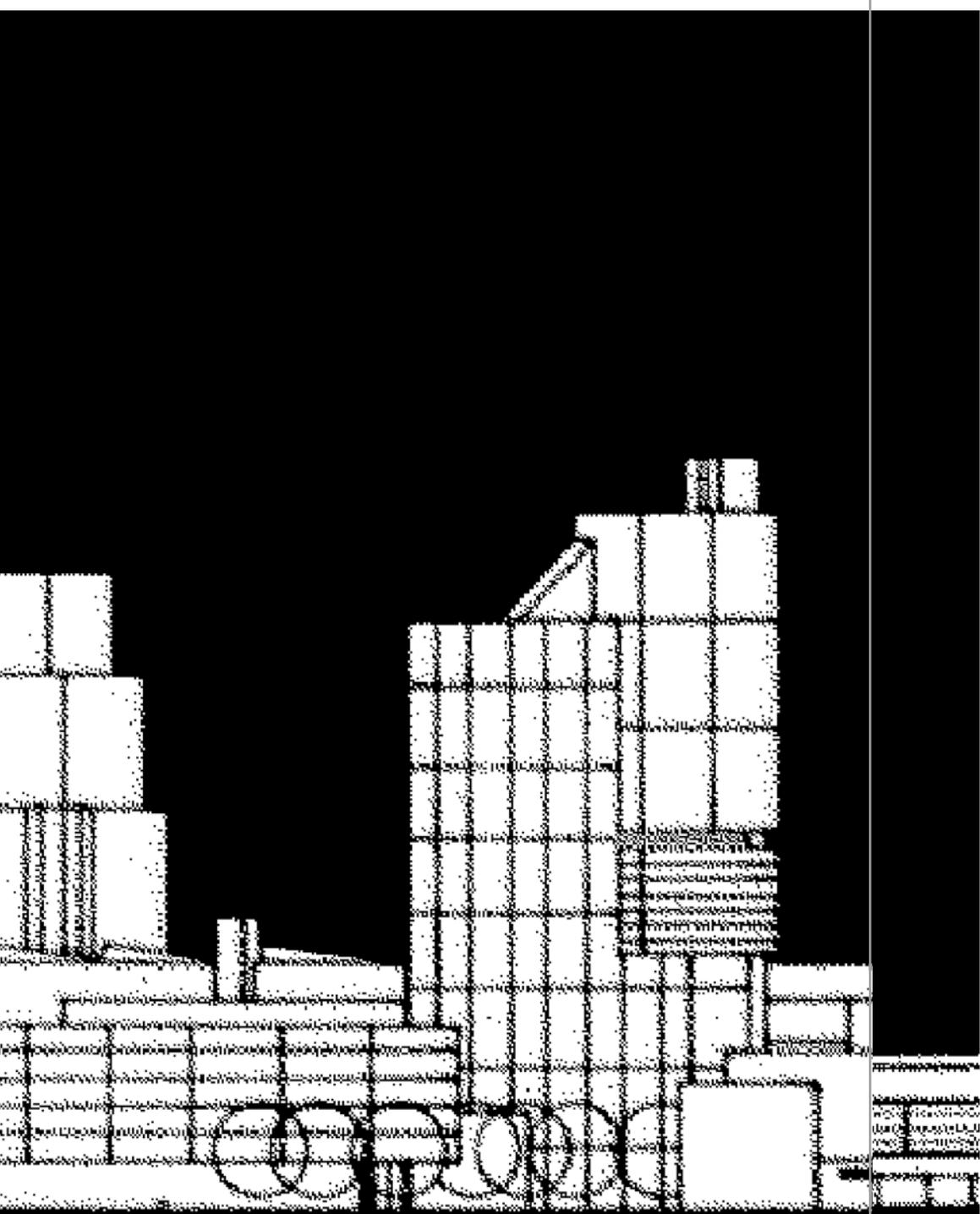


Ingrid Ruudi



**SPACES of the INTERREGNUM:
Transformations in Estonian
Architecture and Art 1986–1994**

Dissertationes Academiae Artium Estoniae 31



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Transformations in Estonian
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S P A C E S
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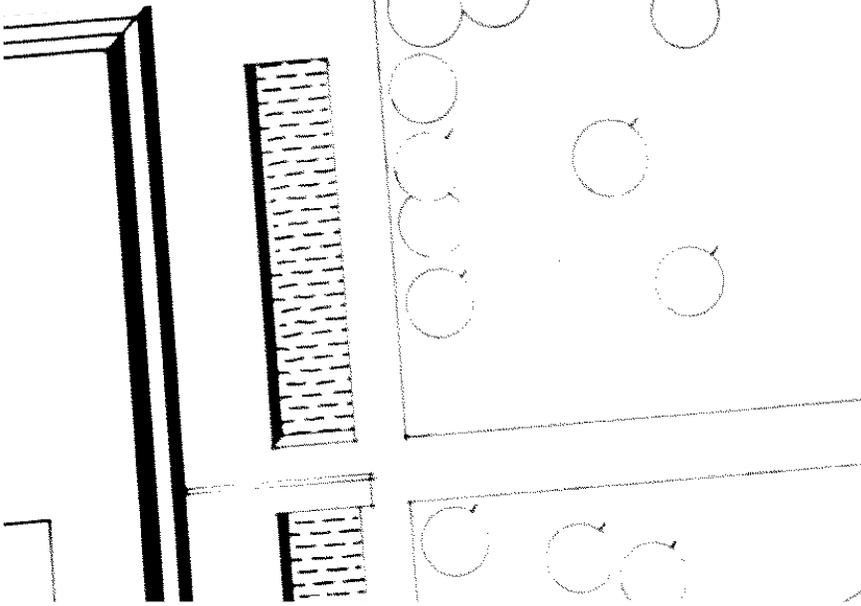
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INTRODUCTION



This dissertation examines the spatial transformations that took place in Estonia during the transition from the last Soviet years at the end of the 1980s to the re-establishing of an independent republic at the beginning of the 1990s. By focusing specifically on this in-between period, the thesis aims to highlight the dynamics of the changes and the heterogeneity of the processes through which certain spatial and social practices continued the developments of the late Soviet period and certain others appropriated imported Western approaches at an accelerated pace, making the transformation from one societal formation to the other, and from one type of space to the other hybrid, fluid and uneven. The work will argue that changes in the regime of space are intricately connected to changes in society, having notable social and political impacts, and significantly contributing to the construction of the public sphere. Springing from a Lefebvrian conviction that societal and spatial organisation is always in correlation and mutually interdependent, the dissertation aims to shed light on the production – at times spontaneous and exultant, and at times painful and perplexing – of space taking place on various interconnected levels: built and planned, dreamt and imagined, performed and enacted, as well as theorised and reflected.

The dissertation examines different case studies from the fields of architecture and urban planning, as well as visual, conceptual and performative art, incorporating manifestations of space in its built, conceived and lived forms. The reason for focusing on such diverse cases is to convey a kaleidoscopic yet interconnected image and understanding of the developments that are as dynamic and unfixed as the energy of this transformative era itself. However, while the work involves some case studies that represent performative, graphic or conceptual visual art and have thus far been incorporated into the respective narratives of visual arts, my interest in them lies primarily in their ability to produce space and inform new conceptualisations of architectural space. Thus whereas a large part of this work is of interdisciplinary nature, it has been more informed by the tradition of the history of architecture rather than the tradition of art history. At the same time, my interest is confined to the realm of conceptualisations and imaginations of space as conscious and deliberative creative practices. Actual large-scale spatial transformations of the era resulting from the processes of property ownership changes, new legislative frameworks, new demographic dynamics, the proliferation of small-scale businesses, a surge in amateur building and renovation projects and the like fall outside the scope of my interest. However, they form an important background for my work. Also, while interested in the potential of participatory art and architecture projects to generate and contribute to the public space and evolving public sphere, I am nevertheless not including widespread cases of urban civic activism, street demonstrations or self-organised mass events where, similarly, public space was an important generator of the public sphere. While all such activities formed an important backdrop to the social and intellectual endeavours of the era, including the pursuits in art and architecture discussed here, delving into the relationship of public activism vis-à-vis art projects would certainly exceed the scope of the current thesis and my expertise as a historian of professional culture. Such a choice is further supported by the fact that, while during the last stages of Soviet socialism the principal agents of history were popular forces, transition culture was primarily driven by elite agency, assuming that the publics emerging from the communist rule needed to be educated in the values of democracy and capitalism, and intellectuals were at the core of designing new institutions and other interventions of the emerging social order.¹

1 Michael D. Kennedy, *Cultural Formations of Postcommunism. Emancipation, Transition, Nation and War*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, pp. 9–34.

The current thesis is one of the very first attempts to research the period as a separate phenomenon. Challenging the common rigid differentiation between late and post-socialist periods in architecture and art, it aims to look at the spatial processes of the in-between era as a phenomenon possessing specific qualities of its own, highlighting the entangled contradictions, processes of appropriation, mistranslations, expectations, near-misses and unfulfilled hopes characteristic of the intellectual and cultural production of the time. While based on case studies that primarily concern Estonia, the dissertation proposes a rethinking of this period in the firm conviction that it could add a valuable contribution to discussions of late and post-socialist culture in the wider geographical framework of Eastern Europe. It also aims to break new ground in analysing the art and architecture of the time as combined and interdependent, mutually impacting fields. The scholarship of the recent art and architecture history of Central and Eastern Europe has tended to focus either on the late Soviet period, concentrating most often on the 1960s–1970s and including occasional examples from the 1980s, or on the post-Soviet era, discussing the conditions of the 1990s, 2000s and occasionally up to the present day in a merged way, stretching the notion of the post-Soviet transition for a decade, two or more. There also seems to be a clear difference between the scholarship of art and architecture history: while in the context of art the 1990s started to intrigue writers soon after the decade was over or even while it was unfolding, often in conjunction with exhibitions displaying contemporary and the most recent art,² in architecture the research community has been much slower to react. The 1990s have been much less written about and even today papers concerning this era are rarely to be found on any conference agendas. The situation is different in the field of urbanism, where large-scale processes of changing urban environments have been researched for quite some time but due to the specifics of the discipline of urban studies, spatial issues are analysed rather from the sociological viewpoint and the intentions and ideas of authors of architecture and artworks normally fall out of their scope of interest. More importantly, in architecture history there is no research being done that specifically focuses on the transition years in the narrower sense, searching for the moment of continuity between the two periods.

Due to political and economic circumstances, the actual architectural production in its built form of the years under scrutiny in

2 For instance, Bojana Pejic, David Elliott (eds.), *After the Wall: Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet 1999; but also IRWIN (ed.), *East Art Map. Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2006.

this research was relatively small, but this is far from implying that space, corresponding to this new social situation in the making, was not produced. The aim of this thesis is to point out that, quite to the contrary, space was actively produced but the process of spatial production primarily took place in other spheres than building construction, and manifested itself in other forms.³ Thus the case studies have been chosen in order to show the more ephemeral side of space: the manifestations of space in the making that might remain hidden at first but that nevertheless had a profound influence on the ways space was conceived, practised and experienced. Instead of newly built houses and visibly altered urban environments, I will look at design proposals, urban visions, detail planning processes, art projects, media polemics, conference papers, discussions, exhibition projects, performance events and renovation processes, which at the time could have been perceived as individual endeavours but that nevertheless operated in a complexity of interconnected networks and mutually impacting processes, enabling new kinds of relationships to form between people, and a new kind of relationship of the individual to develop towards society. Looking at phenomena belonging to both the realms of architecture and art in a combined way makes it possible to juxtapose common prejudices associated with both fields. The standard narrative of post-socialist architectural discourse tends to see the profession as succumbing to fierce neo-liberal realities, while artistic projects have mostly been examined in search of critical commentaries on the fast social processes and for resistance to the injustices these entailed. However, as the case studies of the current thesis demonstrate, this is certainly not entirely true: considering the cases in mutual relations as parts of larger processes and networks occasionally leads to a contrasting view highlighting the critical efforts in architecture, as well as counterprogressive or at least ambiguous effects of art projects that have been generally categorised in the critical tradition.

Analysing the diverse manifestations of a new regime of space, the aim of the thesis is to see how the cases studied worked socially and politically: among other things, how they contributed to the production of a new kind of space and to the construction of a new democratic public sphere.

3 Among the legal and material processes, privatisation was perhaps the one with the biggest impact on space in its built, lived and conceived forms. See Erik Terk, *Erastamine Eestis: ideoloogia, läbiviimine, tulemused*. Tallinn: Eesti tulevikuuringute instituut, 1999.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL SPACE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Understanding the spatial dynamics of a certain era is crucial to understanding the era itself. Whereas as historians we cannot really grasp the past as it is over and unattainable from the present, we have to base our interpretations and narratives of the past on the artefacts, documents, structures and environments that have survived into our times.⁴ Architecture and spatial configurations are amongst the most potent of these. Analysing the spatial configurations of the period, theoretically this work is most strongly, if indirectly, indebted to critical spatial theories stemming from the seminal work of Henri Lefebvre and elaborated by various cultural geographers and urban sociologists, from Doreen Massey⁵ to Mark Gottdiener.⁶ As Henri Lefebvre has postulated, every society produces its own space,⁷ and the transformations taking place in space reveal a lot about the changes in the respective social formations: space can work as a tool for the analysis of society. Yet, space is far from simply a physical manifestation, the actual built materialisation of design. According to Lefebvre, the space of any particular era is produced in a much more complex way, encompassing not only the built environment but also the ways space is conceptualised (talked about, measured, codified and regulated) and experienced (lived through, adjusted and invested with subjective meanings and practices). This production of space is a continuous trialectic process⁸, where three aspects of space operate simultaneously – perceived, conceived and lived space, or spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces in Lefebvre's terms, or first, second and thirdspace, as the concepts were further elaborated by Edward Soja.⁹ A non-hierarchical tripartite model is formed where each aspect is in constant interaction with the others. This spatial triad works both on the level of individual as well as social: the material space would be incomplete without its conceptualisation and its emotional and bodily perception. Thus space, in Lefebvre's view, is not a priori given but is only being formed in social practices. It is an active entity, an intricate network of relationships that is constantly in creation and recreation. Accordingly, an understanding of space can only be time- and situation-specific,

4 Carl L. Becker, *What Are Historical Facts?* – *The Western Political Quarterly* 1955, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 330.

5 Doreen Massey, *Politics and Space/Time*. – *New Left Review* 1992, No. 196 (Nov–Dec), pp. 65–84.

6 Mark Gottdiener, *The Social Production of Urban Space*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.

7 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. Transl. Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Blackwell, 1991, p. 31.

8 Trialectics, a neologism referencing and rethinking dialectics, was proposed as an attempt to transcend a mode of thinking based on dualities and introduce spatial dimension to reasoning. While the idea originated in Lefebvre, the term itself was mainly promoted by Edward Soja, see Edward Soja, *Thirdspace. Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

9 Edward Soja, *Thirdspace*.

and involves acknowledging its inherent contradictions and antagonisms.¹⁰ The different aspects of space must be analysed as simultaneous, mutually interdependent and mutually reinforcing processes. The three main principles that ensue are that the research must shift from space itself to the processes of its production; it must embrace the multiplicity and complexity of social practices that produce the spaces and, instead of neat generalisations, focus on the contradictory, conflictual and ultimately political character of these processes.¹¹

At the same time, Lefebvre warns against using his spatial triad as an abstract model and stresses the importance of grasping the concrete, of focusing on the irreducible and singular experience, to show how perceived, conceived and lived spaces actually manifest themselves, and how they work politically.¹² Postmodern geographers, such as Doreen Massey and David Harvey, building upon this, have further emphasised that the specifics of particular spaces, sites and locations must be understood in relations to larger physical and ideological processes, systems and networks.¹³ However, this dissertation is not an exercise in the orthodox use of Lefebvrian model on the spatial developments of 1980s–1990s Estonia. Instead, it has been used quite loosely, serving rather as an inspiration and encouragement to deviate from the strict tripartite model. Keeping the different levels of spatialisation in tension, I have invented my own, situation-specific categorisations that are used in the chapters detailed below: unbuilt, utopian, discursive, performative and institutional spaces. This understanding of space as a dynamic and multifaceted entity, a social and material construct, has helped to explicate the development of a fundamentally new and different kind of space through examples that, due to the circumstances of the time, involved very few actual built manifestations of the new spatial regime. Reading Rosalyn Deutsche and Jane Rendell has helped me see the opportunities for a dialogue of projects coming from the realms of architecture and the arts, and has demonstrated the productive effects of interdisciplinarity in analysing these two fields in parallel and intersecting ways.¹⁴

As numerous political theorists have shown, forging a shared space is a crucial aspect of building a democracy:¹⁵ the configuration of spaces plays a major role in determining the possibilities of encountering

10 Christian Schmid, *Henri Lefebvre's Theory of the Production of Space: Towards a Three-dimensional Dialectic*. – Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipfer, Richard Milgrom, Christian Schmid (eds.), *Space, Difference, Everyday Life*. Reading Henri Lefebvre. New York and London: Routledge, 2008, pp. 27–45.

11 Lukasz Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space. Architecture, Urban Research, and the Production of Theory*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, p. ix.

12 Henri Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 40.

13 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989; Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.

14 Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions. Art and Spatial Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996; Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*. London: IB Tauris, 2007.

15 See Marcel Henoff, Tracy B. Strong (eds.), *Public Space and Democracy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

and assembling, in shaping behaviour and identity, and in framing individuals' relationship to society. Spatial configurations naturalise social relations by transforming contingent forms into a permanent landscape that appears to be immutable rather than open to contestation:¹⁶ indeed, architecture often appears to serve the affirmative functions of political and social powers.¹⁷ However, space also always holds the potential for transformative power, stemming from its ability to facilitate change and develop new identities and practices. As such, it plays a crucial role in the construction of the public sphere, defined as the arena for public debate on common goals, as well as the collective body constructed through that debate.¹⁸ However, the nature of the public sphere and its relationship to the facilitating spaces, as well as its role as a purveyor of democracy, is not without controversy. The normative definition of the public sphere, as postulated by Jürgen Habermas, has generally signified free and unbiased, rational debate of private individuals aiming to reach a consensual understanding of the common good, linking the theoretical elaboration of liberalism with a particular social milieu and its social spaces.¹⁹ According to Habermas, public sphere is a vital attribute of liberal democracy, enabling deliberation on matters concerning social advancement, and public space, understood as free and accessible to all, is an important arena for these dialogues. But this understanding has been challenged as partial, based on hegemonic dominance and multiple exclusions. The Habermasian model has been shown to be a theoretical concept based on the exclusive assumptions that status inequalities such as markers of class, gender, race, and abilities can be bracketed, that the aim should be a single, comprehensive public sphere, that 'private interests' should be distinguished and dismissed from the debates, and that civil society and the state should be kept separate. According to Habermasian ideal concept, there exists a singular political space with a rational basis and a strong inner coherence. But criticism of such an understanding has paved the way for a more inclusive, contemporary concept of the public sphere, acknowledging the simultaneous existence of multiple public spheres and stressing the vital role of counterpublics as 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs'.²⁰ This has helped to explain the public sphere, and with it democracy itself, as a continuous process

16 Margaret Kohn, *Radical Space: Building the House of the People*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003, p. 4.

17 Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1991, pp. 38–45.

18 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: Polity 1989 [1962].

19 *Ibid.*

20 Nancy Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy*. – *Social Text* 1990, No. 25/26, pp. 56–80.

constantly redefining itself. According to Claude Lefort, Chantal Mouffe, Jean-Luc Nancy and other theorists of radical democracy, the essence of democracy lies in uncertainty about the meaning of 'the social'. Claude Lefort has built his concept of democracy on the analysis of the situation after the French revolution, where the previous legitimisation mechanisms of power, based on a transcendent source, had ceased to exist, and power, now in the hands of 'the people', started to constitute a void to be filled each moment anew via negotiations. In the disappearance of a transcendent source of legitimisation that fortified the preceding autocratic form of governance, the power in democracy has nothing stable to rely on, and instead has become linked to the 'image of an empty space'.²¹ From such an empty space, the public space emerges: a space of continuous negotiations and renegotiations on the meanings and applications of social phenomena, a place of constant production and, at the same time, a challenging and redefinition of the public. Thus what is recognised in the public space is the legitimacy of the debate without external authority.²² Furthermore, the agonistic concept of democracy stresses the artificiality of the concept of consensus itself, based on the hegemonic suppression of conflicting views.²³ The public sphere and the political in general always involve antagonisms, and the public space is an arena in which to make visible different claims and irreconcilable contradictions.²⁴

Some of the most productive conceptual starting points to take from the Lefortian model of democracy for the present thesis are the lack of any markers of certainty, creating openness to all opportunities, and the legitimacy of a constant debate where all positions are equally valid. The application of these ideas to analysis of artistic and architectural projects in constructing public space and the public sphere has also been inspired by Rosalyn Deutsche's use of Lefortian concept of power as an empty space as the foundational quality of the public space.²⁵ At the same time, Andrew Arato has stressed the applicability of Lefort's ideas specifically to the situation related to the social changes taking place around 1989, calling him 'the philosopher of 1989', enabling one to conceive '*how to begin democratically where there is no democracy before*'.²⁶ Both elaborations have vitally informed the argument of this thesis as well, making it possible to show how different art projects embodied and applied this void as a space for

21 Claude Lefort, *The Question of Democracy. – Democracy and Political Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p. 17.

22 Rosalyn Deutsche, *Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy*. – *Social Text* 1992, No. 33, pp. 34–53.

23 Chantal Mouffe, *Democracy, Power and 'the Political'*. – *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso, 2000, pp. 17–35.

24 Chantal Mouffe, *Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces*. – *Art & Research. A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* 2007, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Summer), <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html>, accessed 18 May 2020.

25 Rosalyn Deutsche, *Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy*. – *Social Text* 1992, No. 33, pp. 34–53.

26 Andrew Arato, *Lefort, the Philosopher of 1989*. – *Constellations* 2012, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 23–29.

constant negotiation, re-imagining space and re-appropriating public space, contributing to the generation of public and counterpublic spheres. More than in periods before or after, the developments in the interregnum era were characterised by an active formation of the public sphere in the processes of constant and intense negotiations on social and political questions, with antagonisms not being subsumed by hegemonic consensus, and in which architectural and artistic imaginations played an active part. These processes were not born out of the blue: throughout the socialist bloc, different kinds of micro-level actions had quietly paved the way for the more assertive civic activism that burgeoned in the second half of the 1980s.²⁷ Although there was no democratic public sphere in the strict sense of the term in the late Soviet era, a concept of a 'second public sphere' has been invented, based on an understanding of the public sphere as a material/immaterial platform for communication and opinion sharing.²⁸ The term is used to denote the sphere in socialist societies that held a certain radical potential to disrupt the official ('first') established system, and it has been found to have existed across borders, having the potential to reflect on the experimental and alternative art scenes of late socialist Eastern Europe. However, the inventor of the term, the Hungarian philosopher Miklos Haraszti, has stressed that different kinds of the second public sphere could only exist within an authoritarian order and not outside of it as rebellious countercultures.²⁹ The intermingling of the separate spheres has been brilliantly investigated by Alexei Yurchak, showing how a peculiar, de-territorialised sphere of life existed and avoided positioning itself as either 'inside' or 'outside' of the system.³⁰ But although many Western commentators wanted to interpret Poland's Solidarity movement as a 're-emergence of a civil society', and had assumed that after 1989 the concept of the public sphere could be used in post-socialist contexts in a manner fairly similar to that in Western societies, reality revealed a number of incompatibilities both in the context of the late Soviet and the transition era.³¹ The re-emergence of autonomous social action at the end of the 1980s was greatly dominated by the state-engineered strata of professionals and intellectuals with high social standing and organi-

27 Jeffrey Goldfarb, *The Politics of Small Things. Power of the Powerless in Dark Times*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

28 Katalin Cseh-Varga, Adam Czirak, Introduction. – Katalin Cseh-Varga, Adam Czirak (eds.), *Performance Art in the Second Public Sphere. Event-based Art in Late Socialist Europe*. Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2018.

29 Katalin Cseh-Varga, *The Troubled Public Sphere. Understanding the Art Scene in Socialist Hungary*. – Galina Mardilovich, Maria Taroutina (eds.), *New Narratives of Russian and East European Art. Between Traditions and Revolutions*.

London and New York: Routledge, 2019, pp. 166–179.

30 Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.

31 Marc Garcelon, *The Shadow of the Leviathan: Public and Private in Communist and Post-Communist Society*. – Jeff Weintraub, Krishan Kumar (eds.), *Public and Private in Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 303–332.

sational competence, and thus the developing public sphere also found itself continuously embedded in active and still powerful fragments of the redistributive social estates of the command economy. Consolidation into stable democratic institutions and a democratic political culture took time and effort.³² Ironically, the disengagement from Soviet rule also brought about a new wave of modernist utopia in the form of grand nationalist narratives and a resistance-focused historical turn.³³ In this situation, the cultural and political vacuum of 1989 generated a free empty space that could be filled with artistic imagination.³⁴ Architectural and art projects, visions, events and debates played a crucial role in the construction of the public sphere, by offering propositions for debate to envision possible future paths, by imagining how things could be different, and by offering temporary yet tangible experiences of radical alternatives. This also highlights the agency of the author: the thesis also investigates the scope of action of creative individuals under the changing social and professional situation, and the means of intervention available to them.

I have tried to demonstrate the architects' strategies of adjustment and their position in relation to the new players in the professional field and their self-regard in newly available international dialogues, as well as artists' tactics for asserting themselves in the networks of social space. Regarding the latter, I have utilised the concept of the crossbench practitioner of Markus Miessen, to describe the uninvited outsider intervening from a disengaged yet strongly ethical position.³⁵ Miessen bases his concept largely on the model of radical democracy, being especially inspired by Chantal Mouffe, and seeing the role of the artist as indispensable in keeping social antagonisms visible.³⁶ Whereas it is the agency of the creative individual as the catalyst of processes – a kind of trickster – that Miessen is most interested in, the actions of the crossbench practitioner also often manage to bring about an actualisation of subaltern counterpublics, to use the term coined by Nancy Fraser.³⁷ The thesis looks at a number of artists whose strategies can be conceptualised in terms of an uninvited outsider. But it also shows instances where such counterpublics have been manifested in a specific relationship to space, and where spatial manipulations have not only contributed to the production of public sphere but

32 Ibid., p. 328.

33 Epp Annus, *Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late Socialism*. – Johannes Angermüller, Katharina Bunzmann, Christina Rauch (eds.), *Hybrid Spaces: Theory, Culture, Economy*. Hamburg: Lit-Verlag, 2000, pp. 25–36.

34 Miklós Peternák, *On Gábor Bachman's Architecture*. – Mihály Varga (ed.), *The Architecture of Nothing*. VI International Architecture Exhibition. Venice 1996. Budapest: Műcsarnok, 1996, p. 71.

35 Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010, p. 191.

36 Nikolaus Hirsch, Markus Miessen (eds.), *Critical Spatial Practice 2. The Space of Agonism*. Markus Miessen in Conversation with Chantal Mouffe. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012.

37 Nancy Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, p. 123.

have also led to a construction of an ephemeral, situation-specific community that constitutes a radical and antagonistic entity indispensable for radical democracy. In conceptualising a notion of community that is non-exclusive, temporary and not reducible to strict common denominators, the concepts of 'inoperative community' by Jean-Luc Nancy³⁸ and the 'coming community' by Giorgio Agamben³⁹ have been helpful. Both stress the spontaneous nature of such a community, having no 'higher' or transcendent purpose that can be instrumentalised for political aims, and thus providing a necessary force in keeping open Lefort's 'void' in the centre of democratic society.

PERIODISATION AND TERMS: TRANSITION, INTERREGNUM, LATE SOCIALISM AND POST-SOCIALISM

As the main interest of the current dissertation lies in architectural space as social space, the periodisation references events and processes in the social and political life of Estonia. Undoubtedly, such changes also reference noticeable changes in qualities of architectural and artworks, but one aim of the thesis is to demonstrate the fluidity of such changes and the contingency of periodisations based on formal qualities. Internationally, the periodisations used for the works of art and architecture of this era are based either on the watershed year of 1989 or 1991, or draw the distinctions simply by decades. 1989, the year of the fall of the Berlin Wall, was the most frequent temporal marker in the first canonical international exhibitions and accompanying exhibition catalogues of Eastern European post-socialist art.⁴⁰ Calling 1989 the year of the spatial turn, Piotr Piotrowski has claimed that this year was a watershed not only in the context of Eastern Europe but that it also bore great significance in relation to developments in China, South Africa and South America, generating the need for horizontal art history writing that is polyphonic, multidimensional and free from geographical constraints.⁴¹ In the Estonian context, 1991 has perhaps been used more often, as it was the year of the official proclamation of re-establishing independ-

38 Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*. Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

39 Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*. Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

40 For example, Bojana Pejic, David Elliott (eds.), *After the Wall: Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet 1999.

In the field of architecture, supported on the same

periodisation include collections Neil Leach (ed.), *Architecture and Revolution. Contemporary Perspectives on Central and Eastern Europe*. London: Routledge 1999; Alfrun Kliems, Marina Dmitrieva (eds.), *The Post-Socialist City. Continuity and Change in Urban Space and Imagery*. Berlin: Jovis, 2010.

41 Piotr Piotrowski, *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*. London: Reaktion Books, 2012, pp. 15–52.

ence.⁴² The common narratives of Estonian art history have preferred to operate with simple decade distinctions,⁴³ although a challenging view has been presented claiming that something like the ‘sensitivity of the eighties’ should actually be attributed to artworks dated 1975–1985.⁴⁴ However, K. Michael Hays, relying on the philosopher of history Frank Ankersmit, has stressed the importance of periodisation in architecture history writing for the understanding of works of architecture and the role they play in social relationships. He has claimed that we should not base the architecture historical narrative on uniform periods, looking for radical breaks in between them, but should rather place a researched work in a chronological framework that makes it possible to see it in the most complex way.⁴⁵ Thus the comfortable established models discussed above usually do not enable us to see the array of meanings and effects of those projects and artefacts in their whole complexity. A different model is needed, free from the simplistic construction in which a single historical event brings about a profound change in artistic expression, a model that incorporates the preceding conditions leading to the change, and the gradual and inevitably uneven unfolding of changes over time.

The beginning and end dates chosen for this thesis are specific to the local Estonian context. The beginning, 1986, marked Mikhail Gorbachev’s declaration of the political reform movement perestroika (‘rebuilding’) at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In Estonia, 1986 marked the beginning of the heritage movement that ostensibly was in perfect compliance with Gorbachev’s ideas of glasnost (‘openness’)⁴⁶ and focused on seemingly non-ideological questions of cultural heritage. Eventually that led to the spark for a national reawakening, supported by the surge in another civic movement against phosphorite mining a year later.⁴⁷ The end date, 1994, marked the leaving of the last Soviet troops from Estonia on 31 August, three years after the country had declared independence. Socially and economically, those three years also marked the harshest time of transition. By 1994 a certain stabilisation was felt and the country began, little by little and with difficulties, to resemble a

42 E.g. Jaak Kangilaski (ed.), *Eesti kunsti ajalugu 6. 1940–1991. I osa*. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2013.

43 For instance, Sirje Helme, Johannes Saar (eds.), *Ülbed üheksakümnendad. Probleemid, teemad ja tähendused 1990. aastate eesti kunstis*. Tallinn: Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2001; Sirje Helme (compiler), *Kadunud kaheksakümnendad. Probleemid, teemad ja tähendused 1980. aastate eesti kunstis*. Tallinn: Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti keskus, 2010. Also Anu Liivak, Heie Treier (compilers), *Valiku vabadus: Vaatenurki 1990. aastate Eesti kunstile*. Tallinn: Tallinna Kunstihoone Fond, 1999.

44 Ants Juske, 1980. *aastate eesti kunst*. – *Vikerkaar* 1991, No. 6, pp. 64–68.

45 K. Michael Hays, *Notes on Narrative Method in Historical Interpretation*. – *Footprint* 2007, Autumn, p. 23.

46 The literal translation of glasnost would be ‘making things public’ which further emphasises the initiative as the beginning of formation of publicness and the public sphere.

47 Kaarel Piirimäe, Peeter Kaasik, Hirveparki kõnekoosolek ja Eesti vabanemine. – *Hirvepark* 1987. 20 aastat kodanikualgatuses, mis muutis Eesti lähiajalugu. Tallinn: MTÜ Kultuuriselts Hirvepark, 2007, p. 32.

'normal' state.⁴⁸ This 'normalisation' has also been characterised, from a different standpoint, as a year when the 'anything is possible' mindset began to wane, productive openness was being replaced by stronger regulations, and the age of visions was over.⁴⁹

The first instance of proclaiming the completion of the transition period was in October 1992, in conjunction with the assembly of the first post-war parliament of the independent republic.⁵⁰ For social scientists, however, the transition lasted considerably longer and a sense of completion was felt in acquiring the status of full membership in the European Union in 2004.⁵¹ From this standpoint, the Estonian transition era has been divided into five periods: 1) the 'Singing Revolution' of 1988–1991, 2) the period of radical reforms (1991–1994), 3) economic stabilisation (1995–1998), 4) negotiations to enter the eurozone (1999–2004), and 5) new challenges and the identity crisis following EU membership (2005–2008).⁵² The present thesis includes the first two periods, where the processes of change were the most profound and intense. The second one of them, the stated period of radical reforms, 1991–1994, more or less correlates with other accounts of these years as displaying the greatest amount of radical openness and embodying a Lefortian concept of true democracy as an empty space where power is constantly negotiated and belongs to no one.⁵³

The most common term used to designate the period in question in the Eastern European context is 'transition'. It is often used in conjunction with the terms 'post-socialist' (related to the whole of Eastern Europe, and also including China, Cuba etc., which makes its dating and duration even more complicated) or 'post-Soviet' (in the context of the former Soviet Union) and, less often, with the term 'post-communist'. There is a vast amount of scholarship concerning transition studies in political science, sociology, anthropology and other related fields that has helped to explain the social dynamics of the era but whose scope is too wide to be covered completely here. Most importantly, in the last decade the continuing applicability of the basic terms has been increasingly challenged, voicing the need for rethinking of the concept of transition and of post-socialism. Both the beginning

48 Läbilõök. Eesti majandus 1989–2009. Tallinn: Äripäev, 2009, p. 59.

49 In 1994, Hasso Krull published an allegorical description of Estonia as the land where breeding unicorns is no longer possible, see Hasso Krull, Üksarvede lahkumine. – Eesti Ekspress 30 December 1994. Anders Härm has also claimed that Estonia was democratic only in 1988–1991/92, see Anders Härm, Eesti oligarhia. – Eesti Päevaleht 30 November 2012.

50 Riigikogu deklaratsioon põhiseadusliku riigivõimu taastamisest. Riigi Teataja 1992, No. 40 (553), <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/13031303>, accessed 9 January 2020.

51 Marju Lauristin, Peeter Vihalemm, Postkommunistlik siirdeaeeg Eestis: Tõlgendusvõimalusi. – Akadeemia 1998, No 4, p. 677.

52 Marju Lauristin, Peeter Vihalemm, The Political Agenda During Different Periods of Estonian Transformation. – Journal of Baltic Studies 2009, No. 1, pp. 1–28.

53 Claude Lefort, The Question of Democracy. – Claude Lefort, Democracy and Political Theory. Transl. David Mackey. London: Polity Press, 1988, pp. 9–20.

and end dates of the transition have come under scrutiny in several new accounts, not to mention the scope of its possible content and meaning,⁵⁴ and this dissertation also aims to contribute to this discourse by offering its own reasoning regarding the periodisation and the nature of the phenomenon. The majority of the discourses so far have approached the term ‘transition’ from the point of view of ‘return to normalcy’, looking at the developments of transitioning societies from the perspective of a normative West. The peculiarities of the transition are measured as either lagging behind or sufficiently fast, presumably at some point ‘arriving’ at a level where the peculiarities and differences will be erased and the transition will be completed. Thus, the terms ‘transition’ and ‘post-socialism’ may be dropped as not adequate any more: it only remains a question of discussion as to when and on what grounds this happens. In the political and social sphere, there actually is no academic consensus around the question of how long a transition takes and what indicators should be used to measure its duration or success: it may involve specific changes in the political and/or economic system, indicators measuring average living standards, dynamics concerning social mobility, etc.⁵⁵ Yet the common understanding is that it is an in-between period with a more or less specific goal in mind. At the same time, while being a process with a future goal, it is also a process of looking back and starting over. The understanding of the transition was greatly influenced by an early conceptualisation by Jürgen Habermas, who in 1990 called the unfolding situation a rectifying revolution (*die nachholende Revolution*).⁵⁶ In its English translation, the notion of ‘rectifying’ implies a correction of mistakes and a redeeming of injustice, while the German term *nachholende* stresses more the aspect of going back in time and starting over from the point where ‘it all went wrong’: a point before the violent communist disruption of ‘normal’ modernist development. This approach strongly resonated in the Estonian context, where the Soviet era tended to be described as an unfortunate interim period or a deviation from the normal development. This, in conjunction with the all-pervasive desire in the 1990s to re-establish pre-war institutions, legal and property relationships and different codes and regulations, to continue where

54 See e.g. Caroline Humphrey, Does the Category ‘Postsocialist’ Still Make Sense? – C. M. Hann (ed.), *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 12–15; Zsuzsa Gille, Is There a Global Postsocialist Condition? – *Global Society* 2010, No. 24, pp. 9–30; Alison Stenning, Kathrin Hörschelmann, History, Geography and Difference in the Post-Socialist World: Or, Do We Still Need Post-Socialism? – *Antipode* 2008, Vol. 40, Issue 2 (March), pp. 312–335; Mariusz Czepczynski, *Cultural Landscapes of Post-Socialist Cities: Representation of Powers and Needs*. London: Routledge, 2008.

55 See Anette N. Brown (ed.), *When is Transition Over?* Kalamazoo: W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1999; and Ave Roots, *Kas siire Eestis on lõppenud?* – Andu Rämmer (ed.), *Vaateid teelahkelt: Sotsioloogia, sotsiaaltöö ja sotsiaalpoliitika aktuaalseid probleeme Eestis*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2008.

56 Jürgen Habermas, *What Does Socialism Mean Today? The Rectifying Revolution and the Need for New Thinking on the Left*. – *New Left Review* 1990, No. 1/183 (September-October), pp. 3–21.

things left off in 1940, has logically spawned the widespread catch-phrases ‘the culture of interruption’⁵⁷ and ‘the republic of historians’.⁵⁸

This conceptualisation of the transition era, originating in political science and sociology, was also adopted as a suitable framework for the interpretation of the art scene of the 1990s. Bojana Pejic writes unambiguously in the catalogue of *After the Wall*, one of the definitive exhibitions of post-socialist Eastern European art, that the transition was a temporary process aimed at a return to normalcy, presupposing the adoption of the rules of Western democracy and, ultimately, joining the European Union.⁵⁹ This places not only social and political decisions and processes but also art and architecture endeavours into the role of tools applied to the service of a clear political goal – a position that this dissertation seeks to avoid. It is rather aligned with the views of Madina Tlostanova who has argued that this goal is unattainable, and the concept of the transition as a directional vector with a happy ending is doomed to fail: ‘*The post-Soviet trajectory of Russia and a number of its former colonies shows that they were first lured by the carrot of the catching-up modernisation and even, in the case of the European semiperiphery, by the promise of getting back to the European bosom, but these models were grounded in false evolutionism. With different speeds and to different extents of realisation of their failure most of these societies grasped that they would never be allowed or able to step from the darker side of modernity to the lighter one, from otherness to sameness. The only move they could count on is comprised of the small steps along the endless ladder of modernity that ultimately led nowhere yet always enchanted with a desired but unattainable horizon.*’⁶⁰ It has certainly been argued that the measures taken for enabling and alleviating the transition – foreign aid, investments, and policies modelled on and aimed at capitalist liberal democracies – were actually neo-colonialism, a swift replacement of Soviet power with Western hegemony, which left the uneven power dynamics essentially in place and instead of levelling differences actually maintained the gaps.⁶¹ Tlostanova’s critical diagnosis is strongly supported by Boris Buden, who has declared unambiguously that the post-communist transition failed.⁶² The transition from the East to the West, not so much a

57 Hasso Krull, *Katkestuse kultuur*. Tallinn: Vagabund, 1996.

58 Marek Tamm, *The Republic of Historians: Historians as Nationbuilders in Estonia (late 1980s–early 1990s)*. – *Rethinking History* 2016, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 154–171.

59 Bojana Pejic, *The Dialectics of Bormality*. – David Elliott and Bojana Pejic (eds.), *After the Wall: Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1999, p. 17.

60 Madina Tlostanova, *What Does It Mean to be Post-Soviet? Decolonial Art from the Ruins of*

the Soviet Empire. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018, p. 3–4.

61 Andrew C. Janos, *From Eastern Empire to Western Hegemony: East Central Europe Under Two International Regimes*. – *East European Politics and Societies* 2001, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 221–249.

62 Boris Buden, *After the Collapse (of Post-Communism)*. – Anu Allas, Ivar-Kristjan Hein (eds.), *Lost and Found Spaces: Displacements in Eastern European Art and Society in the 1990s*. Tallinn: Estonian Art Museum 2019, pp. 26–32.

political, economic and social transformation from communist rule to democracy and capitalist market economy as a transformation of cultural identity, as an arrival at a seamless and self-evident belonging to the Western cultural identity, has proved unattainable. It is as if the East and the West were situated in different chronological frameworks: the West, as a normative modernity, remains in a post-historical standstill while the East finds itself continuously hopelessly behind in spite of constantly hurrying to catch up.⁶³ This incongruity is also one of the grounds for the various shifts of perception, misinterpretations and misunderstandings that surface in the case studies of this work.

If the transition has failed and the East and West will always remain separate categories, this means that we continue to need another problematic yet quite unavoidable term: 'post-socialism'. The anthropologist Caroline Humphrey has indicated that whereas post-socialism applies to a great variety of contexts, there are immense differences among the former socialist countries and there is a growing gap between the Eastern European and the Central Asian states, not to mention China. These differences include the ways in which 'democracy' is applied, the relationship between the individual and the state, and the role of law. Still, Humphrey finds the term useful, because it is still not completely clear what the legacy of socialism is and how it exactly influences current political and social choices and the developments of these countries. According to her view, the common denominator post-socialism will be rendered unnecessary once a full generational change has taken place and the majority of people do not have personal experience of a Soviet past.⁶⁴ According to this view, post-socialism is a 'vector term' with a 'best before date', much in the same way that 'transition' is. The sociologist Zsuzsa Gille, on the other hand, has argued that the concept of post-socialism must be widened instead of abandoned: it is a global condition that involved and affected the 'first' and 'third' worlds as much as it did the 'second' one.⁶⁵ Gille challenges the unidirectional arrow of influence from the West or the global as the cause and the East as an effect, claiming the ties to be more complex. Although socialism was the ideology officially fostered in the East, it also was not without meaning in the West as a possible alternative to capitalist development. As Anthony Gardner has pointed out, time-wise the crumbling of the Eastern Bloc correlated with the subjugation of socialist ideals to neo-liberal politics in the West during the mid-1980s;

63 Ibid.

64 Caroline Humphrey, *Does the Category 'Postsocialist' Still Make Sense? ?* – C. M. Hann (ed.), *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 12–15.

65 Zsuzsa Gille, *Is There a Global Postsocialist Condition? – Global Society 2010*, No. 24, pp. 9–30.

thus post-socialism refers to conditions wider and more encompassing than the geographic delineations of the East and the West.⁶⁶ The political scientist Chris Hann has similarly observed that the faith in socialism as an ideological system, either as official party politics or as an alternative to the ever-widening colonising aims of capitalism, waned simultaneously on both sides of the Iron Curtain.⁶⁷

Accordingly, post-socialism is in fact appropriate to use as a noun in the plural to understand conditions as they are lived and experienced. Post-socialist conditions manifest themselves in a huge number of ways in different regions, countries, contexts and spheres of action, and rather than looking for a general model to suit them all, Alison Stenning and Kathrin Hörschelmann call for differentiating them, focusing on ‘actually existing post-socialisms’.⁶⁸ Their goal with the multiplicity of post-socialisms is to find ways for this diversity to be seen not as counter to a theorised model but as an enrichment and a challenge. It is also an opportunity to acknowledge and theorise about the uneven development of socialism and post-socialism: although based on some shared history, this does not imply uniformity nor demand a common ‘end result’ that unites the concept with that of the transition.

All of the above tends to indicate that the term post-socialist is still necessary and valid, containing all of its connotations, from ‘coming after’ to ‘being against’ and ‘negating’ the socialist period, and that it is possible to arrive at a nuanced reading of the actually existing post-socialisms that respects local specific forms, as well as acknowledging the mutual dialogue with the wider global context. At the same time, I prefer not to use the term ‘transition’ in order to avoid approaching the period and the developments under scrutiny as a unidirectional vector whose aims and perspectives were imposed from somewhere outside, i.e. from the normative (Western) point of view. Similarly, conceptualising the artistic and cultural productions of the time as ‘transitional’ diminishes their agency: it could provide a basis to see artistic and architectural endeavours as mere instruments in the service of social goals, and could render them less valuable than the assumed ‘mature’ art of the period after the transition is over. In order to appreciate the qualities of the artistic developments on their own terms and highlight the value of open opportunities, I prefer to refer to the period as an interregnum instead, borrowing the term from Antonio Gramsci’s oft-quoted diagnosis: ‘The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born;

66 Anthony Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming. Postsocialist Art Against Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass., and London: The MIT Press, 2015, p. 8.

67 Chris Hann, *Postsocialism – Farewell to the Socialist ‘Other’*. – Chris Hann (ed.), *Postsocialism: Ideas, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*. London: Routledge, 2002, p. 6.

68 Alison Stenning, Kathrin Hörschelmann.

in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.⁶⁹ While ‘interregnum’ was previously used only in legal reference, Gramsci gave it a much wider significance in the social and cultural spheres. Lately, Zygmunt Bauman has built upon his observations, using ‘interregnum’ as a general denominator of our current social situation, where the risk society (*Risikogesellschaft*) has been replaced by a global community of uncertainty (*Unsicherheitsglobalschaft*).⁷⁰ However, for Bauman this characterises the contemporary condition in a much wider time frame – the last couple of decades – and encompasses such critical issues as global migration and sustainability. For the current thesis, I’m using the concept to denote legal, cultural and social processes but in a much more focused sense chronologically.⁷¹

A smaller part of the period under scrutiny in this thesis falls into the common periodisation term ‘late socialism’: an equally problematic concept that is relative in terms of chronology as well as content, depending on whether it is used in the context of the Soviet Union, different Eastern European countries, China, Cuba or elsewhere. As Vladimir Kulic has remarked, late socialism tends to be generally associated with decline compared to the relative optimism and growth of the post-war era, although even this is not universally applicable, as in some countries, including Estonia, late socialism actually involved relative prosperity compared to earlier times.⁷² The volatile chronological definitions of late and post-socialism are further demonstrated

69 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: The Electric Book Company, 1999, p. 556.

70 Zygmunt Bauman, *Times of Interregnum*. – *Ethics & Global Politics* 2012, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 49–56.

71 Recently, the anthropologist Francisco Martinez tried to capture the specific aspects of the Estonian transition period through the concept of liminality. Quoting Victor Turner’s *Liminality and Communitas*, Martinez describes liminal entities as neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony. Stressing the ambiguity and in-betweenness of liminal spaces and liminal persons, Martinez describes perestroika as a collective condition of liminality, emphasising the highly emotional and culturally creative quality of the time. However, in Martinez’s view, this state of liminality turns the phase of suspension into a new normality, with the liminal order brought about by the break-up of the USSR incorporated into the ‘permanent structure’ of society that largely still prevails (see Francisco Martinez, *Wasted Legacies? Material Culture in Contemporary Estonia*. PhD dissertation, Tallinn University, Department of Anthropology, 2016). Another broad concept related to the specific qualities of spaces of interregnum is Michel Foucault’s heterotopia: spaces of contestation with and rupture from the existing hegemony, where incompatible sites are

juxtaposed in one place, exposing normal life as illusory and incongruous, while also being related to particular slices of time or ‘heterochronies’ (see Michel Foucault, *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*. – *Diacritics* 1986, No. 16 (Spring), pp. 22–27). However, Madina Tlostanova has recently pointed out that Foucault’s concept of heterotopia requires critical reassessment when applied to postcolonial and/or postsocialist circumstances. According to Tlostanova, the serious rethinking of Foucauldian heterotopia from the position of the postsocialist/postcolonial Other reveals his conception of space as being constructed from the Western position, failing to see the ‘darker sides’ of his ideal heterotopias, e.g. the ship or the settler colony. Based on the models of Foucault’s heterotopia and Bakhtin’s chronotope, Tlostanova proposes the concept of post-dependent tempo-localities to express the multiplicity and complexity of spatial-temporal relations of the post-dependence condition that are still marked by a universalist de-localised zero-point positioning and progressivist positivist teleology (see Madina Tlostanova, *Postcolonialism and Postsocialism in Fiction and Art. Resistance and Re-existence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; esp. Ch. 5: *Postsocialist/Postcolonial Tempo-Localities*, pp. 93–128).

72 Vladimir Kulic, Introduction. – Vladimir Kulic (ed.), *Second World Postmodernisms: Architecture and Society Under Late Socialism*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2019, pp. 1–13.

by Stephen J. Collier, who includes in his examination of post-socialist social and urban developments a number of examples and phenomena that, in the strict sense, took place, or at least originated, before the dissolution of the Soviet Union.⁷³

METHODOLOGY

The argument of the dissertation and interpretation of case studies is primarily based on a method of close reading of architecture and urban planning projects, artworks and events. The thesis has turned up a significant amount of previously unresearched archival material concerning a vast number of architectural and urban design projects, drawings and artworks, the majority of which were found in the private archives of architects and architectural offices, as well as in the Estonian State Archive and the collections of the Estonian Museum of Architecture, the Art Museum of Estonia, and the Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art. I have analysed the works thoroughly to show the scope of their meanings, the effect that they might have upon the viewer, participant or user, the relationship of the works to their wider social and cultural context, and the dialogues that have been formed with other works of the era.

Close reading as a method originates from literary studies, where it was one of the dominant modes of analysis throughout the 20th century, from the pre-war New Criticism to structuralist and poststructuralist critiques, only to be challenged by the advent of digital humanities.⁷⁴ From literary studies, the method aimed at a qualitative synthesis of formal and contextual analysis migrated successfully to the context of visual arts. Close reading as a method is most fruitful when combined with great appreciation of and attention to a work's social historical context, with a keen understanding of the details of the work, leading to novel paths of interpretation that, while admittedly subjective, are nevertheless not idiosyncratic. Close reading is a way of treating the work as a meeting place where meaning is embedded in all of the details, its social and cultural relevance stemming precisely from the intricate complexity of the meanings; this also makes it possible to arrive at readings that might contradict and challenge canonical interpretations, and acknowledge the active relationship works of the past have with the present.⁷⁵

In addition, the dissertation involves a considerable amount of discourse analysis, with the analysis of contemporary media and reviews covering the projects, as well as more generalised accounts of the devel-

73 Stephen J. Collier, *Post-Soviet Social. Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.

74 Barbara Herrnstein Smith, 'What was "Close reading"? A Century of Method in Literary Studies.' – *Minnesota Review* 2016, Issue 87, pp. 57–75.

75 Mieke Bal, *Reading Art? – Griselda Pollock* (ed.), *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*. London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 29–52.

opments and tendencies of the art and architecture sphere and social and political life. With very few art historical accounts and canonical interpretations concerning the works of such a recent past, contemporary criticism has been an invaluable source for revealing works' receptions in their own times, as well as helping to elucidate the intellectual trends and mentalities of the time. The discourse surrounding the projects is rich and varied – unlike at present, projects were often reviewed thoroughly and in many different media – and a critical reading of these texts played an important role in the process of my research. Discourse analysis has made it possible to shift attention from the properties of individual works to the wider social and political context and the impact of them, and to show the workings of language in the production and framing of the works, and architecture and artistic culture in a wider sense. By looking at the corpus of written texts framing the works, and the locations and practices of their representation and reflection, it is possible to identify discursive formations – the patterns of dominant concepts, themes and concerns – and to understand what conditions led to their emergence, what rules governed their manifestation, and how they conditioned the functioning of the works in the wider social realm. My use of discourse analysis as a method is based on the Foucauldian intention of focusing on the regimes of practice, including both language and practices, to demonstrate the conditions of the production and effects of a discourse, and to highlight the historical discontinuity and contingency of those discourses.⁷⁶ At the same time, I acknowledge that the method was used as a general guiding principle and not in a systematically structured manner, as the aim was not to study the discourse as a subject in itself in the framework of critical discourse analysis,⁷⁷ but to integrate it into a wider architecture historical account of the research subject.

As research on phenomena of recent historical origin, the work has also greatly benefited from oral histories: I have conducted a large number of interviews with the practitioners themselves, as well as with different managers and persons involved in the projects and events in other ways. The importance of oral accounts in filling the gaps in conventional architectural historiography and for including the accounts of actors and agents beside architects who are involved in the production of space in an equally meaningful way has recently been increasingly acknowledged.⁷⁸ Finally, I am dealing with a period that falls within the span of my own personal memory, and while subjective writing is not among the main methods of this work, I have indirectly

76 Michel Foucault, *Truth and Power*. – Paul Rabinov (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, pp. 51–75.

77 Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research*. – Ruth Wodak, Michael Meyer (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 2001, pp. 121–138.

used personal experiences of at least some aspects of the spatial transformations of the era in question, while acknowledging the hazards and advantages of doing so.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE WORK

The dissertation has been divided into five chapters, which investigate five loosely connected case studies, providing links and interconnections via recurring architects and artists, projects and sites. The first chapter, dedicated to unbuilt architectural and urban design projects, is the longest and partly serves as the introduction and backdrop to the following cases. The chapter investigates changes in architectural and planning practice and the specifics of new types of commissions and building typologies, as well as architects' agency under the changing circumstances and their methods of adapting to and coping with the new demands and situations. It analyses the renewed enthusiasm for participating in urban planning competitions and the ensuing discussions concerning developments of urban public space for the transforming society. It also demonstrates the primacy of imagological concerns, supported by rhetorical and representational means, with a number of issues channelled into the question of high-rises. Additionally, the new kind of public was also imagined through new typologies, such as media centres. At the same time, the imagological concerns also strongly pertained to issues of representing national identity, as exemplified by projects for religious buildings, the Estonian National Museum and the national pavilion for the Seville Expo. The chapter deals with the most characteristic examples among the proliferation of unbuilt designs of the era, making it possible to analyse the main tendencies of architectural practice. The empirical material of the chapter is largely based on fieldwork done for the exhibition *Unbuilt. Visions for a New Society, 1986–1994*, curated for the Estonian Museum of Architecture in 2015, and the preliminary observations concerning the material were also presented in the eponymous catalogue published with the exhibition.⁷⁹

The second chapter follows up on the previous one in terms of providing a more detailed discussion of another unbuilt project: the future vision for Naissaar island by the artist Tõnis Vint. However, as a self-initiated proposal by a visual artist, ignoring all the conventional regulations, procedures and presentational means of an architectural or urban planning project, Vint's vision belongs to a whole

78 See, for instance, Janina Gosseye, Naomi Stead, Deborah van der Plaats (eds.), *Speaking of Buildings. Oral History in Architectural Research*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2019.

79 Ingrid Ruudi, Ehitamata. Visioonid uuest ühiskonnast, 1986–1994 / *Unbuilt. Visions for a New Society, 1986–1994*. Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 2015.

different category than the architectural projects of the previous chapter, and with its scope of vision duly deserves examination as an example of utopian space. However, in spite of the character of the project relating it to a tradition of conceptual urban utopias, the way the author actively promoted it in Estonian mainstream media – both in newspapers and on TV – as well as managing to insert it as an alternative to the official detailed planning process of the island, renders the categorisation of the project much more ambiguous and problematic. The chapter investigates how under the circumstances of the radical openness of the interregnum there was a social willingness to openly and earnestly consider the potential of an idea that lacked any realistic grounding in terms of feasibility or infrastructural means, and how for a creative agent it was possible to freely navigate and interconnect the realms of art, politics and economics. The chapter also analyses what kind of additional dimension was added to the project by its spiritual reasoning, and how the New Age individualistic pathos played into the neo-liberal restructuring of the society. In this way the author's avant-gardist position, which advanced a cause of resistance during the late Soviet era, under the changing circumstances of the transition and post-Soviet era turned out, inadvertently, to be socially reactionary. In this sense, a close reading of the Naissaar vision by Tõnis Vint shows it to be a quintessential project of the interregnum, carrying both late Soviet and post-Soviet values. It highlights the frictions resulting from trying to apply grandiose ambitions to the social, economic and political realities of the day, and the characteristic ambiguity of what was deemed possible. A preliminary shorter version of this chapter has been published in the journal *Studies in Art and Architecture*.⁸⁰

The third chapter looks at the discursive space. The profound changes taking place under conditions of architectural production demanded both updated self-reflection by the profession and a realignment with the architectural ideas and overall intellectual tendencies of the 'free world'. However, compared to the late Soviet period, when at least the more avant-garde architects were actively conceptualising their activities in the form of articles, essays and exhibitions, the pace of the interregnum seems not to have left much energy for such reflection: architects' written output significantly declined. In this context, the most suitable case for studying the self-image of the Estonian architecture culture and its intellectual ambitions was the Nordic-Baltic architecture triennial, which took

80 Ingrid Ruudi, Tõnis Vint's Vision for Naissaar Island: An Extraterritorial Utopia Zone of the Transition Era. – *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi. Studies in Art and Architecture* 2016, No. 3–4/ pp. 7–37.

place every three years, from 1990 to 2005. The third chapter concentrates on the first two triennials (in 1990 and 1993) as two of the most daring intellectual endeavours of the time, aimed at establishing a platform for international cooperation and an ideas exchange between the Nordic and Baltic countries. The chapter looks both at the different discursive positions of the participating post-Soviet and Western architects and the organisational background of arranging the event under difficult conditions of rapidly changing political and economic realities. What kinds of shifts of meanings and (mis)-translations happened in communicating the beliefs and values of practitioners of the two sides? What were the political connotations of different architectures, and what was at stake for both sides in the attempt to establish an institutional platform for facilitating such a dialogue? A comparison of the first two triennials also highlights changes in the Baltic and Nordic architects' reactions to the changing conditions of design and construction, and the shifts in what was considered the main purposes of architects' creative endeavours that took place in this quite short span of time.

The fourth chapter, titled *Performative Space*, examines the possibility and outcome of channelling architectural ideas into the practice of performative art. The case considered is Group T, an affiliation of like-minded intellectuals formed by the architects Raoul Kurvitz and Urmas Muru in 1986 that also included painters, photographers, musicians, actors and writers. The chapter follows the development of the ideas of Kurvitz, Muru and Peeter Pere from their early design practice at the Estonian Industrial Project to experimentation with different architectural visualisations to ever more elaborate site-specific performances. The latter evolved from their own engagement with spatial settings to the orchestration of multi-day events generating temporary communities in spaces temporarily operating under alternative spatial conventions. These enable us to show how the more avant-garde architectural practices of the transition era were built upon the experience and legacy of the preceding Tallinn school of the late Soviet era, but how their positions were also markedly different: they involved the profound rethinking of how architectural and artistic gestures were able to relate to the social environment, a redefinition of the scope and the possibilities of the different means of architectural practice, and entering into a dialogue with the vast and unsystematically absorbed influence of newly arriving intellectual trends and theories, mainly stemming from continental philosophy. The chapter follows Group T's gradual movement from design to performance

as a more immediate, readily available means of generating spatial situations that would, in response to the contemporary social developments, be able to build a temporary counterpublic sphere. The ideas for this chapter have been tested in articles written for the exhibition catalogue of Raoul Kurvitz⁸¹ and in a publication of the European Architecture History Network conference.⁸²

The fifth and final chapter focuses on institutional space, with the main case being the Tallinn Art Hall and especially its renovation process, conceptualised as the processual artwork *Revival of Space* by the Swiss artist George Steinmann. Although in the strict sense the object of the case study is an artwork, it certainly exceeds the traditional realm of art, involving large-scale architectural construction, as well as social, economic and political dimensions on an international scale. The aim of the chapter is to analyse how a site-specific art project redefined the architectural space, fostering the institution's functioning as a public space, and to ask what kind of influence the ethical and aesthetic choices of the artist had upon the specificities of the public thus constructed, operating in a dialogue with the heritage movement and the general restitutional mentality of the era. What kind of effect did the meticulous restoration work of the physical architectural environment of the Art Hall have on the workings of the space, and how did the ensuing reinvigorated symbolic connotations of its pre-war legacy play into the conventions of an institutional art space? At the same time, the chapter highlights the agency of the artist as an uninvited outsider in the social processes of the transition era, where his activities were able to forge new and previously non-existing connections between the realms of art, economics and politics, and point out the context-specific circumstances that made such a unique and successful intervention possible. Thus the chapter also sheds light on a certain internal contradiction of the project, introducing a progressively engaged artistic position with strong ethical and sustainable commitment, while allowing for a nostalgic reception and supporting a conventional interpretation of art as a strongly aestheticised sphere. The preliminary version of this text appeared as part of an article in the journal *Studies in Art and Architecture*.⁸³

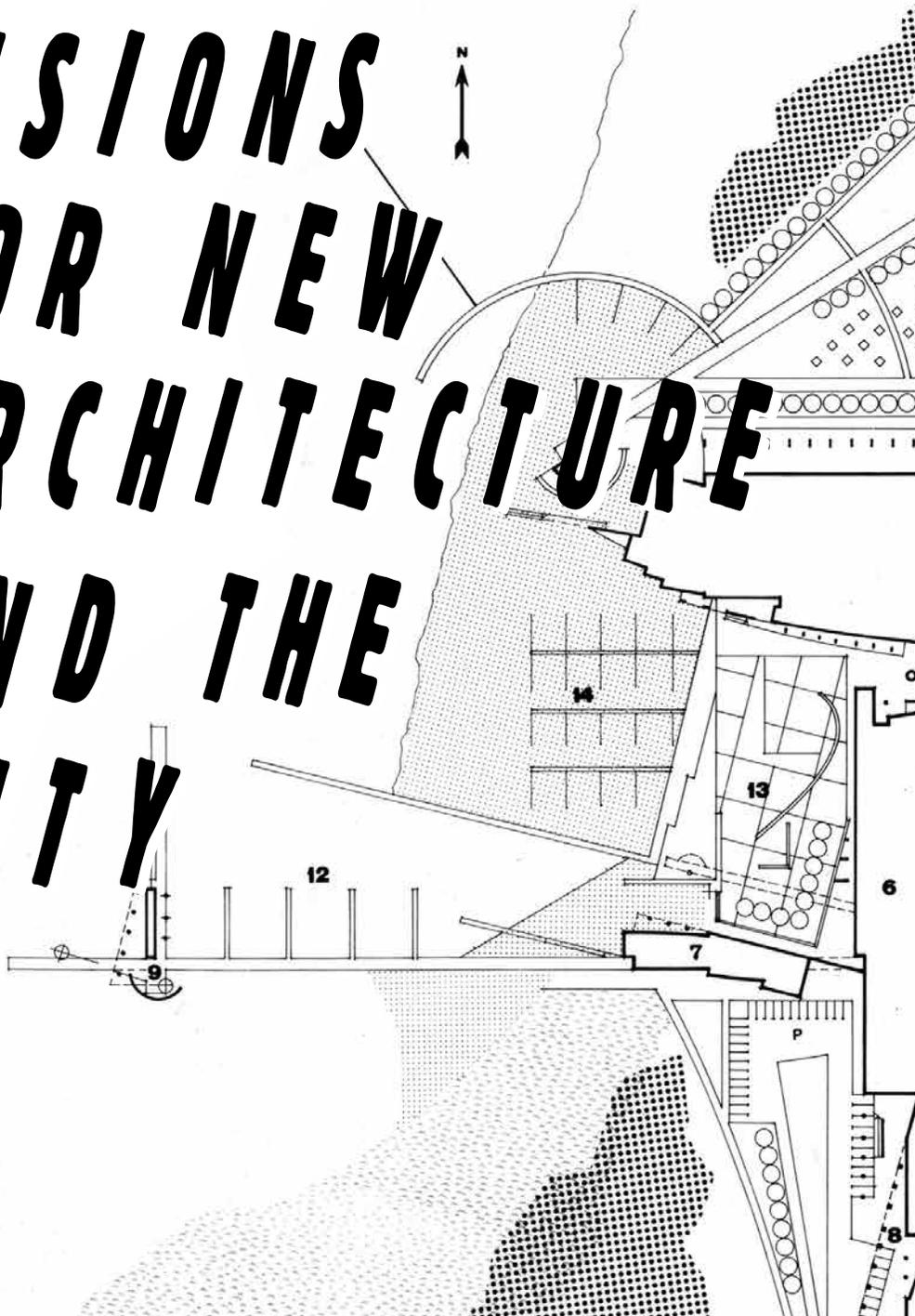
81 Ingrid Ruudi, Anarhiline ruum maskide langemise ajastul. Rühm T arhitektuur ja performance. – Kati Ilves (ed.), Raoul Kurvitz. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuseum, 2013, pp. 21–39.

82 Ingrid Ruudi, Radical Space for Radical time: the Intersections of Architecture and Performance Art in Estonia, 1986–1991. – Michaela Rosso (ed.), Investigating and Writing Architectural History: Subjects, Methodologies and Frontiers. Papers from the Third EAHN Meeting: Third International

Meeting of the European Architecture Historians Network, Torino 19–21 June 2014. Torino, 2014, pp. 888–897.

83 Ingrid Ruudi, The Tallinn Art Hall as a Testing Ground for the Public Sphere in the Transition Era: The Cases of Group T and George Steinmann. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi / Studies on art and architecture 2018, No. 4, pp. 31–63.

**UNBUILT
SPACE:
VISIONS
FOR NEW
ARCHITECTURE
AND THE
CITY**



In conventional histories of Estonian architecture, the period from the end of the 1980s to the second half of the 1990s is presented as a gap.⁸⁴ The standard narrative merges the first half of the 1980s with the Soviet postmodernist developments of the 1970s. The story continues with the resuming of building activities around 1995–1996, characterised by all of the peculiarities of the post-Soviet architectural developments related to rapid changes in land ownership and the privatisation processes, real estate speculation, insufficient building regulations, and the desire to put architecture to good symbolic use as a signifier of a progressive, Westernised society. Thus, the narrative of Estonian architectural history, written based on the examples of executed buildings, conveys the image of a significant break, highlighting the profound differences between the architecture production of the late Soviet and post-Soviet times.

So how did the architectural ideals, principles and practices evolve from the playful yet somewhat hermetic mid-1980s to the pragmatic and even outright cynical mid-1990s? A much more nuanced picture unfolds if we include the vast array of projects and designs from the transitional decade that were not built. The main reason why this intermediate period in architecture has, for the most part, not been perceived as a separate phenomenon is undoubtedly the fact that the majority of architectural works from the time never went beyond the planning stage. Yet it was a period with remarkable architectural creativity and a huge number of projects reflecting the dynamic societal changes and searching for new spatial expressions compatible with the changing social and entrepreneurial expectations. An exceptionally large number of both open and invitation-based architectural competitions were held in transition-era Estonia. Likewise, many projects were completed as commissions for ambitious customers or on architects' own initiative, while very few of them actually went into construction. It is hard to determine exact figures, especially concerning the various designs commissioned by real estate developers, but the major competition designs and commissions connected with Tallinn and a couple of other major cities number well over a hundred unbuilt projects.⁸⁵ The major emphasis in the period's architecture was indeed placed on shaping new public and semi-public space, but the range of typologies, programmes and sites definitely reflected major changes in land ownership and use, economic models and cultural values. These included 'reclaiming' important urban districts previously occupied either by Soviet indus-

84 See for instance, Mart Kalm, *Eesti 20. sajandi arhitektuur*. Tallinn: Prisma Prindi kirjastus, 2001.; Jaak Kangilaski (ed.), *Eesti kunsti ajalugu 1940–1991*.

85 Estimation based on fieldwork done for the exhibition *Unbuilt. Visions for a New Society, 1986–1994* at the Estonian Museum of Architecture, 2015, involving interviews with architects and research in the archives of various Estonian architecture offices.

trial complexes or fenced off for military and defence purposes (e.g. the Rotermann Quarter, the paper factory zone, the area around the Linnahall in Tallinn and Sillamäe), new topics, set tasks and typologies, such as business centres, bank headquarters, entertainment and media centres and religious buildings, as well as an urgent need to rethink architectural representation and its role in forming national identity, as exemplified in symbolically weighty museum competitions or national representations abroad (e.g. the Seville Expo pavilion, competitions for the Estonian National Museum and the Museum of Estonian Art). Opportunities to participate in international architecture and design competitions, first semi-officially, then increasingly officially, substantially broadened the scope of action. Altogether, this repository of unbuilt architectural projects effectively fills a gap in the conventional architectural history, enabling us to follow the gradual unfolding of processes of adaptation and appropriation in which the design goals and principles of practice inherited from the late Soviet era merge with the demands and ideals of the post-Soviet time. In architecture, the transition from one social formation to another formed a fluid, hazy and hybrid process: forms and practices characteristic of late Soviet postmodernism existed side by side with approaches that were affirmed in built architecture only in the late 1990s.

NEW INTEREST IN URBAN PLANNING

In the mid-1980s, urban planning in Estonia was still operating in a quite bureaucratic Soviet top-down system with mass construction in mono-functional residential districts being a priority and quotas of new residential square metres the main measurement of success. Regarding central Tallinn, the 1984 detailed planning project by Ignar Fjuk, Rein Hansberg, Irina Raud, Ene Aurik and Tiina Nigul was a breakthrough to a more human-scale and conservational approach to the existing urban environment, including a novel suggestion to preserve and repurpose the end-of-the-19th-century industrial structures on Mere Boulevard (the Rotermann Quarter) that all previous planning schemes had marked for demolition.⁸⁶ Two years later, in February 1986, the famous speech of the new Soviet Union leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, at the Communist Party Congress called for political and economic restructuring of the state, with a need for

86 Dmitri Bruns, Tallinn. Linnaehituslik kujunemine. Tallinn: Valgus 1993, pp. 161–163.

more transparency and openness. However, it took some time for an adjusted mind-set to settle in official Estonian discourse: the political ice age only began to show signs of melting after Gorbachev's visit to Tallinn in 1987.⁸⁷

In the field of architecture, this echoed primarily in transparency stipulations, procuring the right to have a say in discussions concerning large-scale planning processes, and – naturally – an end to callous and bureaucratically-dictated mass construction. When in 1987 the official guidelines still required further advancement of the mass construction of prefabricated blocks of flats⁸⁸ and a planning competition was held to generate a solution to Suur-Õismäe, a new major prefabricated residential district in western Tallinn, the competition received only two entries⁸⁹ and was officially considered a failure.⁹⁰ This prompted the ESSR Construction Committee to acknowledge the need for alternative solutions for mass construction, especially the reconstruction of already existing residential areas in the city,⁹¹ starting with Kalamaja, and initiating designs combining brick and reinforced concrete instead of the prefabricated panel system.⁹² The national civic movement intensely highlighted the political dimension of construction policies: the mass construction of blocks of flats as a mechanism for supporting immigration came into focus at the legendary plenum of creative unions held in Tallinn in April 1988. Echoing the extremely popular message of a patriotic song released at the same time by the composer Alo Mattiisen and the writer Henno Kõo, then Chairman of the Union of Estonian Architects Ado Eigi proposed at the plenum to halt the construction of the Lasnamäe district, which was predominantly inhabited by migrant workers from other parts of the Soviet Union.⁹³ By the end of 1988 this indeed led to the Construction Committee agreeing to stop any and all building of standard-design projects.⁹⁴ In accordance with the general policies of glasnost, a greater degree of transparency was demanded in urban planning processes overall.⁹⁵ One way of achieving this was considered to be an annual exhibition of projects green-lighted for construction to take place at the Tallinn Art Hall (as the Architects' Union lacked their own building).⁹⁶

87 See e.g. Kalle Muuli, *Vabariigi sünnimärgid. Varjatud murdehetki Eesti poliitikas 1987–2007*. Tallinn: Tulimuld 2013, pp. 35–40.

88 *Arhitektide Liidus*. – *Sirp ja Vasar* 27 November 1987.

89 *Noored arhitektid ja Eesti talu taassünd*. – *Noorte Häääl* 23 January 1988.

90 Heikki Talving, *Lootusrikkalt*. – *Õhtuleht* 31 December 1987.

91 *Ibid.*, Gunnar Kuldvere, *Uued tuuled arhitektuuripoliitikas*. – *Edasi* 12 July 1987.

92 Heikki Talving, *Lootusrikkalt*.

93 Eesti NSV loominguiliste liitude juhataste

ühispleenum. *Sõnavõttudest*. – *Sirp ja Vasar* 29 April 1988.

94 *Piret Lindpere, Kas tõesti lõpp tüüpprojektidele?* – *Sirp ja Vasar* 16 December 1988.

95 *Linna planeerimine ei peaks olema kitsa ametnike-spetsialistide ringi salanõu*. – *Sirp ja Vasar* 14 October 1988; Ülo Pihlak, *Uusehitused ja avalikustamine*. – *Sirp ja Vasar* 4 March 1988.

96 Boris Mirov, *Ühest näitusest, millest võiks kujuneda traditsioon*. – *Sirp ja Vasar* 30 January 1987; *Linna planeerimine ei peaks olema...*

The last years of the 1980s saw two remarkable urban design competitions in Tallinn, the grounding principles of which had been laid with the 1984 city centre planning project but whose execution and outcomes unmistakably reflected the new social and political realities, as well as intense imagological ambitions. One of these was the competition for an area along Mere Blvd – a dense conglomeration of industrial buildings built from the late 19th century to the 1970s – sitting as a walled-in impediment right in between the main square and the harbour, and now marked for reconstruction as a new commercial centre.⁹⁷ The other was for the area around Süda Street, where a competition for the new opera building in 1984, with a subsequent design process running up to 1988, had failed to provide a solution that could reconcile contrasting demands for the needs of the opera and a sustainable approach to the historical and natural milieu.⁹⁸

The competition for the Rotermann Quarter and the Mere Blvd development was announced by the Tallinn city government at the end of 1988. The competition brief stated the need to preserve the more imposing structures from the end of the 19th century, finding them new commercial uses, and integrating them into additions of contemporary architecture. The aim of the new complex was to serve as the main new commercial and service centre for the town. This aim of converting industrial structures for mixed-use commercial and cultural premises was very much in tune with global developments of the time, with the first large-scale industrial conversions underway in Germany, Great Britain and elsewhere.⁹⁹ The desire to follow Western models and attract international expertise was also clearly manifested in the unprecedented decision to declare the competition open to foreign participants: in the still operating Soviet legal framework, this meant the right to participate for architects from Kotka, Finland, and Kiel, Germany, the ‘friendship cities’ of Tallinn, with whom relations had been established during the Soviet time under the aegis of the World Federation of United Cities. As a result, eight Finnish and ten Estonian architects or teams participated in the competition, and the first prize was awarded to the young Estonian team of Emil Urbel and Ülo Peil (ill. 1). While their proposal foresaw integrating the industrial street front and a new department store within the quarter with a covered outdoor gallery, and such new functions as exhibition premises and a video-disco hall were housed in a windowless grain

97 Tallinna Mere puistee kaubanduskeskuse arhitektuurivõistluse tingimused, žürii protokollid, ekspertarvamused, seletuskirjad. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 5.7.6.

98 For a more detailed account of the opera house design process in 1984–1988, see Peep Jänes,

Ooperimaja mittedaamisloost. – Teater. Muusika. Kino 2003, No. 7, pp. 23–26.

99 See e.g. TransEuropeHalles. The Factories: Conversions for Urban Culture. Berlin: Birkhäuser, 2002.

elevator, the most important impetus of the work was the attempt to integrate the previously closed quarter seamlessly with the surrounding city on three sides.¹⁰⁰ For that purpose, they exceeded the competition area, proposing an elevated pedestrian walkway to allow for a smooth walking connection with the adjacent main square of the city, and converting the adjacent Mere Blvd into a full pedestrian zone, with only tram traffic remaining. Most daringly, they proposed adding a new opera house north of the quarter, at the Admiralty marina in the harbour area, which at the time of the competition was still a strictly closed territory of the Soviet marine industry and border defence. Nevertheless, on no real basis except hope for change, Urbel and Peil's 1989 competition entry pictured it as an open and integrated part of the city, where the Soviet presence would be replaced by an opera house, an arts centre and yachting clubs at both ends, marking the anticipation of a new era of much greater personal and social freedom, as well as an orientation towards a wealth and elite culture.

The unresolved issue of the opera theatre was also the main impetus for the almost simultaneously announced Süda-Tatari competition, which was to decide the future development of this long-neglected yet very centrally located area. The conditions of the competition, which left *'the participants free hands: from the complete preservation of what exists to the building of something completely new'*¹⁰¹, reflected both weariness from long-running squabbling with the opera project and a readiness to start with a clean slate and imagine an entirely new urban environment needed for the future. The competition entry by Jüri Okas and Marika Lõoke (ill. 2) was the only one that took a theatre into account, placing it next to the Kosmos cinema.¹⁰² Nevertheless, the jury found that the competition proved the large theatre volume was unsuitable for the quarter and it would be left out of plans for the area from then on.¹⁰³ It did, however, recommend the location as the site for an art museum, despite the outcome of a recent competition for selecting the site for the museum, which did not even consider Süda Street. However, the most important conclusion the jury drew from this open competition was that *'retaining the wooden-neighbourhood milieu in Tallinn's city centre is inconceivable /.../ extreme solutions preserving greenery and old structures only increase the zone's destructiveness'*¹⁰⁴. This confirmed the radical assessment made a year earlier that, in the quarter's wooden-house milieu, *'there are no structures with artistic value; even specific building*

100 Tallinna Mere puistee kaubanduskeskuse hoonestamise konkurs. Võistlustöö „1154“, I preemia. Arhitektid Emil Urbel, Ülo Peil. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 5.1.60.

101 Süda-Tatari piirkonna planeerimiskonkurs. Teade. – Sirp ja Vasar 3 March 1989.

102 Tallinna Süda tänava kvartali planeerimise

konkurs, võistlustöö „Süda“, I preemia. Arhitektid Jüri Okas, Marika Lõoke. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 5.1.18.

103 Jüri Lass, Süda-Tatari piirkonna planeerimiskonkurs. – Sirp ja Vasar 16 June 1989.

104 Ibid.

details are handicrafts typical of the era and do not possess artistic value'.¹⁰⁵ As a result, in the prize-winning entries, most earlier buildings would be replaced by new ones¹⁰⁶ (both in the entry by Okas-Lõoke and the much talked-about shared third-place entry by Andres Siim and Hanno Kreis, ill. 3). Rävåla Blvd was also bravely lengthened (by Okas-Lõoke),¹⁰⁷ or was instead channelled into a tunnel, thus freeing the above-ground space for imaginative buildings (in both Siim and Kreis' entry and Urbel and Peil's shared third-place entry). Okas-Lõoke's downtown-style mixed development was functionally the most diverse, encompassing five-storey blocks of flats and a hotel, in addition to a proposed performing arts centre and an architecture museum. The entry also took into account the existing street structure, and impressed the jury with a park containing busts of the large number of cultural figures who had lived in the area. However, the most ambitious solution, which envisioned a new city in one fell swoop, authored by Siim and Kreis, was criticised by the jury for its excessive radicalism.¹⁰⁸ It was comprised of a strip-shaped commercial building running along a tunnel and vainly dubbed 'foreign commerce representations', which intersected with a sheer 21-storey hotel in addition to a contemporary art centre, a concert hall for avant-garde and jazz music, sound studios, halls for modern dance and alternative theatres, information agencies, and a then new and vague 'communications centre': a neologism certainly referring to a new type of inclusive public space.¹⁰⁹ Rhetoric is undoubtedly just as important as forms and volumes when designing a new social space, and so Siim and Kreis' competition entry was unambiguously titled *Tallinn's New City* ('city' being written in English in the Estonian version). The tendency for rhetorical exaggeration was very characteristic of the era: the fashion of calling each new enterprise or shop a 'centre' has been interpreted as an attempt to compensate for the feeling of being peripheral;¹¹⁰ thus, this can be seen as a tactic of hopefully achieving accelerated reintegration with Western capitalism.

Obviously, though, this alluring 'new city' did not receive consensus approval, and conflicts continued. Only a year later did the Estonian Heritage Society, the Central Estonian Children's Protection Union, and the Tallinn Green Movement jointly commission two

105 Voldemar Vaga, Hinnang Tallinna Sõda tn. kvartali kohta. – Sirp ja Vasar 4 November 1989.

106 With the exception of Hillar Rink's second-place entry, which preserved both the existing plot structure and a portion of the buildings, endeavouring for the opportunity for gradual construction.

107 A similar lengthening of the boulevard was proposed already in 1956 by Harald Arman and Otto Keppe in connection with a grander scheme of the area, see Regina Viljasaar, Tallinna Lenini

puiestee – kadunud võimu teostumata peatänav. Bachelor's thesis, Estonian Academy of Arts, Institute of Art History, 2004.

108 Jüri Lass, Sõda-Tatari piirkonna planeerimiskonkurss.

109 Tallinna Sõda tänava kvartali planeerimise konkurss, võistlustöö „Azalp“, III preemia. Arhitektid Andres Siim, Hanno Kreis. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 5.1.11.

110 Karin Hallas, Paradigma muutus linnaplaneerimiseideoloogias. – Sirp 11 June 1999.

more alternative conceptual drafts as a part of heritage protection, which could perhaps be regarded as the first instance of participatory planning in Estonia. In tune with the times' overall surge in civic activism, residents of Süda-Tatari formed a committee and polled 440 households in the neighbourhood: the majority were not interested in relocating elsewhere and supported, among other things, a plan to make the quarter an historical-cultural protection zone.¹¹¹ Taking local opinions into account, conceptual drafts by Mall and Tiit Tomiste (themselves residents of the area), as well as Tiina Linna and Kersti Lootus, followed the existing street and plot structure, and strove to preserve greenery and existing buildings as much as possible. One proposed new function involved embassies; Linna and Lootus ruled out plans to breach Rävåla Blvd by placing a conservatory crosswise with the street. On these grounds, the Green Movement and Heritage Society petitioned to form a protection zone, referencing the needless demolitions and stalled construction of the conservatory in connection with the dominant moods of indifference and chaos.¹¹² At the same time, the visual material for Okas-Lõoke's competition entry, captioned 'Conceptual Building Plan for the Süda St Quarter', was still used to illustrate a newspaper article on a meeting of the Tallinn Building Council, which was convened to discuss the topic.¹¹³ The article asserted the necessity of completing the 'city' and opposed the establishment of a protection area in principle, recommending that such plans be directed towards neighbourhoods with more integrity, such as Kadriorg, Pelgulinn and Kalamaja. Over the next few years, the ideas were basically abandoned due to a lack of funds, followed by property ownership reforms. Still, Irina Raud, having ascended to the double position of city architect and vice-mayor of Tallinn in 1990, tried to tackle some of the issues by commissioning an additional developmental scheme for areas around Tatari St from the architects Andres Alver and Tiit Trummal.¹¹⁴ The main outcome of this was the decision to fill in an empty lot at the end of Tatari St, on the corner of Vabaduse Square: in the re-privatisation processes of the following years, the legal reclamer of the lot was the wife of the Estonian émigré architect Henno Sillaste, who in 1991 envisioned an office building there, eventually realised in 1997 as Kawe Plaza (ill. 4).¹¹⁵

Seen together, the competitions of Mere Blvd and Süda-Tatari demonstrate the incoherence of attitudes toward heritage. While both areas comprised of historical architecture that could be characterised

111 Reet Rihvik, Kaks uut ideekavandit Süda tänava piirkonna jaoks. – Päävaleht 18 May 1990.

112 Ell Väärtnõu, J. Tamm, Süda tänava kvartalist. – Öhtuleht 19 June 1991.

113 Sven Harjo, Tallinna city Süda tänava kvartalisse? – Öhtuleht 4 July 1991.

114 Interview with Andres Alver, 2 February 2015.

115 Jarmo Kauge, Uude maailma. Eesti arhitektid Torontos. To the New World. Estonian Architects in Toronto. Tallinn: Museum of Estonian Architecture, 2018, p. 246.

as everyday rather than exceptional (industries and housing), at the Mere Blvd, the value of beginning of 20th century buildings was just becoming to be appreciated and the existing structures imaginatively integrated into the new schemes, whereas at Sūda-Tatari the everydayness of the buildings from the same historical period served as a pretext for dismissal as something common and worthless. At the same time, they demonstrate architects' increasing courage to think beyond the bureaucratic system: while the competition briefs continue to be drafted in a piecemeal manner, not much taking into account other competitions or planning projects underway at the same time, the architects propose solutions that try to link developments in different urban areas.

TRANSITION TO A MARKET ECONOMY AND NEW COMMERCIAL SPACES

While the city was struggling to find coherent developmental visions, the first attempts at private entrepreneurship involved real estate as well. Construction activities were greatly hindered by the lack of legislative regulations and, after regaining independence, the slowness of land ownership reforms. At first, the regulations did not allow for rights for superficies at all, only offering the possibility of long-term rent of the plot, which as a rule was seen as a hindrance by foreign investors.¹¹⁶ However, this did not discourage bold entrepreneurs from commissioning various architectural visions and preliminary designs: this was a way to invest roubles, which were quickly losing their value under the conditions of soaring inflation, and there was a hope that an existing preliminary design would serve as a basis for finding and securing investments or, additionally, as an asset in plot ownership negotiations with the municipality.¹¹⁷ A large number of commissions concerned new commercial typologies that were previously non-existent or at least much less prominent in the Soviet context: business and commercial centres, media centres, entertainment centres, night clubs, bank headquarters, office buildings and international hotels. These commissions clearly required imagining a new kind of public space and public life. A look at some of the projects from 1988 to 1991 reveals the evolution of notions concerning architectural space as a facilitator of social life.

116 Huvi Tallinna ärikeskuste ehitamise vastu on eluterve. – Äripäev 17 May 1995.

117 Interview with Emil Urbel, 19 February 2015.

In accordance with Gorbachev's reforms, which also reduced restrictions on foreign trade and enabled the establishment of companies with relative independence, in 1987 the first Soviet semi-private foreign trade enterprise, Estimpeks, was established based on the ESSR Foreign Commerce Administration to coordinate all foreign transactions of Soviet Estonian enterprises without direct involvement of the central authorities in Moscow. This proved a hugely successful venture, with an annual turnover of over 100 million dollars just three years later.¹¹⁸ Among the first endeavours of Estimpeks was planning the establishment of a major 500-guest hotel complex, aimed at high-end foreign business clients. For this purpose, a competition by invitation was held in 1988, with entries submitted by Ado Eigi, Peep Jänes, Raine Karp, Toomas Rein and the team of Jüri Okas and Marika Lõoke, who had the task of envisioning a locally unprecedented level of luxury fit for high-end international clients. The winning design by Okas and Lõoke, code named *Perestroika*, envisioned the complex as an anchored cruise ship with a two-storey 'breakwater' extending out into the sea, with a café at the top, walkways branching off from the third-storey level towards the land, and a bold mast construction on the roof (ill. 5). Quite in tune with the metaphor of the cruise ship, the design conveyed the image of an exciting foreign environment suddenly landed on the Estonian shore. The technicist, neo-constructivist architecture was consciously devoid of any reference to, or relationship with, the surrounding context. Its separateness from the surrounding late Soviet semi-suburban environment was further accentuated by encircling the whole complex with a fence and equipping it with guards; the landscaping also involved generating a private beach and a closed-off yachting marina. A 16-storey slab, situated transversally between the seashore and Paldiski road, offered magnificent views of the sea and the Old Town further away. A helicopter landing pad on the roof served as a signifier of the luxury of the new era to come: a detail to be subsequently repeated in the tandem's project for the Astlanda commercial centre and finally realised with their Foreksbank bank building of 1997. In addition to the hotel itself, with guest rooms occupying floors 3–14, the complex included a night club, conference centre, sports building with outdoor tennis courts and outdoor pool, Estimpeks headquarters, an area for the hotel employees, and other facilities, most of them accessible by an indoor passage in the middle of the

building. The VIP suite on the 12th and 13th floors had a separate access from the front lobby with its own entrance and elevator; the VIP suite and the three- and four-room luxury suites were planned as split-level duplexes.¹¹⁹ The entrance level for hotel guests was the third floor, accessible from the outside via ramps. The financial, service, staff and administration facilities were located on the first and second floors, and technical systems on the 12th–15th floors. In tune with the building's overall high-tech ambition, the façades were to be covered with polarised plate glass, part of it multi-toned. Exterior and interior finishing materials also included polished granite, anodised aluminium and chromed steel. The other competition entries ranged from Ado Eigi's playful postmodernism and Peep Jänes's more traditional low-rise with guest room wings radiating from a central core, to Toomas Rein's and Raine Karp's more severe monumentality. In the latter's solution, the main hotel complex formed an artificial island, separated from the employees' lodgings on the mainland: further evidence of the need to segregate foreign visitors of such high standing from the late Soviet reality, and even more supported by the choice of a relatively remote plot (five kilometres from the central city to the West). Obviously, this was a sign of the continuing late Soviet attitudes and unease regarding interaction between Western visitors and locals.

A year later, in 1989, the political and social situation had improved enough for the segregation to appear inappropriate and the hotel plans were relocated to a much more central plot at the beginning of Paldiski Road, next to the already existing Hotel Tallinn, which belonged to the Soviet tourism committee Intourist. Now a second competition was held for the new plot in a hurried manner, asking for an analysis of urban context and a preliminary solution for the building in a mere month, and with a new set of competitors, including Miia Masso and Rein Luup, Raine Karp and Toivo Kallas, Jüri Jaama, Hans Köll and Margus Pilter, and A. Böecl from the USA.¹²⁰ It may be assumed that the inclusion of an unknown American architect was a requirement of foreign business partners – for the hotel enterprise, Estimpeks established a separate joint venture, Amerest Hotels, with partners from the United States and Austria – and that the change in the set of competitors was due to a short deadline not suitable for more fastidious architects. The spatial programme was much less exuberant: naturally, the city centre plot

119 The information about VIP suites is missing from the building description as it was published in the Estonian architectural review *Ehituskunst*, it is only referenced (alternatingly as VIP suites or presidential accommodation) in the project description published in the Finnish architectural review *Arkkitehti*, see Tallinna 500-kohaline hotell. – *Ehituskunst* 1991, Vol. 5, pp. 56–57, and *Hotelli*

Tallinnaan. *Kilpailuehdotus „Perestroika“*, 1. palkinto, Jüri Okas, Marika Lõoke. – *Arkkitehti* 1989, No. 7, pp. 47–51.

120 See „Estimpeks“ luksushotell Tallinnas Paldiski mnt. – *Arhitektuurikroonika* '89. Tallinn: Ehituse teadusliku uurimise instituut, 1992, pp. 250–251.

did not allow for tennis courts or a golf course, outdoor pools or a yachting marina any more. Indeed, the winning design by Karp and Kallas was chosen for its relatively low height and simple functional solutions. The hotel was to include 340 guest rooms, plus a presidential suite, 50 office spaces for rent, a casino, three restaurants, a ballroom, several bars and night clubs, four conference halls, a sports club, a pool and saunas.¹²¹

In 1990, based on this second design, a contract was signed with the international hotel chain Sheraton, but the outlandish building costs and insecurity in terms of economic feasibility led to demands for a governmental guarantee for the project.¹²² Although by the beginning of 1992 several wooden houses had been demolished in the area to make way for the project, and investments had almost been secured from German and Austrian banks,¹²³ the lack of money and especially prolonged disputes over plot ownership and the compensations for pre-war owners and their heirs eventually led to abandonment of the project and Amerest Hotel's bankruptcy.

Another landmark of the architectural ambitions of early private enterprises was the Estar, later to be known as the Astlanda, project: one of the most noteworthy architectural projects of the interregnum era, perhaps even one that captures the era's essence the best. Estar, a one-of-a-kind self-budgeted experimental organisation, had been founded in 1985 as the first test lab for the Soviet economic reforms of the perestroika era. A regional concern incorporating all of the textile companies and other light industries, it was modelled on the example of similar concerns encompassing whole branches of industries in the German Democratic Republic.¹²⁴ With a relatively great deal of freedom regarding decision making and operation, over the following years it quickly accrued remarkable capital, which required meaningful utilisation.¹²⁵ Building a headquarters, including premises for the Tallinn Fashion House and a showroom for the *Siluet* fashion magazine, and enjoying enormous popularity over the whole Soviet Union, it seemed like a good idea from the beginning. A competition for the Fashion House on Rävåla (then Lenini) Blvd had been organised in 1985 and won by Raoul Kurvitz and Urmas Muru; however, the enterprise's ambitions had grown significantly by the time the construction drawings were finished a few years later. A new project commissioned from Jüri Okas and Marika Lõoke in 1989 added so many functions and so much volume that the Fashion

121 Sheratoni hotelli matus Tallinna linnakohtus. – Äripäev 19 August 1996.

122 Aavo Kokk, Selgust Ameresti üliprojekti. – Edasi 5 October 1990.

123 Sheratoni hotelli matus...

124 Kalev Kukk, Eesti majanduse 100 aastat. Tallinn: Riigikantselei ja AS Postimees Grupp, Post Factum 2019, p. 113.

125 See e.g. Kalle Muuli, Vabariigi sünnimärgid, pp. 30–31.

House and the editorial office of the magazine became merely a marginal part of the project (ill. 6). At this point, a complex consisting of six- to seven-storey buildings housing a hotel, a conference centre, the credit institution Esttexpank, and a savings fund, together with a range of retail spaces, restaurants, bars and public saunas, was connected by two intersecting inner streets: a novelty in the Estonian context also featured in Okas and Lõoke's hotel design described above. Office spaces for lease would have been situated in a slender 30-storey tower with dark aluminium panelling at the end of Laikmaa Street. In addition, people would have been able to zoom from street level up to a restaurant, bar and viewing area at the top of the tower by way of a stylish glass lift.¹²⁶ Astlanda produced an architectural project that was not only taller than the usual small-town scale, but due to its organised density spread from edge to edge of the lot, and horizontally and vertically multi-layer nature, it possessed an entirely unprecedented urbanist dimension for Estonia. In this vision of urbanity, any and all fantasies about the metaphysics of urban space had been done away with, fantasies which the architects of the Tallinn school (a group with which at least Okas had been associated since the 1970s) had spoken of just a decade before. It was sober, business-like, and technicist, free of any pathos or symbolism. No doubt the refined nature of polished constructivist details and industrial materials served as compensation for earlier shoddy Soviet building technology.¹²⁷

However, when the initiators of the project, who had meanwhile reorganised the Soviet-era Estar concern into the joint-stock company Astlanda, started to look for investors for the ambitious project, their plans backfired in an unexpected way. Central European banks, having examined the project and the business plans, demanded as a prerequisite for investing that the architect be of Western origin.¹²⁸ This was sufficient grounds for neglecting the already existing design and commissioning a new one from Tõnu Altosaar, an Estonian émigré architect from Toronto. A commercially successful Canadian architect with flexible aesthetic principles, Altosaar compiled a number of imagologically varying project versions for Astlanda, among which the clients chose the one that, with its vaguely constructivist metal detailing, most – even if indirectly – resembled Okas-Lõoke's original design (ill. 7). The 70 000 square metres of the complex were to house a shopping centre on the ground floor, 236 hotel rooms, bank and stock exchange premises, a public atrium, cafés and pools. The whole

126 See Ärikeskus Tallinna. Projekt 1991 – Ehituskunst 1992, Vol. 6, pp. 43–45.

127 Andres Kurg has written about details as a value in its own in the case of the project. See Andres Kurg, *Kakskümmed kaks aastat iseolemist*

– Arhitektuuribüroo J. Okas ja M. Lõoke. Tallinn: J.Okas ja M. Lõoke, 2013, pp. 15–17.

128 Neeme Brus, *Astlanda ärikeskus tuleb*. – *Äripäev* 26 November 1991.

high-rise part was designated for rental offices, with a restaurant-cum-casino occupying the highest floor, and two floors of underground parking underneath. Preparations for construction were optimistically started by demolishing 14 wooden houses, but these activities, including rehousing the dwellers of the houses, drained the initial funds.¹²⁹ The extent of the demolitions, comparable to that planned for the Süda-Tatari district, was quite in contrast with the attitudes demonstrated in the Mere Blvd planning competition: the existing built heritage in all of these areas dated from roughly the same period but was valued quite differently based on building typologies, location and real estate development pressures. However, possible investors again deemed the Astlanda project too ambitious and its feasibility questionable, which led to remarkable cuts in the building programme and volume, and finally the lease of the plot to a different operator by the Estonian Land Board.¹³⁰

THE AMBIVALENT RELATION TO INTERNATIONAL KNOW-HOW

The case of Astlanda's change of architects is characteristic of the period's complicated relationship to the issue of foreign competence. Similarly to the end of the 19th century national awakening and subsequent establishment of the Estonian republic at the beginning of the 20th century, the processes of re-establishing independence during the transition era involved a significant amount of self-colonisation, which has been described as an important influencing and constituting factor of the Estonian culture as a part of the larger European framework.¹³¹ The models and values of the dominant European culture were voluntarily adopted and the command of these was very much taken pride in, yet the relationship was not devoid of ambivalence, as the adoption of these foreign models was seen as a prerequisite for independence. A similar mentality occurred during the transition era. Decades of Soviet occupation with restrictions on travel and communication with the Western world had generated a kind of fetishising of everything Western, ranging from expert knowledge to everyday goods, and the gradual lifting of such restrictions with perestroika led to an eagerness to make up for lost time and, often, indiscriminate gorging on Western information and experience, characterised by the

129 Pekka Erelt, Tarmo Vahter, Pealinna kullaaugud. – Eesti Ekspress 25 November 1994.
130 Astlanda krunt on renditud SRV Kinnisvara AS-le. – Eesti Ekspress 26 August 1994.

131 Tiit Hennoste, Postkolonialism ja Eesti. Väga väike leksikon. – Vikerraar 2003, No. 4/5, pp. 85–100.

general ‘rectifying’¹³² mentality of the transition era. Architects eagerly dove into international architectural life, participating in competitions, workshops and triennials, and taking advantage of every possible opportunity to expand their horizons. Starting in the late 1980s, it was also possible for Estonians to officially travel abroad to work; the destination of choice was, of course, most frequently Finland,¹³³ but some architects also temporarily practised in Germany,¹³⁴ or the more ambitious ones in the United States.¹³⁵ The new opportunity to participate in international workshops and summer schools served as an education opportunity.¹³⁶ In 1991, it was already possible to organise an international workshop in Estonia: an urban planning workshop in Otepää grew out of contacts established in the previous year in Groningen, where Leonhard Lapin and Enn Laansoo participated in an architecture festival commemorating the city’s 950th anniversary.¹³⁷ The aim of the Otepää workshop, titled *A Great Architect in a Small Town*, was to envision possible urban futures for Otepää, a small Southern Estonian town, but, even more, to introduce the format of the intensive short-term international workshop with a presentation at the end, and to establish contacts in a more informal working environment.¹³⁸ In 1992, a joint Estonian-Finnish urban planning summer school was organised in Pärnu on the initiative of the young Finnish architect Panu Lehtovuori, who wanted to get some first-hand experience of the processes of a transition environment. Lehtovuori invited the Dutch urbanist Jan Verwijnen to be the tutor of the summer school, a situation that eventually resulted in the latter’s mentorship of some of the local planners, his participation in the first planning workshop-competition of the Tallinn harbour area in 1993 and consulting on several other seaside development projects, and eventually the establishment of the urban studies degree programme at the Estonian Academy of Arts.¹³⁹ In 1990 the Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial in Tallinn, with a symposium and exhibition involving architects from the three Baltic countries, Finland, Sweden,

132 Jürgen Habermas, *What Does Socialism Mean Today?*

133 Among Estonian architects working temporarily in Finland were Kalle Vellevoog, Margit Mutso, Meeli Truu, Mai Šein, Tiivi Torim, and Andres Põime. Erki Valdre and Oona Masso have stayed there until today.

134 In 1989, Andres Alver was working at Jörg Spengler’s office in Nürnberg.

135 In 1989, Raivo Puusepp did a research trip to architecture offices in New York, Boston and Washington, including the office of James Wines.

136 For instance, Emil Urbel has admitted to the influences he received from a workshop he and Hanno Kreis attended in Switzerland in 1989, led by Mario Botta and Luigi Snozzi; Andres Alver got

many new ideas from the Architectural Association seminar that he attended in London in 1991; Urmas Muru went to study to Holbaek Kunsthojskul in 1991; interior architect Pille Lausmäe studied in Helsinki in 1991–1992.

137 Kristel Jaanus, *Taevatrepp Groningenis. Eestlaste hügelobjekt rahvusvahelisel arhitektuurifooriumil Hollandis*. – *Eesti Ekspress* 12 January 1991.

138 Enn Laansoo, *Otepää workshop – 1991*. – *Ehituskunst* 1991, Vol. 6, pp. 10–11.

139 See more: *Urban studies of the periphery: Nine Years of Urban Studies in the Estonian Academy of Arts*. – *Estonian Urbanists’ Review* U 2013, No. 14, <https://www.urban.ee/issue/en/14#>, accessed 15 August 2019.

Norway, Denmark, Iceland and the Faroe islands, served as a major networking opportunity¹⁴⁰. Occasionally, significant commissions served as the impetus for research trips with the expenses paid by the client, educating architects and clients themselves on contemporary architecture, construction organisation and business management issues of new developments. Thus, prior to planning a new development next to the Piritä Expo, Andres Alver and his office managed to persuade the client to finance a comprehensive research trip to the Netherlands, which also led to establishing contacts with Winy Maas and MVRDV; likewise, prior to the same architects' design of the Olümpia 2 high-rise hotel, the architects and the client visited inspirational examples in Helsinki, Stockholm and London.¹⁴¹ Whereas the first, remarkably early and bold attempts to invite foreign participation in local design competitions had been executed in a hasty manner and were not really fruitful – indeed, the decision to open the 1989 Mere Blvd commercial centre planning competition to Finnish and German participants was only made when the competition was already fully underway, the brief was available only in Estonian, and the whole organisation received serious criticism from the local participants¹⁴² – some later attempts were more thought-out and ambitious. Thus, the participation of Henning Larsen in the jury for the Hansapank bank and offices competition – the first foreign architect of such an internationally high level to judge Estonian competition entries¹⁴³ – was clearly a signifier of its serious ambitions and respectable outcome at a time when the city had seen more than five years of lofty visions and development projects abandoned. The choice of Larsen, one of the leading architects of Denmark, a professor of the Danish Royal School of Art and the founder of the Danish architecture magazine *Skala* and an architecture gallery of the same name, was based on the contacts established at the 1990 Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial and was also obviously motivated by the determination to receive a winning design that would represent sensible good quality architecture associated with the Nordic contemporary tradition instead of something more extravagant and lofty. The planned location for the bank headquarters was an empty plot across from the Hotel Olümpia, for which Alver Trummal Architects had designed in 1989 and 1991 two versions of the Olümpia 2 annex. Now, out of the five Hansapank projects by Alver Trummal Architects, Künnapu and Padrik, Urbel and Peil, R-Konsult (Irina Raud and Tarmo Ökva), and Siim and Kreis, the latter pair

140 For a more comprehensive analysis of NBAT, see chapter 3.

141 Interview with Andres Alver, 2 February 2015.

142 Piret Lindpere, Eesti ja Soome arhitektide pilgud Mere puiesteel. – Sirp ja Vasar 28 April 1989.

143 Karin Hallas, Viis uut Hansapanka. – Hommikuleht 10 September 1994. In terms of foreign architects, Pekka Helin had earlier been on the jury for Saksi Church; see Jüri Lass, Saksi saab kiriku. – Kodumaa 14 March 1990.

won the competition (ill. 8). Their design was based on contrasts: an anonymous office tower with a reflective façade was set on top of a heavy, faceted bank hall. The symbolic force of the first-place project, which was closed and rather detached from the street space, was preferred for example over Alver and Trummal's solution, which tried to convey an impression of a genuinely metropolitan architecture with an inner street and an atrium with high-tech imagery. The latter project was criticised for not making it clear that it was a bank building.¹⁴⁴ during the period in which the transition-era's radical openness was ending,¹⁴⁵ clearly defined expectations for methods of representing the symbolic power of money had already formed.

However, the learning process of the Estonian architects was not one-sided: in 1987 Vilen Künnapu had been invited to lecture in Oslo, and in 1992 Andres Alver served as a guest professor in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and in State University in Alexandria, USA.¹⁴⁶ The eagerness to reintegrate with the international architectural world was also manifested in increasing participation in international open architecture and planning competitions, the heyday of which were the last years of the 1980s, with enthusiasm somewhat cooling off at the beginning of the 1990s. In this regard, contact with Finnish architects was invaluable in the transference of information: the Finns informed their Estonian colleagues of competitions that had been announced, purchased and transported to Estonia the brief materials for architectural competitions, and often helped to send Estonians' competitions entries by post from Helsinki. The choice of competitions to participate in was quite random, depending on the accessibility of information and competition briefs. Naturally, the motivation for participating, demanding as it was in terms of time and resources, also differed by generation. This ranged, for example, from Okas-Lõoke and Alver-Trummal, who had clear visions for applying their skills foremost to design inside of Estonia in spite of work offers from Finland,¹⁴⁷ to the decade-younger architects Siim and Kreis, who participated in several ambitious international competitions, daringly aspiring to their 'internal world-record potential'.¹⁴⁸

At the same time, based on the excellent reputation of Estonian architecture in the Soviet Union¹⁴⁹ but even more on the international success of the architects of the Tallinn school – its group exhibi-

144 Hansapanga arhitektuurikonkurss. – Maja 1994, No. 3, pp. 60–63.

145 Hasso Krull has described this feeling of closing allegorically as 'the end of the age of unicorns', see Hasso Krull, Üksasarvikute lahkumine. – Eesti Ekspress 30 December 1994.

146 Oliver Alver, Interview with Andres Alver.

147 Aita Kivi, Üks aasta iseolemist. – Rahva Hää! 20 February 1991; interview with Andres Alver, 2 February 1991.

148 Barbi Pilvre, Pigem maailmas viimased, kui vallas esimesed. – Eesti Ekspress 19 January 1996.

149 A list of different prizes and acknowledgements awarded to the Estonian architects in the Soviet Union and internationally since the 1980s was included in Krista Kodres' article attempting at a general overview and analysis of Estonian architecture in the 1980s and in the transitional context, see Krista Kodres, Mütüdioloogiad ja teised. – Ehituskunst 1990, Vol. 5, pp. 3–15.

tions had indeed taken place in Jyväskylä, Helsinki and Rovaniemi (1984), Zürich (1988) and Stockholm (1989), and their works were reviewed in some of the main international architectural reviews: Künnapu and Padrik had successfully participated in the international exhibition *Modern Redux* in 1986 with Bernard Tschumi, Zaha Hadid, Frank Gehry and Norman Foster, not to mention their entries winning awards at the competitions of the Rovaniemi centre in 1984 (honourable mention) and the Los Angeles West Coast Gateway in 1989 (second prize, ill. 9). The self-esteem of the Estonian architects remained high. In this regard, and notwithstanding their own eagerness to learn from the West, they felt irritated and offended if their competence in dealing with changing construction realities, budgeting or management demands, or building materials was challenged. Often the problem was the clients' and investors' prejudices, including the widespread rebuke concerning Soviet-schooled architects' tendency to design spatially extravagant and lavish solutions, e.g. large atrium spaces that could not be put to commercial use.¹⁵⁰ Estonian architects were often viewed by developers as prioritising artistic content over economic feasibility.¹⁵¹ The local architects, in turn, expressed considerable discontent with the tendency to trust lesser-known international architects instead, believing that the preference for foreign architects was justified only if they belonged to the genuine international avant-garde.¹⁵² Without mentioning names, it was clear from the comments in the media that their contempt was for the designers of Tallinn Bank (Aare Saks, FFNS Arhitektid, 1997),¹⁵³ Astlanda (Tõnu Altosaar, B+H Architects, 1991), Kawe Plaza (Henno Sillaste, 1997)¹⁵⁴ and other important central city commissions. Swedish and Canadian architecture in general – due to personal relations, reaching out to Estonian émigré architects was the easiest way to include foreign competence and these were the two main countries of their origin¹⁵⁵ – was dismissed as high-quality but boring.¹⁵⁶

150 Interview with Ülo Peil, 26 February 2015.

151 Neeme Brus, Astlanda ärikeskus...

152 Jüri Okas, Sidebar comment to the article Vilen Künnapu, Soositud või tõrjutud? – Luup 14 October 1996.

153 Toomas Rein, Sidebar comment to the article Vilen Künnapu, Soositud või tõrjutud? – Luup 14 October 1996.

154 Jüri Okas, Sidebar comment...

155 For a more comprehensive account of Estonian émigré architects' projects to Estonia during and after the transition, see Jarmo Kauge, Back Home to Estonia. – Jarmo Kauge (ed.), To the New World. Estonian Architects in Toronto. Tallinn: Museum of Estonian Architecture, 2018, pp. 242–253.

156 Ike Volkov, Sidebar comment to the article Vilen Künnapu, Soositud või tõrjutud? – Luup 14 October 1996.

THE ARCHITECTS' AGENCY AND SELF-REGARD

Such comparisons with Western architects and accounts of changing realities of design practice highlight the complicated adaptation processes of the Estonian architects who had late Soviet work experience. For a start, the big state design organisations, with their bureaucratic management, proved unsuitable for the commissions of the new developers, and as soon as circumstances enabled, the more active architects started to break away from these organisations, forming independent small enterprises. The first private architecture office was started in 1989 by Toomas Rein, followed by Jüri Okas and Marika Lõoke, Ado Eigi, and Emil Urbel and Ülo Peil. In order to support the establishment of private offices, an Estonian Architectural Fund was established on the initiative of Ado Eigi that saw as its primary goal assisting private customers and mediating communication between customers and practitioners. Trying to help enliven the market, the Architectural Fund also arranged competitions for private and row houses¹⁵⁷ and called on architects to share suitable residential design projects for repeated use.¹⁵⁸ Start-up private practices registered at creative unions were initially supported by tax-exempt status,¹⁵⁹ efforts were made to enforce a licensing system to put the market in order,¹⁶⁰ and a system of fee regulations was passed,¹⁶¹ although the more liberal architects condemned this as interference in market competition.¹⁶² However, in spite of all of these efforts, the architectural commissions which had burgeoned in the late 1980s dried up when the Estonian kroon came into circulation, to the point that in some cases bureau practice became practically a hobby rather than a job.¹⁶³

The Estonian Republic's first meagre years put architects' self-confidence to the test and showed that the 'individual creator' position architects had formerly been accustomed to was no longer feasible. Critics pointed out that there was a pressing need to reinvent the architect's role as a 'postmodern project manager'.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, architects who saw their role as creative individuals refrained from a business-centric definition of their activities, refusing, for example, to advertise or to inform possible clients of their abilities in any way.¹⁶⁵

157 Noored arhitektid ja Eesti talu taassünd. – Noorte Hääl 23 January 1988.

158 Ado Eigi, Arhitektuurifond – eramuehitus. – Sirp ja Vasar 10 March 1989.

159 Aita Kivi, Üks aasta iseolemist...

160 Ignar Fjuk, Rein Murula, Teesid: projekteerimisbüroo ja professionaalsus. – Sirp ja Vasar 29 September 1989.

161 Ike Volkov, Arhitektide liidus. – Sirp 3 May 1991.

162 Nils Niitra, Arhitektide Liit ei tohiks sekkuda hinnakujundusse. Arhitektuuribüroo 'Ignar Fjuk AS'. – Hommikuleht 26 July 1993.

163 Nils Niitra, Arhitektitöö võib olla ka hobi. Arhitektibüroo „Looveer AS“. – Hommikuleht 26 July 1993; Nils Niitra. Arhitektide Liit ei tohiks sekkuda...

164 Krista Kodres, Vaikne hooaeg ja Tallinna II arhitektuuritriennaal. – Sirp 1 October 1993.

165 Nils Niitra, Rahast räägitakse selles büroos harva. Arhitektuuribüroo „Künnapu ja Padrik“. – Hommikuleht 26 July 1993; Nils Niitra, Arhitekti teenused ei ole kõigile taskukohased. Arhitektuuribüroo „Kuup“ AS. – Hommikuleht 26 July 1993; Nils Niitra, Arhitektitöö võib olla ka hobi...; Nils Niitra, Arhitektide Liit ei tohiks sekkuda...

In 1987, Vilen Künnapu gave a lofty and poetic account of the architect's role and position in society in an article that read almost like a manifesto.¹⁶⁶ He acknowledged the manifold roles and tasks an architect had in contemporary society, likening the architect to a magician, an officer or a saint. But the foundation of his account was a firm avant-gardist belief that the calling of the architect was special and the ability to orchestrate spatial processes was unique: '*[T]he architect has his dreams; he is able to visualise space and perceive with his pencil a time that is yet to come. These abilities are his lion, and they help him to overcome even the most difficult crises. The architect is an apparition. He appears among people in a white suit, magic rolls of paper under his arm, his head filled with various spaces, pictures, colours and sketches, his heart filled with sweet passion and trepidation.*'¹⁶⁷ In 1995, with mostly unbuilt and a few built commissions from the new era under his belt, and reflecting his three final years as the city architect of Tallinn, Künnapu still believed that an architect had to be somewhat eccentric, balancing the possible with the impossible.¹⁶⁸ This was not solely the position of the Tallinn school architects, which could be explained by their nostalgia for their paradoxical creative freedom in the late Soviet period. The myth of the architect-artist they had fought for so hard since the 1970s had also turned out to be convincing and appealing to the generation that came of age in the second half of the 1980s.¹⁶⁹ Indeed, Raoul Kurvitz has claimed Künnapu as his first mentor and an important influence,¹⁷⁰ Andres Siim made some of his first competition entries in cooperation with Künnapu,¹⁷¹ and Raivo Puusepp listed Jüri Okas and Toomas Rein as his main inspirations.¹⁷²

At the same time, the imagology of the independent architect-artist was contested by some other practitioners' more sober judgements of the architect's position under the new social realities. Andres Alver, replying to the harsh criticism of his 1993 restaurant in Pirita (ill. 10), in which it was accused of populism and betrayal of the ideals of the Estonian architectural avant-garde,¹⁷³ argued for a middle position between the avant-garde and commercial: '*You cannot design an opera house if the commission is for a McDonald's.*'¹⁷⁴ Asking polemically if commercial architecture is *a priori* bad, he said that the commercial

166 Vilen Künnapu, Arhitekt kui viirastus. – Sirp ja Vasar 27.3.1987.

167 Vilen Künnapu, Architect as an apparition (1987). – Vilen Künnapu, Across the Red River. Selected Texts 1972–2001. Tallinn: Tallinn College of Engineering, 2001, pp. 133–134.

168 Katrin Maack, Künnapu: Tallinn on kolgas. Padrik: Muinsuskaitse pidurdab. – Äripäev 17 May 1995.

169 Krista Kodres, Mütüdiloojad ja teised...

170 Conversation with Raoul Kurvitz, 6 December 2012. In 1989, Kurvitz wrote a portrait story of Künnapu as well, see Raoul Kurvitz, Vilen

Künnapu. – Vikerkaar 1989, No. 4, pp. 50–53.

171 Including the West Coast Gateway competition to Los Angeles, and two urban parks in Tallinn.

172 The sympathy must have been mutual as Toomas Rein also introduced Puusepp to Reima Pietilä, the contact eventually leading to an exhibition of Puusepp and others in Helsinki in 1990. Interview with Raivo Puusepp, 25 February 2015.

173 See Mart Kalm, Mis on saanud arhitektuurist? – Eesti Ekspress 21 May 1993.

174 Ann Alari, Mis saab arhitektuurist? – Sirp 20 August 1993.

architecture of the 1930s was now held in high regard. Reflecting on the legacy of the Tallinn school, Alver wondered if their self-confidence might prove a hindrance under the new working conditions, and if their strength was perhaps turning into unproductive stiffness.¹⁷⁵ In reality, the pendulum often swung to the other extreme, where the market logic and customer wishes held absolute sway, a position that in 1997 Raivo Puusepp summarised with probably the most radical statement of the decade: *'The Estonian architect is a prostitute.'*¹⁷⁶ The disruption of creative hierarchies, the proliferation of nouveau-riche clients and corrupt authorities were of course problems widely acknowledged and blamed as the main reasons for the degradation of the architecture culture during the first half of the 1990s throughout the post-Soviet sphere.¹⁷⁷

However, Andres Alver's main contribution to the discussion lay elsewhere: in general, he called for going beyond the issues of aesthetics and formal qualities to deal with more essential properties of space and urbanity. Alver's position stood out from the mainstream of Estonian architectural discourse, being more in tune with contemporary international theories stressing the primacy of the qualities of the urban space over the specific needs of a single building,¹⁷⁸ and the need to acknowledge and creatively employ the architect's limited means to direct and channel urban processes.¹⁷⁹ A new-found interest in urban design was definitely something that characterised the architecture practice of the transition era in general. This attitude differed greatly from the late Soviet period, when bureaucratic decisions sometimes overruled architects' deliberations and their abilities to affect urban developments were perceived to be limited and contingent. On the other hand, from the mid-1990s onwards, urban planning was increasingly dominated by the ambitions of and sheer pressure from real estate developers, while the city government acted rather weakly, letting the market drive processes, leading to disillusionment among professionals. In this light, the in-between transition era emerged as a window of earnest enthusiasm and self-confidence among architects and visionaries, backed by at least a willingness if not the real capability of the city government to steer the rapidly changing situation. At the same time, the Soviet-era confidence in specialist culture prevailed: the arrival of democracy did not yet mean the existence of participatory practices in planning processes or taking into account grass-roots interests (the 1989 Süda-Tatari

175 Andres Alver, Tugevusest ja nõrkusest. – Maja 1994, No. 4, pp. 72–73.

176 Andres Kurg, Raivo Puusepp: Eesti arhitekt on prostituut. – Kultuurimaa 1 October 1997.

177 See e.g. Architecture in a Post-Totalitarian Society: Round-Table Discussion Conducted by Bart Goldhoorn. – Neil Leach (ed.), Architecture

and Revolution. Contemporary perspectives on Central and Eastern Europe. London and New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 163–174. [The discussion took place in 1996.]

178 Ann Alari, Mis saab arhitektuurist?

179 Andres Alver, Tugevusest ja nõrkusest.

dwellers' poll, described above, was an anachronism partly fuelled by the nature and heritage preservation movements' interests in the same area). The belief in grand visions remained strong, advocated mainly by architects themselves in a quite modernist way. There seemed to be a strong desire to start building the space for the new society from scratch, not paying much attention to the urban layers of the beginning of the century (let alone the Soviet building heritage), a position in quite a paradoxical relationship to the strong grass-roots heritage movement and the general restitutorial mentality in the society.

IMAGOLOGICAL ISSUES: HIGH-RISES, INTERACTION CENTRES AND KIOSKS

In January 1990, Irina Raud assumed the unprecedented double position of Tallinn city architect and vice-mayor, and promptly started to use this power to create a more coherent picture of the various development ideas in the city and to try to consolidate these into possible integrated developmental visions. These efforts had a more solid foundation based on her successful participation in the 17th annual meeting of the Union of International Architects (UIA) in Montréal in 1990. Tallinn was invited to the urban planning exhibition *Salon International d'Architecture* in Milan that took place 20 September–6 October 1991.¹⁸⁰ By that time, the *de jure* independence of Estonia had existed for only a couple of months but a number of developers and speculators had already presented to the city government a plethora of business plans and projects for privatising and developing the most promising plots in the city centre. For the Milan exhibition, the city commissioned three planning proposals to integrate the already existing plans, to consider the feasibility of these proposals and to envision the future of the Maakri paper factory area, another Soviet-era closed industrial pocket half a kilometre from the central square. Ideas were commissioned from Jüri Okas and Marika Lõoke (ill. 11),¹⁸¹ and Vilen Künnapu and Ain Padrik (ill. 12),¹⁸² Andres Alver and Tiit Trummal (ill. 13),¹⁸³ all firmly established as forward-looking architects. While the latter two teams, as Tallinn school members, were well-versed in the debates of postmodernism, Alver-Trummal also admitted that the urban ideas of Rem Koolhaas

180 Interview with Irina Raud, 20 January 2015.

181 Ärikeskus Tallinna citysse. Projekt 1991. a Milano näitusese „The Future of the Cities“. Arhitektid Jüri Okas, Marika Lõoke. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 5.1.74.

182 Ärikeskus Tallinna citysse. Projekt 1991. a Milano näitusese „The Future of the Cities“.

Arhitektid Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 5.1.17.

183 Ärikeskus Tallinna citysse. Projekt 1991. a Milano näitusese „The Future of the Cities“. Arhitektid Andres Alver, Tiit Trummal. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 5.1.75.

were a strong source of inspiration.¹⁸⁴ Along these lines, all three projects featured a dense, very active, multi-level urban environment that had new commercial enterprises acting as catalysts of the development of the area but also a hefty number of cultural institutions thrown in for a vital mix of urban environment: in addition to a high-rise annex for the Academy of Arts, an art museum, exhibition centre and design studios were proposed by Alver-Trummal, and a modern art museum, clubs and a cinema by Künnapu and Padrik; many of them were also displayed as separate projects at the exhibition.¹⁸⁵ The projects accepted all of the developers' proposals – the reconstruction of the Services House at the side of Viru Square, a multifunctional Astlanda Business Centre, and the new high-rise hotels Baltlink and Olümpia 2 – integrating them into the new urban structure that reinforced these commercial aspirations by adding ever more similar new developments. Künnapu and Padrik proposed a number of residential buildings as well, including tower blocks 15–20 storeys in height. Strangely, the Rotermann Quarter, which just two years earlier had been seen as a new commercial centre of the city, was not integrated into the full visions; nor was there an effort made to bring future city-centre development to the edge of the sea.

In the projects, the new central area formed a continuous zone from the paper factory to the main square, functioning, especially in the works of Okas-Lõoke and Alver-Trummal, almost as a single megastructural development with a new traffic breakthrough in the middle and elevated walkways for pedestrians throughout. The values highlighted by Okas and Lõoke in their project description for Astlanda were more than appropriate for the city centre vision as a whole as well – *'polyfunctionality, horizontal and vertical multidimensionality, structure, density, communicability, centrality, convenience, scale and humanity'*¹⁸⁶ – although one might ask what exactly constituted the humanity of the project. Krista Kodres, in one of the few articles that attempted a generalising reflection of architectural processes of the interregnum era,¹⁸⁷ stressed that as much as symbolic monuments, the new society needed architectural humanity in the form of buildings with families, children, elderly and disabled people in mind, as well as civic architecture, e.g. museums, cafés and churches. In practice, the aspects of architectural humanity as a quality of equal opportunities for participation was not actualised much in the projects of the era, much less among such commercial designs.

184 Interview with Andres Alver, 2 February 2015.

185 Irina Raud, Tallinn-Milano-Tallinn. – Ehituskunst 1992, Vol. 6, p. 12.

186 Jüri Okas, Marika Lõoke, Business centre for Tallinn. – Ehituskunst 1992, Vol. 6, pp. 43–45.

187 Krista Kodres, Arhitektuur – kellele ja kuidas? – Sirp 4 October 1991.

Unlike the Rotermann Quarter in the 1989 Mere Blvd competition, the architectural heritage of the paper factory was demolished and, along with it, the majority of existing buildings surrounding it. Left intact from the existing built substance were only St. John's Almshouse Church and the leather factory buildings on Maakri Street. Alver-Trummal planned design studios along Maakri, while Künnapu and Padrik foresaw a modern-art museum there; as Raud asserts, most of the existing structures in the neighbourhood needed to be demolished.¹⁸⁸ The architects who in the 1970s–1980s had treasured the historical small-scale milieu as an opposition to Soviet large-scale mass housing, and had written essays extolling the metaphysical enigma of the shabby beginning-of-the-century environments,¹⁸⁹ saw no value in these any more when a new era of fast-paced, businesslike internationalism was within reach. While post-communism is said to have always hidden in itself a certain nostalgia for the communist past,¹⁹⁰ the transition period was certainly free from it, and an appreciation of the immediate past only slowly built up: after a decade, if not more. A characteristic of the transition era was the wide discrepancy between the existing immediate urban realities and the envisioned urban futures, an attempt at a giddily enormous leap. This was consistent with the great overall idealism prevailing in the society at the time, a willingness to endure a lot in the name of a brighter future to come; indeed, the most popular and widespread metaphor of the day was the proclamation of readiness to survive on potato peels in support of a brighter, independent Estonia. To reach this glimmering goal, much of the present had to be done away with: regardless of the fact that appreciation of the past, local heritage and more delicate postmodernist planning practices had served as important motivations for progressive architects in the 1980s, with the change in the social situation the goal of a profound renewal seemed to have been stronger.

In addition to the scope of the demolitions, the strong urge for a complete makeover was most strikingly manifested in the sheer height of the new buildings, and their cool, high-tech appearance, especially in the skyline image of the Okas-Lõoke proposal. The stylistic language was borrowed from early modernism, reinterpreting it in a decorative way: Okas-Lõoke especially favoured the precision of technicist details and materials as the essence of their aesthetic, as if the quality of building technology manifested in such aesthetics was a signifier of a new era in itself, contrasting with the sloppy

188 Aili Sandre, Arhitektuuri kaudu poliitikasse. – Öhtuleht 5 October 1991.

189 For the Tallinn school architects' earlier relationship to the ordinary and everyday urban environment, see Mari Laanemets, *Pilk sotsialistliku linna tühermaadele ja tagahoovidesse: happening'id,*

mängud ja jalutuskäigud Tallinnas 1970. aastatel.

– *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi / Studies on Art and Architecture* 2005, No. 4, pp. 139–172.

190 See Charity Scribner, *Requiem for Communism*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2003, pp. 63–88.

finish work of the Soviet era.¹⁹¹ But even more striking was the issue of height. During the Soviet years, two hotels of around 20 floors were built in central Tallinn, and were largely considered to be rather alien to the quiet town's milieu of predominantly two- to five-storey buildings in the central city.¹⁹² The skyline featured in the project of Okas-Lõoke was, contrastingly, filled with high-rises, appearing uniformly technicist, and presented as an integrated whole, with many of them sharing common circulation and public premises on the lower floors. Furthermore, the skyline rendering of the project omitted any existing structures of the city around the area, effectively creating the impression of a new city plunked down on a tabula rasa. The focus was on a rupture with everything already existing rather than integration or gradual transition. Consequently, the focus of a discussion evening that accompanied an exhibition of the Milan projects on display at the Tallinn Art Hall that November and December was foremost on debates over 'pseudo skyscrapers'.¹⁹³ 'Almost everyone', writes the journalist, was opposed to the Astlanda construction plan, and even the blemish of the Viru Hotel on the fringe of Tallinn's Old Town was brought up once again.¹⁹⁴ Yet the desire to add height to the city, the easiest act of visually marking the beginning of a new and Western-oriented era in the urban texture, was equally strong, especially among the professional circles, having been first manifested in the 1988 competition design for the Estonian State Institute of Arts reconstruction by Andres Alver and Tiit Trummal. The competition only demanded a general reconstruction of the already existing building in the central city, but the architects wrapped the existing volume in a new multi-layered skin and added a remarkably slender and elegant tower to the southeast corner, creating only one lofty and airy studio on each floor. A year later, the same architects, for aesthetic reasons and much to the developer's initial reluctance, opted for a high-rise when an enlargement of the existing Olümpia hotel was planned on a plot opposite the Soviet-time 'skyscraper'. Künnapu and Padrik's Baltlink hotel of 1990 was another high-rise that primarily stemmed from the architects' own constructivism-inspired aesthetic ideals, planting a skyscraper in the middle of a diverse urban milieu with buildings ranging from 1920s–1930s blocks of flats and Soviet office buildings

191 Andres Kurg, *Kakskümmend kaks aastat isolemist*, p. 15.

192 A 1968 experimental plan of central Tallinn, envisioning the replacement of much of the existing centre with high-rises sparked a lively discussion on the suitable height of Tallinn building stock in the cultural weekly *Sirp ja Vasar* over the next few years, with the majority of commentators preferring a nice and quiet, 'Scandinavian-style' centre with houses no taller than five to six floors;

at the same time the first high-rise, Viru hotel, was being completed in 1972. See more: Ingrid Lillemägi [Ruudi], 1968. aasta Tallinna kesklinna eksperimentaalprojekt – kujutusloos moodust metropolist. Bachelor's thesis, Estonian Academy of Art, Institute of Art History, 2001.

193 Kaidi Klein, *Kas Tallinnast saab varsti Manhattan?* – *Õhtuleht* 11 December 1991.

194 *Ibid.*

to a tiny baroque church and wooden slum dwellings. At the same time, Urbel and Peil's 22-storey office building for AS Ehitusinfo (1991) in the middle of an urban block between the existing high-rise Viru hotel and Designers' House on Rävala Blvd was an attempt to densify and support an already evolving logic of urban development. Alternatively, the desire for a bustling high-rise city, a genuine Manhattan in Tallinn, was projected onto Naissaar, an island 11 kilometres off the Tallinn coast, leaving the problematic existing city and the cherished Old Town intact. The idea, first presented by the businessman Sulo Muldia as speculation in a weekly newspaper in 1990,¹⁹⁵ took on a highly idiosyncratic twist in the vision project of the artist Tõnis Vint, who dedicated the following years to elaborating and propagating it and lobbying for it by all possible means.¹⁹⁶ In his daring vision, a dense new city populated with high-rises, their height varying from 400 to 1000 metres in different versions, would serve as a generator of a completely new level of social, economic and spiritual life, enabling Estonia to lead the way to a profound global renewal.

The issue of the high-rise was, obviously, an imagological, not functional one. In the most ambitious projects of the transition era, stunning visual effects were very important: the visual imagery of the time was highly charged and ever more keenly observed in a culture which during the Soviet years had developed a highly sophisticated ability to interpret the visual realm in order to decode subtle signs of allegiance or dissidence. Now the new 'Western' signs were meant as an aesthetic display of capitalism: the premise was that capitalism was a belief, an ideology, and a system that had to be 'built' in the same way as socialism was 'built'.¹⁹⁷ The importance of architectural images as conveyors of internationalism was by no means a phenomenon exclusive to the Estonian context, but rather was shared by a wide array of practitioners in the former Eastern Bloc; for instance, Lukasz Stanek has stressed the image-centeredness of Polish practitioners at the beginning of the 1990s, who often transferred to their imagologies their previous experiences in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.¹⁹⁸ Overall, neoliberalism brought about semicapitalism, a structural condition wherein signs, rather than goods or even services, are the primary output of abstract production; in this condition, the architectural project took on an enhanced importance, becoming the site of the production of 'anticipatory

195 Sulo Muldia, *Pilvelõhkujad Naissaarel. Rikas Eesti kuus aastat hiljem.* – Eesti Ekspress 19 January 1990.

196 For a more detailed account of Tõnis Vint's project, see chapter 2.

197 Sigrid Rausing, *History, Memory and Identity in Post-Soviet Estonia: The End of a Collective*

Farm. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 44–45.

198 Lukasz Stanek, *Postmodernism Is Almost All Right. Polish Architecture After Socialist Globalization.* Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2012, p. 73.

effects'.¹⁹⁹ Similarly in Estonia, the images of high-rise cities, the choice of the overall aesthetic imagery of the proposals, the graphic designs of the project presentations, and the English language used on presentation boards took on a heightened importance as signs of distinction from the previous, Soviet time. Whether it was the axonometric renderings of the Rotermann proposal, diagrams or skylines of the Tallinn central city visions for the Milan exhibition, or the drawings of Naissaar settlements, all of them were intended to invent their own visual imagery and depicted the proposed urban developments as distinct from the existing urban environment. These strategies were situated in the larger cultural tendency of 'performing' something that was anticipated or, to quote Christian Nae, *'eastern [European] reality is performative, which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed'*.²⁰⁰ However, high-rises as the prime markers of a Western imagology soon lost their appeal among the professional community (although not among real estate developers): as early as 1996, Veljo Kaasik made a statement about the inadequacy of the high-rise in the face of an urgent need to deal with creating an integrated and diverse urban space at the street level.²⁰¹

Another imagologically loaded phenomenon was the appearance of various kinds of media centres or interaction centres in the programmes and solutions of urban design projects, facilities that in a spatial sense and content-wise were mostly defined only vaguely but that definitely served to indicate new and heightened opportunities for participation in public life. It's true that media and interaction centres as platforms for creative self-realisation and idealistically reimagined public life had already appeared in the conceptual projects of Soviet postmodernism at the very end of the 1960s, such as the renderings of future cities by the groups NER (Aleksei Gutnov, Ilya Lezhava, Andrei Baburov, Stanislav Sadovski, Zoya Kharitonova and others) and Dvizhenye (Lev Nussberg, Francisco Infante, Galina Bitt, Viktor Buturlin, Vyacheslav Borodin, Lyudmila Orlova and Tanya Bystrova-Grigoryeva).²⁰² Beginning in the 1970s, several projects associated with the Tallinn school displayed a new interest in information theories and their application to spatial design, as well as a reworking of the concept of subjectivity to allow for more flexibility and freedom, including more freedom to participate in the

199 Helen Runting, Fredrik Torisson, *Managing the Not-Yet. The Architectural Project Under Semiocapitalism*. – *Architecture and Culture* 2017, Vol. 5, Issue 2 (July), pp. 213–220.

200 Christian Nae, *Retrospective Exhibitions and Identity Politics: The Capitalization of Criticality in Curatorial Accounts of Eastern European Art after 1989*. – Mária Orišková (ed.), *Curating Eastern Europe and Beyond: Art Histories through the*

Exhibition. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013, pp. 44–64.

201 Veljo Kaasik, *Tallinna tornid ja Tartu City*. – *Äripäev* 15 May 1996.

202 Andres Kurg, Mari Laanemets, *Our Metamorphic Future*. Exhibition at the Estonian Museum of Applied Arts and Design, 2012. Exhibition texts in the possession of the curators.

public sphere.²⁰³ Building upon this, the 1984 graduation project of Raoul Kurvitz, the *Tallinn Interaction Centre* (ill. 14), adapted the international model of a media centre to specific Soviet realities, with functions like ‘a club of rationalisers’ and ‘a bureau of propositions’ added to auditoria, workshops, music, television and video studios, labs, a library, a cinema, exhibition spaces, games rooms and spaces for active and passive communication. Whereas in the late Soviet era the tendency was part of a more general development towards a new subjectivity and more experimental and ambiguous workings of the public sphere, in the transition era the interaction centre as a typology began to acquire more neo-liberal characteristics, subjects being conceptualised as citizen-consumers and the spaces of the interaction centres increasingly focusing on the affective. In Siim and Kreis’s 1989 Süda-Tatari competition design, the triangular-shaped interaction centre was listed as connected to a centre of contemporary arts, including exhibition rooms, a modern dance hall, a sound and radio studio and a cinema, but was spatially detached from the rest, with the main emphasis of the project on a commercial centre with international trade outlets. The existence of an interaction centre in the project remained just a rhetorical, imagological indication, whereas the actual interaction took place in the commercial parts of the overall project.

Künnapu’s and Padrik’s *Life Centre* of 1994 (ill. 15) arranged different functions in a more interwoven manner: an institution, described as ‘the little heart of Tallinn’, and ‘a huge kinetic sculpture symbolising a new phase of life in the city,’²⁰⁴ consisting of ‘streets, stairs, terraces, shops, cafés, a restaurant, kiosks, a discotheque, office spaces, a casino, a sauna and a highly attractive market space above’²⁰⁵. As a partly open structure, the stairs and terraces would display people moving around, making them into actual parts of the complex, much like what happened at the Centre Pompidou, its ideological predecessor, which has been described as the first neo-liberal ‘festival of circulation’.²⁰⁶ According to Douglas Spencer, the Pompidou was the first and most elaborate instance of architecture where the heightened participation of people, their circulation, mobility and informality became parts of the architecture and parts of the information the building conveyed. The visitors use their freedom to participate and interact, eradicating borders between culture and information, but this performance becomes a continuous loop, an end

203 Andres Kurg, *Boundary Disruptions. Late-Soviet Transformations in Art, Space and Subjectivity in Tallinn 1968–1979*. Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Arts, 2014, pp. 70–76.

204 Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik, Elukeskus Tallinnas, projekt 1994. Künnapu & Padrik. Valitud töid. *Selected Works*. Tallinn: Arhitektuuribüroo Künnapu ja Padrik, 1999, pp. 42–43.

205 Ibid.

206 Douglas Spencer, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism. How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017, pp. 111–121.

in itself, optimising the people into prototypical subjects of neo-liberalism: consumers of culture or informationally enfranchised citizens.²⁰⁷ On a much smaller scale, Künnapu's and Padrik's *Life Centre* allowed for a similar integration of architecture's functional programme, and exposed circulating masses, and blinking informational and advertising messages, as currently exemplified in a huge Yamaha ad on top of the building. The project highlighted the peculiarities of the interregnum era: whereas its ambition was to be no less than the new heart of the city, permitting the emergence of a new type of consumer-citizen modelled according to international examples, the aim was attained by the most modest of possible means, the structure being essentially a multilayered conglomeration of temporary kiosks.

The *Life Centre* was also a manifestation of the 'kiosk economy' that flourished in all former Eastern Bloc countries starting in the late 1980s, when the liberalisation and privatisation of urban space initially gave rise to developments that resembled a hybrid of the city business centre and uncontrollable urbanisation. The city calmly accepted this process as a temporary phenomenon: by allowing it, it was possible to receive at least an overview of self-initiated retail; in addition, retail fees were a significant additional form of revenue for the city budget.²⁰⁸ Often, the kiosks were situated directly on squares, in front of buildings and other sites with important symbolic charges. In this, one can see the strategy of the banalisation of space, with the acquisition of urban space, regarded as sacrally pure in the Soviet times, through chaotic occupation.²⁰⁹ Architects' interference in the processes were clear only in their final phase, when self-formed businesses wished to expand and/or legalise their operations.²¹⁰ In Tallinn, this could be observed for instance on Viru Street, one of the main and most representative streets of the Old Town, which at the end of the 1980s was taken over by a bustling row of kiosks. The developer of these was so pleased with revenues that he tried to commission a refurbishment of them from Andres Alver, asking for a multi-storey complex of kiosks along the street.²¹¹ The architect declined for aesthetic reasons, but the solution eventually took shape as the present De la Gardie shopping mall (1999). Whereas many temporary kiosks did receive quality designs by architects and were built over the first half of the 1990s, this overall tendency of temporary use was commented upon by Jüri Okas's self-initiated conceptual project of filling in the corners of the prefabricated housing blocks in Lasnamäe and Mustamäe (ill. 16).

207 Ibid.

208 Aita Kivi, Ius linn ei tohi vaid unistuseks jääda. Intervjuu Tallinna linnakunstniku Urmas Mikuga. – Rahva Hääl 19 February 1993.

209 See Lydia Coudroy de Lille, Miléna Guest, Towards Banalization? Trans-Forming the Legacies of the Post-Socialist City. – Alfrun Kliems, Marina

Dmitrieva (eds.), *The Post-Socialist City. Continuity and Change in Urban Space and Imagery*. Berlin: Jovis, 2010, pp. 34–51.

210 Andres Kurg, *Kakskümmend kaks aastat iseolemist*, p. 15.

211 Interview with Andres Alver, 2 February 2015.

The spaces left empty by five-storey blocks of flats' adjacent corners were to be populated by light-construction annexes made with modern materials – retail kiosks, shopping centres, video-rental shops and halls, saunas, medical offices, art galleries, fire and rescue services, and churches – commenting on the laissez-faire development of the urban environment. As Okas said, the goal was '*not to repair the irreparable architectural appearance of the Soviet districts, but rather to meet social demands and enliven everyday life*'.²¹² Okas's corner solutions, which emphasised their temporary nature by using advertisements featuring cigarettes, alcohol and 'complex-free ladies', as the prostitutes were called in newspaper ads, can be seen as incorporating the changing landscape of public visual imagery directly into architecture, elevating the banal to the status of camp, a strategy exceptionally vibrant in the contemporary art inspired by the visual language of the early 1990s advertising world as well.

ARCHITECTURE AS THE EMBODIMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Whereas a remarkable part of the design practice of the transition era involved coming to terms with new functional programmes, changing or even shattering rules and regulations, and speculative demands of commercial clients, this did not mean that architecture as an art of representation had become completely obsolete: expectations of conveying symbolic messages through architecture had not disappeared. A number of projects may be seen as struggling to give shape to a new national self-consciousness, to combine the expectations for national authenticity with aspirations for liberality and openness. Among these, the issue of the representation of Estonianness surfaced as the most prominent in the unbuilt projects for new churches, such museums as the Estonian National Museum and Estonian Art Museum, and in the case of the Estonian pavilion for the 1992 Universal Exposition of Seville.

One of the first tendencies to be highlighted was the revival of religiousness, which came with unexpected force in the late 1980s, and the large number of architectural competitions for new churches and congregation buildings that sprang up. Religion was in disfavour throughout the entire Soviet period and thus had the reputation of

212 Explanatory letter of the design, 1993. Archive of Jüri Okas.

being oppositional. Now, nationalist mindsets merged fluidly with rediscovered Christianity. The period 1987–1991 can be called an era of a religious boom, in Estonia and in other countries of the former Soviet bloc: after the end of Marxist ideology and before any clearly outlined party positions or consistent value systems were formed, the only alternative anchors for future visions were national and religious ideologies.²¹³ A similar convergence of nationalist and religious impetus occurred in Poland and Lithuania, but there Catholicism prevailed due to its strong traditions, whereas Estonia's mainly Protestant background was looser and allowed for more varied interpretations and manifestations in relation to social ends. It was a two-way process: people flocked to different congregations, resulting in massive numbers of new baptisms and record participation in various religious ceremonies and, at the same time, members of the clergy entered enthusiastically into public life, taking part in the activities of the civil society movement, including the heritage protection movement, the National Front, the Estonian Congress, and debating in media and the public sphere. Organised religion as a form of oppositional activity was perhaps best and earliest embodied in the *Elu Sõna (Word of Life)* congregation, founded in 1986. Its ideology was unusually aggressive and explicitly mingled religious and political aims: prayer was understood as spiritual warfare against any kind of oppression, including communism,²¹⁴ and the Soviet Union was rendered as the Empire of Evil, as described in the *Book of Revelation*.²¹⁵ The popularity of *Elu Sõna* lent some of its political flare to the revival of other confessions as well, most notably Lutherans as the traditional congregation, but a newfound public activity was also enjoyed by Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists and others. They all needed spaces for congregation work and missionary activities, and the establishment of new religious spaces was a powerful sign of new personal freedom and a change in the ideological pillars of society. A similar boom of new churches occurred in Poland, where it took place somewhat earlier, at the beginning of the 1980s, and it had more ambivalent references as an officially approved development with intense nationalistic undertones.²¹⁶

Of all the various religious strains, only the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation endeavoured for conscious architectural representation by organising open architectural competitions. The wave began with a competition for the Haljala Cemetery chapel in

213 Lea Altnurme, *Kristlusest oma usuni. Uurimus muutustest eestlaste religioossuses 20. sajandi II poolel*. Doctoral dissertation at the University of Tartu, Department of Religious Studies, 2005, p. 79.

214 See Tiina Eier, *Elu sõna koguduse algusest ja tõöst Eestis, eriti Tartus*. – *Mäetagused* 2000, No. 14, pp. 57–61.

215 Ringo Ringvee, *Riik ja religioon nõukogudejärgses Eestis 1991–2008*. Doctoral

dissertation at the University of Tartu, Department of Religious Studies, 2011, p. 36.

216 See more: Lidia Klein and Alicja Gzowska, *One Size Fits All: Appropriating Postmodernism in the Architecture of Late Socialist Poland*. – Vladimir Kulic (ed.), *Second World Postmodernisms. Architecture and Society under Late Socialism*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019, pp. 98–110.

1988, which was organised by the Viru Kolkhoz and received 29 entries. The fact that the organisation of the Haljala competition was a noteworthy initiative that received wide social response was reflected in the cultural weekly *Sirp ja Vasar's* (*Hammer and Sickle*) annual prize, which normally bestowed recognition on finished buildings.²¹⁷

The award-winning designs of the Haljala Chapel broadly established a self-image acceptable to the Lutheran Church: the practicality and minimalism of Leonhard Lapin's first prize entry (ill. 17) and Emil Urbel's second prize design triumphed over the expressionist visions of Raoul Kurvitz and Urmas Muru (ill. 18). The following competitions for churches in Saksi (ill. 19), Palivere (ill. 20), Harkujärve and Sillamäe (among others) confirmed the fact that the nationalist-religious space was to be austere and contemporary in form, not looking back to the religious past but ideally creating links with a very generalised understanding of pre-war modernism. The appeal of white boxy neo-functionalism was twofold: harking back to the values of the pre-war Estonian republic, a connotation that had been important to the architects of the Tallinn school in the 1970s, and representing the values of transparency, honesty, dynamics and pragmatism, which were highly compatible with the new social and business elite of the transition.²¹⁸ In addition to design language, pragmatism dominated the overall approach of the new religious buildings; for instance, in a 1993 competition to re-work Tallinn's Freedom Square, Siim and Kreis had no problem with proposing to demolish St. John's Church to replace it with a new town hall-cum-church in a joint economic box. Pragmatism definitely had its say among the choices of the winning projects as well, as funding of the optimistically initiated church projects was meagre and often resulted in being forced to give up the whole idea of construction. Nevertheless, some phenomenological deliberations may be detected in the attempts to convey a traditional feeling of Estonian sacral space, vividly summarised in a statement by Emil Urbel, one of the most prolific church designers of the time: '*It definitely has to be cold in there. So cold that you can see your breath.*'²¹⁹

The most successful participants in church competitions were, for the most part, Urbel, Peil and Ausing, and Siim and Kreis, a group whose architectural credo can be tentatively related to the concept of 'critical internationalism' minted by Jean-Louis Cohen.²²⁰ With this term, which paraphrases Kenneth Frampton's 'critical regionalism',

217 Tiina Käesel, Tānavusest arhitektuuri-preemiast. – *Sirp ja Vasar* 6 January 1989.

218 Mart Kalm, Valged kastid – edu-Eesti arhitektuur. – *Maja* 2003, No. 4, pp. 28–31.

219 Emil Urbel, Ajad ja majad. – *Aja pulss* 1991, No. 9, pp. 25–26.

220 See Jean-Louis Cohen, *The Search for a Critical Practice*. – Casabella 1996, No. 630–631, pp. 20–27.

Cohen was referring to architecture that did not see local needs as being in conflict with the internationalisation of markets. Instead of a postmodernist yearning for the past, the 'critical internationalists' supported returning to modernism itself, although without any utopianism, sometimes also slipping into illusions, simplifications and even deformations. The theory fever was over; the intellectualisation of architecture was not something worth fighting for. Above all, this meant adapting (albeit at times disagreeably or cynically) to market demand, while at the same time believing in the possibility of critical practice on a smaller scale, not really challenging the conditions of global modernity, but commenting on or mildly challenging its actual programmes, technologies, and methods of use. Naturally, such an architectural position carried the danger of losing to the neo-liberalist developments of the 1990s, and the tendency to keep away from politicisation among intellectuals, perhaps signalling some weariness after the turbulent 'national awakening' times, made this even more likely.²²¹

However, when the newly established republic needed an official 'architectural face' for the 1992 Universal Exposition in Seville, it was the 'old guard' of the Tallinn school who were invited to the competition and not the younger proponents of critical internationalism. The invitation to participate in this global event came in autumn 1991, a few months after the official proclamation of independence, so the selection and preparation time was tight, eventually leading to discarding the idea of building a pavilion at all, confining efforts to an indoor exposition in a rented space instead. But initially, in late 1991, propositions for a free-standing pavilion were requested from Vilen Künnapu (ill. 21), Leonhard Lapin (ill. 22), Jaan Ollik and Jüri Okas (ill. 23). The deadline was extremely short, only ten days for the initial solution, and a month for detailed plans, probably explaining the sketchiness of the designs.²²² To greater or lesser extents, the world Expo context tempted them to seek intersections between contemporary architecture and national symbolism: the sea and ships, grain fields, limestone, oil shale, wood and glacial boulders.²²³ This was quite in tune with their well-earned position as postmodernist myth-makers, summarised by Vilen Künnapu as early as 1977 as the intention to create a myth and a narrative capable of enfolding the future user's dreams and illusions.²²⁴ This was reiterated in 1989 as an obligation to aim at genuine design undisturbed by international

221 See also, Barbi Pilvre, *Eesti intellektuaale kammitseb poliitikakartus*. – *Hommikuleht* 29 October 1994.

222 Krista Kodres, *Eesti paviljoni katse Sevillass*. – *Ehituskunst* 1992, Vol. 6, p. 18.

223 1992. aasta Sevilla maailmanäituse Eesti paviljoni konkursiprojektid. *Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM* 5.4.1–5.4.4.

224 Vilen Künnapu, *Keskcond läbi müüdi*. – *Sirp ja Vasar* 12 August 1977.

trends and commercial expectations of ever new architectural fashions, and based on Nordic myths instead.²²⁵ It was a design strategy that repeatedly earned Künnapu international recognition: the Rovaniemi Arctic centre competition design from 1984 (design team: Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik and Lennart Meri) received special recognition, was published in the Finnish *Arkkitehti* and the British *Architectural Design*, and was chosen for the *Modern Redux* exhibition in New York; the entry for the prestigious West Coast Gateway competition in Los Angeles in 1988 (design team: Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik and Andres Siim, ill. 9) won second prize, and the Nuuk Cultural Centre competition entry for Greenland in 1993 (design team: Vilen Künnapu and Ain Padrik) received media coverage in spite of not winning any awards. For Seville, Künnapu's open-structure pavilion was much less sculptural than the above-mentioned grand projects but embodied those myths in several elements working as signifiers: a mass of stacked limestone, a dolomite column and a water pond, an oak tree and a granite boulder used to defend the Estonian government building during the 1991 putsch,²²⁶ and more abstract, universal symbols, such as a glass cylinder and a steel sphere (ill. 21). Altogether, this made for a heaping abundance that was deemed characteristic of his perestroika-era designs, where the subtle ambivalence of 1970s projects had given way to excessive playfulness and symbolic overload, signifying that nothing was forbidden or taboo any more.²²⁷

Leonhard Lapin's solution (ill. 22) was even more literal, in a shape reminiscent of a ship, surrounded by blue concrete 'waves', with a 15-metre blunt prow topped by an additional four-metre mast. As the pavilion was to be built on site, handcrafted of wood, the building process itself would have been presented as a continuous performance, poetically if simplistically alluding to Estonia as a state in the process of being created. The state of being in flux was even more stressed by Jüri Okas, who manifested this in a more sober manner, highlighting the ambivalence of the transition: 'During the construction or demolition of every structure or building, it is, at a certain point, at the stage where it is hard to define whether it is being constructed

225 Vilen Künnapu, Kristlaste arhitektuur, paganate arhitektuur. Ettekanne Piranos (1989) / Architecture of the Christians, Architecture of the Pagans. A Presentation in Pirano, 1989. – Vilen Künnapu, Üle punase jõe. Valitud tekste 1972–2001. / Across the Red River. Selected Texts 1972–2001. Tallinn: Tallinn College of Engineering, 2001, pp. 135–139.

226 On 19–21 August 1991, there was an attempted coup d'état in the Soviet Union with the aim of halting the disintegration processes of the union. Armoured troops were also sent to the three Baltic States to recapture power. For the

defence of the Supreme Soviet building on Toompea castle from tanks, large boulders were brought to the streets leading towards the castle. See more: Kaks otsustavat päeva Toompeal. 19.–20. august 1991 (dokumente ja mälestusi). Koostanud 20. augusti klubi ja Riigikogu Kantselei. Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, 1996.

227 Andres Kurg, Werewolves on Cattle Street. Estonian Collective Farms and Postmodern Architecture. – Vladimir Kulic (ed.), Second World Postmodernisms. Architecture and Society under Late Socialism. London: Bloomsbury, 2019, p. 122.

or demolished: the same can be said of society.²²⁸ The competition entry found an adequate form for this as a stratified, seven-storey construction of concrete, cables and webbing, which was deconstructed by a 30-metre steel ramp cutting into it diagonally. It simultaneously embodied the utmost ambition and a yearning for the future, as well as complication and impediment. It commented upon the discrepancy of international aspirations and homespun results due to underdevelopment and lack of means: the architecture of deconstructivism that the project alluded to would imply high-tech materials and construction means, but the pavilion mixed steel details with rough unfinished timber and chicken wire, revealing the ad hoc resourcefulness of the ongoing processes as well as the inevitable scarcity of material means. However, it still included some Estonian symbolism in the form of limestone. Of the four entries, Jaan Ollik's was the least symbolically overloaded, with a long processual ramp leading to the main pavilion space underground, and a simple structure on top of it resembling a sailing yacht.

With the Seville Universal Exposition, the obligation of national representation came too fast for thoroughly thought-out strategies to develop, and the naivety of the projects can be explained by the immediacy of the tumultuous political events and the lack of experience of similar international events. Indeed, it has been observed that the phenomenological approach had a high appeal among many architectures of post-socialist Eastern and Central Europe, adding nationalistic undertones to the yearning to embody national and domestic values in representative architecture.²²⁹ Of the four Seville projects, the winning design by Okas (ill. 23) was the most able to maintain a critical distance from expectations for simplistic celebratory solutions, emphasising the in-betweenness and the inevitable disintegration inherent in the construction of the new. Due to a lack of time and money, however, the ambition of building a pavilion was soon discarded and was replaced with an exhibition by the artist Ando Keskküla in a rented pavilion with a solution hybridising natural heritage and technological innovation in a quite lavish, even overburdened way. For some commentators, Keskküla's 'agro-cyber' style established the foundation layer for the only conceivable manner of national self-advertisement in that decade,²³⁰ but the mix of natural

228 Jüri Okas, 1992 Sevilla Universal Exposition competition project Avenida 4, 1991. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 5.4.4.

229 Neil Leach, *The Dark Side of the Domus. The Redomestication of Central and Eastern Europe*. – Neil Leach (ed.), *Architecture and Revolution*, pp. 150–161.

230 Anders Härm, *Šamanism ja meditatsioon: "natuurpoeesia" 1990. aastate eesti videos*. – Üibed üheksakümnedad. Probleemid, teemad ja

tähendused 1990. aastate eesti kunstis. Tallinn: Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2001, p. 152.

Actually, the valorisation of limestone and investing the material with nationalist significance may be taken back to the 1980s already when Mart Kalm coined the term 'limestone functionalism' to denote a significant tendency in the work of 1930s Estonian architect Herbert Johanson, see Mart Kalm, *Herbert Johanson: paefunktsionalism*. – *Ehituskunst 1984*, Vol. 4, pp. 58–63.

references and contemporary technology had certainly manifested itself in the architectural competition designs preceding it.

Actually, the approach also resonated with another cultural tendency that mainly manifested itself in literature: that of ethno-futurism, surfacing initially in 1988–1989. The idea of the movement, as characterised in their 1994 manifesto, was to ‘connect the two extremes of culture: to make the indigenous meet the cosmopolitan and urban’.²³¹ Ludic and at times parodic in their approach, the ethno-futurists were critical of ‘official’ nationalism, with its Christian undertones, and advocated a turn to more ancient, more indigenous sources of culture, at the same time honouring digital means of communication, such as the Internet, declaring it to be the manifestation of the future.²³² Deemed a peculiarly peripheral and provincial modification of postmodernism,²³³ ethno-futurism employed ambivalence, irony, anti-form and a mix of the comical and heroic. More than in the Seville pavilions, this sensibility may be observed in the winning design of the Estonian National Museum competition (1994) by the then very young architects Ra Luhse and Tanel Tuhhal (ill. 24).²³⁴ It was probably the only occasion during the transition era when a competition was held for a building explicitly defined as symbolic on such a scale. Selected for the museum’s location was a relatively narrow plot on the edge of Tartu’s Vallikraavi moat, in spite of the fact that Tartu’s sparse city centre also needed an urban dimension a public building would have provided: the last attempt to modernise the Tartu city centre had been made by a large-scale conference-hotel and business centre next to the Vanemuise Theatre, designed by Alver Trummal Architects in 1988 but never built. Nevertheless, now the Estonian National Museum competition received thirty entries and was considered a very successful undertaking overall.²³⁵ Luhse & Tuhhal’s winning entry, *Põhja konn* (*The Frog of the North*’, referring to an artificial folk story from the end of the 19th century national awakening era), was based on the form of an ancient stone hatchet, combining it with constructivist details and forms. The National Museum competition seemed to release all kinds of post-modernist imaginations: many of the competition entries were plagued by an overflowing storytelling quality, striving to use architectural form to reference the contour of the map of Estonia, a tepee, or the

231 Kauksi Ülle, Andres Heinapuu, Sven Kivisildnik, and Maarja Päril-Lõhmus, *Etno-Futurism as a Mode of Thinking for an Alternative Future*. Transl. Sven-Erik Soosaar. <http://www.suri.ee/etnofutu/efleng.html>, accessed 24 September 2019.

232 See more: Tiit Hennoste, *Ethno-Futurism in Estonia*. – *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* 2012, Vol. 2 Issue 1, pp. 253–285.

233 Piret Viies, *The Phenomenon of*

Ethnofuturism in Contemporary Estonian Literature. <http://www.suri.ee/etnofutu/viies.html>, accessed 24 September 2019.

234 Eesti Rahva Muuseumi uue hoone konkursitöö „Põhja konn“, I preemia (asendiplaan, korruste plaanid, lõiked, vaated). Arhitektid Tanel Tuhhal, Ra Luhse. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 5.4.18.

235 Margus Koot, Üks kordaläinud arhitektuurivõistlus. – *Maja* 1994, No. 1, pp. 34–37.

mythical axis mundi.²³⁶ However, it seems this was exactly what the jury was looking for, asking for some kind of genuine architectural language that would be the museum's 'very own', on equal footing with its symbolic role, at the same time referring to the yielding neo-functional and neo-constructivist designs as interpreters of 'fashions'.²³⁷ Pursuing some kind of a consolidating gesture that would lead back to indisputable original springs is indeed characteristic of the construction of the majority of post-socialist societies' national narratives.²³⁸ However, this belief in the constancy and distinctness of ethnic identity was more characteristic of the period of 'ethno-symbolism', the 1970s–80s; the developments of the transition era gave way to an understanding of ethnic identity as an impetus for games and transformations.²³⁹ The *Põhja konn* design seemed to stem from exactly this kind of eagerness to play freely with the symbolic content without depending on a single exclusive interpretation: as the authors said, the project referred to ancient lore but it remained for the viewer to decide whether it resembled an axe, a ship, a bird or a fish.²⁴⁰ The narrative was ambiguous and amenable to many interpretations.

CONCLUSION

While the above cases are just a fraction of the many unbuilt architectural projects of the transition era, they highlight some of the processes most characteristic of the time: the wide discrepancy between the urban realities and projected environments of the new social organisation, a desire to manifest the new with little regard for Soviet or earlier 20th century heritage, a newfound enthusiasm for urban planning and a willingness to tackle the bigger scale. They also testify of the strong importance of imagological considerations and an underlying belief that the new social order had to be consciously 'designed', which may be seen as a continuity of earlier postmodern design strategies and their relatively smooth integration with neo-liberal expectations. Imagological aspects also play a significant role in issues of national representation in architecture, ranging from earnest symbolism to parodic playfulness. The architects persisted in believing in architecture as a realm of expert knowledge and high art, maintaining a remarkably high self regard, whereas the budding civic activism, so influential in some other social realms, seems to have had relatively little impact on urban issues. At the same time

236 Eesti Rahva Muuseumi arhitektuurikonkursi projektid. Estonian National Museum, ERM EJ 584.

237 Ibid.

238 Epp Annus, *Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late Socialism*.

239 Kajar Pruul, *Etnosümbolism ja etnofuturism. Teese revolutsioonigaegsest kirjandusest*. – *Vikerkaar* 1995, No. 12, pp. 58–62.

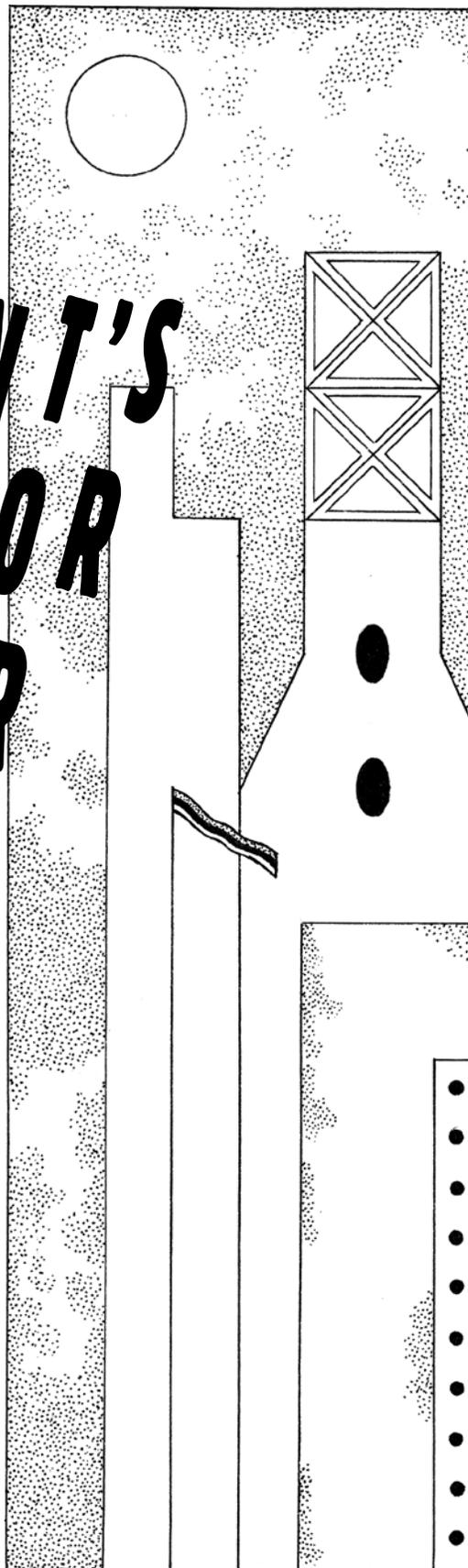
240 Silja Joon, *Põhja konn ei kerki nõiaväel*. – *Postimees* 4 March 1994.

the relationship to the influx of international know-how remains problematic and there is not much coherence in ways of appropriating international trends and novel design philosophies, with the narrative and phenomenological impulses of postmodernism, the poetics of neo-expressionism and the pragmatism of 'critical internationalism' employed in simultaneous and intersecting ways. The space produced in these projects was an eclectic mix of tasteful modernism perceived as local tradition and citations of international neo-constructivism with a heightened attention paid to details and materials as references of contemporaneity and affluence. It was a space that certainly foresaw a more intense public participation than architecture of the previous era, yet this public space was imagined in a pragmatist and primarily commercial terms – compared to some of the most daring spatial propositions of the 1970s, a certain utopian dimension seems to have been lost, and new environments were being imagined not for a profound transformation of human experience but rather for a joyous and affluent everyday existence that is tangible and soon within reach.

Unlike with the preceding late Soviet postmodern period, the unbuilt designs of the interregnum era cannot be labelled as 'paper architecture': the social shifts no longer provided a reason, or time, for purely conceptual considerations. The visions were at least hypothetically meant for actual execution, and while architects admitted to themselves that the likelihood of the structures' realisation was slim, the most dizzying of developments could nevertheless present themselves. While the architects of the preceding period were stimulated by the 'unmotivated deed' – a creative energy that surfaced seemingly without reason and without actual application²⁴¹ – the interregnum era opened up the opportunity and enthusiasm for testing out design solutions that could actually be applied to a profound change in the material and social environment.

241 Liivi Künnapu, *Konstruktiivisuus ja destruktiivisuus Viron arkkitehtuurissa*. – *Arkkitehti* 1989, No. 7, p. 33.

**UTOPIAN
SPACE:
TÕNIS VINT'S
VISION FOR
NAISSAAR
ISLAND**



Somewhat surprisingly, the grandest vision for a new kind of urban and architectural space during the Estonian transition period did not emerge from an architect but from the graphic artist Tõnis Vint. Whereas throughout the transition period architects were preoccupied with a wide variety of commissions, competition projects and self-initiated design proposals, ranging from architectural objects to urban plans encompassing large areas of central Tallinn, none of these demonstrated utopian radicalness. In contrast to the late Soviet period, when the political and bureaucratic restrictions and limited means for self-realisation prompted alternative visions or critical conceptual and fantasy projects, the promises brought about by the rapid social and economic changes of the transition rendered such work much less appealing. Paradoxically, while one might expect the social changes to ignite in architects an urge to propose really radical visions for the new society in the making, the 'catching up with the West' mentality prevalent in the whole society seems to have also provided readily existing models for architecture and urban space, and somewhat hindered imagining a profoundly alternative kind of space.

In this context, the proposal by Vint stands out as a genuinely utopian one, in that he advocated a completely new urban settlement on a former military base on Naissaar island ten kilometres north of Tallinn. Although Vint was a graphic artist, his project certainly went beyond the realm of visual art. This was underscored by its large-scale media coverage and supported by the close intellectual relationship between Vint and the local architectural community. In Estonia, architecture was taught in the State Art Institute in close proximity to art, leading to an active and mutually influential relationship between the disciplines. In this context, Vint occupied a special position as the central figure of an artistic circle, an informal school where many members were architects. As early as the 1970s Vint was a close friend of many members of the Tallinn school and contributed significantly to their intellectual discussions. Towards the end of the 1980s, several members of his circle formed the Etteaim group (the name means 'prophecy' or 'prognosis' in Estonian), including many subsequently very prolific architects, such as Ülar Mark, Andres Ojari, Markus Kaasik, Ralf Tamm and Angela Orgusaar.²⁴² It has been argued that the aesthetic preference in the 1990s for black minimal forms (as exemplified in the work of Andres Siim and Hanno Kreis) or geometric references (as in the designs of Andres Alver in the

242 Tõnu Kaalep, Tõnis Vint, Ralf Tamm ja rahvuslik arhitektuur. – Eesti Ekspress 11 March 2004.

1980s) can be attributed to Vint's influence on architects.²⁴³ Moreover, Vint had ample opportunities to present his works and wide-ranging conceptual writings in the architectural review *Ehituskunst*, edited by Leonhard Lapin from 1991 onwards, and was the sole local speaker at the 1996 Nordic-Baltic architecture triennial. All of the above show that the architectural ideas and conceptions of Vint were far from isolated from the local architecture scene, and his vision for Naissaar island was proposed in a conscious attempt to engage in local discussions about architecture and urban space, and to promote the discussion of a whole new, utopian level: 'utopian' here being a broad term for the visionary realm of ideal social organisation.

NAISSAAR: THE CITY OF THE FUTURE

Tõnis Vint was one of the most progressive artists of late Soviet Estonia and in the 1960s–1970s established himself as a prolific visual artist and graphic designer, and one of the spiritual leaders of a generation of artists and architects who aesthetically and socially revolted against the canons of Soviet life. His practice was characterised by an astonishing number of interests and inspirations, ranging from pop art and art nouveau to Baltic and Celtic folk art, to aesthetic and semiotic systems of China, Japan and India. From the late 1960s onwards, Vint's flat was a centre for regular meetings of Tallinn's artists and intellectuals, with frequent visits from alternative artists from Moscow and elsewhere, becoming an important site for discussions and exchanges of information and creative impulses that by the end of the 1980s had evolved into something of an alternative education for a devoted group of disciples. Whereas in the late Soviet era Vint's own artistic production had mainly focused on two-dimensional art and graphic design, the social transformations related to the dissolving of the Soviet bloc and restoration of independence of Estonia inspired him to pursue projects aimed at a large-scale transformation of the spatial environment and a total renewal of society. Although the period of transition generated an abundance of urban and architectural visions aimed at conceptualising and envisioning space for the new society in the making, Vint's vision for Naissaar was clearly the boldest of them.²⁴⁴ The ambition of the project was demonstrated by its architectural innovation, its scope of conceptual references and by the media chosen for its presentation.

243 Leonhard Lapin, Tõnis Vint ja tema ajatus. The Timelessness of Tõnis Vint. – *Ehituskunst* 2002, Vol. 33/34, p. 8; Tõnu Kaalep, Tõnis Vint, Ralf Tamm ja rahvuslik arhitektuur...

244 For a more comprehensive overview of conceptual and unrealised urban and architectural projects of the era, see chapter 1, and Ingrid Ruudi, *Ehitamata*.

Vint's vision for Naissaar consisted of a series of drawings, accompanied by four essays explaining and promoting the idea that were published in specialist media, such as the Estonian architectural review *Ehituskunst*,²⁴⁵ as well as in general media, such as the very popular weekly newspaper *Eesti Ekspress*,²⁴⁶ itself an icon of the era, and the popular monthly magazine *Elu Pilt*.²⁴⁷ In addition, the project was thoroughly introduced, including lengthy commentaries by Vint himself, in the environmental show *Osoon* on national television in 1994,²⁴⁸ and a year later a full feature called *The City of the Future* was dedicated to it on the same national broadcast channel.²⁴⁹ Other essays from the same period dealing with large-scale urban visions re-imagining the Tallinn waterfront may be seen as a continuation of these ideas.²⁵⁰ Vint continued to be preoccupied with the issues of large-scale urban visions and the issue of high-rise buildings as the generator of social, economic and spiritual growth for at least a decade. This is attested to by his project for redesigning Freedom Square (1998),²⁵¹ followed by his participation in the freedom monument competition on the square in 2001 (together with Ralf Tamm and Angela Orgusaar, they won a purchase prize), a visionary proposal for establishing a new academic and research complex for Tallinn in Lasnamäe (2003),²⁵² as well as by his written articles²⁵³ and a lecture given at the third Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial in 1996.

The central idea of his project for Naissaar was to establish there an international centre for technology, culture and environmental research. The uninhabited island off the coast of Tallinn had been devastated by its 50-year use as a Soviet military base. With different drawings testing out the architectural solution, the new settlement was to form a cluster of buildings on each end of the island, with each cluster rising to a soaring height of almost one kilometre. In tune with Vint's previous practices of spiritual art, the extraordinary height of the Naissaar settlement was to act as an accumulator of 'cosmic energy' and a device for urban acupuncture, healing the trauma of the Soviet past. It is most remarkable that the project was first introduced in a widely circulated print medium, followed by TV broadcasts, and

245 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar – tulevikuvision. *Ehituskunst* 1995, Vol. 11, pp. 4–10.

246 Tõnis Vint, Kas Naissaar suudaks päästa Eesti tippteaduse ja kõrgkultuuri? – *Eesti Ekspress* 16 April 1993; Tõnis Vint, Naissaar. Kaks teed tulevikku. – *Eesti Ekspress* 12 January 1995.

247 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar ja Tallinna geomantiline selgroog. – *Elu Pilt* 1993, No. 4, pp. 22–24.

248 *Osoon*. *Elu võimalikkusest Naissaarel*. ETV 10 January 1994, <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/osoone-elu-voimalikkusest-naissaarel>

249 *Tuleviku linn*. Directed by Mariina Mälik. ETV 1995.

250 Tõnis Vint, Suur vabanemine surmakaarest. – *Hommikuleht* 29 October 1994; Tõnis Vint, Mustast surmainglist kuldseks päikseingliks. – *Eesti Ekspress* 21 October 1994.

251 Tõnis Vint, Vabaduse väljak. *Vabadussammas*. Kolm õnneväravat. – *Eesti Ekspress* 20 February 1998.

252 Tõnis Vint, Reval University City. Tallinna uus ülikoolikeskus. – *Eesti Päevaleht* 22 November 2003.

253 E.g. Tõnis Vint, Väravatornid. *The Gate Towers*. – *Ehituskunst* 2000–2001, Vol. 29/30, pp. 83–84; Tõnis Vint, Suur draakon „Nord-East Express“. – *Ehituskunst* 2001/2002, Vol. 31/32, pp. 82–95.

only in 1996, four years after the initial idea, as a series of drawings, exhibited in the exhibition of Studio 22, a group comprised of Vint and his disciples focused on the ideas of future urban developments.²⁵⁴ This indicates a clear intention of stepping out of the confines of the artistic sphere. Notwithstanding the project's utopian character, Vint clearly aimed to relate it to the actual social and economic context and to enter into a dialogue with the public.

The very first exposition of the idea in a polemical article published in *Eesti Ekspress* (ill. 25) set the tone: as the title '*Would Naissaar be Able to Save Estonia's Top Science and High Culture?*' suggests, the aim of the project was to establish something of extraordinary quality that would impact the development of the whole state. However, the article was quite unspecific in terms of the actual spatial structure or functional programme of Naissaar; instead, the text dealt with geomantics, introduced as a feng shui secret science, an ancient system for making decisions concerning urban planning principles. A couple of years earlier, Vint had publicly introduced geomantics as a psycho-geometric system that would form a basis for a spiritual awakening through art, presupposing a thorough understanding of the principles of nature, visual manifestations of the cycle of germination and degeneration, imagery stemming from the unconscious, and knowledge of secret numerical systems.²⁵⁵ According to Vint's geomantic analysis, Naissaar was the 'energetic Mother' of Estonia, and Naissaar's fate directly influenced Estonia's development. Thus building a new settlement on Naissaar would be the key to future developments in the country.²⁵⁶

In the article, Vint set out to perform a geomantic analysis of the whole of Tallinn, arriving at the conclusion that the Soviet-era residential areas of prefabricated tower blocks at Õismäe and Lasnamäe were positioned 'absolutely incorrectly' and were thus a failure.²⁵⁷ Instead, further urban development should be concentrated on the axis of Naissaar island, Ülemiste lake, the Viimsi peninsula and other coastal areas. The experience of Soviet-era urbanism would be negated and left behind, so that the new era would be based not on monotonous architecture, inadequate social spaces or inappropriate ideology, but on primeval and thus seemingly universal and indisputable spatial forces. The rhetoric used was unprecedentedly strong: Vint presented the necessity and inevitability of building the settlements on Naissaar as a fate that had already been decided gener-

254 The exhibition *Tornid ja väravad [Towers and Gates]* took place at the Estonian National Library 10–27 September 1996.

255 Tõnis Vint, *Hermetria ja rühm 22*. – Sirp ja Vasar 3 February 1989.

256 Tõnis Vint, *Naissaar ja Tallinna geomantiline...*

257 Tõnis Vint, *Kas Naissaar suudaks päästa Eesti tippteaduse ja kõrgkultuuri?*

ations ago and could not be disputed, stating: '*Building up Naissaar is not a utopia: it is a fact. It was decided centuries ago by the first settlers of Tallinn, and the day is near when we will see it reaching the heights. It is an inevitability, based on natural laws.*'²⁵⁸

Vint continued aggressively, entering into heated discussion with the leaders of Viimsi parish – according to Estonian administrative division, Naissaar belongs to the parish and not the city of Tallinn – accusing them of short-sightedness and petty financial motives. Such an abrupt change in rhetorical registers, mixing cosmic-universal matters and daily politics, was characteristic to Vint's polemical articles of the time, establishing a voice that seemingly spoke from a position of higher authority, and assessing the opportunities and dangers of contemporary decisions from an all-knowing cosmic vantage point. In this article, the larger context of future developments of Naissaar was Europe: the project was presented as an essential counterforce to the spiritual and intellectual decline then threatening the whole of Europe.

Given the militant tone of the argument, it is surprising that in these first presentations of the project we get very few hints of the vision itself in terms of its content and outlook. What is even more surprising, for the first two years of elaborating the idea, Vint did not produce any visual images of his own to illustrate his ideas. His first essays were accompanied by futuristic drawings of a dense high-rise city that turned out to be reproductions of Yakov G. Chernikhov's compositions from his series *Architectural Fantasies*, published in 1933.²⁵⁹ First, he used Chernikhov's *Composition No. 25*, supplemented by five Estonian national flags on top of the buildings (ill. 25); in 1995, another article used the same image without the added national flags, plus Chernikhov's *Composition No. 18* (1929), to illustrate two settlements at the northern and southern ends of the island.²⁶⁰ In both cases, the images were uncredited; whereas in informal conversations Vint never denied Chernikhov's influence on the project, the influence was not publicly acknowledged. Regardless of their origin, the images convincingly conveyed the idea of a thoroughly modern, thriving, high and technicist built environment that would presumably reflect a highly advanced industrial society. Chernikhov's drawings served primarily as a promotional image rather than an actual speculative urban vision, clearly establishing a mental affinity with the ambitions and concerns of the Russian avant-garde. They

258 Ibid.

259 Dmitri Khmel'nitski, Yakov Chernikhov: *Architectural Fantasies in Russian Constructivism*. Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2013.

260 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar – kaks teed tulevikku.

signalled that Vint's vision would entail a social transformation that was at least as wide-reaching and radical as the one pursued by the proponents of the Russian avant-garde. However, for the latter the urban transformation went hand in hand with social renewal, aiming, like most utopian urban thought, at a more communal, collectivist social order. For Vint, the new physical environment was similarly necessary for the renewal of the society, but the way it was presented revealed important inconsistencies: the pursued spiritual transformation did not imply a heightened awareness of communal concerns but was highly individualistic. This could explain the choice of Chernikhov, who was, unlike the majority of Russian avant-garde artists, relatively uninterested in politics, and whose emphasis on individuality and self-expression was actually at odds with the general impetus of the constructivists, for whom the radicalness of the new art was primarily grounded in social and political aims.²⁶¹ Like Vint, Chernikhov was primarily a graphic artist whose main concern was visual effect and imagology rather than new spatial configurations or spatial accuracy. As the title of his published collection, *Architectural Fantasies*, implies, he created pure visual fantasies that seemingly hovered in the air without any reference to the surrounding context. In Chernikhov's drawings, it is quite difficult to understand the spatial relationships of the depicted buildings, and actually no new kind of space is proposed.²⁶² The same can be said of Vint's vision in these initial stages: the actual spatial configuration of the new settlements on Naissaar was not among his primary concerns. Vint was initially focused only on the concept and the grand structures: the geomantic relationships of Naissaar and Tallinn, and the height that needed to be built. How to achieve that desired height, and what kind of architectural and programmatic proposal would be suitable under the economic and political conditions of a newly developing society to build something so high, were questions of minor importance.

However, in the following articles, as well as when talking on TV broadcasts, the vision began to take on a more comprehensive form, both in terms of function and visual style. Vint continued emphasising the importance of feng shui principles but brought the issue more down to earth by drawing analogies with Hong Kong and Macau.²⁶³ He provided idealistic descriptions of their economies, where great revenues from entertainment industries and gambling were apparently invested in the public well-being, contrasting this model with

261 Alla Roseinfeld, *From Construction to Fantasy: The Architectural Drawings of Yakov Chernikhov in Context*. – Yakov Chernikhov 1889–1951. *The Soviet Piranesi*. London: James Butterwick Russian and European Fine Arts, s.a, pp. 15.

262 Thomas Seebohm, *Deconstructing the Constructivist Drawings of Iakov Chernikhov*. – *From Research to Practice: Mission - Method - Madness: ACADIA Conference Proceedings*, Montana: Montana State University, 1990, pp. 61–77.

263 Tõnis Vint, *Naissaar ja Tallinna geomantiline...*

the greed of Estonians, who would rather see the island divided into private recreational havens.²⁶⁴ He also displayed a certain flexibility: as meanwhile there had surfaced an alternative development vision, to turn the island into a semi-closed zone of environmental protection, Vint integrated the idea into his proposal. In 1992, the Viimsi parish government council had decided to establish a nature park on the island, and a year later the Naissaar-born Estonian émigré artist Erik Schmidt proposed creating an international ecological centre there. The idea found remarkable support from the Viimsi parish council, which commissioned a feasibility report from Canadian and Estonian environmental specialists, who recommended a nature reserve with a limited number of tourists allowed to enter for day trips.²⁶⁵ The report included a proposition for establishing a Baltic environmental research centre on the island but ruled out any substantial business developments.²⁶⁶

Thus, trying to integrate some of these ideas into his own vision, an article written by Vint in 1995 detailed the following functional scheme: the main part of the island would remain untouched forest and the new settlements would only be concentrated on the island's northern and southern ends (ill. 26), featuring international banks, cultural and educational centres, information centres fostering the cooperation of sciences and arts, research institutes for futurology and intellectual tourism.²⁶⁷ All of the institutions would be established in cooperation with Western and Eastern (i.e. Japanese and Chinese) institutions and corporations, aimed at creating an unprecedented hub of creativity, knowledge and cooperation. Compared to articles written two years earlier, there was now much less space devoted to spiritual and esoteric concerns: the focus was more practical, and the language more down-to-earth and business-like. This certainly reflected a surprising turn in his efforts, trying to take the whole matter into his hands. In 1994, Vint had compiled a promotional brochure (ill. 3), introducing not only his core idea, feng shui analyses (ill. 31) and drawings for Naissaar, but also visual material claiming similarities in Estonian and Japanese traditional architecture and ornamentation, as well as examples of the work of such fellow Estonian architects as Leonhard Lapin, Vilen Künnapu, Jüri Okas and Marika Lõoke.²⁶⁸ The brochure again included the collages with Chernikhov's drawings but also some of Vint's own earlier architecturally-inspired graphic work (the Indian ink drawings *Q42* and *Q44*, both from 1982, and a reworking of an image from the 1979 series *The City*). The hand-bound

264 Ibid.

265 Pekka Erelt, Naissaar – tuleviku kullaauk Läänemerele. – Eesti Ekspress 24 March 1995.

266 Ibid.

267 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar. Kaks teed tulevikku...

268 Naissaar. Project. S.l, s.d, unpaginated. Archive of Tõnis Vint.

brochures were presented to the Japanese embassy in the hope that the diplomats would pass them on to Japanese companies interested in possible investment and cooperation.²⁶⁹ At the same time, Vint was not free from a certain Orientalist mentality, seeing Naissaar as a potential training ground for Eastern businessmen who could spend some time there learning Western ways of doing business and socialising before continuing on to ventures in Western Europe.²⁷⁰

Visually, the project also evolved, taking on a more recognisable appearance as a Vint approach, linking the vision to some drawings of conceptual space from his earlier career. The first published illustration of Naissaar was titled *Naissaar – the Holy Mountain Rising from the Sea*.²⁷¹ Visually, this image bore a resemblance to the language of architecturally-inspired graphic images that Vint produced in 1978–1983, for instance *Yin-yang* (1978), *Mandala House* (1978), the *Q* series (1982) and the stage set for Rabindranath Tagore's play *Postimaja* (*Post Office*, directed by Juhan Viiding, 1983). Most of these depict highly abstract orthogonal building forms and strongly employ a grid motif. Similarly to his graphic work, the image of Naissaar as the Holy Mountain is completely two-dimensional, depicting only façades without any perspective or other references to three-dimensional space, hovering in an undefined, seemingly infinite picture plane. The façades are simply graphic signs (ill. 29). In another illustration, presented with his 1995 article and added to the brochure for the Japan embassy, further details emphasised that the space inhabited by the buildings was beyond the physical: the sun and the moon were simultaneously in the sky, and the flags pointed in different directions. The focus was on height and the thrust upwards, connecting the project to Vint's general theme of towers and futuristic cities, which began with the children's book *Aastasse 2000*²⁷² (*To the Year 2000*) from 1973, which featured an image of a high-rise city with elevated expressways in the foreground. The high-rise building in the form of a tower has been called one of the central elements of Tõnis Vint's personal iconography, a visual archetype that symbolises universal higher aspiration and ascetic devotion, a connection between the material and spiritual worlds leading to interaction with the higher sphere.²⁷³ Vint has repeatedly emphasised the importance of high-rises for the advancement of society, referencing the 18th-century Swedish

269 Conversation with Ralf Tamm, Tõnis Vint's main assistant in the project, 24 March 2016.

270 Tõnis Vint in TV broadcast *Tuleviku linn* (City of the Future), 1995.

271 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar ja Tallinna geomantiline...

272 Tõnis Vint, *Aastasse 2000*. Tallinn: Kunst, 1973.

273 Elnara Taidre, Graafilisest kujundist keskkonnakavanditeni. Tõnis Vindi esteetilisest utoopiast. – Sven Vabar, Jaak Tomberg, Mari Laaniste (eds.), *Etütide nüüdiskultuurist 4. Katsed nimetada saart. Artikleid fantastikast*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli kirjastus, 2013, pp. 49–67.

philosopher and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg, who claimed that there was a correlation between the height of buildings and a society's level of mental and spiritual development.²⁷⁴ Vint also spoke about Russian scientists who have confirmed the role of high towers as mediators of human consciousness and higher knowledge.²⁷⁵ In this context, building high-rises would be – as much as the whole Naissaar project – an attempt to counter a provincial and petite bourgeois mentality.²⁷⁶ High construction, symbolising aspiration for the sky or the higher realm, remained the central concern of Vint's urban visions and commentaries for the next decade, whether in an alternative elaboration in the form of a monument of freedom as the 'tree of life' for Vabaduse square,²⁷⁷ or in his support for the Tallinn World Trade Centre plans, including a high-rise that he suggested should have 65 floors instead of the planned 30.²⁷⁸

Whereas the height of buildings might be a recurring issue in the tradition of visionary architecture, another feature of Vint's illustrations was density: his chosen fantasies by Chernikhov display a dense cluster of buildings, and in his own illustrations the façades are so tightly set next to each other that no common urban space may be imagined in between. This seems to be an idealised reference to the contemporary megacities of Western capitalism rather than an actual conception of an ideal city in the classic utopian tradition: the latter, as a rule, features generous space in between buildings, as ample public space (usually, 50–70% of the whole area of different utopian city projects) is conducive to a sense of community.²⁷⁹ In this sense, the possibility of empowerment and the attainability of spiritual and intellectual growth by an environment that adheres more to the milieu of a contemporary commercial city involves overlooked problematic issues quite similar to his all-white living environment in his Mustamäe flat, which was supposed to lead to a higher spiritual living standard but in practice included such inconveniences as a complete lack of privacy and the fostering of hierarchical family relationships that were not likely to support individual personal growth.²⁸⁰

For the 1996 exhibition, Vint additionally produced a set of images that represented the whole island as seen from the sea, with two new settlements at its ends. This set included five alternative formal solutions to the settlements that varied greatly yet adhered, with one

274 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar. Kaks teed tulevikku...

275 Ibid.

276 Elnara Taidre, Graafilisest kujundist keskkonnakavanditeni...

277 Elnara Taidre, Mudel, metafoor, mäng.

Omamütoloogiline tervikkunstiteose visuaalkunsti 20. sajandi paradigmatavahetuse kontekstis.

Dissertationes Academiae Artium Estoniae 21.

Tallinn, 2016, p. 163.

278 Tõnis Vint, Suur vabanemine surmakaarest...

279 Tessa Morrison, Unbuilt Utopian Cities 1460 to 1900: Reconstructing their Architecture and Political Philosophy. Surrey: Ashgate, 2015, p. 203.

280 Andres Kurg, Empty White Space: Home as a Total Work of Art in the Late-Soviet Period. – Interiors 2011, Vol. 2, Issue 1, p. 55.

exception, to a common scheme of two clusters of high-rises on both ends of the island, symmetrically mirroring each other and connected by an elevated bridge – an elevated expressway or suspended railway – cutting straight through the island landscape. The practical reason for such a solution was indeed the need to keep most of the island's greenery intact, not to mention that due to the island's military past there was still danger of landmines and explosives. But symbolically, the solution generated isolated enclaves, interacting with the rest of the island as little as possible, as if forming islands within an island. The particular isolation that an island as a locus implies is a classic prerequisite of a utopia. But as Reinhold Martin has shown, paradoxically, an island is also one of the most central configurations of postmodern space, as manifested in its abundant self-reflexive forms, such as the gated residential community, the isolated office cluster, the climate-controlled campus and the restricted golf course, where patterns of spatial organisation persist that can be characterised as utopian.²⁸¹ Tõnis Vint's Naissaar settlement, combining technological advancement, liberal capitalist economics, a high-tech urban environment and spiritual pretensions in an isolated enclave was precisely such a self-contained postmodernist space that retained a twisted sense of utopia.

In another act of appropriation, one version of the project included four images of the Empire State Building (ill. 27), two at both ends of the island, referencing Manhattan as the archetypical cosmopolitan high-rise city. The images of the Empire State Building may speculatively also have been used for height reference: the higher versions of the vision (ill. 28) depicted buildings of neo-constructivist or high-tech aesthetic appeal three to four times the height of the Empire State Building. This would make them over a kilometre tall: a height unattained to this day.²⁸² It is also notable that there were double towers on both ends, forming the motif of gates, and the island images as a whole, with towers at the ends and an elevated highway connecting them, could again be read as an image of gates on a larger scale. This system of doubles involved geomantic and feng shui reasoning,²⁸³ but additionally the composition also referred to the motif of gates, also of utmost importance in Tõnis Vint's idiosyncratic symbolic-aesthetic system.²⁸⁴ In his discussion of the role of gate towers throughout architecture history, Vint glorified the Gothic era, when high gate towers formed a connection

281 Reinhold Martin, *Utopia's Ghost. Architecture and Postmodernism*, Again. University of Minnesota Press, 2010, chapter Territory. From the Inside, Out, pp. 1–26.

282 In 1996, the tallest building in the world was the Sears Tower in Chicago (442 m); the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur (451.9 m) were under construction.

283 See a more elaborate explanation of Vint's geomantic system in Elnara Taidre, *Mudel, metafoor, mäng*, pp. 165–168.

284 Tõnis Vint, *Värvatornid*.

between the earthly and heavenly realms, and he called them 'light-houses for the human soul'.²⁸⁵ The same era was also the heyday of historical Tallinn; hence reconstructing a system of prominent gate towers around the contemporary city would greatly contribute to its regaining a bygone prosperity. In this light, the two interconnected settlements on Naissaar would form an image of gates on a gigantic scale. The symbolism of the number two and the image of the gate were probably the main reasons why the new settlement, housing all of the commercial, administrative, entertainment, cultural and research institutions, was pushed to the opposite ends of the island in the first place, as the concept gave no hint of practical (functional or typological) segregation of the buildings that additionally demanded a difficult and costly construction of a transportation system to connect them. Vint's main focus was on the image and the visual effect that could convey the scope of his conception in the most striking way. Determining the specific aspects of the actual architectural designs and liveability of the spatial environment were never Vint's aims. Quite the contrary, he insisted that designing the actual buildings should be entrusted to the most important international star architects and that the construction be commissioned from international companies with the most up-to-date know-how in construction technology: all of them, he believed, would be eager for such an opportunity.²⁸⁶ Elsewhere, he also expressed the conviction that only Japanese designers would be able to handle the unique hybrid situation of untouched nature and concrete military structures.²⁸⁷

'THE ZONE', OR LEGAL AND ECONOMIC SPECULATIONS

Speaking about the practical feasibility of his vision, Vint repeatedly used terms such as 'grand project', 'new international centre' and 'new economic centre', and talked vaguely about a new economic model. But in one article he directly mentioned ideas by Sulo Muldia as his inspiration.²⁸⁸ In 1990, the young and energetic businessman Sulo Muldia wrote an article in the weekly newspaper *Eesti Ekspress* titled '*Skyscrapers in Naissaar. Rich Estonia in Six Years*'.²⁸⁹ With great optimism, he pictured the Estonian government realising within a year that the legislative system drawn up following the examples of Scandi-

285 Ibid.

286 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar. Tulevikuvision.

287 Osoon. Elu võimalikkusest...

288 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar. Kaks teed tulevikku...

289 Sulo Muldia, Pilvelõhkujad Naissaarel.

Rikas Eesti kuus aastat hiljem. – Eesti Ekspress
19 January 1990.

navian welfare states would not suit Estonia as a developing country, so the government would turn to Singapore and Taiwan for inspiration. With the impetus for the vision clearly coming from discontent with Estonian tax laws, Muldia proposed reforms completely abolishing income taxes and all taxes related to raw materials and export. The tax exemption was to apply to the whole of Estonia, but a special boost would be given to Naissaar, which would form a separate jurisdiction with regulations being made not by the Estonian government but by a private board, consisting of financial experts and businessmen. The situation would quickly result in developing a super project on Naissaar which would attract investors from the Far East and Western Europe, as well as from Russia. Within six years it would develop into a completely duty-free city, populated by leading international corporations, which would use it as a base for transactions with the Russian market. A great deal of risk capital would be invested in high-tech enterprises. Gambling turnover would equal that of Monaco; the entertainment business would flourish unhindered by puritan Scandinavian morals: these opportunities, and being a shopping haven, would bring in a flock of tourists all year round. According to Muldia's vision, thanks to Naissaar by 1997 Estonia would have a positive state budget and an excellent international image. Tellingly, the article was illustrated with an image depicting an illuminated night view of Manhattan, the quintessential capitalist high-rise city.

The proposition was audacious but not frivolous: the ideas were lobbied to top politicians. In October 1994, the Estonian government formed a special committee to assess the idea of establishing a special economic zone.²⁹⁰ There were two locations under discussion: in addition to Naissaar, the possibility of making use of a submarine fuelling platform in the Gulf of Tallinn as a base for building up an artificial island was considered.²⁹¹ The committee, consisting of leading businessmen and an ex-minister of economic affairs, engaged a consultant from the United Kingdom, Sir David O'Grady Roche, who within a couple of months presented a report on the possibilities of a free trade zone in Estonia.²⁹² He first assessed the possibility of turning the whole country into a free trade enclave, but pointed out that the young state lacked all four necessary prerequisites for a successful tax free region: a stable government, good infrastructure, good general command of English and a pleasant climate. Furthermore, its current parliamentary governing system would be a great hindrance: any

290 Kalle Muuli, Naissaare superprojekt. – Rahva Hääl 21 January 1995.

291 Conversation with Jaak Leimann, member of the committee, 27 May 2016.

292 Plaan maksuvaba piirkonna asutamiseks Tallinnas. – Rahva Hääl 23 January 1995.

benefits offered might be rescinded by the next government. Also, the European Union, which the country aimed to join – discussions concerning Estonia's possibly joining the European Union had started already in autumn 1993, with an association contract signed later the same year – was strongly against such free trade zones, requiring, quite the contrary, evening out legislation among the member states, and members had to work against the possibilities of tax avoidance and money laundering.

The solution O'Grady Roche offered was to create a completely new jurisdiction with a new name, proposing Livonia.²⁹³ It would be a sovereign dependent territory legally modelled after Gibraltar or the Isle of Man. As Naissaar, or the new zone Livonia, would not have any citizens – indeed, initially no inhabitants at all – it would have no one to answer to, ensuring stability of governing. Ireland's Shannon Scheme, the world's first free trade zone, located next to Shannon Airport beginning in 1959, and Customs House Dock in Dublin were described as models established prior to Ireland joining the European Union: an impetus to organise Livonia as quickly as possible before the Brussels laws started to interfere. The constitution of Livonia should be modelled on British charter companies, with a governor and an advisory board. As a sign of stability and trustworthiness, the governor was supposed to come from outside of Estonia and, bizarrely, the position was to be hereditary: after all, the vision was drafted by a British baronet. The advisory board was designed to be international, with representatives of Estonia, the Scandinavian countries and Russia. However, O'Grady Roche was not overly optimistic about physically building up a whole new city on the *tabula rasa* of Naissaar: creating the necessary infrastructure and communications would have required too much investment for an island which lacked even a stable water supply, not to mention electricity or other necessities. Instead, he advocated a solution based on the Dublin Docklands, where multinational corporations were actually first allowed to pursue their activities throughout Dublin, under the license of the free trading zone, if they declared that they had 'intentions' to start operating and building in the actual zone. But what would be the benefit and attraction of this separate 'kingdom' for Estonians? O'Grady Roche thought the island would be an interesting tourist destination open to everybody as a nature park, or perhaps a theme park, with Soviet army railroads converted to carnival rides around

293 It remains pure speculation as to whether O'Grady Roche got inspiration for the name from Tõnis Vint's concept of Celtic Livonia, or if they ever discussed the matter.

the island, and Livonia's own peculiar stamps (not unlike those of the Vatican) and currency as souvenirs.

The beginning of the 1990s, when the visions of the Naissaar free trade zone were discussed, was a period of the proliferation of various similar extraterritorial zones. Actually, the first wave of exponential growth of zones was in the 1970s, when such entities were propagated by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization as legal and economic instruments most suitable for jump-starting economies in developing countries. The benefits offered to companies registered in a zone varied from place to place but might include holidays from income or sales taxes, dedicated utilities, such as electricity and broadband, the deregulation of labour laws, the prohibition of labour unions and strikes, the deregulation of environmental laws, streamlined customs, access to cheap imported or domestic labour, cheap land, foreign ownership of property, exemption from import/export duties, foreign language services, or relaxed licensing requirements.²⁹⁴ Generally this meant that in individual deals the zone authority had the power to bypass any law, and in most countries the investors could not be sued in ordinary domestic courts. This created the conditions for a quick spread of zones over the globe: in 1975 there were 79 such entities, employing 800 000 people, in ten years the numbers had doubled, and in the 1990s a new increase began, reaching 3500 zones in the world by 2006, and employing 66 million.²⁹⁵

But as early as 1980 the United Nations began to express caution regarding using the zones as anything other than temporary catalysts. A report noted that the resources redirected to the zones could have been better used for improving infrastructure, business platforms and other potential relationships with foreign interests within the regular territory of the state.²⁹⁶ The main danger in the zones was that, instead of acting as catalysts, they tended to reinforce themselves, remaining flourishing but closed enclaves that served only their own interests. By the beginning of the 1990s, the zone model had begun to mutate, growing into hybrid entities where the original free trade zone merged with container ports, tourist areas, research parks, IT campuses, knowledge villages, and even universities and museums. The focus, initially on trade, evolved first towards manufacturing, and by the 1990s towards service and science. At the same time, zones, initially quite utilitarian in their spatial solutions, began to grow more and more into proper urban entities. The new peak period of the zones

294 Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft. The Power of Infrastructure Space*. London: Verso 2014, p. 34.

295 Thomas Farole, Gokhan Akinci, Introduction. – Thomas Farole, Gokhan Akinci (eds.), *Special*

Economic Zones. Progress, Emerging Challenges, and Future Directions. Washington: The World Bank, 2011, pp. 1–21.

296 Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft*, p. 34.

in the 1990s and later was also characterised by the aggregation of zones cross-nationally, circulating products between jurisdictions and employing complex supply chains. The zones started to form a network run by the interests of multinational corporations, quite unhindered by the regulations of traditional states. The zones had become the quintessential loci of globalised neo-liberal capitalism, employing a politics of their own, a politics relying on exceptions inside borders, and stressing a non-political position towards everything outside them.

The period when the future of Naissaar was envisioned both by Tõnis Vint and by David O'Grady Roche was exactly the time when the zone model was undergoing transformation. This is reflected in their different approaches to the issue. O'Grady Roche dwelt on the original idea of the special economic zone as primarily a juridical entity, focusing on alleviating conditions of international trade, whereas the vision of Vint correlated more closely with the new developments in the zone model, resembling a hybridised entity where economic interests were diversified and allied with tourism, research and recreation, in the process of becoming an independent urban assembly quite detached from the mother state. Vint's view of economic development integrated with and boosted by institutions and activities in the spheres of culture and research also correlated with the ideology of the arts as an industry, which was increasingly popular from the second half of the 1980s onwards, with the concept of creative industries entering public policies internationally in the 1990s.²⁹⁷

At the governmental level, the idea proposed by O'Grady Roche was dropped with the change of government in spring 1995.²⁹⁸ Tõnis Vint's vision, however, was included as one possible option in detailed planning negotiations that started after the government had declared the area a nature reserve in March 1995.²⁹⁹ As a pilot project, the detailed planning process of Naissaar included, for the first time, an environmental impact assessment, encouraged and financed by the Finnish Ministry of the Environment as a structural aid measure to help build up democratic planning processes in the newly independent Estonia. In this way, the planning of Naissaar became a demonstration project.³⁰⁰ This entailed initiating a participatory planning process where all parties who had ever expressed interest or generated ideas concerning Naissaar were invited to meetings in Viimsi parish, the official commissioner of the planning.

297 Susan Galloway, Stewart Dunlop, *A Critique of Definitions of the Cultural and Creative Industries in Public Policy*. – *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 2007, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 17.

298 Conversation with Jaak Leimann, 27 May 2016.

299 Naissaare looduspargi moodustamine ja kaitseeskirja kinnitamine. – *Riigi Teataja* 1995, No. 1.

300 Conversation with Kaur Lass, main architect of Naissaar detailed planning project at ENTEC OÜ in 1995–1997, 29 January 2016.

By spring 1995, when the planning meetings began, there were no spokespeople for the free trade zone from business circles, although Vint continued to pursue his visions, taking part in the meetings with some of his architecture student disciples. The protocols of the planning process reveal that his vision, now named *Project East-West* but content-wise exactly copying the text of his most recent article in *Eesti Ekspress*, was discussed on an equal basis with the other future scenarios, and was included as one of three proposals in the final environmental impact assessment.³⁰¹ A SWOT analysis listed his idea of developing an ideal society as a strength, together with scientifically-based planning, a tax-free zone, and an international environmental research centre, while the threats listed included foreign rule and money laundering.³⁰² As a separate proposal, the planning documentation included a vision of a Naissaar urban park written by the Etteaim group (Markus Kaasik, Ülar Mark, Andres Ojari, Ralf Tamm and Ilmar Valdur). In broad terms, their proposal built on Vint's, repeating the lure of an international mega-project and high-rise settlements but without mentioning esoteric-universal reasoning. Rather, it was more focused on information technology as a necessary future developmental trend for Estonia's competitiveness, and called for the universities in Tartu and Tallinn to lead the endeavour, and to set up an international ideas competition.³⁰³ The documentation of the lengthy planning process made it clear that the Viimsi parish officials justified dropping the ideas of the proposal for practical reasons: a settlement for an estimated 10 000 inhabitants and lively international traffic would have presented huge infrastructure problems and investment needs for an island that lacked electricity, a public water supply, sewerage or a proper harbour. It was stressed that the issue was never the utopian character of Vint's proposal per se but the lack of credible investors to back him up. However, in the words of Kaur Lass, the architect responsible for drawing up the detailed planning project, the reluctance of Vint and his disciples to propose even schematic solutions for those infrastructure issues definitely did not help.³⁰⁴

The situation concerning the detailed planning process and Vint's involvement in it was characterised by conflicting conceptions of the public sphere. The initiators and executives of the detailed planning, with the moral and financial backing of more experienced Finnish colleagues, aimed to introduce a democratic consensual process, a

301 Naissaar. Work No. 59/95, ENTEC OÜ archive.

302 Ibid.

303 Ibid.

304 Conversation with Kaur Lass.

rational deliberation of a public matter in the Habermasian sense where all discussants needed first to be recognised as legitimate and concerned parties in the matter, and a public and disinterested discussion would lead to a consensus serving the common good.³⁰⁵ In this sense, the process initiated by Viimsi parish was an important milestone in introducing inclusive, democratic urban planning practices, where a wide public consensus was the general aim. This was a worthy goal in a society with a very recent past of Soviet top-down bureaucratic planning practices and an architecture culture that still highly valued the undisputed authority of the professional. At the same time, the process raised questions about the nature of consensus itself and highlighted difficulties in determining whose good the common good might be. As several critics of the Habermasian model have observed, it is a conceptual ideal based on multiple exclusions rather than a universal and impartial process.³⁰⁶ The notions of both consensus and the common good have been challenged by theorists of the antagonistic public sphere and democracy, pointing out that the concept of consensus involves multiple ways of suppressing some viewpoints in favour of others, and the issue of legitimate participation in discussion is far from as self-evident as it seems.³⁰⁷ From the strictly Habermasian position, Vint's contribution to the official detailed planning process can be seen as an illegitimate claim for participation: he did not have a relevant and mutually authorised interest in the matters. His vision negated the obvious practical shortcomings of the day and brought the discussion to a whole different level of utopian thought, refusing to 'normalise' his proposal with relevant infrastructure solutions that would have brought it to a level of comparability with the other ideas on the table. In a sense, this determination can be seen as stemming from a contrasting, antagonistic conception of the workings of the public sphere. It was not possible to arrive at a consensus by rationally deliberating on Vint's vision and the ideas and hopes of environmentalists and descendants of former landowners. To the contrary, Vint's intervention mainly served the role of keeping the antagonisms on the surface, opening up a discussion about the possible scope of future plans and aims not only for that particular island but for the country and society as a whole. His role as an agent in the public discussion of the matter, and in the public planning process was to keep open the potential for radical democracy. In this sense, Vint was consistent

305 See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

306 See Nancy Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere*.

307 Chantal Mouffe, *Democracy, Power and the 'Political'*. – Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso, 2000, pp. 17–35.

with his avant-garde artistic position as it was formed in the late Soviet context, offering a disruptive challenge to the workings of the dominant sphere. But the actual content of his proposal had more dimensions and, paradoxically, may be read as challenging this role internally, rendering his position far more ambiguous.

‘COSMIC ENERGY’ FOR URBAN ACUPUNCTURE

The issues of architectural form or actual methods and ways of establishing a future community on Naissaar were apparently of secondary importance to Vint. The free trade zone was to be just a means to a greater end: a spiritual transformation of the island itself, Tallinn, the whole Estonian society and even Western civilisation. As such, the project can be situated in the tradition of utopian imagination that has had remarkable impetus from spiritual aims and esoteric reasoning, seen as a counterforce to the rationalist order that has led society into decline.³⁰⁸ Throughout his career, Vint researched and integrated a wide array of intellectual, mental and spiritual impulses, information that he shared with his disciples, as well as in written articles that he was able to publish even during the Soviet times, although some were occasionally censored due to their content.³⁰⁹ The symbolic content of his art practice has also been meticulously researched³¹⁰ but it has not yet been studied in the context of New Age, in which the ideological background of his work at least partially falls. In Vint’s case, the assembly and use of different Eastern philosophical systems and spiritual practices, such as tantra, Hinduism and Taoism, and their mixing with Western neo-pagan references, symbolism and pop art, are not really justifiable as postmodern juggling: most researchers agree that his approach always lacked postmodern irony.³¹¹ Although Vint said that his initial drive towards Eastern inspirations was visual, nurtured in the art museums of Moscow and Saint Petersburg in the 1960s, and that the philosophical inquiries followed from that experience,³¹² the resulting intellectual system that he gradually built up bears a strong semblance to New Age culture, not the least in its desire to establish an alternative mental sphere that in the West has had strong adherence

308 See e.g. David Ayers, Benedikt Hjartanson, Tomi Huttunen, Harri Veivo (eds.), *Utopia: The Avant-Garde, Modernism, and (Im)possible Life*. Berlin & Boston: DeGruyter, 2015.

309 For instance, Tõnis Vint, *Kuldne lill. Tantra. Tao*. – *Kunst* 1975, No. 2, a magazine issue that was destroyed as the whole printrun.

310 See Elnara Taidre, *Tõnis Vindi kunstipraktikad kui sünkretistlik tervikkunstiiteos. Tõnis Vint’s Art Practices as a Syncretistic Total*

Work of Art. – Elnara Taidre (ed.), *Tõnis Vint ja tema esteetiline universum. Tõnis Vint and his Aesthetic Universe*. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2012, pp. 19–40.

311 Elnara Taidre, *Eesti kunsti viimane modernist ja esimene postmodernist. Intervjuu Tõnis Vindiga*. – *Sirp* 31 May 2012.

312 Tõnis Vint, *Algimpulsid*. – *Ehituskunst* 2002, Vol. 33/34, p. 40.

to the whole counterculture of the 1960s. In the Soviet context, these kinds of activities had even stronger countercultural connotations, with Eastern spiritual practices seen as among the means of establishing an alternative reality,³¹³ and the practitioners effectively contributing to a subculture.³¹⁴ The subculture Vint created in the 1960s–1970s was based on living out one's own principles, and has been interpreted as detaching oneself from the surrounding Soviet realities as much as possible.³¹⁵ Whenever he wrote of the future then, he avoided being concrete about where and within which boundaries the processes that interested him could function.³¹⁶ An interest in spiritual aspects of world cultures helped him to build up and reinforce a life-world of his own rules, existing mentally separate from the surrounding Soviet realities, a private aesthetic universe as it has been called.³¹⁷

With the arrival of the newly independent republic and the new social rules, Vint wanted to bring these issues into the public discussion. For him, these issues were wide-ranging, embodied not only in his project for Naissaar but embedded in much of his continuing work in the 1990s and elaborated in different project propositions and polemical essays. For instance, in response to the 1994 tragedy of the Tallinn-Stockholm ferry *Estonia*, with more than 800 people drowned, Vint proposed restructuring the city's coastal area and redesigning the Russalka monument by Amandus Adamson from 1902, to cleanse the city of a certain 'death arc' on the coast: a configuration of Tallinn landmarks that worked as a curse on the city and its marine traffic and that had caused the tragedy.³¹⁸ In 1996, he introduced his ideas on urban acupuncture and feng shui-driven planning principles to an international audience in a lecture delivered at the third Nordic-Baltic architecture triennial (see Chapter 3), and almost a decade after the Naissaar project he had the opportunity to comprehensively present his esoteric interpretation of architecture in a special issue of *Ehituskunst* magazine devoted to his work.³¹⁹ Spiritual argumentation also formed the basis for his proposal for a new Tallinn university and research centre in Lasnamäe in 2003. The proposition was indirectly a critique of the popular idea of

313 See Maria Popova, *Underground Hindu and Buddhist-inspired Religious Movements in Soviet Russia*. – *Usuteaduslik Ajakiri* 2013, No. 1, pp. 99–115.

314 See also, Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More. The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton University Press, 2006, chapter *Deterritorialised Milieus*, esp. p. 154.

315 However, this was never a complete withdrawal: the way Vint advocated for his aesthetic choices in magazines with all-Soviet circulation, including presentations of his own flat interiors both in the Soviet Estonian magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* and in the Finnish *Kodin Kuvalehti*, indeed testifies to

his intention (and success) of having a wider social impact; see Andres Kurg, *Empty White Space...*

316 Sirje Helme, *Korter nr 22 – üks Tõnis Vindi esteetilise universumi planeetidest. Flat No. 22 – a Planet in Tõnis Vint's Aesthetic Universe*. – Elnara Taidre (ed.), *Tõnis Vint ja tema esteetiline universum. Tõnis Vint and his Aesthetic Universe*. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2012, pp. 46.

317 Elnara Taidre, *Tõnis Vindi kunstipraktikad...*

318 Tõnis Vint, *Mustast surmainglist kuldseks päikeseingliks*; Tõnis Vint, *Suur vabanemine surmakaarest*.

319 *Ehituskunst* 2002, Vol. 33/34. Tõnis Vint eri / Tõnis Vint special.

relocating the Estonian Academy of Arts to the former Patarei prison complex, which in Vint's view was a place carrying intensely negative, destructive energies.³²⁰ The Patarei prison also had a significant role in the 'death arc' elaborated in his previous essays.

However, the intellectual and spiritual world-view fell into a greatly transformed historical context. In the West, the latter half of the 1980s had seen a transformation of the New Age principles, with much greater internal diversity and a proliferation of new movements that aligned with the ethos of capitalist modernity and had an increasing appeal to the prevailing yuppie mentality. The earlier rhetoric of 'authenticity', 'harmony', 'tranquility' and 'creativity' were increasingly replaced by 'power', 'energy' and 'abundance', and New Age became increasingly treated as a utilitarian resource catering to personal desires for stimulation, pleasure and affluence.³²¹ The hedonistic lifestyle of desire and mass consumption increasingly associated with spiritual practices even prompted seeing Tantrism as definitive for late capitalism in the way Protestantism was for early capitalism.³²² In the post-Soviet context, perestroika meant the end of decades-long imposed atheism and, whereas in many post-Soviet countries this primarily meant the reinstatement of traditional Christian churches, there was also a surge in interest in different manifestations of New Age: a specific situation that has been called a 'post-atheist minimal religiosity' aimed at holistic spirituality independent of traditional liturgies.³²³ Instead of supporting resistant or alternative lifestyles as in the late Soviet times, New Age ideas made their way into popular culture, mainly by way of published books and articles in the written media.³²⁴ Thus the publication of Vint's articles about a geomantic analysis of Tallinn and the accumulators of cosmic energy in Naissaar in such major newspapers as *Eesti Ekspress* came in the context of the same mainstream media outlets that frequently published New Age-related features on astrology, numerology, esoteric healing practices and UFO-spotting. This definitely affected the reception of his ideas, although the relationship was by no means unambiguous: at the same time, the intense popular interest in all

320 Tõnis Vint, Tallinna uus ülikoolikeskus...

321 Paul Heelas, *The New Age: Values and Modern Times*. – Lieteke van Vucht Tijssen, Jan Berting, Frank Lechner (eds.), *The Search for Fundamentals. The Process of Modernisation and the Quest for Meaning*. Dordrecht: Springer, 1995, pp. 143–171.

322 Hugh B. Urban, *The Cult of Ecstasy: Tantrism, the New Age, and the Spiritual Logic of Late Capitalism*. – *History of Religions 2000*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (February), pp. 268–304.

323 Mikhail Epstein, *Post-Atheism. From Apophatic Theology to Minimal Religion*. – Mikhail Epstein, Alexander Genis, Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover (eds.), *Russian Postmodernism. New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999, pp. 345–393.

324 Marko Uibu, Marju Saluste, Lugejate virtuaalne kogukond: Kirjandus ja ajakirjandus vaimsete-esoteeriliste ideede kandja ja levitajana. – Marko Uibu (ed.), *Mitut usku Eesti 3: Uue vaimsuse eri*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli kirjastus, 2013, pp. 79–106.

previously unheard of exotic practices, and an open willingness to discuss such matters non-judgementally in a way also lowered the threshold for entering into a discussion of the issues presented in such a way. The general popular rise of interest in New Age as a backdrop worked both ways: it was easier to publicly present a case like Vint's geomantic proposal and get it seriously debated but also easier to lump it together with mumbo-jumbo and dismiss it as such. Naturally, the symbolic capital that Vint had acquired over the years as a successful artist added credibility to his views.

However, in order to understand the position and effect of Vint's Naissaar project under the particular social circumstances, it is important to take into consideration the ideological implications of its New Age dressing. Whereas the first wave, countercultural New Age included an element of rebellion against modernity, Vint's proposal for Naissaar, with its high-tech enterprises housed in high-rises, was certainly something else, adhering more to the yuppie-friendly 1980s version of the phenomenon. The all-too-natural amalgamation of New Age sensibilities and neo-liberalist capitalism has been pointed out by Slavoj Žižek, employing the term 'Eurotaoism', initially coined by Peter Sloterdijk.³²⁵ Žižek maintains that New Age, blending Eastern spiritual practices of very different sources, contributes to extreme individualism in a way easily taken advantage of by our current neo-liberal capitalism. Claiming the individual's full responsibility for all aspects of life, New Age cultivates passivity towards rapid social changes, an inclination to drift along while maintaining an inner distance and indifference, and wilfully blinding oneself to more structural agents, such as overall capitalist dynamics and market forces of laissez-faire economies. At the same time, such a mental disposition enables one to fully participate in the late capitalist frenzy, maintaining a belief that we are not fully immersed in it but actually seeing the worthlessness of this spectacle and able to withdraw to the cultivation of the inner self or to aim at higher ends independent of it.³²⁶ This is exactly the position detected in Vint's Naissaar project, which had no difficulty in presenting a possibly exploitative free trade zone economy, morally dubious entertainment industries and unrestricted gambling paradoxically as ultimately serving the ends of spiritual transformation. His liberal capitalist sympathies were clear when he called environmentalists' concerns for nature 'extreme leftism', 'a rebirth of French Maoism', and an overall obstruction of

325 Peter Sloterdijk, *Eurotaoismus. Zur Kritik der politischen Kinetik*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989.

326 Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief*. London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 12–15.

civilisation; in a similar vein, he condemned preservationists' concern for Kalamaja as nurturing a crime hub, and proposed to start implementing his vision by starting to build the first high-rises on the Kopli peninsula in Tallinn.³²⁷ At the same time, Vint's New Age rhetoric dealt with universality in a way that rendered his vision unquestionable and definitive, using the expression '*building up a centuries-old architectural utopia*'³²⁸ as if the idea of utopia were something definitive and could never have different manifestations. This gave his futuristic vision an odd claim for historical legitimacy that added its own twist to the whole restorative ethos of the newly re-established republic.³²⁹ Also, the New Age undertones of Vint's project hint at a surprisingly socially conservative traditionalist stance regarding gender: saying that the buildings in his drawings were always conceptualised as representing a male or a female element,³³⁰ Vint claimed that the buildings on Naissaar must be tall and phallic to be able to impregnate the female island for a new culture to be born.³³¹

CONCLUSION

Having examined Tõnis Vint's Naissaar vision from diverse viewpoints, such as its connection with the artist's earlier work, the proposal's correlation with global developments in free trade zone economic policies and the ideological implications of its New Age rhetoric under the changing social conditions of the era, the project emerged as a peculiar example of the transition or interregnum era culture. On the one hand, it showed a continuation of ideas developed during the late Soviet era; on the other hand, it showed the scope of changes in social circumstances with a radically widened public arena available for entering from a seemingly quite outrageous position. The project highlights the lack of taboos during this period of the formation of a public sphere, and a look at the unfolding of the detailed planning process over a couple of years shows the initial openness to inviting antagonistic interventions, such as Vint's proposal, as well as its development toward a more normalised, consensus-oriented understanding of the planning process. The project, encompassing considerations as diverse as practical economic gain, as well as spirituality and mysticism, can be read as characteristic of the

327 Tõnis Vint, Kaks teed tulevikku...

328 The phrase is used repeatedly in most of Vint's articles, as well as in his project description in the detailed planning documentation.

329 Due to strong restorative tendencies and a general looking back to the Republic of Estonia of 1918–1939, Marek Tamm has described the reestablished republic as a 'Republic of Historians';

see Marek Tamm, „Vikerkaar ajalugu“?:

Märkmeid üleminekuaja Eesti ajalookultuurist – Vikerkaar 2006, No. 7/8, pp. 136–143.

330 Elnara Taidre, Eesti kunsti viimane modernist ja esimene postmodernist. Intervjuu Tõnis Vindiga.

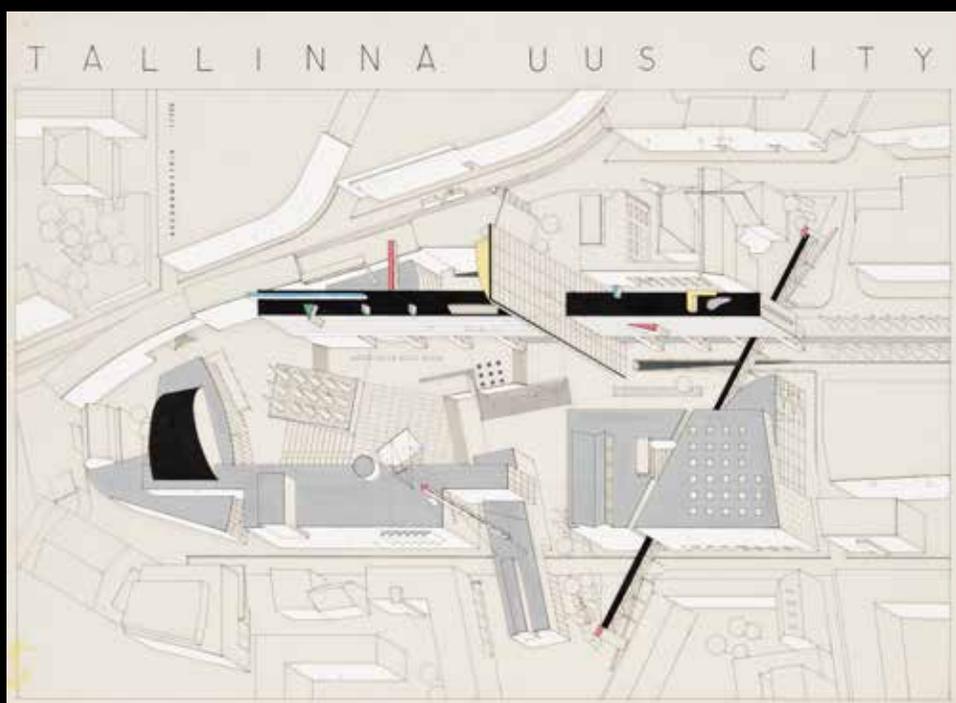
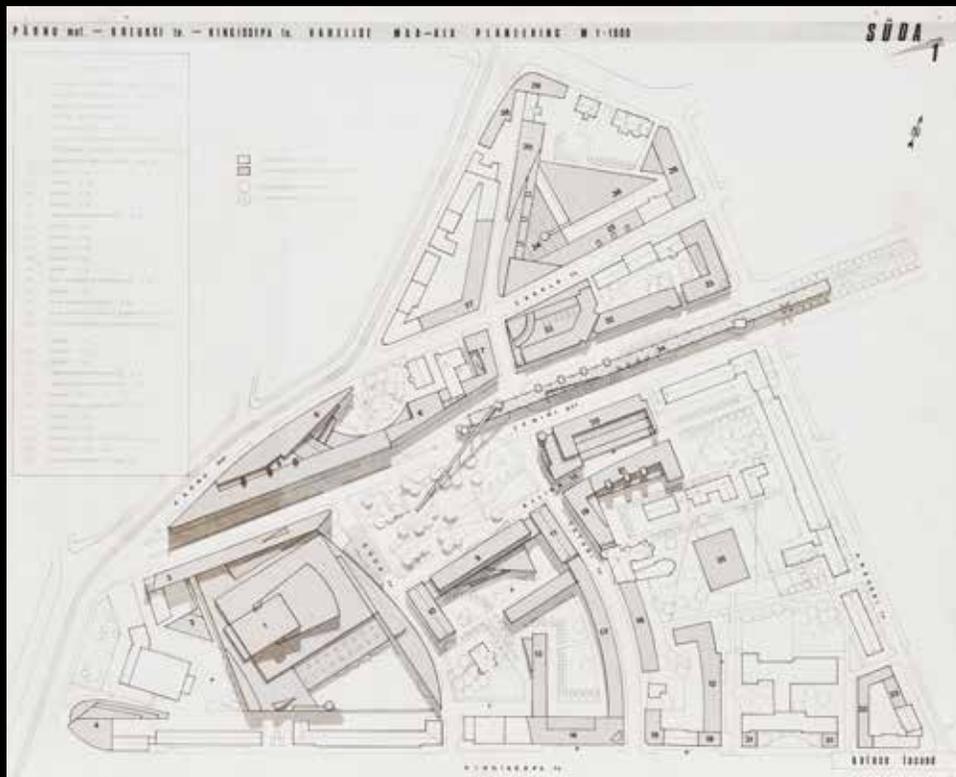
331 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar ja Tallinna geomantiline selgroog. Naissaar, translating Female island, was first mentioned as Terra Feminarum in 1075.

society in the making, open and willing to give serious consideration to any ideas, and lacking conventional protocols that would keep issues within strict confines. Yet examining the project in the wider context of global developments reveals it as liberal-conservative in a way the artist was unable or unwilling to see himself. On the one hand, the marrying of the futuristic vision with an extremely liberal opportunistic economic scheme may be seen as socially irresponsible, riding the tide of the very first years of the newly independent republic, and unable to maintain a critical distance from mainstream rhetoric. On the other hand, New Age spirituality, and the way it presented itself, reinforced even more the new extremely liberal social mentality that had replaced the communal atmosphere of the national awakening of the 1980s, contributing to a gradual closing of the radical openness of the transition era. The vision of Tõnis Vint was a vivid demonstration of various layers of meaning adding up to an incoherent whole that was very characteristic to the time, with the artist trying to retain and pursue his avant-garde cause of the previous era but too innocent about the new era for it to work out.

TALLINN



1. Emil Urbel, Ülo Peil. Planning competition for Mere Blvd commercial centre, 1989, 1st prize. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

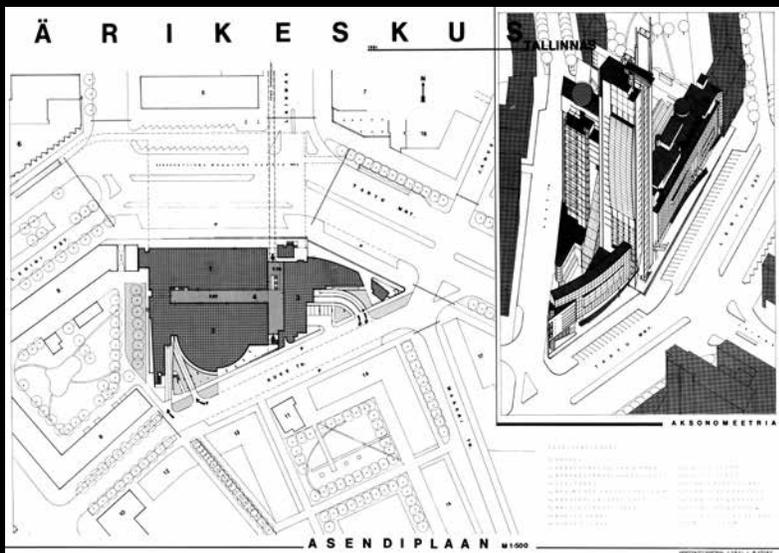
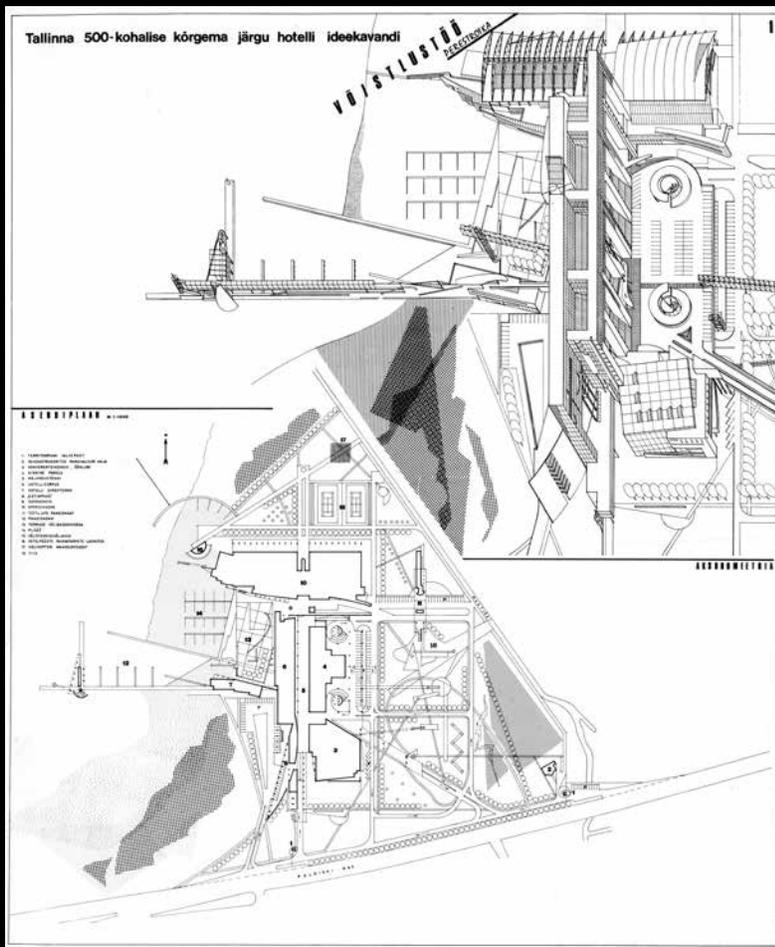


2. Jüri Okas, Marika Lööke. Planning competition for Süda-Tatari district, 1989, 1st prize. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

3. Andres Siim, Hanno Kreis. Planning competition for Süda-Tatari district, 1989, 3rd prize. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

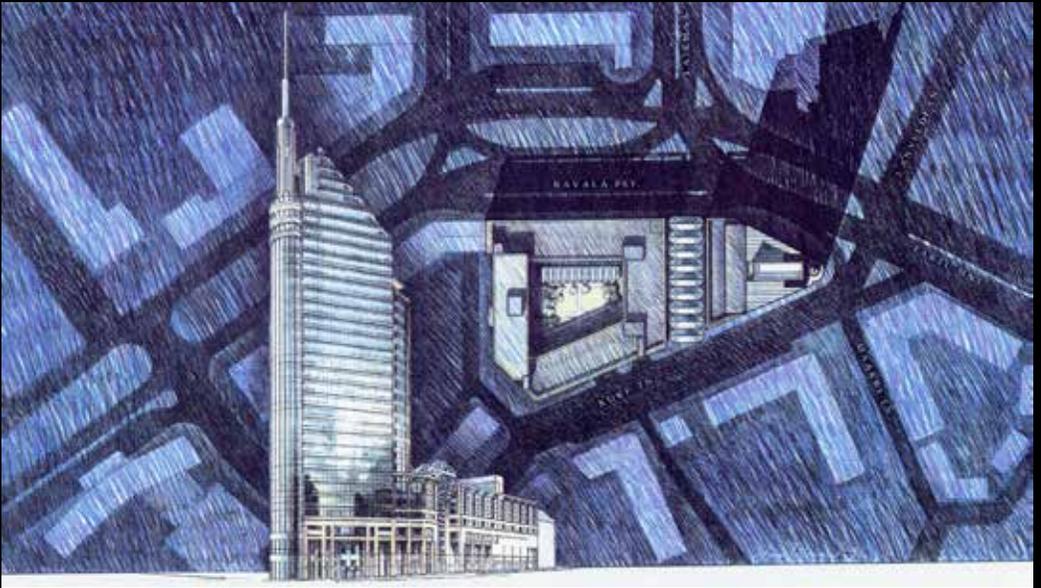


**4. Henno Sillaste. Kave Plaza commercial and office building, 1997.
Photo by Peeter Sirge. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.**

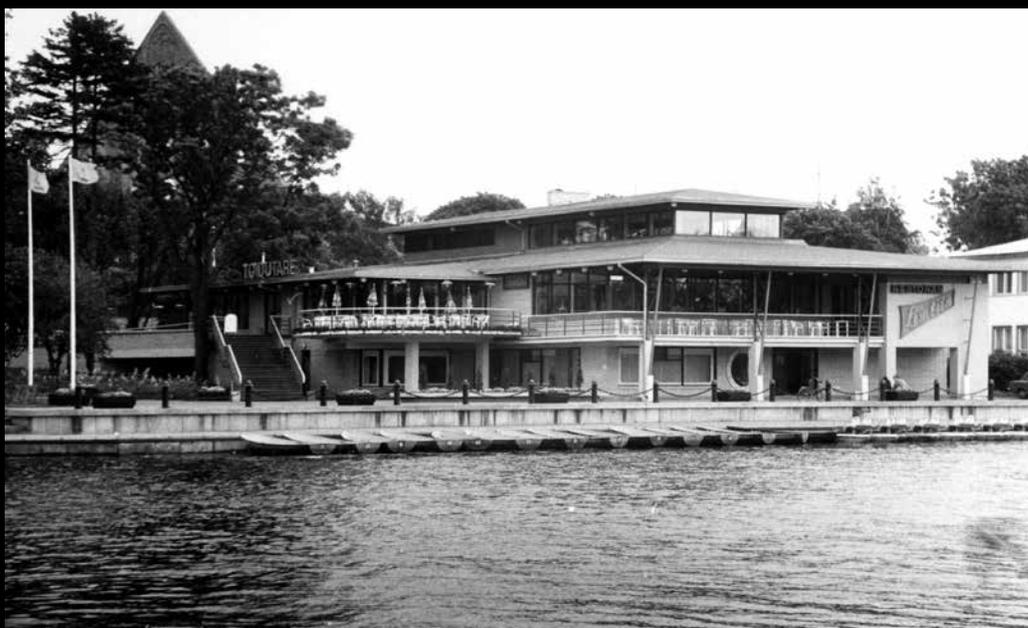
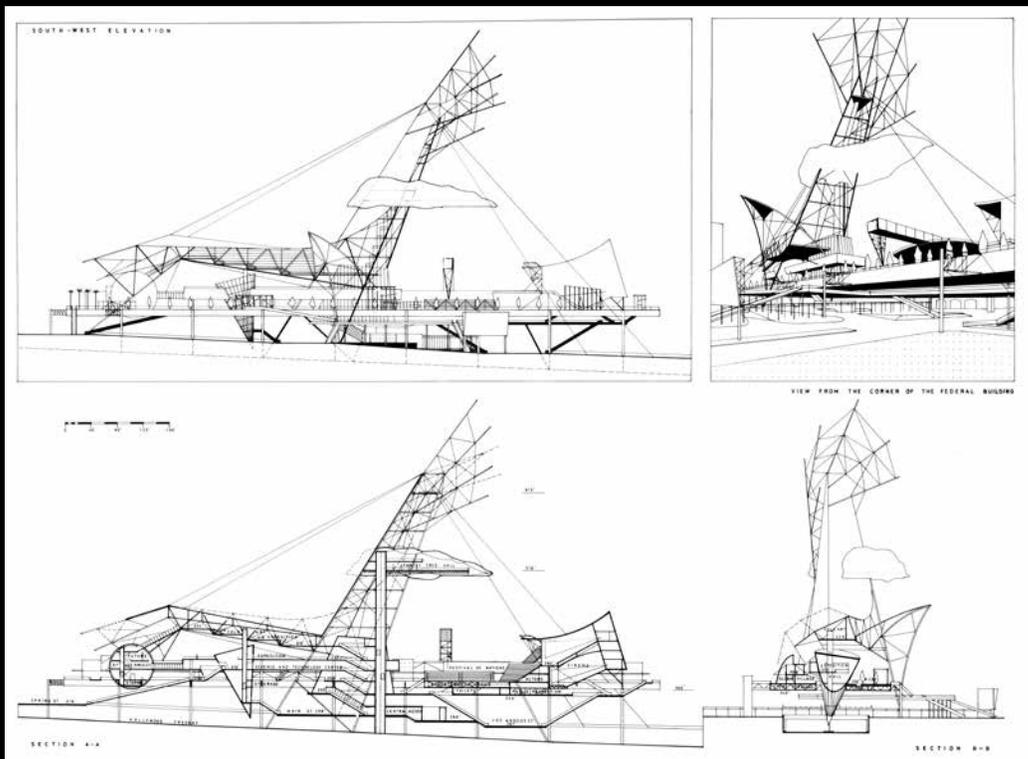


5. Jüri Okas, Marika Lööke. Competition for a luxury hotel for 500 guests, 1988, 1st prize. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

6. Jüri Okas, Marika Lööke. Estar (later Astlanda) commercial centre, 1st version, 1991. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

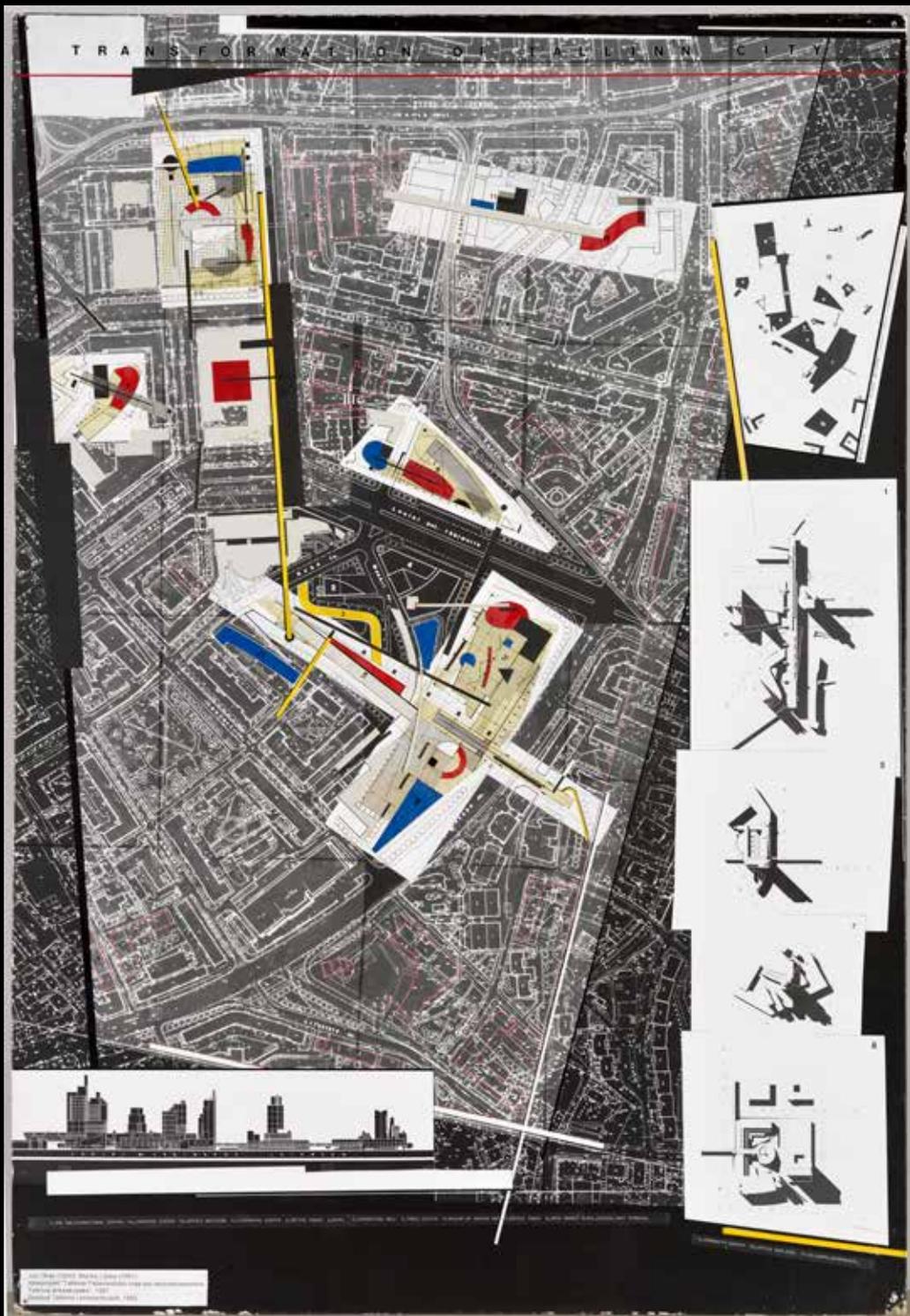


7. Tõnu Altosaar. Astlanda commercial centre, 1992. Courtesy of B+H Architects, Toronto.
8. Andres Siim, Hanno Kreis. Competition for Hansapank bank building, 1994, 1st prize. Courtesy of Arhitektuuristuudio Siim & Kreis.



9. Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik, Andres Siim. Competition for Los Angeles West Coast Gateway, 1989, 2nd prize. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.
 10. Andres Alver, Tiit Trummal. Restaurant and café in Pirita, 1992. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

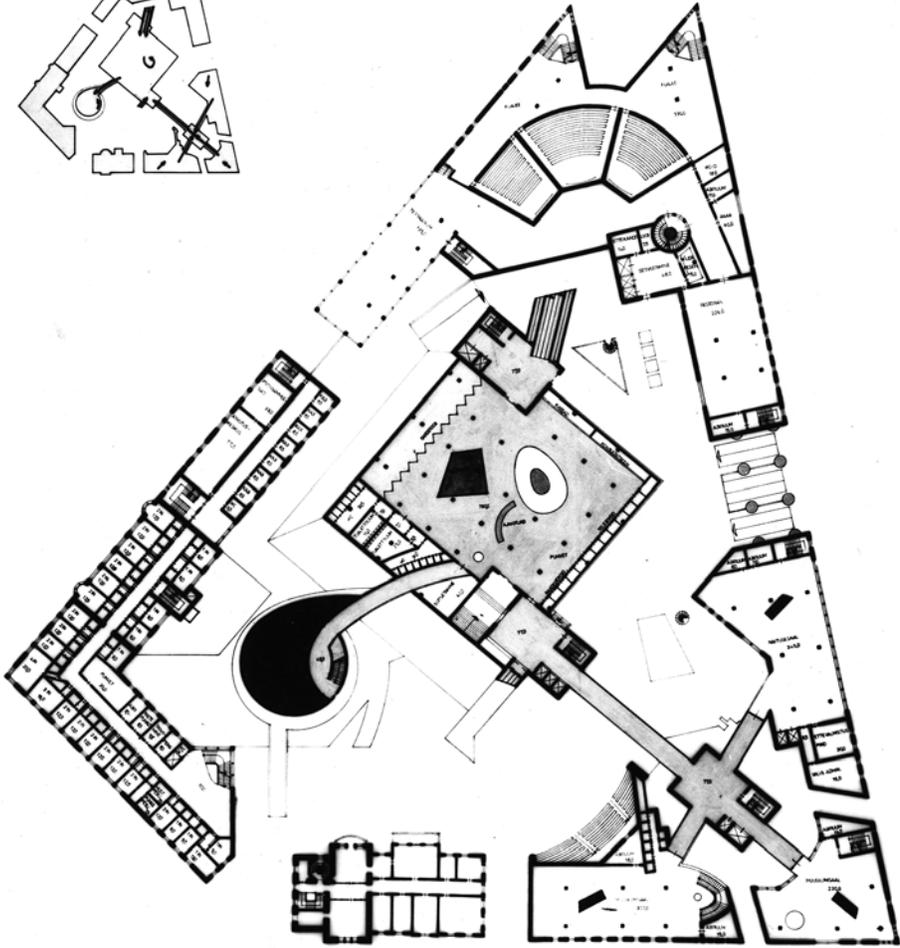
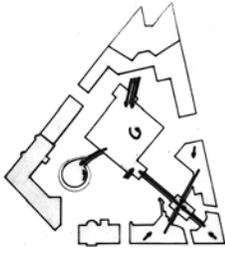
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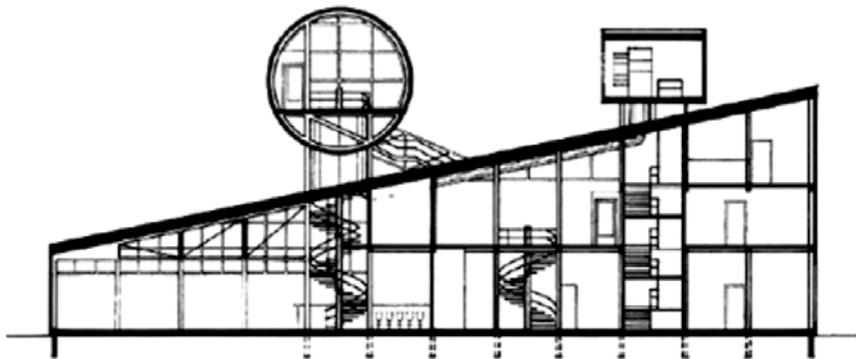
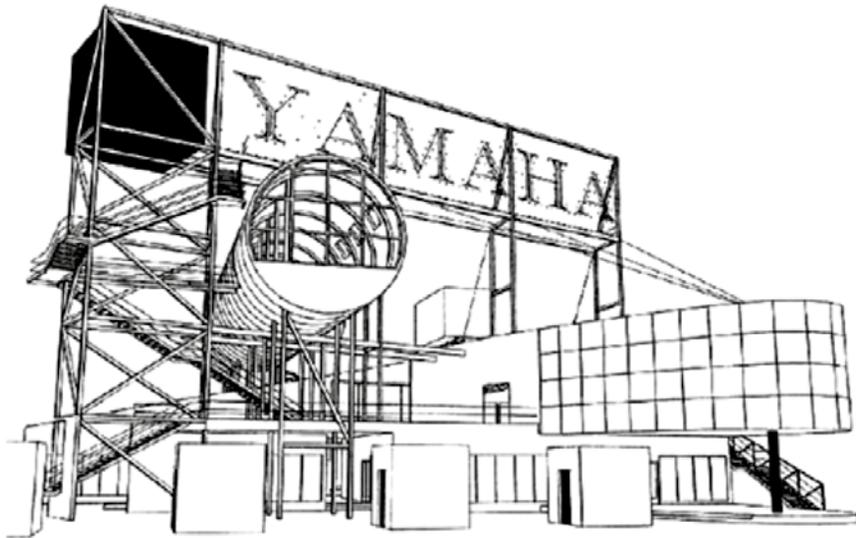
11. Jüri Okas, Marika Lööke. Commercial centre to Tallinn city. Project for the 1991 Milan international exhibition *The Future of the Cities*. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

PÕHIKORRUS

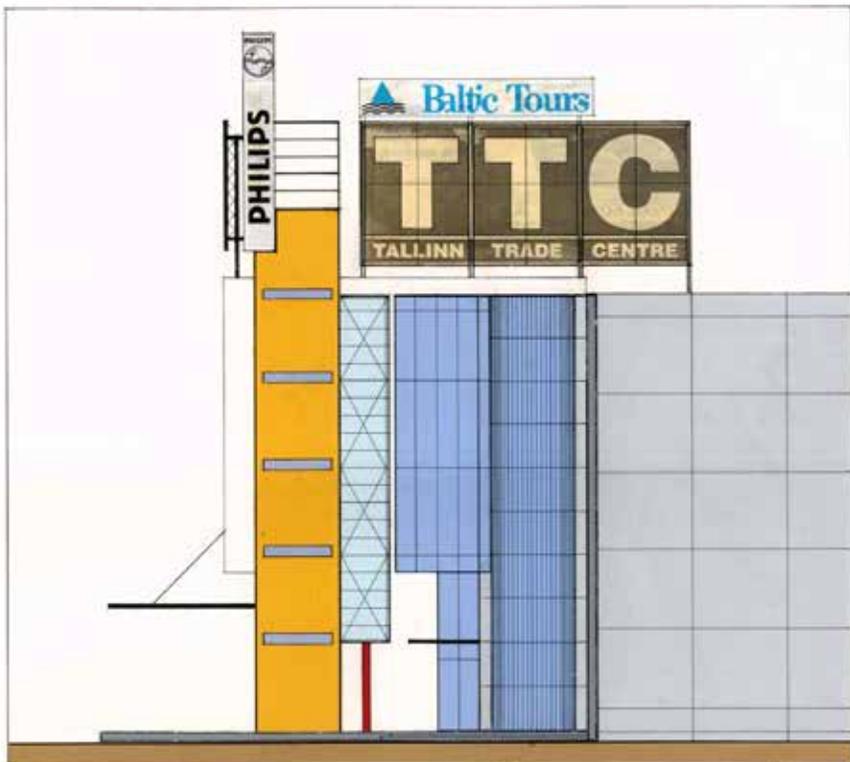
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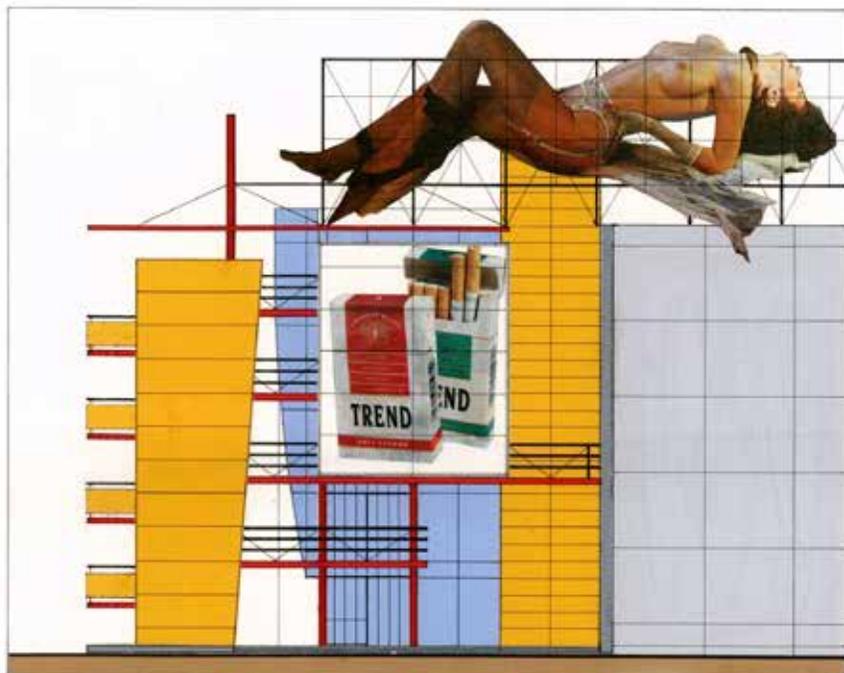
TATARI TÄNAV



15. Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik. Life Centre in Tallinn, 1994.
Courtesy of Künnapu & Padrik Arhitektid.

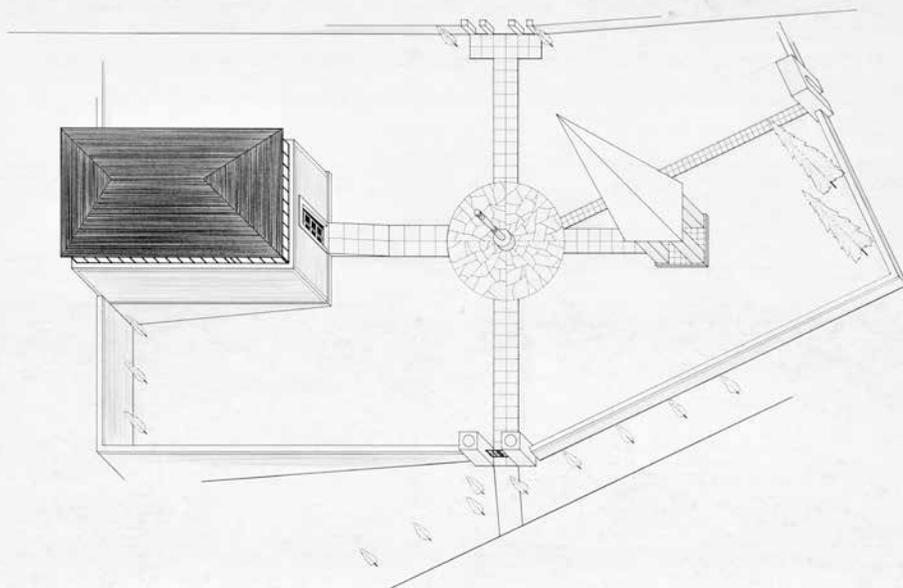


VARIANT 31 PÄRISTEPEENIHTUS - BÜROKORUURID GRADE 1/1/100

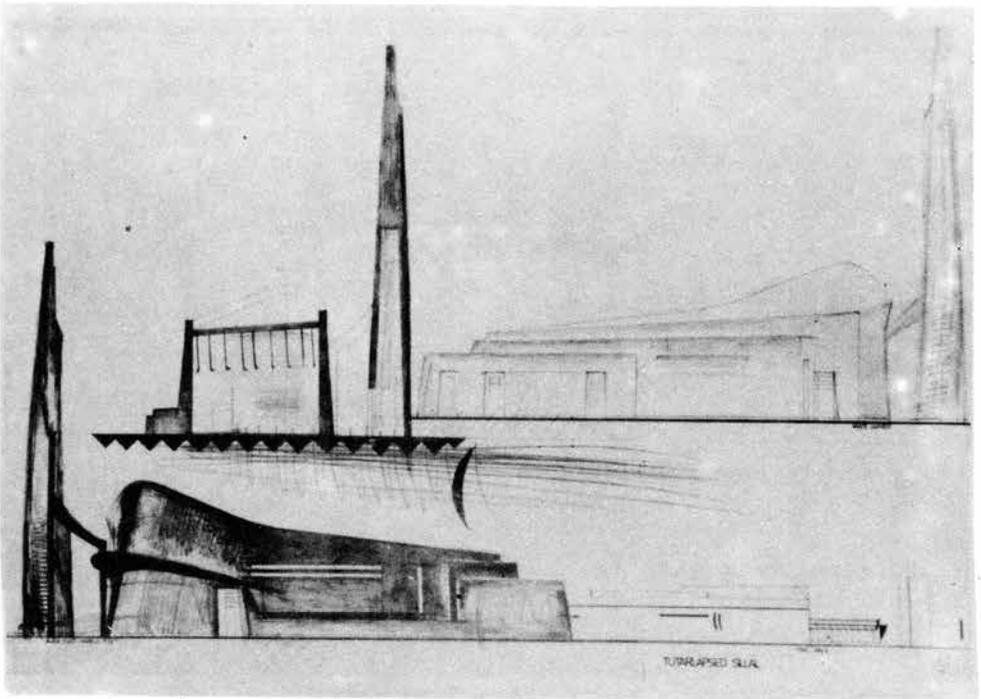
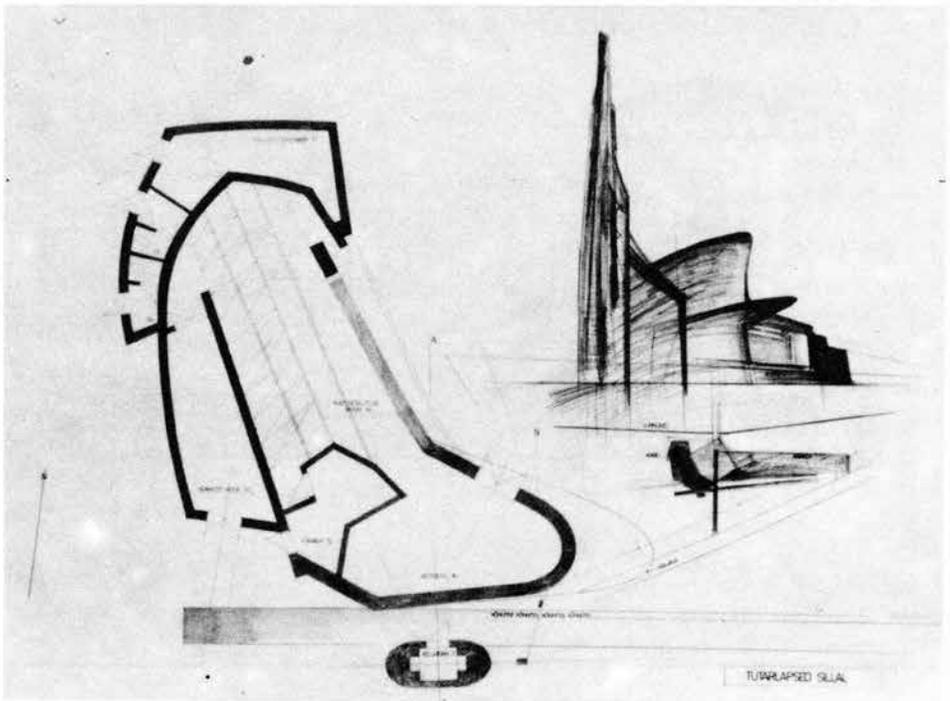


VARIANT 24 TEKNIKOPIIRIAD - KAUPLUSED GRADE 1/1/100

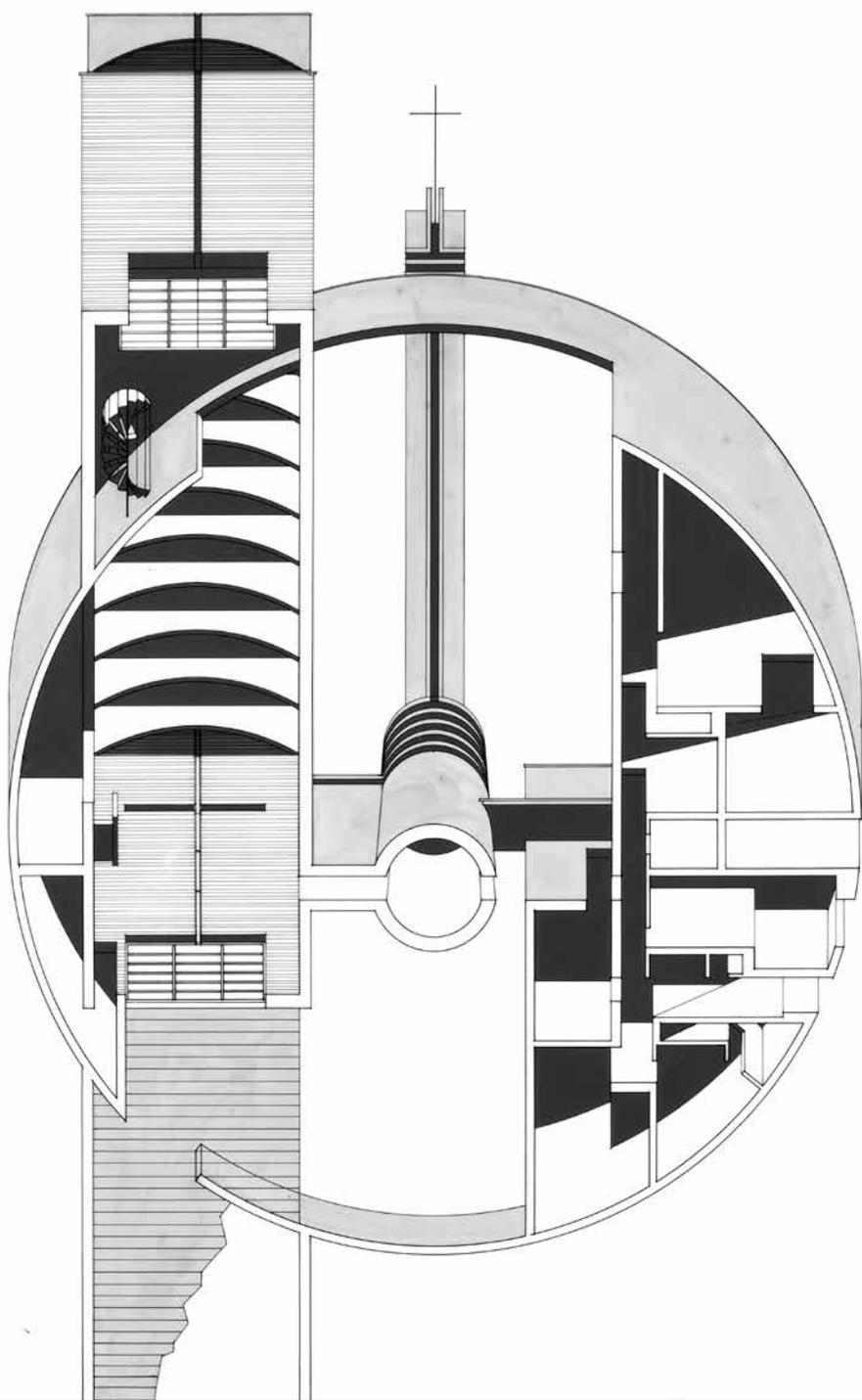
16. Jüri Okas. Corner solutions to prefabricated housing blocks in Lasnamäe, 1993. Courtesy of Jüri Okas.



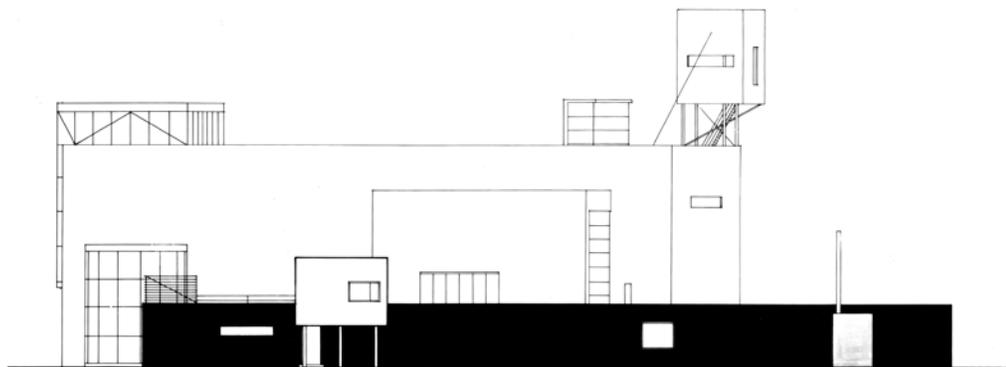
17. Leonhard Lapin. Competition for Haljala chapel, 1988, 1st prize.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.



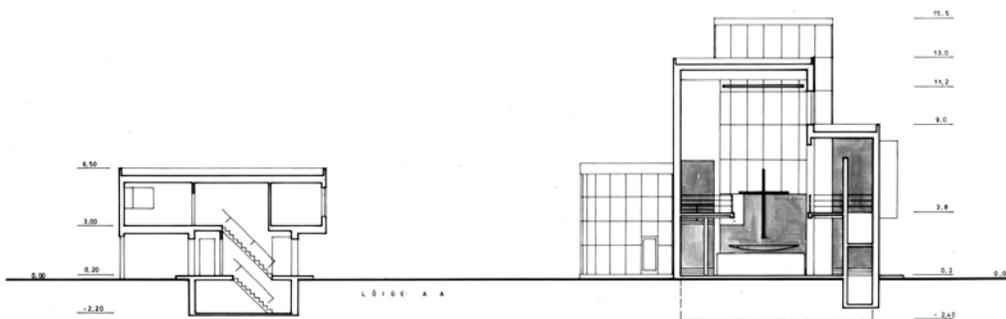
18. Urmas Muru. Competition for Haljala chapel, 1988, purchase prize.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.



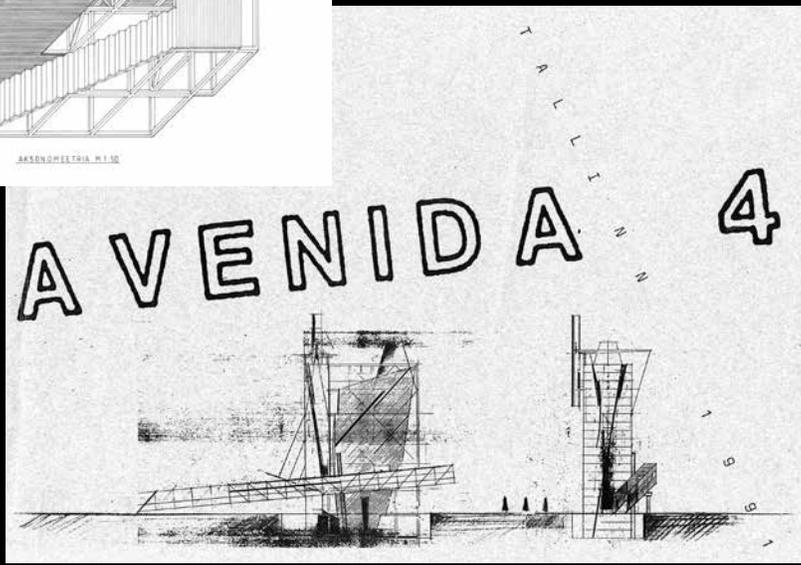
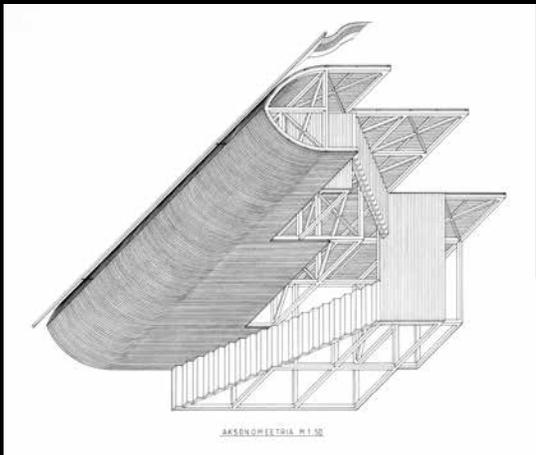
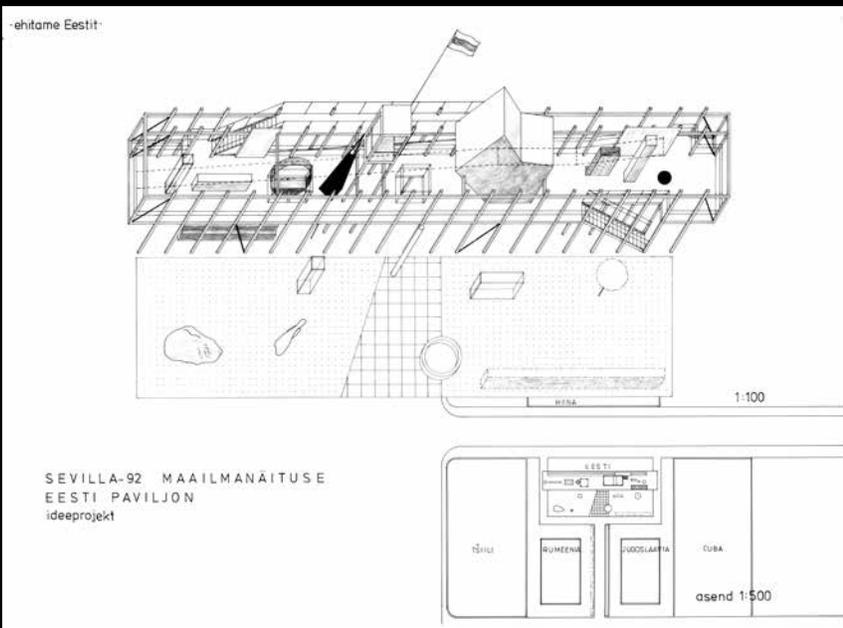
19. Emil Urbel. Competition for Saksi church, 1989, 1st prize.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.



VAADE RAUDTEELT

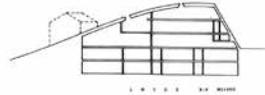
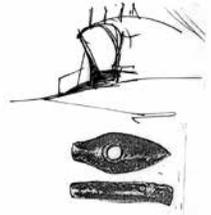
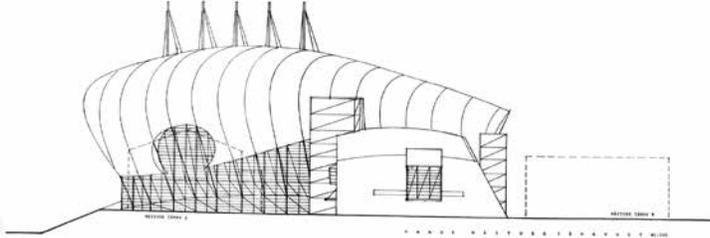
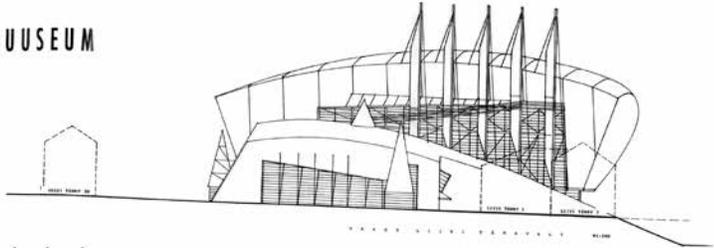


20. Andres Siim. Competition for Palivere church, 1989, 1st prize.
 Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.



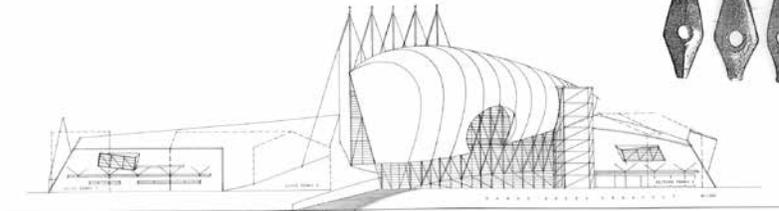
- 21. Vilen Künnapu. Competition for the Estonian pavilion at the Universal Exposition in Seville, 1992. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.
- 22. Leonhard Lapin. Competition for the Estonian pavilion at the Universal Exposition in Seville, 1992. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.
- 23. Jüri Okas. Competition for the Estonian pavilion at the Universal Exposition in Seville, 1992, 1st prize. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

EESTI RAHVA MUUSEUM



Põhja Kona

EESTI RAHVA MUUSEUM

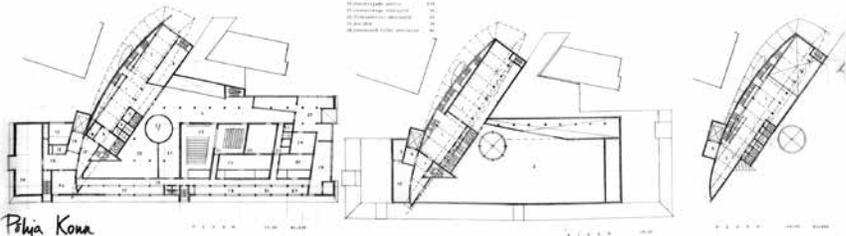


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Põhja Kona

24. Ra Luhse, Tanel Tuhal. Competition for the Estonian National Museum, 1993, 1st prize. Courtesy of Estonian National Museum.

Kas Naissaar

suudaks päästa Eesti tippteaduse ja kõrgkultuuri?

Kogu Ida-Euroopa elab viimastel aastatel üle vaimse arengu kõrgumise tragöödiat. Kui 1968. a. Praha kevade aegu jõudsid Poola, Tšehhoslovakkia, Ungari ja Jugoslaavia - tolleageisid minimaalseid vabadusi kasutades - maailma juhtivate kultuurriikide hulka, siis nüüd tuli nendes maades võimule madalam keskklass. Madalam keskklass aga ei vaja loovat inimest, ei teadlast, kes tegeleb tema jaoks iliga keeruliste probleemidega, ei kunstnikku, kellest ta aru ei saa. On vaja ainult seitsieli, mille nimeks "teadus", ja seitsieli, mille nimeks "kultuur". See kõik puudutab otseselt ka meid. Me seisame teelahkmel, kus igatüks meist peab mõtlima, kas Eesti, mida me ehitame, on ikka selline, nagu me teda aastakümneid oma südames kandisime. Kas meie ideaaliks saab keskpärasus või midagi, mis natukenegi kõrgem.

Euroopale on negatiivseks õppetunniks olnud linnamaa, kus aastasadu võideldi vabaduse eest, aga kui see vabadus lõpuks saabus, tekkis olukord, kus rahvuse vaimse kultuuri elit lahkus oma kodumaalt. Siin polnud teda enam kellelegi vaja. Ja ei meelita tagasi isegi see, et vaimuimeine on linnamaal täielikult väbustatud maksudest. Aga tavaline iirlane peab kortsis pidu ning lasab laulu saatel mär-

jukesel hea maitsa.

Ehitusmeistrite salateadus

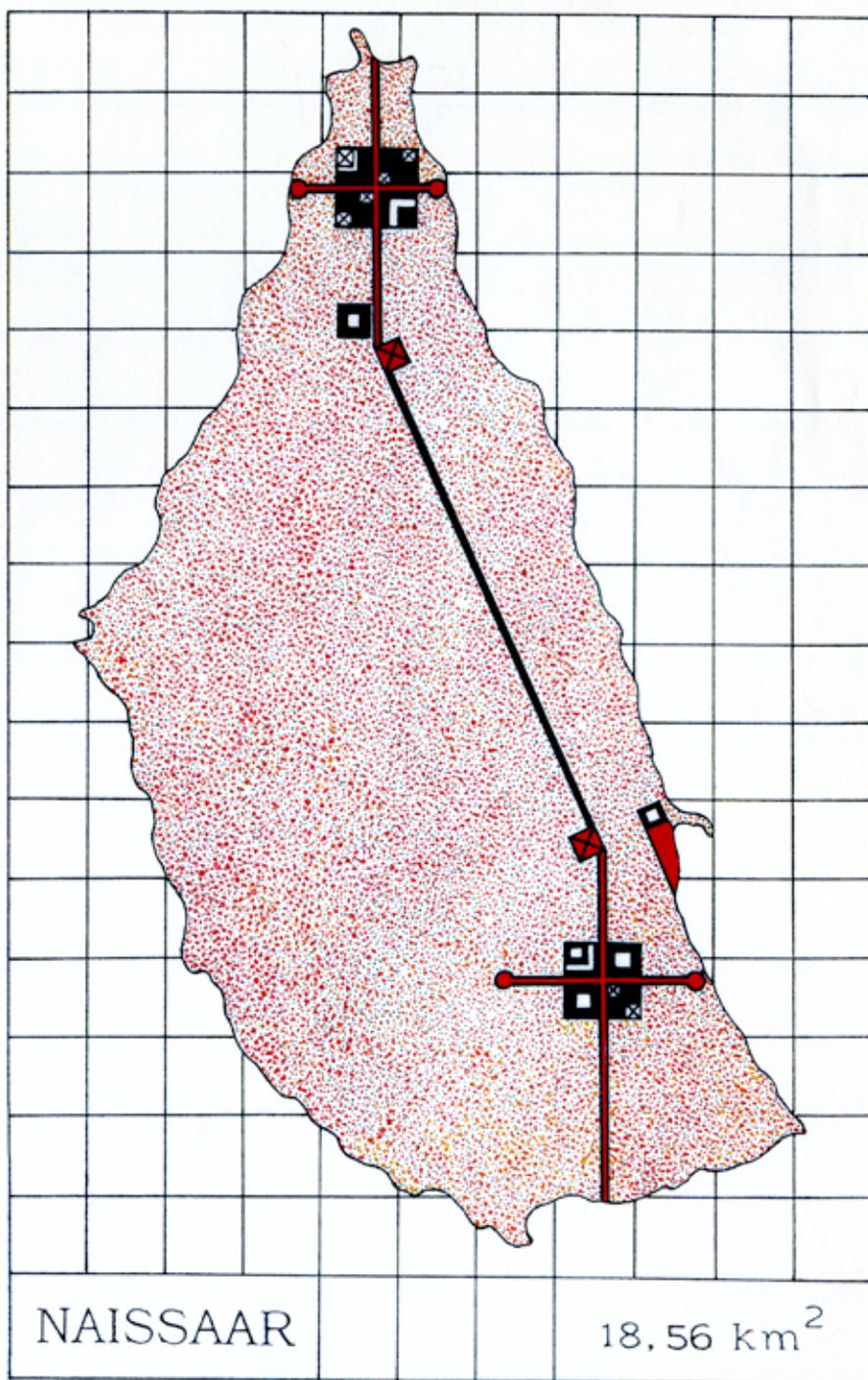
Kas te olete kunagi mõelnud, millise kasvumahuga linna kujutatakse endale ette kunagised Tallinna rajajad? Milliseks oli arvestatud Tallinna osatähtsus teiste Euroopa linnade hulgas? Tundub, nagu ei oleks neile küsimustele võimalik leida vastust, aga ormei oli kunagistel ehitusmeistritel salateadus GEOMANTIA, sama, mis aastatuhandeid kannab Hiinas nime FENG SHUI. Seda mõistes leiame me vastuse nii Tallinna tulevase kasvu kui ka linna kõrguse kohta.

Linnade rajamisel arvestab GEOMANTIA maa energiooni, maastikuvormi-

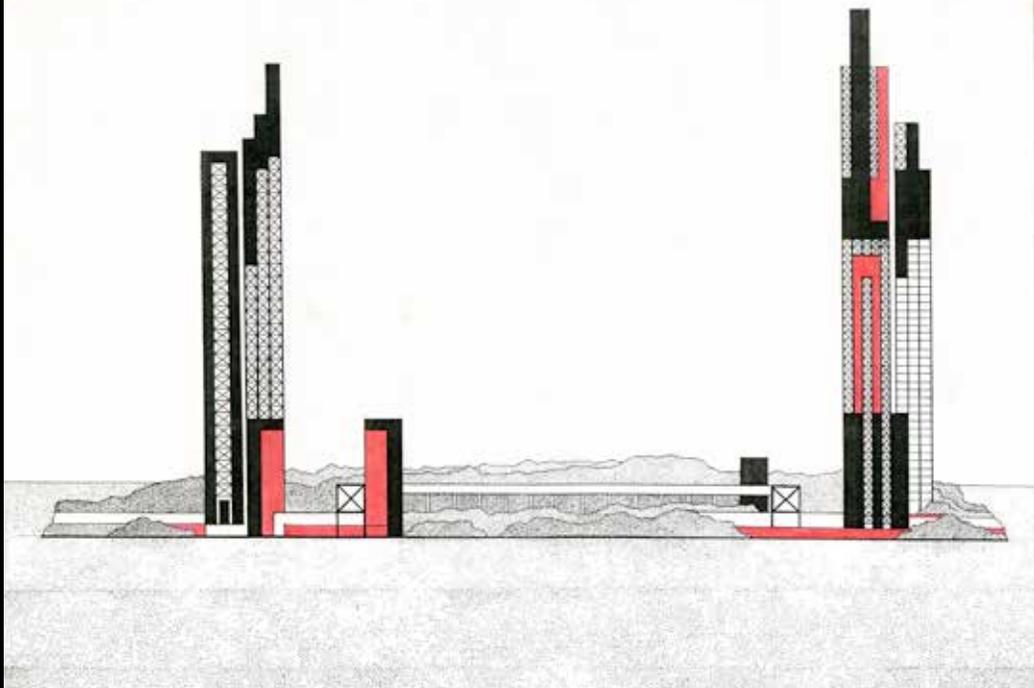
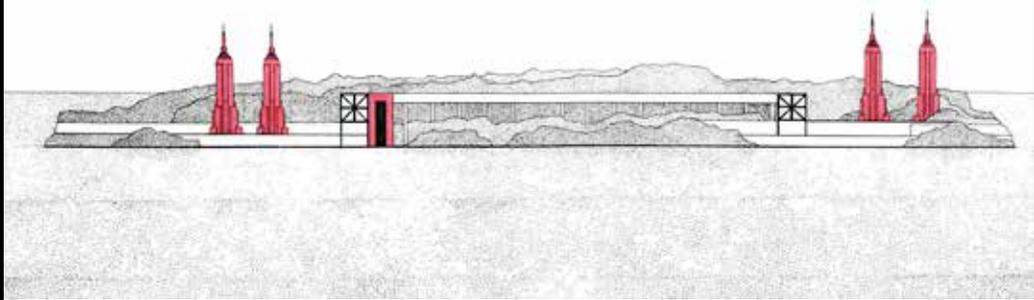
de omapära, vee ja maismaa suhet. Kõik see on allutatud looduse esinova kahe algprintsipi, naiseliku ja meheliku alge (YIN-YANG) talustiku tasakaalustamiseks, et tagada inimesele materiaalseks ning vaimseks arenguks soodne keskkond. On üllatav, et võttes kätte Tallinna plaani, näeme siin ühtegi kõrgi talustikumat FENG SHUI'i näidet. Just sellist, nagu me kirjanduse kaudu leiame muistselt Hiinast.

Mida me siis võiksime välja lugeda, kui teeksime oma kodumaa geomaatilise analüüsi? Kõigepeale seda, et Tallinn on kavandatud tunduvalt suurem ja kõrgem, kui me seni endale teadvustanud oleme. Suur Tallinn algab energaaliselt Naissaarest. Pange tähele: GREAT YIN samastub siin mäga! Kui Tallinn kasvab välja oma esialgselt mündega piiratud alast, muutub hädavajalikuks ka Naissaare väljajähtamine. Oma kasvus ulatub Tallinn aga Viimsi poolsaare ja Aegna saaroni. Osmäe ja Lasnamäe väljajähtamine oli õksitus. Geomaatilisest aspektist on Harju järve ümbrus energeetiline null. Samas omavad aga nii Aegna saar kui ka Harju järve põhja puutumatusse aspekti. Seisisesse paika elamurajooni projekteerimisel tuleks olla eriti ettevaatlik. Lasnamäe asemel oleksime pidanud välja ehitama Viimsi poolsaare. Nüüdsel kujul põhjustab Lasnamägi linna üldpindala tunduvalt suurenemist. Võib muidugi mitte uskuda aastatuhandete varust tarkust, aga võtke kätte ja jalutage korra Linnahalli juures Kopli poolsaare tippu. Seal, kus tavapärast meredärsetes linnades asuvad kõige luksusikumad kvartallid, leiame meie oma kodulinnas vaid barakke ja vangimaju. Geomantia põhiprintsiipide rikkumine põhjustab seda. Alles Naissaare-Uuemista talve väljajähtamine vabastaks meid Kopli, Lilleküla ja Peiguranna pättide ja hulguiste agulitest. Uuemista aktiviseerimine tähendab Tartu maantee poolse Lasnamäe veeru tunduvalt

A

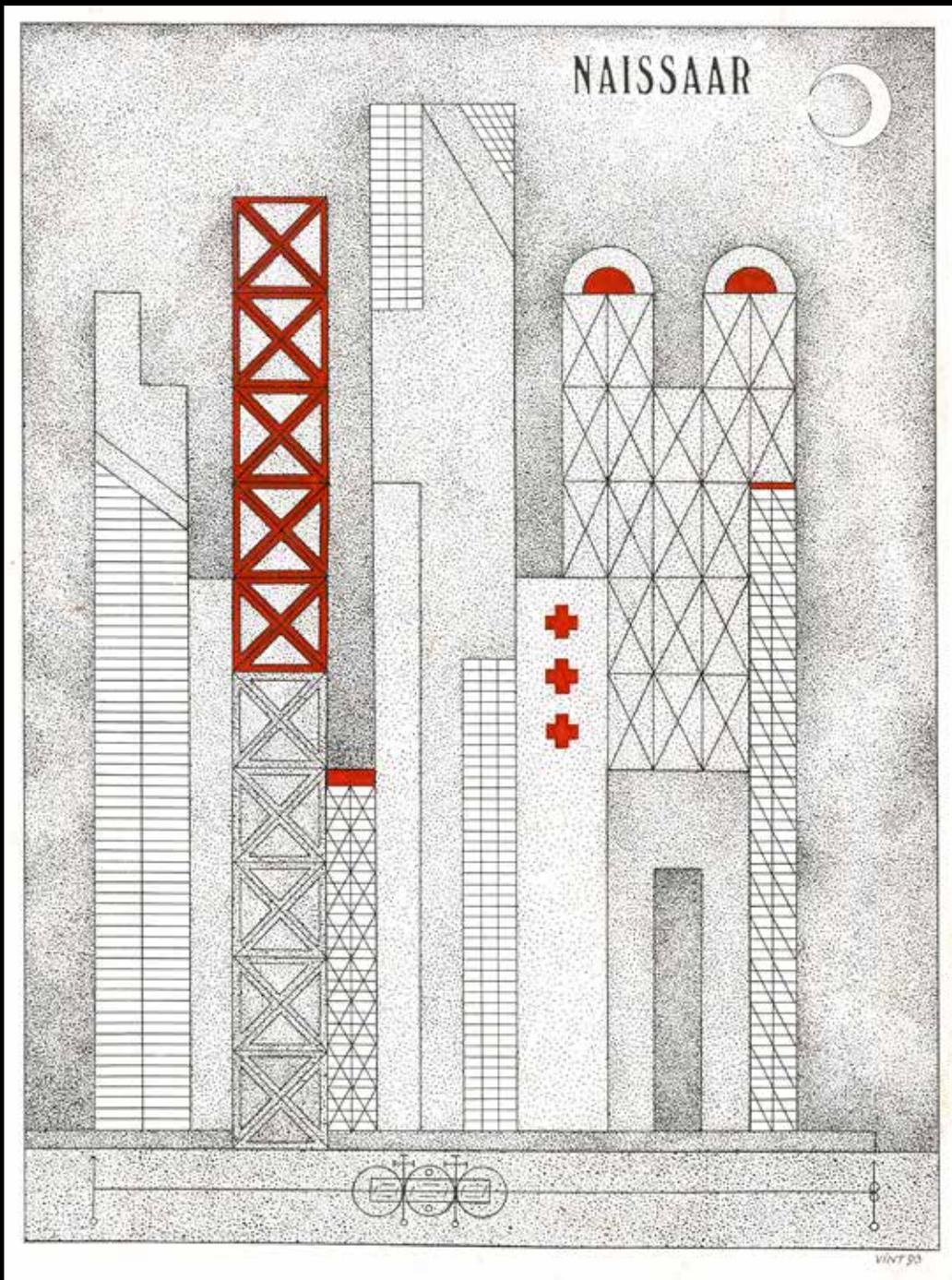


26. Tõnis Vint. Naissaar urban vision, 1993–1996. Plan. Courtesy of Eva Vint.

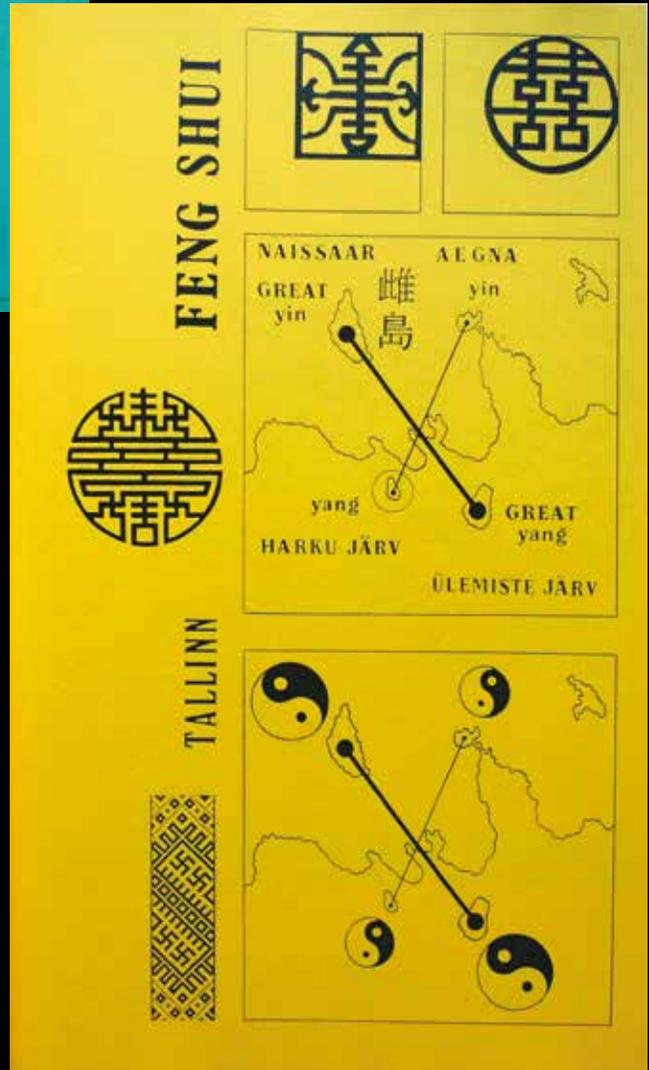


27. Tõnis Vint. Naissaar urban vision, 1993–1996. Elevation, lower version. Courtesy of Eva Vint.

28. Tõnis Vint. Naissaar urban vision, 1993–1996. Elevation, taller version. Courtesy of Eva Vint.



29. Tõnis Vint. Naissaar urban vision, 1993–1996. Buildings. Courtesy of Eva Vint.



30. Tõnis Vint. Naissaar urban vision, 1993–1996. Promotional brochure. Courtesy of Eva Vint.
31. Tõnis Vint. Naissaar urban vision, 1993–1996. Feng shui diagram. Courtesy of Eva Vint.

**DISCURSIVE
SPACE:
NORDIC-BALTIC
ARCHITECTURE
TRIENNIALS
IN
INTERNATIONAL
DIALOGUE**

The background of the page is a black and white architectural drawing. It features a complex network of lines, including straight lines forming rectangular shapes and curved lines that suggest organic or structural forms. The drawing is partially obscured by the large, bold text of the title, which is set in a sans-serif font and slanted to the right. The overall composition is dynamic and technical.

The interregnum of the end of the 1980s – beginning of the 1990s also marked noted transformations of the discursive space. On the one hand, they built upon previous developments of the 1980s but, on the other hand, marked profound changes regarding the possibilities, means and scope of advancing architectural discourse in terms of writing, public debate and exhibition practices. In design and construction practice, it was a time for radical reorientation from socialist models of building an economy to capitalist ones, a complete change from the system of large state design offices to small architecture offices as private enterprises, and a replacement of the state as a fairly anonymous client with a plethora of speculative players in the newly developing real estate field. At the beginning of the 1990s manual design methods were starting to be replaced by computer-aided design, leading to a number of previously non-existent issues related to the acquisition of hardware, software and know-how, as well as uncertainty concerning if and how this would change design practice. All of these factors necessitated a significant reorientation of architecture practice, and urgently required updated self-reflection on the discipline in relation to its social and economic position, as well as its cultural significance. However, the intensity of the changes and the challenges posed by adapting to the circumstances did not leave much time or energy for profound self-reflection: the beginning of the 1990s certainly witnessed a decline in architects' written output in terms of theoretical articles.³³² In the mainstream media, architecture surfaced most often as a topic related to the new entrepreneurial field of real estate, in relation to polemical urban planning competitions, or to portrait stories of architects in their new role as small entrepreneurs.

Adaptation to the tumultuously changing design conditions naturally involved accelerated borrowing from the West, using all existing opportunities and contacts and eagerly searching for new ones. However, the traffic of ideas was not just a one-way street: the fall of the Iron Curtain also led to a notable curiosity among practitioners in the West, eager to experience an exotic system operating so differently from their own, and hoping to establish new and potentially fruitful professional contacts. A limited number of personal and institutional contacts had existed since the 1960s, most notably with Finnish architects,³³³ but the situation after the proclamation of perestroika and glasnost was different, opening up communication on a much wider scale. One of the best examples of the specific

332 Triin Ojari, Sissejuhatuseks. – Triin Ojari (ed.), *Positsioonid. Lugemik uuest Eesti arhitektuurist*. Tallinn: Solness, 2012, p. 8.

333 See more: Karin Hallas-Murula, Soome-Eesti: Sajand arhitektuurisuhteid. Tallinn: Eesti arhitektuurimuuseum, 2005.

nature of encounters with the international architecture world and the readjustment processes of the architecture discourse of the transition era in general is the Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennials. As the name implies, they were meetings and discussion platforms for architects from the Nordic countries and the three Baltic States, established in Tallinn in 1990 and taking place every three years until 2005. In this chapter, I will focus on the first two triennials, taking place in 1990 and 1993, and will analyse the main motivations and primary messages of the Estonian initiators and the Nordic co-organisers of the events. The chapter will also look into what kinds of shifts of meanings and (mis-)translations happened in communicating the beliefs and values of practitioners on both sides, the political connotations of different architectures presented and promoted at the events, and what was at stake, for both sides, in an attempt to establish an institutional platform for facilitating such a regional international dialogue. A comparison of the triennials in 1990 and 1993 also highlights certain changes in the participants' expectations, their responses to the changing realities of design and construction conditions, and the shifting focal points in local and international architecture discourse that revealed themselves in this short span of time.

THE AMBITIOUS INITIATIVE

The Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennials were platforms for regional cooperation initiated by Estonian architects and involving representations from the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and the Nordic countries of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands (the latter only participated in the first triennial, in 1990). The event usually took place in September, and in its first instalment was comprised of a three-day symposium with lecturers from all of the participating countries, as well as some invited international stars and an exhibition with national representations. Additionally, the event was preceded by an international student workshop and followed by a programme of architecture excursions in Tallinn and other parts of the Baltics. The later triennials followed the same scheme, although occasionally the symposium lasted two days and sometimes, for instance in 1996, an additional urban installation programme was added to the regular exhibition. Over time the scope

and importance of post-event tours also diminished as the opportunities for regular travel for international tourists increased. The locations of the symposia and the exhibitions were different each time: in 1990 the event took place at the Blue pavilion of the exhibition grounds in Pirita Road, while in 1993 it was relocated to the Sakala culture centre in central Tallinn. Later premises included the Tallinn Art Hall, Estonian Museum of Architecture, and St. Nicholas Church. Each triennial had an overarching theme, decided by the organising committee, which served as a loose umbrella for presentations that ranged from introducing a certain architect's practice and/or their work(s) at the triennial exhibition, to more general accounts of current issues in architecture. The national representations at the exhibition were chosen by the respective architects' unions. The triennials ended with a concluding discussion, and a closing party.

The audacious idea of organising a major international architecture event at a time when Estonia was still a part of the Soviet Union was first presented by the architect Irina Raud in 1987 after visiting Interarch, a somewhat similar event of the Eastern Bloc in Sofia, Bulgaria.³³⁴ From the very beginning it was obvious that the establishment of an international event of such scope at such a politically intense period exceeded the scale of pure professional interests and plugged into larger developments of national identity formation. In this light, at a discussion at the Architects' Union, the architect Veljo Kaasik suggested³³⁵ that it would be most beneficial to align interests with the Nordic states, especially with smaller and internationally lesser-known countries, such as Iceland.³³⁶ An organising committee was formed at the Architects' Union, comprised of Irina Raud, Andres Alver, Veljo Kaasik and Miia Masso, with Ann Alari as an external aide who sent our invitation letters to the architects' unions of Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the Faroe Islands, Latvia and Lithuania. Irina Raud has stressed that it was a deliberate attempt to avoid the existing international cooperation models and networks of socialist Eastern Europe, such as *Baltic Sea – the Sea of Peace*, and to relate to the 'real' Western world instead.³³⁷ In spite of notable scepticism from some influential local architects regarding the feasibility of such an enterprise in turbulent times,³³⁸ the first contact was made with the Union of Swedish Architects: in June 1988, Ignar Fjuk was able to visit Swedish colleagues, sympathetic Estonian émigrés among them, and introduced the idea unofficially. This was followed by an official

334 Conversation with Irina Raud, 20 January 2015.

335 Piret Lindpere, Ega's ilma omakasuta? – Eesti Päevaleht 16 October 1990.

336 In a similar vein of 'mutual support of small nations', Iceland was also the first country

to officially recognise Estonia's restoration of independence in 1991.

337 Conversation with Irina Raud, 1 December 2017.

338 Conversation with Leonhard Lapin, 12 March 2015.

invitation for co-operation sent from the Union of Soviet Estonian Architects to the Union of Swedish Architects (Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, SAR) in August 1988.³³⁹ In September 1988, the representatives of Nordic architects' unions met in Denmark, and the general response to the idea was quite enthusiastic. The Union of Finnish Architects (Suomen Arkkitehtiliitto Finlands Arkitektförbund, SAFA), having the strongest existing links to Estonian architects, agreed to be the main coordinator among the Nordic countries.³⁴⁰ Considering that on the institutional level Estonian architects had no cooperation agreements or previous interaction with the Scandinavian professional organisations, the quick and eager response of the Nordic colleagues came as a surprise.³⁴¹ At the same time, the Estonian organising committee sent invitations to the Latvian and Lithuanian architects' unions, who were equally welcoming of the idea.

Regarding the Scandinavian countries, the invitation came at a moment when the reputation of their architecture and design was certainly not at its strongest. In the mid-1950s, Scandinavian architecture and design had enjoyed a high level of respect and success internationally due to such high-profile masters as Alvar Aalto, Arne Jacobsen and Sverre Fehn, with the image of a sober, minimalist yet humane approach being also intensely promoted with the help of state-supported travelling exhibitions, e.g. *Design in Scandinavia*, *Architecture in Finland* and *Sweden Builds*. However, by the 1980s, historicist postmodernism had become international mainstream, and the restricted Scandinavian sensibility was forced to the margins. In Finland, the death of Alvar Aalto in 1976 inspired a new wave of debate about the legacy of the master, and in this connection, also about the identity of Finnish architecture in general.³⁴² The first Alvar Aalto symposium in 1979, initiated with the aim of interpreting Aalto's heritage from a very broad range of theoretical viewpoints, provided an international forum for the discussion, followed by the *Schooner Symposium* the next year, with an impressive international line-up of architects and theoreticians debating the possibilities of postmodernism and regionalism on board the ferry *Svanhild*, cruising the Gulf of Finland.³⁴³ During the 1980s, the Aalto symposia

339 SAFA archive at the Finnish Archives of Salaried Employees. Documents concerning the Tallinn Triennial 1990.

340 Ibid.

341 Piret Lindpere, Ega's ilma omakasuta.

342 Anni Vartola, *The Aalto Card in the Conflict between Postmodernism and the Modernist Tradition in Finland*, 2013. https://www.alvaraalto.fi/content/uploads/2017/12/AAM_RN_Vartola.pdf, accessed on 15 March 2018.

343 The list of speakers was the following: Gerald Allen, Kristian Gullichsen, Vilhelm Helander, Pekka Helin, Helmut Jahn, Robert Kliment,

Heinrich Klotz, Markku Komonen, Sakari Laitinen, Daniel Libeskind, Kjell Lund, Charles Moore, Matti K. Mäkinen, Carl Nyrén, Richard Oliver, Juhani Pallasmaa, Timo Penttilä, Peter Pran, Anton Schweighofer, Roland Schweitser, Dennis Sharp, Michael Sorkin, Jean-Claude Steinegger, Jan Söderlund and Bartholomew Voorsanger. Cited in Anni Vartola, *Kuritonta monimuotoisuutta. Postmodernismi suomalaisessa arkkitehtuurikeskustelussa. Aalto-yliopiston julkaisusarja Doctoral Dissertations 103/2014*. Helsinki: Aalto ARTS Books, p. 69.

evolved into a continuous and viable platform for architectural discourse where the questions of Finnish architecture's current state and possible futures were deliberately approached in dialogue with international contexts, occasionally touching upon the question of a joint Nordic sensibility. In other Nordic countries, a similar tradition of a regular discussion platform in the conference format was missing, although its necessity had occasionally been brought up, most notably by Henning Larsen in the mid-1980s.³⁴⁴ In 1988 in Copenhagen his ideas, with organisational help from the architecture magazine *Skala*, bore fruit in the form of a conference on the Nordic tradition in architecture but this remained a one-time event without the ambition to grow into a regular regional series of meetings. In Sweden, the magazine *Tessin*, established in 1980, served as the main platform for theoretical debates about postmodernism and other urgent issues in architecture.³⁴⁵ In 1987 *Tessin* ceased to exist, leaving behind a significant void that might have contributed to the Swedish architects' enthusiasm for establishing a new regional theoretical platform. It was all the more needed considering that the deregulation of the Swedish financial market in 1985 and the ensuing building boom led by private developers and their commercial interests had thrown Swedish architecture into a state of crisis, where many basic principles supporting the previous welfare state architecture model came under threat and the social relevance of architecture needed urgent rethinking.³⁴⁶

Among Baltic colleagues, there was not much previous institutional cooperation either. There had certainly been attempts at some regular events, especially involving the younger generation of architects: in October 1985, there was a meeting of young Baltic architects in Tallinn entitled *The Role of Youth in the Theory and Practice of Architecture*, which included slide presentations of projects, discussions of architecture education, and excursions to recently completed buildings.³⁴⁷ In April 1988 a more extensive triennial of young Baltic architects followed in Vilnius, including an exhibition, presentations and an awards ceremony. From Estonia, 35 architects participated, and there were also guests from Finland and Poland, but regardless of the ambitious title of the event, it failed to grow into a regular platform. Reviews noted Estonian architects' remarkably different creative approaches in comparison to more conservative Latvian and Lithuanian designs,³⁴⁸ reflecting the

344 Conversation with Juhani Pallasmaa, 6 March 2018.

345 Helena Mattsson, Revisiting Swedish postmodernism: Gendered architecture and other stories. – *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 2016, Vol. 85, Issue 1, p. 117.

346 Helena Mattsson, Catharina Gabriellson, Pockets and Folds. – *E-flux*, <https://www.e-flux.com/>

architecture/overgrowth/221607/pockets-and-folds/, accessed 5 December 2019.

347 Aet Pikk (compiler), *Arhitektuurikroonika '85*. Tallinn: Valgus, 1987, p. 160.

348 Helju Sirel, Oleg Kotchenovsky (compilers), *Arhitektuurikroonika '88*. – Tallinn: Ehituse Teadusliku Uurimise Instituut, 1991, p. 241.

Estonian architects' general tendency to differentiate themselves from their 'less advanced' southern neighbours, the comparison being supported by the self-image of Estonia as the most Westernised Soviet state, which had been cultivated since the 1960s.

DIVERGING EXPECTATIONS

In November 1988, the first major preparatory meeting of the triennial was held in Tallinn, with representatives from the architects' unions of all three Baltic States, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark present; Iceland, Norway and the Faroe Islands delegated their representations. In an enthusiastic atmosphere, a five-member triennial executive board was formed, aided by an advisory council with representatives from each country. Two secretariats, one based in Tallinn and one in Helsinki, were to take care of all organising work of the Baltic and the Nordic participations, respectively. The first triennial was scheduled for autumn 1990 (ill. 32). The initial idea was a grand one, aimed at a thorough examination of architectural issues, as well as a wide-ranging synthesis with other cultural disciplines, such as film and music. The triennial was to be comprised of two main events: a three-day symposium with lecturers from all participating countries, and an exhibition where each country was to be represented by a group of three to six architects, who would devise displays specifically conceptualised as responses to the triennial general theme (ill. 33). The national displays were to be evaluated and awards given by a jury, with the exhibition as a whole intended to travel to the other participating countries after the event. In addition to the national participants, each symposium was to present a couple of invited keynote speakers. Those were to be internationally relevant architects or theoreticians who would set the tone for the whole triennial; for the first event, Kenneth Frampton, Christian Norberg-Schultz and Umberto Eco were invited, obviously trying to steer the discussion towards the realms of architectural regionalism and phenomenology, and also testifying to the monumental ambition of the organisers to offer a line-up of A-class speakers. Eco and Norberg-Schultz declined their invitations; Frampton was interested and was officially announced to lecture on 24 Sept,³⁴⁹ but due to practical problems did not attend. Instead, Peter Wilson and Julia Bolles-Wilson acted as invited guest speakers,

349 Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial program handout, 1990. Archive of Irina Raud.

although they were presented on the last day of the symposium and were not really assigned the role of keynoters.

In addition, there was to be a film and music programme: initially, it was imagined that each country would produce a specific film or video in dialogue with the triennial theme, to be evaluated by an award jury as well. Conceptual musical performances that would relate to architectural issues were also expected from each country, but in the course of the preparations the film and music programme underwent serious cutbacks (the music initiative actually found its only output in the Swedish Estonian Toomas Tuulse's musical poem *Baltoatlantis* at the opening, and the film programme only consisted of recent animation by Priit Pärn and documentaries by Mark Soosaar). For a week preceding the triennial, there was a student workshop for the three best architecture students of each country, led by Veljo Kaasik from the Estonian State Art Institute and tutored by other Estonian architects in Andineeme to the east of Tallinn, with a display of the results exhibited at the triennial venue. After the conference, day trips took place to different Estonian towns, as well as to Latvia and Lithuania.

Whereas there seems to have been a broad consensus about the structure of the event, content-wise the concerns and expectations of the Estonians, as the initiators, and the Scandinavians were somewhat different. For the Baltic architects, the main impetus was to reconnect to the Western cultural and intellectual milieu and to (re-) establish themselves as equal players in the international architectural world. Indeed, the event was linked to intense efforts to achieve a joint independent Baltic representation at the UIA separate from the representation of the architects of the Soviet Union. Such a request was officially made by Irina Raud at the UIA meeting in Montréal in the summer of 1990. The issue was again raised in a sympathetic triennial address by the participating UIA's Swedish general secretary, Nils Carlson, and the establishment of the Baltic Association of Architects' Unions followed in November 1990.³⁵⁰ At the same time, this thirst for professional communication and exchange of ideas was quite open, involving equally eager interest in a number of quite different architectural tendencies and trends. Looking for inspiration, the Baltic architects tended to be more concerned with broad ideas and visions rather than with the actual specifics of building contexts. In this sense, some comments in the minutes of a preparatory meeting by the

350 See more: Eduard Tüür, Nigeerlane eestlastele kohtumikuks? – Öhtuleht 18 June 1990; Arhitektide Liidus. – Reede 30 November 1990; Arhitektide Liidus. – Sirp 26 April 1991.

Norwegian organiser Elisabeth Seip are telling: *'The Estonians have a very specific but contradictory vision of the content of the event. They would like to address the most topical trends in current architecture of Western Europe and the USA; they are smitten with deconstructivism and so-called contextual art. At the same time they demonstrated obvious frustration when we tried to bring in issues that would be most beneficial to them, such as contemporary construction materials, building techniques, organisation of the construction site, more convenient and inclusive housing, rehabilitation of mass housing areas and building upkeep.'*³⁵¹ In a very down-to-earth manner, especially the minutes taken by Swedish and Norwegian organisers reveal a rather practical inclination with a keen willingness to share the experiences that would be most beneficial and more or less applicable in the rapidly developing situation of the Baltics. The Swedes proposed that the triennial should be used as an opportunity to introduce and promote the Nordic Institute for Planning (Nordplan) in Stockholm, which had recently undergone a re-conceptualisation of its curriculum: *'As far as we know, the Estonians have not been able to study architecture or planning anywhere outside the Soviet Union – studying abroad would have been unthinkable. We in the Nordic countries should show initiative and now draw up some sensible economical solutions for that. For instance, studying could be combined with a half-time job at an architecture office to make it feasible and give valuable experience as well.'*³⁵²

At the same time, the official documents painstakingly avoided any references to a colonialistic 'aid mission' to the Baltics. The funding application presented to the Nordic Cultural Foundation,³⁵³ as well as promotion texts and press releases,³⁵⁴ stressed that it was not a matter of a meeting of East and West but rather a revitalisation of an existing historical tradition around the Baltic sea and a case of common interests among cultures in fringe areas in relation to the dominant international mainstream. An exhibition proposal that was submitted to a Finnish open call (although not chosen to represent Finland at the triennial) stated the case even more clearly. In the face of the process of establishing the European Union and its possible threat of levelling off specific regional features, the proposal stressed the necessity of consciously opposing such forces by fostering authentic connections with local tradition and regional identities: concerns common to all Nordic and Baltic countries.³⁵⁵ The same

351 SAFA archive at the Finnish Archives of Salaried Employees. Documents concerning the Tallinn Triennial 1990.

352 Ibid.

353 Ibid.

354 Arkkitehtuuriuutiset 1990, No. 2, pp. 22–23; NBAT press release, personal archive of Gunnel Adlercreuz.

355 The proposal was submitted by Marja-Riitta Norri, Petri Blomstedt, Kristian Gullichsen, Pekka Helin, Markku Komonen, Marja-Riitta Norri, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Kirmo Mikkola. SAFA commented about the decision to reject it and select the other submitted proposal that a starting platform such as NBAT would be more suitable for the younger generation. – SAFA archive at the Finnish Archives of Salaried Employees. Documents concerning the Tallinn Triennial 1990.

concerns were explicitly raised in an advertisement published by SAFA in the magazine *Progressive Architecture: Participants in the first Nordic/Baltic Architecture Triennial, 'Metropolism and Provincialism'*, will concentrate on questions such as: 'What should the role of architecture be in order to preserve national identity in an integrated Europe?'³⁵⁶ For the Baltics, establishing their national identity through cultural production, such as architecture, was of course relevant in the context of all of the restoration of independence processes, but the ability to consider the issue in a new context of an integrated Europe was most likely something that eluded them in the fervour of breaking loose from the previous forced association with the Soviet Union.

NATIONALISTIC MYTHS AND THE ISSUE OF PROVINCIALISM

The issue of being on the periphery in the face of the soon-to-be legal reality of the European Union and the trends of the international architectural mainstream was addressed by the title of the event itself. The title (and main theme) was a matter of dispute. The first letters sent out by the Estonian initiators included different title proposals: *Metropolism in the Province*, *Metropolism and Provincialism*, *Dull Architecture*, *Heritage of the Future*, *Identity of the Avant-Garde* and *Northern Lights and Southern Winds*. The minutes reveal intense disagreements over the possible theme, as well as misunderstanding and confusion over the wording that was eventually chosen: *Metropolism and Provincialism*, effectively the one that was proposed as the main idea by the Estonians in the first place. The theme reflected the narrative of the disadvantages and advantages of peripheral culture that had entered into the local art and architectural discourse in the Soviet era, and was simultaneously addressed at the Finnish-Estonian art seminar *Periphery and Centre*, which took place in Helsinki in spring 1989. There, Leonhard Lapin emphasised the specific advantages that peripheral positions had over mainstream European culture, namely the ability to challenge European rationality with irrationality and the absurd, and countering the dualistic mode of thinking with concepts of endless space and circularly flowing time. In Lapin's view, such notions were common to both Estonian and Finnish culture, revealing the need for a common cultural mission.³⁵⁷ At the NBAT, the issue

356 Nordic-Baltic Triennial, 24–26 September. – *Progressive Architecture* 1990, No. 6, p. 36.

357 Leonhard Lapin, *Perifeeria ja keskus*. – Leonhard Lapin, *Kaks kunsti*. Tallinn: Kunst 1997, p. 15.

acquired a slightly more provocative twist: the word ‘provincialism’ was evidently perfectly in tune with the Estonian team’s playful and self-ironic attitude, intrinsic in the Soviet context, but was met with a great deal of suspicion and disapproval from the Nordic organisers, who considered it derogatory. It is revealing that the Finnish continued to use the parallel titles (with double conjunctives further accentuating the indecision) *Metropolism and/in Provincialism* and *International and/versus Identity* in their promotion articles;³⁵⁸ in the Nordic culture foundation application, written in Finnish, the title was likewise presented differently in Finnish and English.³⁵⁹ This discomfort continued right into the event itself, where the moderator of the closing panel discussion, Kristian Gullichsen, downplayed it by stating that, after all, the theme was just an excuse to come together.³⁶⁰ Similarly, one of the Estonian participants, Toomas Rein, declared that the title of the event was completely irrelevant and did not have any effect on his input to the exhibition whatsoever.³⁶¹

The theme was taken more seriously by the Baltic presenters and exhibitors. The lecturers of three Baltic States, Ignar Fjuk from Estonia, Modris Ģelzis from Latvia and Gediminas Baravykas from Lithuania, all tried to give a very broad overview of the history and essence of their respective national architectures, based on an intensely binary pattern of local specificities in the face of alien metropolitan influences. Modris Ģelzis started with references to Latvian indigenous culture before the medieval Christianisation as an introduction of an alien culture; he continued by discussing the turbulences of the 20th century with European-style eclecticism at the turn of the century, brief independence as an assertion of a genuine Latvian culture, and the near-destruction of national architectural culture during the Soviet era. According to Ģelzis, Latvian architecture had retained its local rural roots in spite of all of these difficulties, metropolitan influences coming during different centuries from various centres of culture, and this indigenous core should be something to build contemporary and future architectural developments on. He concluded with a question, *‘[i]s it not so that our historical architectural heritage with its peculiar provincial appeal is our principal advantage and source of wealth? In the present world, which imposes all kinds of mighty influences on us, it is important to maintain something that is peculiar only to you, characteristic only to you, and to keep the right to choose your own metropolis.’*³⁶²

358 Kutsu Tallinnan triennaaleen. – Arkkitehtuuriuutiset 1989, No. 4.

359 Metropolism and Provincialism. Kansainvälisyys ja paikallinen identiteetti (transl. Internationalism and Local Identity). – SAFA archive at the Finnish Archives of Salaried Employees. Documents concerning the Tallinn Triennial 1990.

360 Karin Hallas, Örnevöimalustest Põhja-Baltis. – Eesti Ekspress 1990, No. 38 (53), p. 4.

361 Ann Alari, Aeg arhitektuuritriennaali eel. – Reede 14 September 1990.

362 Modris Ģelzis, Metropolism and Provincialism in the Course of the Development of Latvia’s Architecture. – Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial Tallinn 24–26 September 1990. Catalogue. Published by the NBAT II Committee, s.l. Unpaginated leaflet of conference papers.

In the exhibition, this search for something genuinely Latvian, untouched by either Western European or Soviet impulses was exemplified by the project *Latvian Mandala* by Ģirts Ādminis, Zintis Butāns, Zaiga Gaile, Ivars Slivka, Ausma Skujiņa and Raitis Jelevičs (ill. 35). The project stemmed from the traditional rural homestead, trying to elevate the basic pyramidal forms to the level of the deep spiritual experience of almost cosmogonic significance, describing the archetypal farmstead as Latvians' spiritual centre and their model of the world. The project implied criticism of contemporary Western architecture as 'a visually effective game of form' that had lost its integration with nature and with human perception.³⁶³ Another Latvian exhibit, the postmodernist National Library project by the émigré Latvian Gunnar Birkets, was also heavily entwined with folk tales, although it was found to be rather unconvincing and megalomaniac by other participating Latvian architects.³⁶⁴ Birkets also had the opportunity to introduce his architectural credo at the symposium, where he stressed his unique position as someone with Latvian roots but international construction experience. Based on the latter, Birkets emphasised the need to find a genuine national architectural idiom, warning against copying international trends and the pursuit of fast success and recognition. While in his talk Birkets called for valuing ethnic and vernacular heritage and exercising self-restraint in architectural expression, his pompous project for the library did not seem to actually live up to the promise of his words.

Gediminas Baravykas of Lithuania confined his lecture to the second half of the 20th century, although constructing the narrative of Lithuanian architecture similarly as a series of responses to outside influences, some imposed, some voluntary, including Stalinist repression, 1960s–1970s Scandinavian influences, and later trends of English brutalism, Japanese metabolism etc., asking '*what is genuine, if so many impacts have been exerted on such a small country?*'³⁶⁵ At the exhibition, the Lithuanian answer to the question was twofold: rural references in the form of huge straw bales as a design device in their display, and a strong assertion of Catholicism, condemned during the Soviet times, but now again seen as essential to the national identity. In this respect, the Lithuanian cultural context was similar to the Polish one, where a widespread boom in building new churches had started in the 1980s, and Catholicism was widely seen as an essential constituent of national identity and a source of resistance to Soviet

363 *Latvian Mandala*. – Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial Tallinn 24–26 September 1990. Catalogue. Published by the NBAT II Committee, s.l., p. 43.

364 Leena Maunula, *Baltian arkkitehtuuri aukeaa maailmalle*. – Helsinkin Sanomat 1 October 1990.

365 Gediminas Baravykas, *Influence of Western Architecture on the Development of Lithuanian Architecture in 1960–1989*. – Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial Tallinn 24–26 September 1990. Catalogue. Published by the NBAT II Committee, s.l. Unpaginated leaflet of conference papers.

oppression.³⁶⁶ Accordingly, the highlight of the Lithuanian display was a design for a new Catholic church in central Vilnius by Baravykas, Andrius Bucás, Markas A. Cukermanas and Remigijus Bimba, an attempt at reconciling the traditional liturgical requirements and clerical expectations with abstract neo-modernist formal language. With its location in the midst of a Soviet prefabricated housing area, the church design conveyed an intense symbolic message.

Ignar Fjuk from Estonia continued the myth-making, picturing Soviet-era Estonia as a reluctant province of Moscow that had opposed Moscow through a deliberate alignment with everything Western. In a bout of self-criticism, Fjuk wondered if the desire to be as 'Western' as possible had at times gone too far, resulting in losing Estonia's own authenticity. Real freedom involved freeing oneself from a provincial attitude towards both the Soviet and Western sides: a renewing society would require a more honest attitude towards itself.³⁶⁷ The Estonian exhibition highlighted the most notable works of the Tallinn school architects Toomas Rein, Leonhard Lapin, Jüri Okas and Marika Lõoke, who had already achieved some international recognition with exhibitions in Helsinki (1984), Zürich (1989) and Stockholm (1990). It also included competition works of the slightly younger architects Andres Alver and Tiit Trummal, Raoul Kurvitz and Urmas Muru, and Andres Siim and Hanno Kreis. It included such executed projects as a set of the most notable buildings from the EKE Projekt design office, as well as non-executed and more or less conceptual designs, such as Toomas Rein's axonometric of a single-family house *Nirvana*, Okas and Lõoke's high-end hotel at the Tallinn seaside, and Kurvitz and Muru's Estonian Art Museum, the model being displayed submerged in an aquarium. The projects did not necessarily share common stylistic or conceptual principles but were nevertheless all executed in awareness of different Western architectural debates and trends. They also displayed an awareness of the architectural exhibition as a discursive device and a site of polemic and production, building upon a tradition that had started with the Tallinn school exhibitions in 1978. In an interview conducted in conjunction with the triennial, Toomas Rein explicitly stated the great importance of the architectural exhibition as a context for up-to-date polemics, as well as a site of praxis.³⁶⁸ In general, the individual projects of the Estonian participants did not explicitly reference ethnographic traditions or the notion of 'local roots' in the

366 For more, see Lidia Klein and Alicja Gzowska, *One Size Fits All*.

367 *Metropolism ja provintsialism*. – *Eesti Elu* 1990, No. 7, pp. C6–C7.

368 Ann Alari, *Aeg arhitektuuritriennaali eel*.

way that the Latvians and Lithuanians tried to do. However, the issues of the contradictions of traditional references and the demands of the modern world were exemplified in the overall exhibition design of Andres Alver, who combined technicist metal structures with the rawness of limestone heaps, locally acknowledged as the unofficial 'national stone' of Estonia. Through such a choice, Alver was unwittingly laying the foundations for a certain 'limestone poetics', which was to become heavily exploited during the following years in similar contexts of national displays, e.g. the 1992 Seville Expo.

REGIONAL IDENTITIES IN INTEGRATING EUROPE

The Nordic presenters saw the theme in a broader perspective. The Swede Carl Nyrén stressed that in integrating Europe, architects should look to regional affiliations rather than national identities. Such a position was instantly met with suspicion in the Estonian reviews, which stated without embarrassment that it would be very unwelcome if Estonian architecture were seen as part of Baltic architecture: we were far too Nordic for that, and our identity could not be based on nationalistic kitsch (implying that the architectures of the other two Baltic countries were). This was a matter of aligning, if not with the avant-garde, at least with originality, contemporaneity and freshness.³⁶⁹ For Nyrén, however, it seemed that it was some kind of 'Europeanness' that was at stake after all, considering the possible future developments primarily in the context of the whole of Europe. He seemed to be optimistic about the coming European community, which would lead to international student exchanges and greater opportunities for design exchange, openly welcoming more foreign architects' designs to Sweden: *'Their example and influence will be all the more beneficial if we too can live in their buildings instead of just looking at drawings and pictures.'*³⁷⁰ At the same time, Nyrén also warned against possible strict all-European regulations with the coming of the European Union. Regarding design praxis, he remained optimistic: *'There is nothing about this trans-boundary contact to suggest an obliteration of regional architecture. /.../ It is the skill of the architect that is most decisive, and an outsider often sees things more clearly.'* However, in the context of migration, Nyrén touched on not only the beneficial

369 Üksikmõtteid Põhjamaade-Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaalilt. – Reede 12 October 1990.

370 Carl Nyrén, *Metropolism and provincialism. – Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial Tallinn 24–26 September 1990. Catalogue. Published by the NBAT II Committee, s.l. Unpaginated leaflet of conference papers.*

knowledge exchange but on the broader issue of immigration, reflecting on the recent migration of Southern Europeans to Sweden, and predicting a much larger influx yet to come from Eastern Europe and what effects this would have on the built environment. At the exhibition (ill. 34), the issue was exemplified by a display of the Tensta housing renewal project. At the end of the 1980s Tensta underwent marked population changes, with a massive influx of immigrants of Northern African and Middle Eastern origin. In 1989, it was chosen as an experimental case for participatory housing renewal, where the agenda was focused not so much on altering the physical built environment as on achieving social, cultural and administrative change with the aim of ‘the community’ taking over and continuing to self-manage the renewal. The programme involved negotiating with hundreds of households and working out general guidelines for halting urban degradation, but was abruptly stopped with the change of government in 1992.³⁷¹ In the milieu of the triennial exhibition, which highlighted avant-garde gestures and poetic ruminations, the Tensta project was a completely different, sociological approach, whose ethical stance was probably quite lost on the audience, for whom the issue of housing for immigrants was too painful to even consider. Indeed, the problems and solutions at Tensta were reminiscent of the vast Soviet-era prefabricated suburbs largely filled with Russian-speaking immigrants from other parts of the Soviet Union: a situation familiar in all of the Baltics. But at the height of the national awakening, where one of the most-cited slogans was ‘Stop Lasnamäe’, which called for halting the construction of such areas (and ideally for even more than that, latently wishing no less than complete removal of such areas and populations), the Baltic architects had a markedly different attitude towards the problems of such urban and social environments.

The dialogue of European and non-European architectural traditions was also addressed by Henning Larsen, who presented his recent award-winning Saudi Arabia Ministry of Foreign Affairs building in Riyadh. In this project the integration of modernism and Islamic heritage was primarily on the symbolic level and the regionalist gesture was discussed from the perspective of individual oeuvre. The same was true of Sverre Fehn, whose much-praised lecture supported the understanding that a truly genuine amalgamation of architecture, nature and local identity was possible due to the creative genius of a great architect.³⁷² The symposium was concluded by Juhani Pallas-

371 See more: Meike Schalk, *Old News from the Contact Zone: Action Archive in Tensta*. – Doina Petrescu, Kim Trogal (eds.), *The Social (Re)production of Architecture. Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*. London and New York: Routledge, 2017, pp. 329–345.

372 Sören Thurell, *Vaikutelmia Tallinnasta*. – *Arkkitehti* 1990, No. 8, pp. 2–3.

maa's *'apocalyptic prophecy delivered with tragic monotony'*³⁷³ as it was called by the reviewer Karin Hallas, condemning the consumption economy and postmodernism, star architects' idolatry and kitsch, and even regionalism, which could be applied as a stylistic concept of its own. Pallasmaa's prediction of social and cultural degradation concluded with a plea for an architecture of silence: an ascetic and contemplative architecture that rejected noise, efficiency and fashions, and lyricising the real things of everyday life.³⁷⁴ The most vigorous architecture critic in the Finnish scene, Pallasmaa rigorously promoted the position that aesthetic choices were in a reciprocal relationship with moral choices, which provided a basis for him to condemn scenographic American postmodernism and its occasional lure for Nordic architects.³⁷⁵ Calling for architecture to win back its artistic autonomy, Pallasmaa was clearly on the same page as Estonian architects, but this architecture as art was to refrain from any theatrical gestures, aiming rather at a certain poeticised naturality. However, not everyone saw such a retreat to architecture's idealised sphere as justified under contemporary social realities. After Pallasmaa had finished, Aldo van Eyck called his preaching on the architecture of silence unethical for a post-Soviet audience, who were only beginning to fight for decent lives for themselves: *'It is immoral to denounce the 'happy life' here, where it has never even been possible to lead a happy life!'*³⁷⁶ But this did not lead to a longer or more profound discussion of the compatibility of architectural ideals and urgent realities: especially for the Baltic participants, the event was primarily a happy occasion, a reason for feeling equal to their international peers and elevating them above the grim realities of the everyday, so they were more than eager to keep the discussion on the level of abstract conceptions and grand ideals. The local reviews emphasised the value of organising the event as an accomplishment in itself, citing compliments from foreign visitors,³⁷⁷ and stated almost unanimously that the Estonian display at the exhibition was the best one.³⁷⁸

It seems that the myth-making of the Baltic speakers, presenting their national architectures as small but having indigenous cores, and heroically resisting various outside influences, succeeded in making an impression on the visitors. A highly sympathetic review in the magazine *Arkkitehti* stated that as an outsider it was difficult to grasp all of the meanings and undercurrents of the Baltic architectural concepts but

373 Karin Hallas, *Õnnevõimalustest Põhja-Baltis*.

374 Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Limits of Architecture – Towards an Architecture of Silence*. – Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial Tallinn 24–26 September 1990. Catalogue. Published by the NBAT II Committee, s.l. Unpaginated leaflet of conference papers.

375 Anni Vartola, *Kuritonta monimuotoisuutta*, pp. 185–187.

376 Aldo van Eyck cited in Karin Hallas, *Õnnevõimalustest Põhja-Baltis*.

377 *Üksikmõtteid Põhjamaade-Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaalilt*.

378 *Ibid.*; Enriko Talvistu, *Metropolism and Provincialism*. – *Edasi* 29 September 1990.

that, in the face of the courage and maturity of these nations that had suffered heavily, the paternalistic counselling and grumbling of foreigners must seem like a nuisance rather than making sense.³⁷⁹ *‘They are living in a total uncertainty that at the same time embodies infinite possibilities: it is a situation of fertile chaos.’*³⁸⁰ The other Estonian lecturer, Vilen Künnapu further fortified this myth of possessing a very specific and valuable creativity derived from genuine contact with archetypal roots, as well as the interpretation of international concepts. Being the local star of the event, Künnapu had a separate satellite exhibition together with his partner Ain Padrik at the freshly opened Vaal gallery, with their international highlight, the 1989 Los Angeles West Coast Gateway competition second-prize project, taking central stage. A triennial review at a Finnish daily started with Künnapu claiming that they had *‘more commissions than our New York and Milan colleagues at the moment’*.³⁸¹ At the same time Künnapu stressed, both in the interview and in his triennial opening lecture, the opportunities arising from the confined Soviet everyday life: there was enough time for creative reflection and the ability to combine architecture practice with the cultivation of artistic and literary pursuits. The same was implied by Andres Alver, who told an interviewer in a national broadcast that so far, paradoxically, the Estonian architect had felt very free.³⁸² For Finnish architects, the Estonians’ uninhibited enthusiasm for combining postmodern theories with local and functionalist heritage, introduced at previous exhibitions and in magazine articles in Finland and now reaffirmed at the triennial, had an impressive and invigorating effect,³⁸³ and their ability to maintain artistic practices in addition to daily design work was for many an inspiration and even a source of envy.³⁸⁴ However, a Danish review added a more critical note, calling the Baltic exhibits sculpture rather than architecture, and attributing their reluctance to deal with actual architectural issues to a lack of opportunities to realise their ideas: *‘For the Baltic architects, the everyday struggles are obviously so big that it makes more sense to muffle oneself in avant-garde formalities. /.../ Their enthusiasm for extravagant international trends seems paradoxical at a time when it is national sovereignty that is at stake.’*³⁸⁵ The review concluded that the thematic focus of the event was too broad and overwhelming for serious discussion and should be replaced by much more precise and practical issues if the event aimed to be meaningful in the future.³⁸⁶

379 Sören Thurell, Vaikutelmia Tallinnasta.

380 Ibid.

381 Leena Maunula, Baltian arkkitehtuuri aukeaa maailmalle.

382 Eesti kroonika 1990. Arhitektuuritriennaal. Eesti Telefilm 1990.

383 Anni Vartola, Kuritonta monimuotoisuutta, pp. 187–189.

384 Conversation with Juhani Pallasmaa, 6 March 2018.

385 Leif Leer Sørensen, Nordic-Baltic Triennial. – Arkitektur 1990, No. 10, p. 84.

386 Ibid.

ESTONIAN-FINNISH AXIS AND NORDIC DISPUTES

In spite of the initial ideas of organising a genuinely joint event and having all of the participating countries contribute equally in terms of intellectual input and organisational responsibilities, in the actual outcome the Estonian-Finnish axis dominated. This was to no small extent due to unexpectedly severe financial difficulties, creating disagreements that seriously jeopardised Nordic cooperation to the point of threatening to cancel the event altogether,³⁸⁷ putting the original plans for the future triennials in a quite different perspective. The budgeting of the triennial was divided into the ‘Baltic and Scandinavian foundations’, both fundraising separately. The Baltic fund was to cover all accommodation, food and other costs of the invited participants while in the Baltics, travel and accommodation costs of Latvian and Lithuanian lecturers and exhibition participants, all costs of the actual event in Tallinn, including venue, technical equipment and receptions, and a later compilation of a catalogue. The Nordic fund was to cover all travel and accommodation costs of the invited Nordic participants, travel and accommodation of the jury, printing and paper for the catalogue, international advertising, and renting or buying a copy machine and audio-video equipment for Tallinn. Each country was to be responsible for the transportation of its exhibits, and for the travel expenses of participants in the student workshop.³⁸⁸ The main source of fundraising was to be participation fees: it was optimistically expected that up to 200 international guests would be willing to buy tickets costing 300 USD.³⁸⁹ In addition, the Nordic cultural foundation was successfully applied to for support; high expectations were placed on such sponsors as SAS, which was about to open a flight route from Stockholm to Tallinn.³⁹⁰ In reality attracting Scandinavian sponsors for an event taking place in such a location turned out to be extremely difficult. The Baltic fund received support from the Soviet Estonian Planning Committee, from the Ministry of Culture, and from the Kirov Fishing Kolkhoz near Tallinn. The exhibition and conference venues at the Tallinn Exhibition Grounds and the space for the concluding party at the Tallinnfilm shooting pavilions were obtained free of charge as well.

The estimated number of international attendees was drawn up by SAR, relying mainly on the vast number of émigré Estonians among

387 SAFA’s letter to SAR, DAL and NAL, september 1990. Personal archive of Gunnel Adlercreutz.

388 Triennial concept signed by Irina Raud and Gunnel Adlercreutz on 1 July 1989; personal archive of Irina Raud.

389 SAFA archive at the Finnish Archives of Salaried Employees. Documents concerning the Tallinn Triennial 1990.

390 Conversation with Gunnel Adlercreutz, 5 March 2018.

Swedish architects and related professionals. But from 1988, when the preparations began, to 1990, when the event actually happened, fast political changes took place, and travelling on one's own had become so much easier that the novelty of an event taking place in Soviet Estonia had somewhat worn off. This applied to Swedish Estonians, as well as to Finnish architects, who had also started to visit their southern neighbours in increasing numbers. Thus, by the summer of 1990, the number of registered international guests was alarmingly small, around 20, and the budget was in serious deficit, leading to heated disputes among the Nordic architects' unions about who should be responsible for covering the debt and how it should be divided.³⁹¹ The Finnish organisers phoned all of the major Finnish, and to some extent other Nordic, architectural offices, to persuade them that it was their obligation of honour to participate,³⁹² and managed to get about 80 paying guests, mainly from Finland and Sweden, whereas there were just six Danish participants, one from Norway, and none from Iceland or the Faroe Islands. Most of the budget deficit fell on the Finnish Architects' Union (SAFA), with the Swedish Architects' Union (SAR) eventually agreeing to take a notable share. In addition, the Finnish architects had donated to the Estonian organising committee copiers and fax machines, *'to enable them to handle the contacts with the Estonians in something that would even remotely resemble a normal time usage'*.³⁹³ They had also taken care of all necessary printing tasks, paid for the Estonian organisers' trips to Finland, bought paper, stationery, coffee and even toilet paper, and put in countless unpaid hours on the organising. In addition, the Swedish Estonian architect Hando Kask personally paid for the lighting system of the exhibition. At the same time, the Estonian organisers wanted to have a really impressive constellation of star speakers but the Nordic organisers entrusted the Finnish to curb their enthusiasm a bit for financial reasons.³⁹⁴ The everyday routine of the Nordic-Baltic collaboration required a lot of stretching but, under the political and social circumstances, this could not have come as a surprise. However, more tension seemed to grow out of the Nordic architects' different levels of willingness to accept the conditions and put in the extra unpaid effort. In spite of the original enthusiasm, the Norwegian and Danish collaborators started to withdraw quite early in the process.³⁹⁵ One can only speculate as to whether there were political reasons in addition to financial ones. After all, helping

391 SAFA's letter to SAR, DAL and NAL, September 1990. Personal archive of Gunnel Adlercreutz.

392 Conversation with Gunnel Adlercreutz.

393 SAFA's letter to SAR, DAL and NAL, September 1990. Personal archive of Gunnel Adlercreutz.

394 Conversation with Gunnel Adlercreutz.

395 Ibid.

to organise a major international event surely meant contributing, however indirectly, to the general process of Baltic sovereignty, and as the Finnish participants recall, visiting Tallinn for preparatory meetings and the event itself, and witnessing the heated political environment first-hand was thrilling but also frightening.³⁹⁶ A couple of years earlier, the Danes had, for political reasons, fearing the oppositional mentality vaguely associated with the group, refused to allow a travelling exhibition of Tallinn school architects, whose international organisation was mainly supported by their Finnish colleagues, sending unopened exhibition crates back to Estonia instead.³⁹⁷ Perhaps, with the socio-political conditions in the Soviet Union growing tenser each day, serious involvement in the triennial organisation started to feel too risky. Indeed, the official political stance of the Finnish government was also quite cautious, but that did not discourage the Finnish architects.

Much disagreement also arose over the fact that the exhibition was initially devised as a display of concept-based works from each country created specifically for the occasion. But with their financial difficulties, the Swedes, Danes and Norwegians decided to contribute highlights of recent exhibitions, a decision that was criticised even in Danish reviews, stating that the Danish buildings displayed were not recent enough, with the freshest being five to six years old.³⁹⁸ Such a solution also made the idea of a triennial award jury quite superfluous, so it was cancelled.

NBAT II AND FURTHER: ESTONIANS CONTINUE ON THEIR OWN

The most idealistic plans devised in the initial meetings of Nordic and Baltic architects' unions had foreseen a genuinely jointly organised travelling event that would take place in different capital cities, alternating between Baltic and Nordic countries.³⁹⁹ Among the Nordic countries themselves, the main organiser was also to rotate, with the Danes planned to take the lead in the second triennial.⁴⁰⁰ But after the first event ended, there wasn't even enough organisational enthusiasm to send the exhibition on a tour of the other participating countries. In Finland, a serious economic crisis hit in 1990, notably affecting the building sector; in addition, 1993, the next triennial date, coincided

396 Conversations with Gunnel Adlercreuz and Juhani Pallasmaa, 6 March 2018.

397 Conversation with Ignar Fjuk, 26 March 2018. The exhibition *Nine Architects from Tallinn* (under the titles *Yhdeksän arkkitehtia Tallinnasta*, *Tio arkitekter från Tallinn*) was displayed in 1984 in Helsinki, Rovaniemi and Jyväskylä, in 1989 in Zürich, and in 1990 in Stockholm.

398 Leif Leer Sørensen, Nordic-Baltic Triennial.

399 Triennial concept attached to the Nordic cultural foundation funding application. SAFA archive at the Finnish Archives of Salaried Employees. Documents concerning the Tallinn Triennial 1990. Also, in conversation with Gunnel Adlercreuz.

400 Conversation with Gunnel Adlercreuz.

with the timing of the Alvar Aalto symposium, which was to apply to exactly the same funding sources, making serious contributions to the NBAT problematic. The Nordic countries suggested postponing the next event until more stable circumstances were achieved politically and financially.⁴⁰¹

Yet in Estonia the first triennial was experienced as a major success despite economic scarcity and organisational difficulties, most of which probably did not even impact the local organisers. Thus, despite the other partners' hesitance, the Estonian organising committee took a firm decision to continue with the second triennial in Tallinn, taking on most of the responsibilities themselves. Without the Nordic cultural foundation support this time, costs had to be cut considerably, although local support was obtained from the Estonian government, the city of Tallinn, the Open Estonia Foundation, freshly established by the Hungarian millionaire-turned-philanthropist George Soros, and the Eesti Ehitus construction company.

The 1993 triennial relocated to a more attractive central city venue at the Sakala cultural centre and got more media coverage than the first triennial. Considering its much less abundant financial resources compared to the first triennial, it had a no less impressive line-up, with the keynote speakers Günter Behnisch and Willem Jan Neuteulings, and participating countries being represented by Snøhetta's Kjetil Trædal Thorsen from Norway, Steve Christer from Iceland, Helle Juul and Flemming Frost from Denmark, Alexis Fontvik and Ivo Waldhör from Sweden, Kai Warttinen, Pekka Helin, Tuomo Siitonen, Mikko Heikkinen and Markku Komonen from Finland, Eugenius Miliunas, Vaidotas Kuliešius and Giatantas Natkevicius from Lithuania, Janis Lejnieks, AKA, Arhis and Juris Poga from Latvia, and the Estonians Leonhard Lapin, Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik, Andres Siim and Hanno Kreis.⁴⁰² The symposium lasted two days instead of three but other than that, the triennial followed the model of the previous triennial, with an exhibition (ill. 38, 39, 40) accompanying the talks and a student workshop preceding it. The workshop focused on the Tallinn harbour development issues and the future of Pärnu in connection with the planned Via Baltica infrastructural project. The workshop, attended by almost a hundred students from the Baltics, Finland, Italy, France, the UK, Canada, the USA and New Zealand, was led by Ian McBurnie from the Architectural Association in London, aided by Veljo Kaasik, Andres

401 Aita Kivi, Ehituskunstist ja isiksustest. – Rahva Hääl 10 September 1993.

402 Liivi Künnapu, Põhjamaine sära Sakalas. Seletus triennaali juurde. – Sirp 1 October 1993.

Alver, Tiit Trummal and Jüri Soolep from the Tallinn University of the Arts.⁴⁰³ The festive opening of the triennial (ill. 37) involved a presentation of a specially written piece of electronic music by the composer Erkki-Sven Tüür; the film programme at the Tallinn Cinema House presented a fresh documentary on Estonian pre-war functionalism and some public broadcast shorts on Vilen Künnapu, Leonhard Lapin and Jüri Okas. A presentation of the latest issue of *Ehituskunst* magazine, relaunched in 1991 under the editorship of Leonhard Lapin, was also integrated into the programme. Although not actually part of the triennial, the Estonian Museum of Architecture had organised an exhibition on Estonian 1970s neo-functionalism at the Tallinn Art Hall⁴⁰⁴ and a display of architecture drawings from the collections at the National Library to coincide with the triennial⁴⁰⁵; likewise the exhibition of Tõnis Vint's graphic works on the metaphysical qualities of cities opened at the Deco gallery during the triennial. The conference tours were also on a smaller scale compared to the previous triennial, taking the visitors to either Pärnu, Viljandi and Tartu or to the somewhat more exotic Sillamäe and Eastern Estonia, but not to other Baltic States.

Building on the first triennial's orientation, the event was titled *Architecture and Individuality*. As the call for participation had stated half a year earlier, the issue of architecture and individuality referred to the need to maintain local traditions and individual approaches in the face of the integration of Europe: an issue that had been a bit too vague to grasp for the Baltic participants in the first triennial was now hitting home.⁴⁰⁶ Thus it is clear that what was at stake for the Estonian organisers was still architecture's symbolic qualities and issues of representation. In this light, the presentations of the second triennial revealed an increasing gap between the Baltic architects' idealisation of creators' heroic individualism, and European architects' much more complicated concerns under the contemporary realities of architecture commissioning and construction, as well as its social implications. The latter was most pronounced in the presentation of the Swede Ivo Waldhör, who introduced the ideas of participatory planning and design exemplified by a housing project in Malmö. The Bo100 housing experiment (1986–1991) was designed by Waldhör, together with the future residents of the block, who first underwent some very basic training in housing design to be able to make a model of their dream flats, which were then assembled into a housing

403 Ann Alari, *Eelmänguna*. – *Eesti Aeg* 8 September 1993

404 Mart Kalm, Krista Kodres (eds.), *Teisiti: funktsionalism ja neofunktsionalism Eesti arhitektuuris*. Toisin: funktsionalismi ja neofunktsionalismi Viron arhitektuuris. Tallinn: Museum of Estonian Architecture, 1993.

405 Arhitektuurijoonis kui ajastu dokument : Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseumi näitus Rahvusraamatukogus 9. sept. – 30. sept. 1993. Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 1993.

406 Üleskutse osalemiseks II Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaalil. – *Sirp* 12 March 1993.

complex reflecting immense variety. The future tenants had a say in all stages of design and construction and a lot of adjustments were made in the process, making the end result definitely time-consuming and expensive but providing rare opportunities to truly cater to individual needs and to create strong attachments and the desire to take care of their homes.⁴⁰⁷ However, instead of this radical rethinking of the roles and individual aspects of different agents in the design process, the Estonian participants were more smitten with the deconstructivism-informed practices of Günter Behnisch and Willem Jan Neutelings.⁴⁰⁸ The latter, presenting primarily his recent work on the European Patent Office in Leidschendam, called for embracing the chaotic conditions resulting from the intermingling of the urban and rural, and claimed architecture to be equally an expression of the individual needs of the client and location and those of the architect.⁴⁰⁹ The enormous office complex, conceived as a structure of intersecting wings alternating with fourteen gardens, exhibited a lot of variability and individuality in a building programme that was more often than not governed by bureaucratic uniformity, while taking into account ecological concerns.

The international speakers' concerns for user integration, ecological aspects and low-cost construction were a far cry from the locals' continuing appreciation of grand design gestures, with Leonhard Lapin's Zen-inspired lecture on emptiness and space almost a direct answer to the previous triennial's Pallasmaa call for an architecture of silence. As an antidote to any contextual concerns, Lapin presented architecture as forms materialising in relation to the surrounding emptiness, and conceptualised the activities of an architect as temple-building. Accordingly, the mind of the architect had to be elevated to higher states of consciousness in order to be able to see all architecture essentially as a temple for the mind.⁴¹⁰ Lapin's editorial in the *Ehituskunst* magazine issue that was published to coincide with the triennial (no. 7/1993) was also titled *Architecture and Individuality*. There he elaborated the social implications of such a spiritual take on architecture, calling for a society where architecture was valued as an ethical art form, an art of harmonious coexistence among dignified

407 See Ivo Waldhör, Protsess ja tulemus. Process and Product. – Teine Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaal. 10.–12. september 1993, Sakala kultuurikeskus Tallinn. Arhitektuur ja individuaalsus. The Second Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial. 10–12 September 1993, Cultural centre Sakala, Tallinn. Architecture and Individuality. Pp. 61–66.

408 Mart Kalm, Virgutav triennaal. – Eesti Ekspress 24 September 1993

409 Willem Jan Neutelings, Euroopa Patendiamet. European Patent Office. – Teine Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaal. 10.–12. september

1993, Sakala kultuurikeskus Tallinn. Arhitektuur ja individuaalsus. The Second Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial. 10–12 September 1993, Cultural centre Sakala, Tallinn. Architecture and Individuality. Pp. 9–17.

410 Leonhard Lapin, Tühjus ja ruum. Void and space. – Teine Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaal. 10.–12. september 1993, Sakala kultuurikeskus Tallinn. Arhitektuur ja individuaalsus. The Second Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial. 10–12 September 1993, Cultural centre Sakala, Tallinn. Architecture and Individuality. Pp. 113–122.

individuals.⁴¹¹ At the exhibition, this spiritual take on architecture was embodied by the display of Künnapu and Padrik, who exhibited their metaphysically inclined designs for the Arctic House in Kevajärvi, the Nordic Cultural Centre in Nuuk, Greenland, the Estonian pavilion in Leeuwarden and, their earlier hit, the award-winning West Coast Gateway project for Los Angeles. The less extravagant competition designs by Andres Siim and Hanno Kreis were conceptually propped up by spatial installations with pretentious titles.

However, it seemed that both the Baltic and Nordic guests had grown somewhat weary of the continued glorification of the Tallinn school architects, longing for something more up to date instead of postmodern metaphysics.⁴¹² Criticism was also voiced regarding the lack of meaningful discussion, with the closing panel focusing on congratulations and gift-giving instead.⁴¹³ Compared to the first triennial, the second was felt to be intellectually less profound, reaching no particular conclusions but presenting a kaleidoscope of positions that did not relate to each other much.⁴¹⁴ Such a verdict was of course fiercely challenged by Leonhard Lapin, who claimed that an architect does not even have to be theoretically sophisticated if their works speak for themselves, and professed audaciously that the triennial had a lot of potential to grow into an event comparable to the Venice architecture biennale.⁴¹⁵ However, all in all the locals seemed to be more on the receiving end of the intellectual exchange this time, with Lapin's presentation remaining on a very abstract level and no Estonians even speaking at the closing panel. The first years of the 1990s seem to have been a time of some intellectual struggle among the Estonian architects, where the older generation of the Tallinn school tried to hold on to their postmodern conceptualisations and struggled to fit these to the realities of new commissions and competitions, the middle generation of 'competition guys'⁴¹⁶ mostly abstained from any verbal self-expression whatsoever, and the younger generation were the first ones to receive international education in the Architectural Association, Zürich ETH or the like and had the capability to relate to more up-to-date theoretical debates, but had yet to manifest their talents. Thus, compared to the heyday of the Tallinn school, at the beginning of the 1990s the Estonian architects' voices were much less heard in the

411 Leonhard Lapin, *Arhitektuur ja individuaalsus*. – *Ehituskunst* 1993, Vol. 7, p. 1.

412 Mart Kalm, *Virgutav triennaal*. – *Eesti Ekspress* 24 September 1993.

413 Krista Kodres, *Vaikne hooaeg ja Tallinna II arhitektuuritriennaal*. – *Sirp* 1 October 1993; *Sigrid Tae, Arhitektuurist sõnas ja pildis*. – *Õhtuleht* 15 September 1993.

414 Karin Hallas, *Individuaalsusest, kaosest ja korrast arhitektuuris*. – *Hommikuleht* 24 September 1993.

415 Leonhard Lapin, *Tallinna arhitektuuritriennaal on kujunemas Põhjala juhtivaks kultuurisündmuseks*. – *Hommikuleht* 16 October 1993.

416 The definition is authored by Mart Kalm and designates a group of architects who started their careers with successful competitions in the second half of the 1980s; see *Eesti arhitektide põlvkonnad. Konkursimehed*. Estonian National Broadcast, 1994 <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/eesti-arhitektide-polvkonnad-konkursimehed>.

public sphere, and even less so in terms of more thorough theoretical contributions. The situation was vividly characterised in issues of *Ehituskunst*, the relaunch of which in 1991 was undoubtedly of vital importance to the local discourse. Content-wise, all of the theoretical articles in the magazine were translations of the works of foreign architects and theoreticians: Juhani Pallasmaa, Jorma Hautala, Marja-Riitta Norri, Alberto Campo Baeza and others. The Estonian critics confined themselves to research articles pertaining to Estonian architectural history, and the architects themselves relinquished the opportunity for any verbal conceptualisation, resorting to project presentations instead. Thus the magazine, which could have operated as a fruitful intellectual platform, managed to fulfil this role only partially, and also definitely reflected the personal choices of its charismatic editor Lapin. His preferences were not far from those of the organising committee of the Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial (which he was a member of), which ensured a kind of mutual support, but they also reinforced each other's weaknesses: a tendency to cling to an elitist approach to the architecture profession, a sympathy for postmodern regionalism and phenomenological place-making, and a reluctance to get involved in the dirtier everyday realities of the urban and architectural issues ensuing from the laissez-faire capitalism of the era. As the capitalist transformation processes of the society seemed more and more out of reach of the architects, and their ability to influence actual spatial developments became smaller and smaller, the louder grew the calls for the need to maintain 'eternal' and 'spiritual' values. However, the tendency to retreat to the idealistic architectural sphere rarely serves as a productive antidote to realpolitik and instead plays into the hands of capitalist agents or, as Reinhold Martin has remarked, architecture's participation in heterogeneous networks of power actually increases with its withdrawal into private games played in esoteric language.⁴¹⁷ The vague discontent reflected in the critical reviews after the second Nordic-Baltic triennial took on a more pronounced form after the third triennial had taken place in 1996, presenting more or less similar positions to the previous ones. By then, the triennial already had to cope with accusations of being quixotic and cliquy, unable to relate to fresh international discourse, and wasting the opportunity to take a firm stand either in the form of a final declaration pertaining to current matters or in other ways that would make it a serious voice of the professional community.⁴¹⁸

417 Reinhold Martin, *Utopia's Ghost. Architecture and Postmodernism, Again*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, p. 9.

418 Krista Kodres, *Meie arhitektuuri tänapäev on meie enda nägu*. – *Kultuurimaa* 25 September 1996.

CONCLUSION

The initiative of the Nordic-Baltic architecture triennials was an ambitious undertaking that clearly reflected and contributed to the direction of the rapid changes that took place from the launch of the concept until the actual occurrence of the event. The Baltic and Nordic participants had quite different agendas that reflected their different social positions and the different realities of their everyday work. For the Baltic architects, they were opportunities to engage in equal professional dialogue with international practitioners. Even more, they provided an arena in which to construct a national narrative through their creative projects and to claim a unique architectural identity stemming from national and local roots interpreted with a postmodernist tendency towards myth-making. For the Estonians specifically, the context was used in a twofold manner: for the joint Baltic presentation of independent creative output regardless of Soviet constrictions, and as an opportunity to present themselves as something more avant-garde, and thus more Nordic, more Western than the other Baltic States. Indeed, the whole triennial initiative was only able to develop thanks to the already existing international fame and contacts of the Tallinn school, derived from successful entries at such international competitions as the Rovaniemi Arctic centre (1983), the Los Angeles West Coast Gateway (1989) and others, and ensuing international media coverage and semi-official travelling exhibitions, but also thanks to established contacts with Finnish architects and their loyal intellectual and material support. In that sense, the triennial was a step in the process that had already begun much earlier but now had courageously come to full fruition. Probably one of the most important aspects of the event took place outside the lecture rooms: the establishment of professional contacts resulted in a number of Estonian architects moving to work in Finland and elsewhere in the last years of the Soviet regime. Similarly, for the participating Nordic guests, the establishment of contacts and the first-hand experience of not only Tallinn but, via the excursions, also of other Estonian towns and especially the more foreign Latvia and Lithuania were highly important as an opening up of a part of a world that had hitherto been very closed: a kind of normalisation of the world.⁴¹⁹

For the Nordic participants, the call to establish the triennial was a concrete and welcome outlet to ideas that had vaguely been circu-

lating for some time already although the ideas of what the event should be about varied considerably. Whereas the Finns, conditioned by a decade of experience with Alvar Aalto symposia, supported a more theoretical and perhaps even speculative orientation, the architects from the other Nordic countries seem to have had much more practical expectations, and eventually a much more tepid interest in debating theoretical issues or searching for common ground on a regional basis. Scandinavian national architects' unions opted for presenting themselves in terms of sensible and good quality built environments, adhering to the basic principles of welfare state architecture, and saw it as their mission to promote those values and the practical means to achieve them to the emerging Baltic publics as well. In that sense, the professional dialogue at the Nordic-Baltic architecture triennial may perhaps be characterised as a case of 'lost in translation', where, in spite of the implicit intention of framing the discussion in terms of (critical) regionalism, the different parties' different starting points and goals did not quite meet. However, in spite of the misunderstandings regarding either organisation or content, the fact that the architecture triennial took place was a remarkable milestone of the transition era, professionally and politically. With extensive media coverage both in the written media as well as TV broadcasts, the events contributed to a much enhanced prominence of architectural discourse in the public sphere and propped the architects' position as commanders of professional, internationally relevant and up-to-date know-how of the built environment. However, the discourse remained largely on idealistic and cultural level, not quite managing to bridge the gap with contemporary realities or address the political forces nor the other emerging agents of urban developments.

**PERFORMATIVE
SPACE:
GROUP T'S
ARCHITECTURE
AND
PERFORMANCES**



In the general milieu of the transition era, there was one group of architects and artists who did not share the optimistic mindset of building a new society, or who at least actively challenged the consensual viewpoint towards it and towards the role architecture and architects might play in these processes. Enigmatically called Group T (Rühm T), this loose group of colleagues, friends and collaborators has thus far been analysed only in the context of art, but the core members' training and successful practice in architecture provide a basis for situating their creative pursuits in the context of architecture as well, shedding new light on their position in relation to the production of space. They can definitely be seen as the heirs of the Tallinn school of the 1970s, carrying on a strong belief in the architect's role as a creative artist and a public intellectual. However, the group represented a distinctly new sensibility and position, challenging and negating all fixed truths, meanings and concepts, including their own. Considered in the context of the end of the 1980s social milieu, the movement towards a civil society and a developing amalgamation of liberal democracy and conservative nationalism, the activities of Group T involved the questioning of some basic values and formed a possible alternative to an otherwise quite consensual understanding of the role of architecture in the processes of building up a new social order. On the whole, Group T questioned the means of producing architecture in general, moving step by step away from the conventional design process, and giving priority to representations of space, and to performances as enacted spaces in time. Initially, their relatively formalist designs displayed a search for expressions of an alienated spatial environment. Then, by presenting representations of space – mainly drawings in pencil and Indian ink but also gouache paintings – quite detached from actual designs and real environments, they aimed at architectural representations as floating signifiers or things in themselves, completely devoid of architecture's traditional concerns with dwelling, and dismantling architecture's traditional role as a social power device, an ordering, structuring and potentially oppressive means. Finally they moved towards denouncing the necessity of designing at all, and towards space as pure event, a temporary occurrence independent of the architectural qualities of space. In the succession of these steps, an artistic position seemed to crystallise that involved a search for an architecture that was non-oppressive, non-hierarchical, and empty of attributed meanings, references and common denominators.

GROUP T: A 'CURATED' AFFILIATION

Group T was formed on the initiative of two core members: Raoul Kurvitz and Urmas Muru, who graduated as architects from the Estonian State Institute of Art in 1984. Soviet central planning meant that all graduates were assigned workplaces. Kurvitz and Muru received jobs widely considered to be the least creative for an architect: Kurvitz at the Estonian Industrial Project office, and Muru at the Estonian branch of Tsentrosoyuzproyekt (although in 1986 Muru transferred to the Estonian Industrial Project). Both were large state design offices specialising in infrastructure and industrial buildings. The design process was slow, the assignments – heating plants, railroad infrastructure, electricity sub-plants etc. – were highly predetermined and restricted in nature, and more often than not the laborious design work did not lead to any actual building, remaining on paper as evidence of five-year plans accomplished, with actual implementation postponed to an unforeseeable future.⁴²⁰ But the young architects had a different vision of the architect's role and scope: by the 1980s, the previous avant-garde generation of the Tallinn school had already established the role of the architect as an intellectual and artist through their exhibitions and polemical articles in the media; they managed to push through reform in the institutional sphere, and some of them were elected to the Architects' Union board in 1979.⁴²¹ Of the Tallinn school, Vilen Künnapu was a particularly important influence on the young Raoul Kurvitz, who had worked as Künnapu's assistant during his studies, and later credited him as the one who had opened his eyes to the arts.⁴²²

Immediately after graduation, Kurvitz set out to form a group of his own. His aim was to move beyond the realm of architecture, to form an interdisciplinary arts group for the renewal of the whole sphere of visual culture. For this purpose, he searched for like-minded people from the other cultural fields, seeing his role more or less as a curator of the group.⁴²³ The closest collaborator in this initial conceptualisation was Urmas Muru; they had already submitted a couple of competition proposals during their architecture studies. The launch of Group T was an outdoor exhibition in the back yard of the Adamson-Eric Museum in winter 1986 (ill. 41, 42), with the architects

420 Conversation with Urmas Muru and Peeter Pere, 21 November 2012.

421 See Andres Kurg, *The Turning Point in 1978. Architects of the Tallinn School and Their Late Socialist Public*. – Ines Weizman (ed.), *Architecture and the Paradox of Dissidence*. London: Taylor and Francis, 2013, pp. 19–32. For a comprehensive overview of the Tallinn school, see Andres Kurg, Mari Laanemets (eds.), *Environments, Projects, Concepts. Architects of the Tallinn*

School 1972–1985. Tallinn: Museum of Estonian Architecture, 2008.

422 Kärt Hellerma, *Kunst on tunne*. – Noorus 1988, No. 10, pp. 40–41. Raoul Kurvitz also wrote an article about the work of his mentor, see Raoul Kurvitz, Vilen Künnapu.

423 Raoul Kurvitz. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2013. Video interview on DVD accompanying the catalogue.

Peeter Pere and Urmas Mikk, the painter Lilian Mosolainen, and the poet Max Harnoon (the philosopher Hasso Krull's pseudonym). The second exhibition, a year later at the Tammsaare Museum, saw the group expanded to include the musicians Ariel Lagle and Margo Kõlar, the graphic artist Anu Kalm, the painters Tiina Tammetalu and Valev Sein, and the poet Andres Allan.⁴²⁴ For the third exhibition, the painter Ove Büttner joined, and members of the rock band Röövel Ööbik produced the audio. In the following years, the group came to be defined as a loose, fluctuating collective of creative individuals, rather than an artistic group in the conventional sense where members shared certain common goals or ideas.⁴²⁵ Occasionally, they stressed the openness of the membership to the extent that any interested passer-by who had the willingness and ideas was welcomed to contribute to an ongoing performance.⁴²⁶ Indeed, *A Guide to Intronomadism* in 1991 had a long list of temporary collaborators.⁴²⁷ In practice, however, the scenarios were mostly quite scripted and the activities self-contained enough to draw a clear line between participants and onlookers. Over time the importance of paintings and installations as object-based art diminished and process-based works took centre stage, with the painters and graphic artists receding from the activities and being replaced by the actor Maria Avdjushko, the stage designer Ene-Liis Semper, and the photographer Tarvo Hanno Varres.

The only consistent members throughout the whole period of Group T's existence were Raoul Kurvitz, Urmas Muru and Peeter Pere, and at the same time all three continued their architecture practices as well. After having worked at the Estonian Industrial Project office for almost ten years, in 1993 the three formed the joint design office KMP (Kurvitz, Muru, Pere), soon reformed as Muru & Pere Architects when Raoul Kurvitz decided to concentrate on a solo career in the visual and performative arts. Thus it may be said that the group had a strong architectural core in spite of this aspect being virtually completely overlooked both in contemporary reviews and in their later, more or less canonical, reception, which was focused almost exclusively on their artistic output in painting and performance. The classic tome *Estonian 20th-Century Architecture* dismisses Group T as a curious episode,⁴²⁸ while the treatment of architecture is lacking

424 As stated in Heie Treier, Tammsaare majamuseumis. Interview with Raoul Kurvitz and Urmas Muru. – Sirp ja Vasar July 3, 1987.

425 Ants Juske, Rühm T juubel Kunstimuseumis. – Eesti Päevaleht 19 October 1996.

426 The authors of *A Guide to Intronomadism* performances were listed as: Raoul Kurvitz, Urmas Muru, Peeter Pere, Tarvo Hanno Varres, Maria Avdjushko, Ariel Lagle, Allan Hmelnitski, Raul Saaremets, Hasso Krull, Eve Kask and Teet Parve; additional participants were listed as: Young people

from the front of café Moskva, A. Veski, E. Kask, H. Liivrand, A. Juske, K. Kivi, T. Pedaru, A. Saaremets, art students of R. Kurvitz and E. Kask (L. Šaldejeva, P. Raudsepp, H. Kont, I. Simm, R. Aus, L. Kuutma) and others. – Appendix to Hasso Krull, *Postnomadonoomia*. – Vikerkaar 1991, No. 6, p. 44.

427 Conversation with Raoul Kurvitz, December 6, 2012.

428 Mart Kalm, *Eesti 20. sajandi arhitektuur*. Tallinn: Prisma Prindi publishers, 2001, p. 419.

altogether in the anthology of the 1980s⁴²⁹ (as opposed to the similar compilation of the 1990s, *Ülbed üheksakümnendad. Nosy Nineties*⁴³⁰). The analysis of the decade's architecture in the more recent account of the Estonian art of 1940–1991 also confines itself mainly to the representatives of the Tallinn school, without a single mention of Group T.⁴³¹

THE REALITIES OF PRACTICE AT THE ESTONIAN INDUSTRIAL PROJECT

Only a year after graduating from the Estonian State Institute of Art architecture department, Raoul Kurvitz (then Kurvits⁴³²) and Urmas Muru entered the local architecture scene by winning a design competition for the Tallinn Fashion House in 1985 (ill. 43, 44). This was also the first occurrence of the name *Rühm T*, which was used as the code name for the competition entry: one more subtle piece of evidence of the architectural roots of Group T.⁴³³ The competition sought solutions for a demanding location in central Tallinn: the new building was to complete one side of the then Lenini (now Rävalla) Blvd, planned in the 1950s as one axis of the 'Tallinn cultural centre', and give shape to the south side of a planned urban square, thus notably affecting the future developments of an area that at the time of the competition was a peculiar mix of prominent urban blocks, Soviet-era public buildings, and turn-of-the-century shabby wooden dwellings. The solution also had to take into account plans to form a central pedestrian zone, and provide an attractive streetscape. The building was to be constructed in two phases: initially, a six- to seven-storey street side volume, comprised mainly of office spaces for the scientific-technical centre of the Ministry of Light Industries, as well as ten speciality shops, a public café and a hairdresser, and afterwards a four- to five-storey wing housing production spaces for the Tallinn Fashion House, exhibition premises, a main hall for fashion shows, and spaces for the editorial office of the magazine *Siluett*, the only local fashion magazine, which also had a highly popular Russian version circulating

429 Andreas Trossek, Sirje Helme (eds.), *Kadunud kaheksakümnendad. Probleemid, teemad ja tähendused 1980. aastate eesti kunstis / The Lost Eighties. Problems, Themes and Meanings in Estonian Art on 1980s*. Tallinn: Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2010.

430 Sirje Helme, Johannes Saar (eds.), *Ülbed üheksakümnendad. Probleemid, teemad ja tähendused 1990. aastate eesti kunstis / Nosy Nineties. Problems, Themes and Meanings in Estonian Art of the 1990s*. Tallinn: Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2001.

431 Andres Kurg, *Arhitektuur: keskkonna demokratiseerimisest isiklike müütideni*. – Jaak

Kangilaski (ed.), *Eesti kunsti ajalugu 6. 1940–1991. II osa*. Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Arts, 2016, pp. 282–318.

432 Since 1992, Raoul Kurvitz (born Kurvits) uses his surname with z as an homage to Georg Baselitz. Margaret Tali. *Kunstnik kui popstaar. Raoul Kurvitz ja Mark Kostabi 1990. aastate Eesti meedia diskursustes*. – *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi / Studies in Art and Architecture* 2007, No. 1–2, pp. 143–169.

433 Tallinna Moemaja arhitektuurivõistlus. – Aet Pikk (compiler), *Arhitektuurikroonika '85*. Tallinn: Valgus 1987, pp. 146–147.

throughout the Soviet Union. The brief was a contradictory one, calling for a presentable urban block with attractive public premises, integrated with a scheme for establishing a continuous pedestrian zone through the central city area, which was added as a special requirement to the brief.⁴³⁴ At the same time, in tune with Soviet urban planning ideologies, it would plant industrial buildings in a central city location: the complex was to house production workshops for both garments and footwear, storehouses and auxiliary rooms, and wood and metal workshops. As a result, despite such a responsible task and a prominent location, the brief required using prefabricated standardised panels, industrial construction and finishing methods: a contradiction that might have contributed to a relatively low interest in participation, with only ten competition entries arriving by the deadline.⁴³⁵ Also, at exactly the same time a competition for the more prominent Estonian National Conservatoire was taking place at the other end of the same Lenini Blvd, which received twice as many entries, yet was condemned in reviews for providing mostly dull and unimaginative results.⁴³⁶ Raoul Kurvitz and Urmas Muru participated in both of these competitions, submitting designs with remarkably similar formal solutions, yet their conservatoire design did not win an award.

The jury mainly praised Kurvitz's and Muru's winning entry for the Fashion House as a convincing urban solution, for good integration with the planned pedestrian zone, and for the functional organisation of the whole programme for a plot with a closed inner yard for the workshops and an active street front facing the north side.⁴³⁷ Aesthetically, the building consisted of a highly symmetrical main volume and a somewhat less rigid second wing, connected by suspended galleries on the second and fifth floor levels, with a pedestrian street with shops passing underneath the galleries.⁴³⁸ The window strips of the main wing were said to be inspired by Estonian national belts, although in a highly abstracted manner; a more literal connection may be found in the staircase tower, modelled to resemble a stocking. While the overall impression of the façades was dense and constructivist, such literal allusions were usually not employed in Estonian postmodern architecture. However, while referencing the classic postmodern concern for the communicability of the façade, in the handling of Kurvitz and Muru these details were detached from their original content and appeared as artificial empty signifiers.

434 Estonian National Archives, ERA.R-1951.1.541: ENSV Kergetööstuse Ministeeriumi Teaduslik-Tehnilise Keskuse ja Tallinna Moemaja arhitektuurikonkurss. Võistlustingimused ja žürii protokollid.

435 Tallinna Moemaja arhitektuurivõistlus. – Arhitektuurikroonika '85. Tallinn: Valgus 1987, pp. 146–147.

436 Eesti Riikliku Konservatooriumi arhitektuurivõistlus. – Arhitektuurikroonika '85. Tallinn: Valgus 1987, pp. 148–149.

437 ENSV Kergetööstuse Ministeeriumi Teaduslik-Tehnilise Keskuse ja Tallinna Moemaja arhitektuurikonkurss, op.cit.

438 Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM FK13685: ENSV Kergetööstuse Ministeeriumi ja Tallinna Moemaja, foto projektist. Arhitektid Urmas Muru, Raoul Kurvitz.

In general, their projects during the mid-1980s did not yet display a very clear character or a consistent position towards producing architectural space. The designs executed at the Estonian Industrial Project office were strongly restricted by the rigid typological requirements of industrial and technological buildings and a limited choice of prefabricated construction details, resulting in highly rational plan layouts and façades, such as those of Raoul Kurvitz's laboratory building in Männiku (1986, ill. 45), warehouse in Sõjamäe (date unknown), and Kuusalu starch factory (1987), and Peeter Pere's margarine factory in Sõjamäe (1989) and construction materials workshop in Pärnu (1989). More daring solutions were tested in competition entries, e.g. Kurvitz's and Pere's design for the extension of the National Institute for In-Service Training for Teachers in Sakala St, Tallinn (1985), which extensively used curved glazed surfaces but in its essence resembled international corporate neo-modernism, with certain neo-constructivist hints. The proposal won second prize, with the jury praising the bold solution, although acknowledging that the current abilities of the construction industry made it impossible to execute it properly.⁴³⁹

Urmas Muru seems to have been a bit luckier in terms of receiving somewhat less restrictive design commissions in the Industrial Design office. His harbour building for Lehtma from 1986 conveys the impression of dynamism and forward thrust with its elongated horizontal ship-like volume accentuated with a rostrum and a mast at one end. From that project on, Muru increasingly employed the vocabulary of expressionist and constructivist architecture as much as the programmes and tasks of industrial buildings allowed, and for this purpose preferred brick construction over prefabricated panels. His heating plants in Elva (1987, ill. 46), Ropka (1988) and Rapla (1989, ill. 47), as well as the high-voltage control building in Tartu (1988, ill. 48) and the computing centre in Pärnu (1988), relied on the dynamic organisation of masses and blind walls contrasted with dramatically positioned openings and the accentuation of staircase towers or non-functional masts or other vertical elements. Particularly the high-voltage control building in Tartu and a garage project for Tallinn (1989) have strong formal resemblances to certain examples of Russian constructivism, with the high-voltage building's huge rounded windows (significantly, only displayed in the perspective drawing version and not found in the actual construction

439 Konkurss "Tööstusprojekti". – Sirp ja Vasar
9 August 1985.

design of the building⁴⁴⁰) alluding to Konstantin Melnikov's Gosplan garage in Moscow (1934–1936), whereas the organisation of building volumes and the grand glazed side opening of the Tallinn garage building was related to Melnikov's handling of architectural volumes in a more generalised way. In some later projects, e.g. his entry for the Haljala chapel competition (1988, purchase prize, ill. 18) and the speculative idea competition for Tallinn New Town Hall organised by the Estonian Museum of Architecture (1992, second prize, ill. 52), he substituted the former brutal and angular machine-glorifying aesthetic for a softer, flowing and curving dynamism reminiscent of Erich Mendelsohn's expressionism. By the time of the Haljala competition, Raoul Kurvitz was also experimenting with formal solutions strongly inspired by 1920s expressionism, although his Haljala competition entry, awarded third prize, as well as a summerhouse in Taevaskoja from the same year, perhaps owe more to the language of Hans Poelzig. It is telling that, in the age of the anticipation of social changes, the formal vocabulary they turned to for inspiration came from expressionism and Russian constructivism, artistic currents that envisioned a socially radical organisation of space in the years following the First World War. The Haljala jury praised Kurvitz's work for its abundant symbolism and a certain 'Estonianness', while Urmas Muru was recognised for having developed a highly distinctive idiosyncratic architectural handwriting, a sculptural aesthetic sensibility that regrettably did not fit well with the capacities of contemporary construction industries.⁴⁴¹ Indeed, of all the designs of Muru's expressionist period, only the heating plant in Elva was actually executed (ill. 50), a modest testimony to a much grander unrealised potential. Yet in a sense, the play with aesthetic inspirations from beginning of the century modernism in its different actualisations still marked the works as a continuation of the project of late Soviet postmodernism rather than a beginning of the new era.

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING AS A SITE OF PRODUCTION

In the second half of the 1980s, the architects of Group T started to increasingly consider architectural drawings to be the main locus of developing and presenting ideas about space. The yearly almanac

440 Estonian National Archives, ERA.T-15.6.3188: Lõuna kõrgepingevõrkude dispetšerpunkt, Ilmatsalu 1, Tartu. Projekt. Kõide I-3: seletuskiri ja joonised. Eesti Tööstusprojekt.

441 Toomas Rein, Haljala kabeli konkurss žüriiliikmete pilguga. – Sirp ja Vasar 3 June 1988.

Arhitektuurikroonika (*Architecture chronicle*), which presented virtually all projects that were designed in Estonian state design offices, as well as all completed buildings and architectural competitions, normally included plans and elevations with axonometric drawings occasionally thrown in. Instead of such conventional architectural representations, the project descriptions of the architects of Group T were accompanied by conceptual drawings, including more or less detailed freehand perspective drawings in black pencil, or charcoal on paper in the case of Urmas Muru (ill. 49), and black Indian ink or gouache colour on found and torn newspapers in the case of Peeter Pere (ill. 51, 53). Pere's use of newspapers instead of tracing paper echoes Russian avant-garde collages but may also be read as a sign of banalising the dignified profession of architecture, as well as adding some messages from the urgent social issues of the times in the form of headlines and paragraphs still visible under the paint. The buildings were rendered in thick lines of black or colourful gouache, ignoring precision and making the forms practically illegible. The appearance had strong correlations with Pere's painting practice at the time: his powerful paintings conveying 'the beauty of catastrophes' in burning colours were acknowledged as some of the most convincing among those of the young generation.⁴⁴² By contrast, the drawings of Muru were much more elaborate: dynamic black technicist buildings seemed to be caught speeding through some inarticulate space-time. The lines were fine, calculated and cool, and the buildings seemed thin or somehow devoid of spatiality: not much more than empty shells of architecture. Naturally, the renderings did not depict interiors or hint at the actual spatiality of the buildings in any way, nor did they contain any references to the surrounding environment where such objects might have been located.

Presenting such subjective renderings instead of 'normal' plans added a different dimension, deliberately detached from the dry ordinary reality of the regular formal context of the architecture chronicle: a self-conscious endeavour to establish a dialogue with the conceptual thread in international architecture history rather than with the surrounding realities of the Soviet Estonian construction business. This alienating effect was further intensified by rhetorical means, inserting into the formal, mostly technical project descriptions isolated sentences in a completely different register, referring to visions in dreams, inspiration from falling in love, or the like. Two

442 Vappu Vabar, Peeter Pere iseendas ja kogu maailmas. – *Vikerkaar* 1988, No. 8, pp. 48–50.

examples: ‘... *The building is situated in the centre of Veeriku and will have a landmark quality in the industrial district. The formal solution is sculptural and dynamic, with an accentuated corner with a slender rounded form. The solution is inspired by a girl from Tartu who came to work as an assistant in the office. The floor plan is minimalist. The structure is mixed, employing frame, panels and brick. ...*’⁴⁴³; ‘... *The building is basically a hall with a three-storey antresole with metal bridges allowing for connections on levels II and III. The longitudinal volume has a very dynamic horizontal articulation. The architectural solution derives from a dream about an unknown city with a similar railway station. The structural solution employs a prefabricated panel frame and brick infill. The exterior is to be finished with paint, and partly with plaster. ...*’⁴⁴⁴

The primacy of architectural drawings over actual building designs was further accentuated by publishing two articles by Muru that conceptualised the role of drawings in the architectural process, describing them as the essence of the architect’s creative expression. This is remarkable because, in spite of the vast legacy of the architectural drawings of the preceding Tallinn school architects, none of the latter had felt the need to actually formulate the role and significance of visionary drawings for their creative endeavours. Muru’s first article was published in the popular youth magazine *Noorus (Youth)* and was aimed at the general public, educating the reader with an overview of conceptual drawings by some of his most important modernist predecessors, e.g. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Bruno Taut, Adolf Loos and Erich Mendelsohn.⁴⁴⁵ Referring to Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani, Muru claimed that, regarding the essence of architecture, the drawing was more important than the executed building. He claimed architectural drawings to be ‘*the bridge between everyday life and new formal explorations*’, ‘*an intellectual response to certain existential problems*’, ‘*especially suitable for periods when conventional architecture’s ability to solve complicated social problems is limited*’.⁴⁴⁶ The text stressed the passionate character and visionary quality of architectural drawings, stating that occasionally such images might work as prophecies and might be regarded as too crazy for society to even consider their actual implementation, although projects initially considered purely utopian might simply be ahead of their time. The utopian aspect was further supported by stressing the importance of the anarchist conceptual framework of the visionary drawings of Taut and his inspiration in the works of Paul Scheerbart and Piotr Kropotkin. The reference to

443 Lõuna kõrgepingevõrkude dispetšerpunkt. – Arhitektuurikroonika ’88. Tallinn: Ehituse TUI, 1991, p. 131.

444 Ropka tsentraalkatlamaja laiendus. – Arhitektuurikroonika ’88. Tallinn: Ehituse TUI, 1990, p. 130.

445 Urmas Muru, Arhitektuursed nägemused. – Noorus 1988, No. 9, pp. 32–33.

446 Ibid.

anarchism seemed to be an important conceptual note. After all, one of the very first performances by Kurvitz, Muru and Velle Kadalipp at the Estonian Industrial Project in 1987 was called *Discipline and Anarchy* (ill. 54),⁴⁴⁷ and Muru also later referred to anarchism as a world-view important to him,⁴⁴⁸ although the exact content or set of ideas related to his adherence to anarchism has always remained somewhat vague. On the visual side, however, the text was accompanied not by the classic modernist visions mentioned above but by many drawings by Kurvitz, Pere and Muru himself, suggesting the applicability of all the described qualities to their own work.

Half a year later, Muru published another programmatic text on conceptual architectural drawing, this time in the more specialised magazine *Kunst (Art)*, illustrated only by his own drawings.⁴⁴⁹ Not needing to justify his work by architectural historical references any longer, he searched for a more personal conceptualisation of architectural drawing. In a highly individualistic way, he described the search for architectural vision as a quest for one's own artistic self, an expression of such emotions as passion, anger, love and erotic attraction. He likened architecture to dance, both having ritualistic roots and being the outcomes of instinctual, pre-rational energies. According to Muru, architecture also possessed such properties as masculinity and femininity, being sensual, holy or tense. As a play of passions, it had to balance the impulses of anarchy and discipline, bringing together contradictory drives that had been lived through in the artistic process.

A contrasting of opposite drives as the constituent element of architecture was also very much present in Hasso Krull's reading of Muru's architectural drawings. Krull, who had participated in Group T's first exhibition with poems under the pseudonym Max Harnoon, was at the end of the 1980s increasingly, if unintentionally, developing into the main conceptual ideologue of the group, not to mention his vast impact on the interregnum era intellectual scene as a whole as a translator and mediator of new philosophical currents, with French post-structuralism receiving the most prominent position in his own thoughts.⁴⁵⁰ Krull played the leading role in the first conscious attempt to develop a philosophical programme for the activities of Group T, which took place when preparing for the group's third

447 According to Raoul Kurvitz, the main part of the performance titled *Discipline and Anarchy* (Raoul Kurvitz, Urmas Muru, Velle Kadalipp), which took place in the Eesti Tööstusprojekt hall in 1987, consisted of chanting 'We demand discipline!'. An unintentional connection with dadaism was created by the costume worn by Kadalipp.

448 Kärt Hellerma, Elu & inimesed. Intervjuu Urmas Muruga. – Hommikuleht 29 October 1994.

449 Urmas Muru, Mälestused tunnetest. – Kunst 1989, No. 2, pp. 22–23.

450 Heie Marie Treier, Sujuv sissejuhatus iseseisvusesse: Hasso Krulli panus 1990. aastate kunsti. – Neeme Lopp (ed.), Hasso Krulli mõistatus. Etüüde nüüdiskultuurist 8. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli humanitaarteaduste instituudi Eesti kirjandus- ja kultuuriuringute keskus, Eesti Kunstiakadeemia kunstiteaduse ja visuaalkultuuri instituut, 2019, pp. 22–27.

exhibition.⁴⁵¹ When discussing the ideas for the event, Krull introduced various concepts from post-structural philosophy and all the participants reflected them and reinterpreted them freely in a jovial, almost ecstatic milieu. No need for a coherent or systemic approach was felt; it was more like a feast on the abundance of intriguing ideas, choosing the bits and pieces that happened to resonate and leaving the rest behind.⁴⁵²

Similarly, Krull's interpretation of Muru's drawings was highly idiosyncratic. Reworked in two versions,⁴⁵³ it has, in spite of its ambivalence and partly fictional form (or perhaps because of it) remained the only attempt at any kind of analysis of the work. He started by stating that Muru's architecture was both sacral and nihilistic, combining two contradictory archetypes: the Gothic cathedral and the Estonian traditional farmhouse, the thrusting vertical and the low horizontal, both amplified to their extremes. The simultaneity of the presence of masculine and feminine impulses prompted Krull to call this kind of architecture androgynous, a reference that was widely used in contemporary art criticism regarding Group T's art practice as well.⁴⁵⁴ Describing Muru's drawing as a nihilist practice (acknowledging that the author himself preferred the term 'anarchic'), Krull proposed that it worked in a manner similar to the text-practice in Julia Kristeva's sense: as a practice that enfolded the subject into an unstable process, driven by simultaneously operating contradictory impulses. It was not possible to secure a fixed position regarding the categories of positive/negative, culture/nature, or life/death: there was an active, mobile nihilism in operation allowing for different solutions at the same time. In the context of architecture, Krull felt that this meant that there was no longer an essential difference between a house and its ruins. Muru's buildings, according to Krull, were petrified structures that were able to change only by self-destruction, disintegration or falling into ruins.⁴⁵⁵ It was a process of triple effacement: the erasure of the object, of its meaning and of its subject.⁴⁵⁶ A building was a mask with essentially nothing behind it, a conceptual ruin even before its material disintegration.

A nihilist approach to designing, manifesting the ambivalence and instability of spatial forms and architectural meanings, also characterised some competition entries from the end of the 1980s.

451 Hasso Krull, Raoul Kurvitzaga vihtlemas. – Kati Ilves (ed.), Kurvitz. Tallinn: Art Museum of Estonia, 2013, p. 41.

452 Ibid., p. 43.

453 Hasso Krull, Androgüünsed varemmed, tekst. – Vikerkaar 1989, No. 10, pp. 35–48; Hasso Krull, Urmas Muru, Majad ja varemmed. – Ehituskunst 1992, Vol. 6, pp. 37–39.

454 Eha Komissarov, Rühm T. – Rühm T. Näitus

Besti Kunstmuuseumis / Exhibition in Estonian Art Museum 18 October–18 November 1996. s.l: Rühm T, 1996, unpaginated; also Maarin Mürk. Kurvitz on Kurvitz on Kurvitz / Kurvitz Is Kurvitz Is Kurvitz. – Kunst.ee 2013, No. 2, pp. 52–56.

455 Hasso Krull, Urmas Muru: Majad ja varemmed, ibid.

456 Hasso Krull, Androgüünsed varemmed, tekst, ibid.

Kurvitz and Muru's entry for the 1988 competition of the recreational area at Kuressaare bay, code named *Antidolorosum*, presented a series of dynamic sketches (ill. 55); an entry for the 1989 Mere Blvd commercial centre competition, code-named *Monsieur l'Jkfgjhrvgip* (not surviving), attributable to the same team, was described by the jury as a masterful yet presumptuous rendering that did not give the slightest clue of the actual planning and design solution.⁴⁵⁷ Their entry for the invited competition aimed to test the suitability of different possible locations for the Estonian Art Museum with a conceptual reversal of architectural form: instead of a visible building volume, the project displayed a jagged tear, like a wound, in a landscape, with the necessary building programme hidden beneath the ground or below artificial landscaping. But the main force of a gesture was again achieved by representational techniques: at the exhibition of the Nordic-Baltic architecture triennial of 1990,⁴⁵⁸ Kurvitz's and Muru's model was displayed in a huge aquarium filled with murky water, submerged and thus virtually illegible (ill. 56). The display was interpreted as a drowned city, a vanished Atlantis,⁴⁵⁹ referring equally to decadent enjoyment of death and decay, and to violent aggression against architecture as a conveyor of symbolic significance.

In his reviews, Krull detected one of the core principles of Muru's, and the entire Group T's, architecture, namely the destructive impulse towards architecture as one of the constituent forces of social power structures, and against architecture as a productive and symbolising agent. Georges Bataille compared the role of architecture in society to Jacques Lacan's mirror stage in personality development: architectural creation as a social mirror that is necessary for self-awareness, for constructing oneself.⁴⁶⁰ Although Bataille was never explicitly referenced in the context of Group T's architecture, his views were nevertheless present and acknowledged, with Hasso Krull translating both his theoretical viewpoints⁴⁶¹ and his literary works,⁴⁶² and the group members discussing his ideas.⁴⁶³ According to Bataille, architecture is society's superego: it either speaks to the masses or silences them, but in any case it does so from a dominant position. Thus any attempt at revolutionising social structures should also involve rethinking and redoing architecture, essentially going against it. The main concern of Bataille was to combine the Marxist position with affect: the greatest revolutionary potential lay within what was the

457 Tallinnas Mere puistee kaubanduskeskuse arhitektuurivõistluse tingimused, žürii protokollid, ekspertarvamused, seletuskirjad. Estonian Museum of Architecture, EAM 4883 Ar 5.7.6.

458 See more: Chapter 3: Discursive space.

459 Metropoliism ja provintsialism. – Eesti Elu 1990, No. 7, pp. C6–C7.

460 Dennis Hollier, *Against Architecture*. The

Writings of Georges Bataille. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995.

461 Georges Bataille, *Kulutuse mõiste*. – *Vikerkaar* 1995, No. 11, pp. 68–82, with a short accompanying essay explaining the context of Bataille's work.

462 Georges Bataille, *Silma lugu*. Transl. Hasso Krull. Tallinn: elf, 1993.

463 Conversation with Raoul Kurvitz, 4 May 2013.

lowest, the most excluded, the most taboo.⁴⁶⁴ *'Revolution is an 'Old Mole' that digs passages into this decomposing terrain so nauseating to the fine noses of the utopians'*: this metaphor highlights the potential of the explosive desires underneath the surface, and Bataille's belief in revolutionary impulses stemming from formless affect rather than from top-down idealism.⁴⁶⁵

A TECHNODELIC EXPRESSIONISM TO COUNTER NEO-NATIONAL ROMANTICISM

At the height of the 'national awakening' at the end of the 1980s, with its sublime goal of the re-establishment of an independent nation-state that would obliterate the effects of the interim Soviet rule, what would a Bataillean position towards social renewal mean? Some light may be shed on the question by examining Group T's *Manifesto for Technodelic Expressionism*, a text written in 1988, at the height of the national awakening. The exhibitions of Group T were almost always accompanied by manifesto-like statements, although in hindsight it is difficult to properly count or attribute them.⁴⁶⁶ The first exhibition, in 1986, was accompanied by short theses that were slightly later published in the magazine *Kunst (Art)* in a quite significantly expanded manner, a version that is usually credited as their first manifesto.⁴⁶⁷ The second exhibition, in 1987, also had an 'introductory sheet of theses', which has been lost, with its exact wording not properly remembered by any of the authors.⁴⁶⁸ *The Manifesto for technodelic expressionism*, however, received special treatment: it was both published as a separate brochure, titled *Estonian Expressionist Architecture 1985–1988*, and illustrated with a selection of Kurvitz's, Muru's and Pere's architectural drawings,⁴⁶⁹ as well as being republished in the progressive cultural monthly *Vikerkaar (Rainbow)*⁴⁷⁰. Authored by Kurvitz and Muru, although the text also includes quotes by fellow architect Peep Urb and the interior architect Eero Jürgenson, the manifesto paradoxically combined technicism as a universalising, industrial logic, and the psychedelic impulse as a highly subjective perception of the world. Declaring that the technical developments were not separate from nature or opposed to it but should rather be acknowledged as part of it in a new amalgamation, the

464 Gavin Grindon, *Alchemist of the Revolution. The Affective Materialism of Georges Bataille. Third Text* 2010, Vol. 24, No. 3 (May), 2010, pp. 305–317.

465 *Ibid.*

466 See Indrek Grigor, *Generatsioon T / Generation T*. – *Kunst.ee* 2006, No. 4, p. 15.

467 Rühm T. – *Kunst* 1987, No. 2, pp. 18–20.

468 Indrek Grigor, *Generatsioon T*.

469 *Eesti ekspressionistlik arhitektuur 1985–1988*. Tallinn: ENSV Riiklik Ehituskomitee RPI "Eesti Tõöstusprojekt", 1988.

470 Raoul Kurvits, Urmas Muru, *Tehnodelilise ekspressionismi manifest*. – *Vikerkaar* 1989, No. 10, p. 88.

manifesto can be seen as harking back to Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto*, written three years earlier, although it is quite unlikely that Kurvitz and Muru were aware of her manifesto. The realities of the technological-industrial realm were countered with ecstatic intensity, eroticism, hallucinations, hidden passions and delirious raving: the realm of Bataillean affect.⁴⁷¹ The space must be seen as a specific state of consciousness, as the manifesto declared.

On the other hand, taking into consideration the extreme emphasis on subjective expression, the manifesto took a surprising turn by addressing the question of national representation. The aim was to engage in a critical dialogue with the previous generation's – the highly esteemed Tallinn school's – resistant position, which they saw as nationalist-nostalgic. Building on the romantic tradition that creative principles derive from specific climatic and racial conditions – in this case, Estonia's harsh and indifferent nature and the Estonian biological code and type of temperament – the manifesto denied universal applicability and situated itself in a very specific geographical and cultural setting. The previous generation's expression of these climatic-cultural specific aspects in the form of static neo-functionalism was seen as an energy turned inwards, whereas the technodelic architects' aim was to use the same energies by turning them outwards, unleashing intense movements.⁴⁷² *'We express the sentiment of our generation: our attitude is rather cool and devoid of pathos,'* stated Muru in one of the earliest interviews.⁴⁷³ *'Conflict-free harmony is definitely not our goal,'* added Kurvitz in the same interview.⁴⁷⁴ They called the dissent of the previous generation 'fruitless' and their ideals an imagination of a *'pure, bright, uncompromising realm of harmony that was thoroughly different than the actual world they are producing: a discrepancy that can only increase estrangement'*.⁴⁷⁵ The previous generation's artistic position was understood as something strongly based on negation, whereas Group T aimed at a mode of existence that would be *'neither hostile nor enthusiastic'* towards the existing conditions.⁴⁷⁶ Similarly, Krull diagnosed the ethos of the whole Estonian society as based on negation: an understandable strategy during the Soviet times but an approach that had presented the essence and significance of Estonianness only in negative terms, as a response to outside pressure, and that hindered any attempts at creating any positive or productive content.⁴⁷⁷ He claimed that the rethinking of Estonian culture should start with acknowledging that it was a colonial culture, and that the

471 Ibid.

472 Raoul Kurvits, Urmas Muru, Tehnodeelilise ekspresionismi manifest.

473 Heie Treier, A. H. Tammsaare majamuuseumis. Interview with Raoul Kurvits and Urmas Muru. – Sirp ja Vasar 3 July 1987.

474 Ibid.

475 Urmas Muru, Rühm T. – Noorus 1987, No. 12, pp. 48–49.

476 Ibid.

477 Hasso Krull, Mõök merepõhjas. Eesti poliitiline alateadvus. – Eesti Ekspress 3 September 1993, p. B2.

concept of patriotism was a fantasy from the era of national romanticism.⁴⁷⁸ *'Even the best patriotic Estonian society would be unacceptable if it declared itself a value higher than individual freedom,'* claimed Krull.⁴⁷⁹ In a Bataillean sense, prioritising individual affective relationship towards the environment was a liberating strategy to counter the rationalising and inherently oppressive character of architecture.

Although it remains unclear how readily the ideas of Krull can be equated with those of Group T as a whole, one cannot deny their strong seminal influence on the self-positioning of Kurvitz, Muru and Pere, and on their understanding of the relationship between society and space. Regarding the model of operation and scope of action of the public intellectual in the current political situation, Krull called for a certain 'grunge' intellectual (yet another conceptual loan from the pop culture scene: in the mid-1980s Group T had declared an affiliation with punk and rock culture, and at the beginning of the 1990s they rode the new exciting wave of rave and techno).⁴⁸⁰ According to Krull, the 'grunge intellectual' should display a fair amount of Goliardic rebellion and sharp-sightedness to be able to go beyond the restitutive concerns of current politics and to distinguish between patriotic politics and neo-liberal disregard of ordinary people. The 'grunge intellectual' would be free from any constraints and superstitions of the previous era and would not have to fight the demons of the past or struggle with adapting to the changing social situation as there would be a release from seeing the situation as a complicated result of the previous oppression. A product of their time, just like the 'jazz intellectuals' of the 1950s and the 'rock intellectuals' of the 1970s, the 'grunge intellectual' was characterised by a certain style and zeitgeist. Although this short description was perhaps not detailed enough to justify calling it a manifesto, it certainly conveyed a sense of discontent with the current politics, the debates in the public sphere, and the pursuit of an alternative political position outside the readily available labels and categorical positions that proliferated in the public debates of the time. A similar desire to position themselves outside of any preconceived categorisations characterised all of Group T throughout their existence, partly as a general postmodern negation of fixed meanings and concepts, and partly as a response to the social debates of the 1990s, which often tended towards black-and-white statements. Thus, the defining strategy of Group T was to denounce any label or position at once if it seemed to stick to them

478 Intervjuu hr. Hasso Krulliga. – Magellani pilved 1993, No. 1, p. 45.

479 Ibid., p. 56.

480 Hasso Krull, Neli intellektuaali ja grunge. – Vikerkaar 1995, No. 1, pp. 92–95.

or had the slightest possibility of starting to define them. A characteristic statement was made by Kurvitz, describing their performances at Billnäs, Finland: *'As the event booklet called us Estonian avant-garde artists, we immediately protested and declared ourselves conservatives, just in case.'*⁴⁸¹ The quality of being 'other' in any possible categorisation has also been noted by Johannes Saar, writing about Urmas Muru's curatorial work for the exhibition *Olematu kunst (Non-existent Art)* in the Tallinn Art Hall in 1994.⁴⁸² According to Saar, Muru was refusing the avant-garde model of oppositions between the previous and the now, replacing it with a simple acknowledgement of a world where there were no 'then' and 'now', no noble progress of civilisation, and no distinctions between culture and non-culture. Devoid of historical perspective, value judgements and appreciation of taste, Muru's position led to a futurologic space with no dimension of time, with the present, past and future existing all at once.⁴⁸³ Naturally, such a conception of space was more easily delivered by performative means rather than conventional built architecture, with its material and functional restrictions and slow and painstaking processes of execution.

PERFORMING SPACE, SUBVERTING PLACES

Performative acts played a vital part in Group T right from the beginning, with performances accompanying exhibition openings at the Adamson-Eric Museum (1986), Tammsaare Museum (1987) and Song Festival Grounds building (1988, ill. 57), as well as taking place as separate events. On the one hand, turning to visual art and performance instead of architecture was surely the result of the frustration with everyday architectural practice, a desire to achieve more instantaneous communication. Kurvitz claimed that architecture, under the current circumstances, was an ineffective means of communicating ideas about space,⁴⁸⁴ and Muru retrospectively admitted the same, stating that art was simply a swifter way to self-realisation.⁴⁸⁵ On the other hand, performance was a means of temporarily establishing a space with a different set of rules, a space 'other' to the surrounding social reality. By focusing on the body, performance led to a Batailleian articulation of a revolutionary space of affect. The reinterpretation of the relationship between architecture, the

481 Raoul Kurvitz, *Asjastamata ja asjastatav kunst Billnäs*. – Kunst 1990, No. 1, pp. 16–21.

482 Johannes Saar, *Muru on miski muu*. – Vikerkaar 1994, No. 12, pp. 41–50.

483 Ibid.

484 Kärt Hella, *Kunst on tunne...*

485 Ants Juske, *Rühm T juubel Kunstimuseumis*. – Eesti Päevaleht 19 October 1996.

body and society necessitated 'bringing back' the non-standardised, subjective, emotional body that created events, and established a parallel between destructive acts towards architecture as a mechanism of social power, and towards the performer's body. For Group T's contemporary Bernard Tschumi, whose position seemed to have some kind of intellectual kinship to theirs, architecture started only with an event, when the body of the user and the architectural body violently collided; here violence was a productive category that measured the intensity of the encounter.⁴⁸⁶ Tschumi brought an unprecedented carnal passion to architectural writing: *'The integration of the concept of violence into the architectural mechanism – the purpose of my argument – is ultimately aimed at a new pleasure of architecture. Like any form of violence, the violence of architecture also contains the possibility of change, of renewal. Like any violence, the violence of architecture is deeply Dionysian.'*⁴⁸⁷ As an echo, Kurvitz also mentioned the goal of finding a way of using the energy of violence most productively.⁴⁸⁸ The intense element of violence and (self-)destruction prompted reviewers to analyse the events primarily from the point of view of the performer and the subject, interpreting the performances via concepts of the Jungian subconscious, sadomasochism, feelings of guilt and the like.⁴⁸⁹ Yet, this commonly held view overlooked the aspect of space and the performing subjects' redefining relationship to their locations, which tended to be culturally highly loaded.

Group T's very first exhibition, in February 1986, mounted literally in snow in the yard of the Adamson-Eric museum – a house-museum of a prolific painter and applied artist, a large part of whose work reinterpreted Estonian national heritage – was both the young rebels' triumphant entrance directly into institutional premises and a violation of all normal conventions about exhibition-making and handling art. Hanging their paintings outside in the middle of winter (ill. 41) and setting up installations in the snow (ill. 42) displayed a markedly masochistic indifference to their own oeuvre and was latently violent towards the institution and its spatial premises. The second exhibition went a step further: the home environment of the house-museum of Tammsaare, an early 20th century author of some of the core novels establishing Estonian national identity, was taken over by an industrial wasteland of found rusted metal, wood and barbed wire. The opening performance involved running head-first into a wall, the collision traumatising the performer and the space.

486 Bernard Tschumi, *The Violence of Architecture. – Architecture and Disjunction*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996.

487 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

488 Script of the performance titled *Discipline and Anarchy*. The archive of Raoul Kurvitz.

489 See e.g. Hanno Soans, Peegel ja piits. Mina köidikud uemas eesti kunstis. – *Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi* 2000, No. 10, pp. 309–353.

The third exhibition took place at the indoor premises of the Tallinn Song Festival grounds. In 1988, the year of the 'Singing Revolution',⁴⁹⁰ the location could not have been more symbolic. Whereas the song festival grounds formed a spatial setting that took on its actual significance only in practice, i.e. in accommodating tens of thousands of singers under its canopy and on the grounds, in the opening performance of Group T's exhibition this normal usage was countered by a sole performer (Urmas Muru) at the back of the building, whose violin playing was, furthermore, disrupted by his suit suddenly catching fire (ill. 57). Later the same year there was a performance in the Writers' Union, in the Hall of the Black Ceiling: again a symbolically highly loaded location in terms of Estonian intellectual culture since the 1960s, with the black ceiling referring to a well-known poem by the tragic national poet Juhan Liiv; in the years of the Soviet occupation the hall acquired additional significance as a symbol of oppression. In order to clash with and short-circuit meaningful references, the event, entitled *Meeting the Black Lady*, referred to a painting by René Magritte and to a local myth of a lady walled up in the castle of Haapsalu. Again the performance tried to undo the space, this time by a complete blackout, and the action consisted of a chaotic aural mix of female screams and recitals in German and English, with four bright flashing lights in the background. In all of the cases, the intense, unintelligible, and meaninglessly violent performances engaging with the prominent locations worked to undo the habitual references the spaces originally had, to disengage their symbolic connotations, and to rid the public of secure footing in relation to the spaces and their meanings.

In a couple of instances the relationship of space and the body was more highlighted. For instance, there was their performance at the opening of the Vaal gallery in Tallinn in 1990 (ill. 58), where there was a clear juxtaposition of the architect's rational activities of measuring and designing, and real creative forces, which were amorphous, unstable and threatening.⁴⁹¹ In a covered gallery courtyard with an oval opening in the ceiling, Peeter Pere was absorbed in measuring the area, calculating and drawing an oval equivalent to the one above his head; at the same time, the oval opening, covered with plastic, first began to be filled with water, and then a man (Urmas Muru) emerged from it, symbolising the process of birth, or creation, as opposed to the futile abstractions occurring on the ground. Characteristically, the process involved

490 This term for the Baltics' non-violent uprising was coined by artist and activist Heinz Valk in an article published a week after the June 10–11 spontaneous mass night-singing demonstrations at the Tallinn Song Festival Grounds, see Heinz Valk, Laulev revolutsioon. – Sirp ja Vasar 17 June 1988.

491 See Vaal 1990 / 2005. Tallinn: Vaal galerii, 2005.

a strong sense of threat and the possibility of self-destruction, as the human body was put in a situation testing physical laws dependent on, among other things, architectural structures, and it was not at all clear whether the plastic could withstand the load. The most direct juxtaposition of human and architectural bodies took place in the performance *À rebours*,⁴⁹² where Urmas Muru performed a balancing act on the rail of the balcony of the Helsinki Student Theatre (ill. 59).⁴⁹³ He appeared to be 'conducting' the building, with black rectangular objects that filled all of the openings of the façade, pulsating to the rhythm of music by Allan Hmelnitski.⁴⁹⁴ At the end of the piece, the façade 'spat out' the black rectangular objects from its windows and openings as in a process of purging or purification, or as if testifying to the internal collapse of the building, rendering the façade a hollow core.

PERFORMANCES AT THE ART HALL: A CLIMAX OF ACTIVITIES

*'A performance is an event where nothing takes place, and once it is over there are no memories of it.'*⁴⁹⁵ This was the declaration by Hasso Krull on the occasion of the performance week *Eleonora*, which took place at the Tallinn Art Hall in February 1993. The statement by Krull was issued in the hope of transcending the common urge to decode the 'meaning' of the performance, and focus on the event as pure presence. And it was exactly the presence of Group T's performative actions – a different, hitherto unseen way of occupying an exhibition space – that temporarily transformed the Tallinn Art Hall, proposing a new way of being together in an institutional space. By doing that, Group T helped a specific counterpublic to emerge and temporarily constructed an alternative public sphere.

Performances at the Art Hall – the exhibition *A Guide to Intronomadism*, which took place 20 Feb–10 March 1991, and the weeklong performance *Eleonora* 15–21 Feb 1993 – may be seen as the culmination of Group T's activities in Estonia. With *A Guide to Intronomadism*, they proclaimed their activities to be finished, as if the 'conquering' of the most important local art venue had served as a climax and self-fulfilment. With *Eleonora*, two years later, they actually only acted as curators, with the majority of the performers consisting of their invited guests from the other Baltics, Scandinavian

492 The title of the performance referred to a symbolist 1884 novel of the same name by Joris-Karl Huysmans.

493 Elisabeth Nordgren, Mellan himmel och jord. – Hufvudstadsbladet 10 May 1992.

494 Conversation with Urmas Muru, 15 April 2013.

495 Hasso Krull, Ei juhtunud midagi (*Eleonora*). – Vikerkaar 1993, No. 4, p. 50.

countries and Estonia.

A Guide to Intronomadism had some artworks permanently on display, e.g. Peeter Pere's paintings, a couple of video works by Urmas Muru and Tarvo Hanno Varres, Raoul Kurvitz's installations and Varres's photo series, but the main programme consisted of performances that took place every night (except Tuesday, when the gallery was closed) for two weeks in a row. By no means were these spontaneous happenings: there was a planned programme with about half of the performances accompanied by specially composed or sampled music by Ariel Lagle or Raul Saaremets and Allan Hmelnitski. Many of the titles of the pieces more or less referenced various inspirations from history or pop culture. Whereas Group T was known for accompanying their endeavours with manifestos (since the first one in 1986), this exhibition was preceded by a programmatic article⁴⁹⁶ in the weekly *Eesti Ekspress*, written by Hasso Krull. The main inspiration for the article, as well as for the title of the exhibition, was Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's *Nomadology*. Krull referenced their understanding of intensities of movement, combining the dynamics of mind-boggling racing and complete stillness: he felt that evoking such moments of intensity should be the main aim of an art event instead of some kind of expression of an artist's self. He also provided the definitive interpretation of the exhibition with an article in the cultural monthly pretentiously ending with a proclamation that the issue of intronomadism never requires any explaining.⁴⁹⁷ In it, he based the actions of Group T on Georges Bataille's concept of pure expenditure, as a way to step out of any natural chains of causality, resisting the system of production and consumption, and defying the need to create value. This was achieved by anti-creativity, destruction, bodilyness and spectacularity.

Eleonora was announced by the manifesto-like article *Nomadism Repeated* by Hasso Krull, referring to a recurrence of previous experiences at the same place.⁴⁹⁸ In a playful manner, Krull proposed three possibilities of nomads' identities: they might be gods, departed from the human realm because of boredom, they could be escaped criminals, or they could be accidental creatures who were epicine, immortal and alien-like. Being outside the normal implied that any interpretations of their actions conforming to regular social norms and expectations would be inappropriate. The event was given the female name Eleonora in an attempt to annul any reference to

496 Hasso Krull, *Nomadistilikud rituaalid*. – *Eesti Ekspress* 15 February 1991.

497 Hasso Krull, *Postnomadonoomia*. – *Vikerkaar* 1991, No. 6, pp. 42–52.

498 Hasso Krull, *Nomadism repeated*. – *Eesti Ekspress* 19 February 1993.

meaning. For three nights, from Friday to Sunday, there were performances by Siim-Tanel Annus, Maria Avdjushko, Lauris Bruvelis, Ansis Egle, Valts Kleins, Hasso Krull, Raoul Kurvitz, Ariel Lagle, Urmas Muru, Irma Optimisti, Kirsi Peltomäki, Peeter Pere, Rühm T, Kimmo Schroderus, Jaan Toomik, Roi Vaara, Tarvo Hanno Varres, Nalle Virolainen, Ugis Witins, Piotr Wyrzykowski, Vilnis Zabers and anonymous assistants.

Compared to the conventional exhibition practice, what was new with Group T's activities at the Art Hall was the redefinition of the venue as an event-space, as a setting for continuous practice instead of a place for exhibiting the end results of previously completed processes. The traditional concept of an exhibition was reworked into something that was in constant flux, and that laid new and more ambitious demands on the authors and on the audience, who by becoming part of this constant reworking of the space and its contents inevitably lost the safe role of spectator and were transformed into participants instead. As Heie Treier remarked in a contemporary review, the way the exhibition changed on a day-to-day basis bound the artists strongly together with their works, naturally requiring extra effort to adjust the setting and create new input daily.⁴⁹⁹ In compliance with postmodern pathos, this naturally contributed to the overall message of eradicating stable structures and the impossibility of meanings: the absence of content behind form was compared to Oscar Wilde's *The Sphinx Without a Secret*.⁵⁰⁰ The experience of the art event consisting of a series of sub-events unfolding over a period of two weeks highlighted the temporal, virtual aspect of it, a heightened sense of being in the moment, of participation and, by virtue of the latter, the formation of a temporary community. The setting, in the sense of the institutional space and even in the form of the exhibition situation as a kind of stage, was a prerequisite. This was literally confirmed by Urmas Muru: *'A gallery space is just an address, nothing else. ... It is just like with the club scene: the club space itself is nothing; it is an address, a location. Everything depends on who is playing the music; this is what defines the essence of the party.'*⁵⁰¹

This de-sacralising of the institutional exhibition space – the devaluing of a physical space in itself, for that matter – was definitely connected with Group T's main protagonists' background in architecture, which gave them a heightened awareness of how any given space works together with the art that takes place there. According

499 Heie Treier, Dessantlased on vallutanud Kunstihoone! – Sirp 15 March 1991.

500 Vappu Vabar, Salapärane performance.

501 Vappu Vabar, Urmas Muru. Jutuajamine näituse "Olematu kunst" kuraatoriga. – Kultuurileht 9 December 1994.

to Tschumi, there is no space without an event, and no architecture without a programme.⁵⁰² Architecture cannot be dissociated from the events that ‘happen’ there. An event, particularly a political event, has the capacity to disrupt simple casual relationships between form and function, allowing for the possibility that anywhere can be used for anything, at any time. This position opened up the political potential of using the particular, historical and highly symbolically loaded space of the Tallinn Art Hall in a subversive way, creating a counterpublic space critical of the mainstream social processes of the time. ‘*It was a pure laboratory, and we took everything it was possible to take from the Art Hall,*’ as Group T themselves remarked.⁵⁰³

In the spatial hierarchy of the Art Hall, the main hall held the highest importance, with indirect yet even and luminous light emanating from the glass ceiling, the light being the most important feature of the room, as it allowed artworks to be displayed to their best effect. As the first move in de-sacralising the space and the art event, Group T covered the glass ceiling with black tar paper, darkening the room for the whole duration of *A Guide to Intronomadism*. Furthermore, for the performance *Death of Marat* they removed the glass panels so that the body of a performer could be hung from the ceiling. Another valuable feature of the Art Hall spaces was the floor: during the Soviet era, under the conditions of general bleakness in public spaces, the existence of a pre-war wooden parquet floor, just like any fine architectural detailing from the period, became a reference to the cherished pre-Soviet independence era. This floor, already suffering from bad maintenance, became even more worn with Urmas Muru’s installation *The Carpet* (ill. 60) burying the parquet underneath granite gritstone. The situation wasn’t made easier with Raoul Kurvitz’s performance *Myra F*, which involved skiing on the floor, and Raoul Kurvitz and Maria Avdjushko lit a fire on it for *Wolf and Seven Little Goats* (ill. 62); the same happened with *Andante* by Urmas Muru and Eve Kask. Those primary elements of earth and fire were complemented with water pouring down from smashed buckets in the performance *Death of Marat* (ill. 61). The opening performance of *A Guide to Intronomadism* involved drilling holes, not quite into the building itself but into large cardboard boxes that could be interpreted as preliminary architectural units. Still, the structure of the Art Hall did not survive quite undamaged: while preparing for the performance of Piotr Wyrzykowski during the *Eleonora* week, an accidental pickaxe hole

502 Bernard Tschumi, *Spaces and Events*. – Bernard Tschumi. *Architecture and Disjunction*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996, p. 139.

503 Eesti nütüdiskunst: Rühm T. ETV 1997. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/eesti-kunst-ruhm-t>, accessed 31 March 2018.

was made in a wall. As a whole, there was quite a nihilistic relationship to the building and a conscious decision to 'make the place their own'. As Urmas Muru has recalled, the venue did not have any security measures and they were free to inhabit the place on a 24-hour basis if the preparations required.⁵⁰⁴ The Art Hall was truly made into a production workshop instead of a venue for displaying high art, the connotation of production processes being accentuated by the choice of materials: tar paper, rough metal and rust, gritstone, industrial prefabricated details, plastic etc. As Kurvitz put it, the contrast was deliberate and acknowledged: '*At the will of the rioting artists, the attributes of an industrial modernism, destined to doom, were displayed right in the middle of the noblest temples of art, which were, in the course of the most blasphemous orgies, rudely subjugated without any resistance.*'⁵⁰⁵

ESTABLISHING A COUNTERPUBLIC AND AN ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SPHERE

Whereas the ritualistic aspect of Group T's performances has so far mainly received interpretation in terms of the performers as postmodern pseudo-shamans or demiurges,⁵⁰⁶ an equally important effect of any rite is a building up of a (temporary) congregation of participants. The issue of participation was crucially acknowledged from the start. In the very first interview with Raoul Kurvitz and Urmas Muru on the subject of Group T, they declared that the meaning of the group came entirely from its public.⁵⁰⁷ Elsewhere, they stated that their identity was based on a certain common 'generational feeling',⁵⁰⁸ and through the years membership in the group was indeed in considerable flux. The group defined itself as an open platform from the start, with Kurvitz and Muru proclaiming that anybody interested could become a member of the group and contribute a performance.⁵⁰⁹ This is exactly how Tarvo Hanno Varres recalls becoming a member of the group for *A Guide to Intronomadism* as a young punk, entering from the street as a result of a chance conversation.⁵¹⁰ But there were also loads of people simply hanging around who were put to good use either in helping out with transport and other practicalities, or who were used as extras in the 'mass scenes' of various performances, receiving exact guidelines for their roles

504 Conversation with Urmas Muru, 18 October 2017.

505 Raoul Kurvitz, Pöörasustes sissepühitsetud {sulud}. – Agent. Eesti Kunstimuuseumi ajaleht 2007, No. 11 (juuli), p. 14.

506 Vaikke Sarv, Sovetliku šamaani raske roll. – Teater. Muusika. Kino 1990, No. 12, pp. 16–19; Vappu Vabar, Salapärase performance.

507 Heie Treier, A. H. Tammsaare majamuuseumis. – Sirp ja Vasar 3 July 1987.

508 Urmas Muru, Rühm T. – Noorus 1987, No. 12, pp. 48–49.

509 Conversation with Raoul Kurvitz, 6 December 2012.

510 Conversation with Tarvo Hanno Varres, 6 October 2017.

in events that left some space for improvisation as well.⁵¹¹ It was a deliberate choice to call all such ‘groupies’ members of the group, accentuating the constant flux, although the core members retained the power to define the essence and conceptual aims of the group. Similarly, it was not really important that the fluctuating members, much less the attending public, thoroughly understood and shared the complex theoretical underpinnings of the performances. The blurring of boundaries between the performers and the audience was never an intention⁵¹² and the performances followed preconceived plans, however improvisational they might have looked. Nevertheless, the sheer duration of the event, unfolding over two weeks, created a kind of common bond among the faithful public who cared enough to attend daily. Urmas Muru has recalled that the intensity of the event, with performances taking place every night, slightly ‘wore out’ the usual crowd who came to art exhibition openings, who were perhaps not used to such effort.⁵¹³ Instead, the evenings were increasingly attended by a new kind of public: young punks who daily hung around in Vabaduse Square and especially in front of the café Moskva, next door to the Art Hall, and the queer people who lacked places of their own in town altogether. Bringing a completely new kind of public to the art institution was also acknowledged in reviews, which appreciated the event’s ability to demolish a barrier between the local art and music scenes, and to bring in new crowds, even at the price of the parquet: the Art Hall was better dilapidated but full of people than immaculate and empty.⁵¹⁴

The art and music scenes were most effectively fused in Tarvo Hanno Varres’s performance *Acid House Dance Party*, on 1 March 1991. It was exactly what the name implied: an acid house dance party, with Raul Saaremetts and Allan Hmelnitski playing house music. This was perhaps the only event during the whole exhibition which tried to provoke the coalescence of performers and viewers, to form a temporary ‘congregation’. As Tarvo Hanno Varres recalls, it was met with surprise and even with disappointment from the regular ‘art crowd’, who had come expecting a ‘normal’ performance. Many of them left when that wasn’t offered, to be replaced by the ‘club scene crowd’, who were happy to claim the space.⁵¹⁵ To be exact, in Estonia there did not yet exist a coherent ‘club scene’ at that time; it was more a loose group of acquaintances interested in contemporary house and techno music, which was still quite hard to get

511 Conversation with Teet Parve, 10 January 2018.

512 Conversation with Urmas Muru, 18 October 2017.

513 Ibid.

514 Vappu Vabar, *Salapärane performance*, p. 77.

515 Conversation with Tarvo Hanno Varres.

your hands on. Also, the distinction between punk rock, indie, and techno scenes was fluid, all of these different strands coming together in the form of the band Röövel Ööbik, whose frontmen, Saaremets and Hmelnitski, were at the time listed as members of Group T (with Tarvo Hanno Varres starting to play base in the band). The first gatherings with about a dozen interested people playing house music from self-recorded cassettes had taken place in 1990, and there was still half a year to go until an event that can actually be called the first alternative electronic music party, at Kodulinna House, took place in August 1991.⁵¹⁶ Thus the *Acid House Dance Party*, with its unusual sound and ambience, must have been as extraordinary to the general public as any other event in the series of performances.

This attempt at integrating cutting-edge pop culture into art practice was by no means an isolated occurrence in the practice of Group T. During their first years, their activities overlapped with punk, with Raoul Kurvitz, Urmas Muru and Eero Jürgenson staging the performance *An Announcement to the Teacher* at the Jäneda punk music festival of 1986, and Kurvitz, Muru and Velle Kadalipp organising the performance *Discipline and Anarchy* – in essence, a piece of punk poetry – at the Estonian Industrial Project office in 1988. At the beginning of the 1990s, however, their interests shifted to more electronic music. They also increasingly acknowledged the huge importance of imagological choices in building up their public personae,⁵¹⁷ and in channelling their creative endeavours towards occupying the newly developing media discourse. This was exemplified by Raoul Kurvitz initiating the series of TV broadcasts *Lifestyles*, an eight-part series of shows introducing different currents of pop culture, executed with experimental visual language and montage.⁵¹⁸ Due to financial difficulties, the series was broadcast with quite long intervals, starting in 1993 with the first part, *Camp*, continuing with *Techno*, *Feminism* (anchored by the actress Viire Valdma instead of Kurvitz), *Romanticism* and *Intellectuals* in 1994, *Hippies* in 1995, and *Disco* and *Winners and Losers* (anchored by Mari Sobolev) in 1996. The *Techno* broadcast was clearly the most important to their own creative position at the time, featuring the *Manifesto for Technodelic Expressionism*, which Group T had issued in 1988 (ill. 63).⁵¹⁹ In addition, *Techno* introduced music from Kraftwerk, Cabaret Voltaire and Throbbing Gristle, with Raul Saaremets stressing the importance

516 Airi-Alina Allaste, Klubikultuur Eestis / Club culture in Estonia. – Ülbed üheksakümne aastate Eesti kunstis / Nosy Nineties. Problems, Themes and Meanings in Estonian Art of the 1990s. Tallinn: Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2001, p. 69.
517 See more: Margaret Tali, Kunstnik kui popstaar.

518 Elustiilid. ETV 1993–1996. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/samast-seeriast/elustiilid-techno/default/1>, accessed 31 March 2018.

519 The manifesto was published in a leaflet Eesti ekspressionistlik arhitektuur 1985–1988 (op.cit); and later republished in the cultural monthly Vikerkaar 1989, No. 10.

of a total immersion in music and dancing in this all-encompassing sensibility. The visual side featured glimpses of urban design projects by the architecture studio Siim ja Kreis, furniture by Toivo Raidmets, glass design by Meeli Kõiva, and video art from Ene-Liis Semper; it also introduced the concept of virtual reality. In the voice-over, techno was stated to be the part of culture that dealt with the most radical innovation, and developed extreme sensual intensity directed towards the future; the computer was declared the muse of creative output. At the same time, Urmas Muru began guest editing the irregular special section *Tsoon (The Zone)* in the weekly *Eesti Ekspress*.⁵²⁰ These sections were characterised by an experimental take on graphic design, with found graphic source material, psychedelic patterns, irregular layering, the use of handwriting, and consciously illegible parts. Content-wise it was a similarly eclectic mix of references and samples on such issues as art and technology, French symbolism, narrated dreams, scenarios for possible performances, non-executed historical and contemporary urban design projects, effects of various narcotic substances, fashion, the relationship of art and sex, and meaningless samples in fictional languages, all combining into a phantasmagoria of a sophisticated contemporary urban sensibility, as kaleidoscopic as the *Techno* broadcast.

The shift from punk to techno was not a simple issue of the arrival of a new and exciting style of music; rather, it was a notable change in mindset and in forms of self-assertion under changing social conditions. Estonian punk has generally been associated with resistance to the Soviet establishment;⁵²¹ indeed, punk has been identified as one of the detonators of the democratic revolution of the eighties in the whole socialist bloc.⁵²² The social position of techno was more ambivalent and greatly in tune with the specific in-betweenness of the transition era. Punk rock's pretentiousness and grand gestures of negation were replaced by techno's denial of spectacle, denial of meaning and truth, and a deliberate lack of message. In the West, where techno sprang from specific social and political context of the decline of industrialism and rise of neo-liberalist ideology, raves drawing thousands of participants have been theorised as Temporary Autonomous Zones⁵²³ – spontaneously organised concentrations of people and musical energy that eluded formal structures of control. Though embodying both dystopian and

520 See e.g. *Eesti Ekspress* 29 April 1994, 20 May 1994, 17 June 1994.

521 See Pirjo Turk, *Eesti punk. Miilitsast presidendini*. – Airi-Alina Allaste (ed.), *Subkultuurid. Elustiilide uurimused*. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2013, pp. 79–118.

522 Gal Kirn, *Contradictions of the Socialist Civil Society in Nineteen-Eighties Yugoslavia*. – Nick Aikens, Teresa Grandas, Nav Haq, Beatriz Herraiz, Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez (eds.), *The long 1980s*.

Constellations of Art, Politics and Identities: A Collection of Microhistories. Amsterdam: Valiz, 2018, p. 186.

523 Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone. Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*. 1985. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/hakim-bey-t-a-z-the-temporary-autonomous-zone-ontological-anarchy-poetic-terrorism>, accessed 26 October 2020.

utopian impulses, raves possessed some extraordinary qualities, transgressing such social factors as race and class.⁵²⁴ Techno seemed to lack any ideological position, any political aim, and by definition that implied a lack of any communitarian ambition. Yet it worked as a 'laboratory of the present',⁵²⁵ generating a certain being-togetherness, an archaic or pseudo-ritualistic commonality and enthusiasm in a shared space. Techno was about complete presence: no ideals were projected towards the future, and the commonality only operated in the present. It was a commonality that was formed, unlike the traditional community, around a void instead of a meaningful core: the being-togetherness existed only in the actuality of the dancing bodies, without any denominator outside of the event.⁵²⁶ Each house party re-established a commonality, a relationship between the participants, without sealing it with clear-cut engagements or being channelled into a political or religious affiliation. Thus it resisted everything that involved a closed political approach or that tried to set any rules or boundaries on this totality of being-togetherness. Although seemingly mere collective effervescence, this festive occasion embodied a change in the state of things, a shaking up of the inertia. Its seeming apolitical nature turned out to be an essential stratum constituting both the social and the political in its claims for a different kind of relationship among people, a different commonality.⁵²⁷

The performances of Group T, not only the *Acid House Dance Party* but the whole two weeks as a continuous 'party', may be seen as re-establishing a commonality of bodies each night by creating a temporary alternative community that shared a space and shared, for a specific moment in the present, exactly such 'collective effervescence'. Jean-Luc Nancy has asked if this characteristic of techno could lead to a being-in-common that precedes any binding principles, to create a commonality before any common denominator.⁵²⁸ In February 1991, when social efforts seemed to be directed at the main aim of re-establishing independence based on historical continuity from the first republic, before the Second World War, and commonality was defined in extremely narrow, exclusively nationalistic terms, the question of finding a way for being-in-common to defy such simplistic common denominators was urgent. In Group T's rhetoric, the equivalent of Nancy's 'community without community' was the figure of the nomad, somebody who 'eradicates their markers of national identity and treats their body as a cosmic spatial entity, as an anti-

524 Nav Haq, Rave. Nick Aikens, Teresa Grandas, Nav Haq, Beatriz Herraez, Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez (eds.), *The long 1980s*, p. 71.

525 Michel Gaillot. *Multiple meaning. Techno: An Artistic and Political laboratory of the present*. Paris: Editions Dis Voir, s.a, p. 18.

526 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

527 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

528 Interview with Jean-Luc Nancy. – Michel Gaillot, *Multiple Meaning. Techno: An Artistic and Political laboratory of the present*. Paris: Editions Dis Voir, s.a, p. 87.

hierarchical field of intensity'.⁵²⁹ In order to avoid misunderstandings in the delicate social situation where uprootedness and the eradication of national identity would have resonated too readily with Soviet identity officially propagated for decades, it was seen as necessary to bring in a clear distinction between the nomad and the immigrant, the latter described as a pirate, only taking advantage of the already existing amenities, whereas the nomad was a drifter completely beyond concepts of nations and nationalities.⁵³⁰ The necessity of retaining individual freedom, which goes beyond seemingly indisputable social goals, was explicitly declared by Krull: *'I'm not going to accept even the best kind of Estonian society if this society claims itself to be a higher value than myself.'*⁵³¹ What the nomads had to offer with their technological rites was a heightened bodily presence and awareness of the present: *'an absolutely free negativity, an empty wind blowing through your pants with nobody knowing what country they will live in tomorrow. ... It is nothing else than the same freedom, bleak and insecure, that currently exists outside the Art Hall.'*⁵³²

529 Hasso Krull, *Postnomadonoomia*.

530 Hasso Krull, *Nomadistlikud rituaalid*.

531 Intervjuu hr. Hasso Krulliga.

532 Hasso Krull, *Postnomadonoomia*.

***INSTITUTIONAL
SPACE:
TALLINN ART
HALL AND
GEORGE
STEINMANN'S
REVIVAL OF
SPACE***



In the process of the transition, the institutional spaces of art also played an important role in imagining and constructing a new public space and helping to build a democratic public sphere. The physical space of the gallery exercises a notable impact on artworks and establishes the conventions and behaviour codes of the public, manifesting a common understanding of how an exhibition space should work, and what its opportunities and limitations are. A look at the transformations taking place in the realm of Estonian art galleries and other institutional art spaces reveals a lot about the realities in which the art world was operating. It points to the imaginations, desires and aspirations concerning the settings suitable for art that aims to address society. Somewhat surprisingly, the issue of Estonian institutional art spaces in the transition era and in the 1990s, and their relationship to the development of art, has not been researched so far, nor is it possible to obtain a comprehensive overview or a list of spaces where art has been shown. In Tallinn, at the end of the 1980s, contemporary art was exhibited either in premises managed by the Estonian Artists' Association, such as the Tallinn Art Hall and the Art Salon underneath it, or in the Draakon gallery, operated by the Art Foundation. The exhibition programme of the State Art Museum occasionally included contemporary art. Smaller exhibitions were held in other museums, such as the Tammsaare or Vilde museums. On certain occasions, group exhibitions took place in other cultural venues, e.g. the indoor premises of the Tallinn Song Festival Grounds, the fair pavilions of Estonian Exhibitions, the Tallinn Hikers' House, the Tallinn Teachers' House or the Institute of History. The end of the 1980s saw the establishment of the first contemporary art galleries outside the system of the Artists' Association, the first being Deco in 1988 (initially aimed only at sales, but in 1993 also opening an exhibition space in Kadriorg⁵³³). In 1990, the opening of the Vaal gallery marked the arrival of the first commercial exhibition space, which signalled its progressive ambitions by its choice of artists and artworks, as well as by the conspicuously polished modern architectural space previously unknown in the local art world.⁵³⁴ Luum, operating in 1992–1994, added another white-cube-type art space, being a privately owned non-profit exhibition space,⁵³⁵ and Tokko & Arrak, also established in 1992, used the premises of the Teachers' House.⁵³⁶ Also in 1992, Mustpeade maja galerii (the Gallery of the House of the Brotherhood of Blackheads) was established, with

533 Brigit Arop, *Mõned nopped Eesti 1990. aastate galeriimaastikult*. <https://cca.ee/ajakiri/meenutajamoned-nopped-eesi-1990-aastate-galeriimaastikult>, accessed 24 March 2020.

534 Kaido Ole, *Minu kohtumine Galeriaga. – Vaal 1990/2005*, p. 49.

535 Galerii "Luum" (20. aprill 1992–28. juuli 1994). – *Kultuurileht* 19 August 1994.

536 *Kroonika*. – *Sirp* 28 February 1992.

the aim of presenting works of artists early in their careers and art students. The gallery operated for four years.⁵³⁷ In addition to these, there were other, more short-lived galleries that contributed to the local art scene but did not establish a clear and sustainable agenda concerning contemporary art and its display. In this context, this chapter looks at the developments concerning the Tallinn Art Hall, with the main focus on George Steinmann's project *Revival of Space*, analysing what kind of spatial, imagological and ideological transformations regarding the building this project brought about. How did this site-specific project contribute to the institution's functioning as a public space, how did it resonate with the concurrent social developments, what was the artist's position in the project and what kind of public was constructed with it?

TALLINN ART HALL AS THE CENTRAL VENUE OF THE LOCAL CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE

Within the diverse art scene, where there were a number of old and new, more or less institutionalised exhibition spaces only gradually acquiring more clearly established agendas, the most representative position in terms of contemporary art was still held by the Tallinn Art Hall. It was a building and an institution with a notable history that had operated since the pre-war Estonian republic and continued through the Soviet era. The building was erected in 1934 on the initiative of the Estonian Cultural Endowment's Fine Art Foundation and the project came about as a result of an architectural competition won by Anton Soans, with the final project refined by him and Edgar Johan Kuusik.⁵³⁸ Programmatically modelled on the German Kunsthalle, it consisted of non-profit gallery spaces, including the main ceiling-lit hall and an adjacent hall facing the main square on the first floor, an art club in the cellar, and artists' studios on the upper floors. Its location as one of the defining structures of Vabaduse (Freedom) Square, the main urban square of the city, and its modern functionalist aesthetics underlined both the importance of art in society and the progressiveness and forward-looking nature of its activities. During the Soviet years, the institution was run by the Soviet Estonian Artists' Union, functioning as their prime official exhibition space. But bad upkeep and lack of funds left the spaces

537 Tambet Kaugema, *Mustpeade maja galerii pannakse kinni*. – Postimees 23 August 1996.

538 For a more comprehensive overview of the competition, building process and architectural details, see Karin Hallas-Murula, *Tallinna*

Kunstihoone 1934–1940. Ehitamine ja arhitektuur. / Tallinn Art Hall 1934–1940. Construction and Architecture. Tallinn: SA Tallinna Kunstihoone Fond, 2014.

more and more dilapidated over the years, and by the end of the 1980s the Art Hall was far from its original pristine condition, with worn-out floors, electrical problems, rotting windowsills and poorly maintained communal and sanitary spaces.

Thus it is no surprise that the changing times seemed to provide hope for invigorating and even enlarging the building and arriving at more appropriate conditions for exhibiting the arts. The dilapidated state of the building had previously given artists a total freedom of experimentation because there was almost nothing to lose, but this was certainly seen as a temporary state. The executives of the institution and many artists longed for more decent premises, to say nothing of the poor working conditions and actual lack of space for exhibiting and storing art. The hopes for positive future scenarios were high if uncertain, connected with opportunities to venture into for-profit activities to become economically self-sustaining. During Ando Keskküla's short reign (1989–1992) as the head of the Estonian Artists' Association, a number of initiatives were undertaken with the aim of expanding the premises. It started with the need for an extension of the art club into the back yard in 1990, actually necessitated by the prescriptions of the sanitary board, resulting in a container-like temporary solution by Raivo Puusepp.⁵³⁹ The next year, the Artists' Association optimistically established a joint-stock company with the Ministry of Culture, Union of Estonian Architects, Culture Fund and others to work on an ambitious development project in the adjacent Harju Street, where a cultural and commercial complex was planned, which was also to house exhibition premises as an extension of the Art Hall.⁵⁴⁰ When this development did not seem to work out and it was deemed more realistic and reasonable to find opportunities to extend the existing Art Hall building, in 1992 Keskküla commissioned architecture office J. Okas & M. Lõoke to draw up two versions of a preliminary design for building an extension in the back yard of the Art Hall.⁵⁴¹ Drafted in 1992, the first option placed the annex behind the main hall, stretching up to the historical city wall; the second version attached a narrow extension, five storeys high, to the side wall of the main hall.⁵⁴² The annex would have housed exhibition halls, storage rooms, and a café-club with an open-air terrace. Characteristic to Okas-Lõoke's sober style, the annex was rendered in a neo-modernist manner with rows of strip windows, a slightly protruding rounded staircase, and a pilotis referencing the

539 Silvi Lindmaa, Kunstiklubi "Kuku" juurdehitusest. – Reede 20 April 1990.

540 M.M. Aktsiaselts "Kuld Lõvi". Commented by Ando Keskküla, head of the Estonian Artists' Association. – Eesti Ekspress 12 April 1991.

541 Anu Liivak, Tagasivaade 1990. aastate kunstimaastikule. – Valiku vabadus. 1990. aastate Eesti kunst. Tallinna Kunstihoone, 1999, p. 33.

542 For the drawings, see Karin Hallas-Murula, Tallinna Kunstihoone 1934–1940, pp. 128–129.

two columns in front of the Art Hall, the only instance of using the Corbusian pilotis motif in 1930s Estonian modernism. However, the project lacked financial backing and remained unbuilt, as did so many other optimistic designs of the same years.

Such lofty plans did not correspond well to practical realities: far from building an annex, the first years of the 1990s were financially beyond insecure for the Art Hall. Initially, in 1991 with the establishment of the Art Hall as a legal body, it was financially supported by the Estonian Art Foundation, a subunit of the Estonian Artists' Association, which also authorised the Art Hall's exhibition schedule and other activities. But the tax incentives initially granted to the Art Foundation were discontinued a year later and from then on its financial support was confined to paying the electric and heating bills. The Art Hall had to find money for its exhibitions and activities by itself, applying for support from the Ministry of Culture and the Tallinn city government, or had to earn it by depositing artworks from its collection.⁵⁴³ The budget was extremely tight, and that was slightly alleviated only with the establishment of the Estonian Cultural Endowment in 1994, with some voices even proposing that the Art Hall should go entirely into the possession and custody of the Endowment.⁵⁴⁴

GEORGE STEINMANN AND THE IDEA OF A SUSTAINABLE PROCESSUAL ARTWORK

An unexpected turn of events came with a short visit by the Swiss artist George Steinmann to Tallinn in September 1992. Arranged with the help of the Finnish art historian Marketta Seppälä, the director of the Pori Art Museum, Steinmann's trip was motivated by curiosity to see a country in the turmoil of transition, but also to investigate possible exhibition opportunities. Upon seeing the premises of the Art Hall with Anu Liivak, the executive director of the institution, Steinmann instantly envisaged an artistic intervention as a processual sculpture in the form of renovating the building to its original state. Steinmann has described his first visit to Tallinn and the Art Hall in somewhat dystopian terms, remembering Tallinn as a small town with unlit streets on a dark September evening, the Art Hall majestic but severely dilapidated, with broken windows, dysfunctional lighting, and

543 Intervjuu Tallinna Kunstihoone intendandi Anu Liivakuga. – *Metroo* 1994, No. 1, p. 5.

544 Karin Hallas, *Kunstihoone ja Kultuurkapital*. – *Rahva Hääl* 16 February 1995.

out of order WCs.⁵⁴⁵ His response to the situation was both deeply emotional and highly rational and calculated: he wished to initiate a renovation project for the building, presented as a processual work of art, and executed by means of Swiss structural aid funds intended for helping Eastern European countries' transitioning to democracy and capitalist economies.

George Steinmann was a Swiss visual and conceptual artist, musician and researcher who had initiated and executed installations and various transdisciplinary projects in institutional locations, as well as in the public space, since 1979. Initially trained as a painter, he soon expanded his practice to photography, sculptural installation and public art, increasingly addressing the issues of sustainability, with works dealing with the problems of fossil fuel and water resources, as well as the general relationship between people and nature, and the question of ethical responsibility in the artist's work. With a holistic world-view, insisting on the interconnectedness of all natural phenomena and human activities, Steinmann's artistic credo was based on a Beuysian mission of empowerment and an ethical stance, aiming at processual works with wide public engagement. Inspired by Joseph Beuys's concept of social sculpture, Steinmann preferred to use the term 'growing sculpture' instead to lay more emphasis on the durational aspect of the work, and to make a connection with natural processes: Steinmann stressed the aspect of growth not as expansion but rather as cyclical process, flux. With such a background, the decision to refrain from exhibiting his own existing visual works in favour of concentrating on the potential of the architectural space itself was for Steinmann a welcome opportunity to expand his previous practice and artistic ideas, which he would execute on a much broader scale, with the involvement of an unprecedented scope of project partners.

Steinmann's initial proposal to Anu Liivak included a conceptual diagram called *Mind Map* (ill. 64) and an artistic creed detailing the diagram titled *An Approach towards a System of Ethics for the Future*.⁵⁴⁶ He describes his approach as primarily locational, deeply rooted in the initial encounter with a particular space, and driven by intuitive knowledge, 'a primordial or inborn knowledge that is more fundamental than knowledge accumulated later'.⁵⁴⁷ Steinmann set the Art Hall project, as well as his artistic endeavours in general, into an all-encompassing ethical framework of sustainability, informed by global

545 Conversation with George Steinmann, 1 December 2017.

546 George Steinmann archive at the Bern Art Museum. A.2007.100/097

547 Ibid.

considerations and aimed at fostering a collectivity rather than the pursuit of his own artistic ego. He saw himself primarily as a catalyst of processes that should lead to transformation: *'In the next few decades we face an acute shift of perceptions. It stems from a host of crises – environmental, climatic, technological, economic, social, and political. Beyond doubt it promises to be the biggest composite crisis that humanity has ever faced. If we do not act promptly and vigorously, we risk an even tighter bottleneck, stretching into an indefinite future. But if we measure up to the challenges ahead, we shall enter into a future that likewise will far surpass anything humanity has ever known. /.../ The present world's challenges demand collaboration way beyond the recent experiences of citizens and politicians alike. We do not lack the means, but we are hopelessly short of vision. Thus, we all need to engage in a 'growth spurt' if we are to attain the giant stature that alone will match the giant rates of change around us. Nothing less will restore our 'ecolilibrium'.*⁵⁴⁸

Steinmann highly valued the sustainability aspect of the project, embodied in the idea of restoring something of existing value, and of helping to create a community, enabling future artistic projects to build upon his intervention. Indeed, among the documents preserved as the archive of the project is a copy of the 1992 United Nations Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit final resolution, a major global event dedicated to a critical look at current modes of production and to finding more sustainable economic approaches, leading to the famous climate change convention. There are also copies of articles from the German and Swiss media referencing the summit and its resolutions, most likely used by Steinmann as additional tools of persuasion in his lobbying for the Art Hall project among Swiss authorities.⁵⁴⁹ However, at the beginning of the 1990s environmental art was far from mainstream internationally, and resonated even less in Estonia. Campaigning for environmental protection had been a big part of Estonian civic activism during the 1980s perestroika, taking the form of protecting the country from devastating Soviet economic interests aimed at large-scale mining with high costs for nature. With the natural environment playing a big part in the construction of the national identity, the surge in civic activism found massive outlets in campaigns to resist projects for mining phosphorite in Eastern Estonia, as well as protests to protect nature in urban settings, as exemplified by the campaign for the rare ginkgo biloba tree in Tallinn.⁵⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the awareness of environmental issues

548 Ibid.

549 George Steinmann archive at the Bern Art Museum, A.2007.100/097.

550 For a more detailed account of the so-called phosphorite war, see Fosforiidisõda: 1987. – Mart Laar, Urmas Ott, Sirje Endre, Teine Eesti. Eesti iseseisvuse taassünd 1986–1991. Tallinn: SE&JS,

1996, pp. 145–167. For the so-called ginkgo biloba syndrome in urban planning, see Enn Põldroos, Hõlmikpuusündroom. – Noorte Hääl 3 January 1987 and Ants Juske, Mis on kallim: hõlmikpuu, ajalugu, arhitektuur või omanik ja krunt? – Rahva Hääl 11 June 1991.

was somewhat narrow and certainly did not – and considering the circumstances, could not – include the problems of overconsumption. Refraining from creating something new as a reaction to global overproduction was an artistic position quite remote from the general attitude in the context of a newly independent post-Soviet state dreaming of indulging in all of the goodies of capitalist consumerism.

At the same time, restoring built heritage resonated strongly. Estonian 1930s functionalism, of which the Art Hall is one of the most remarkable examples, had already had a notable revival in the 1970s, with the architects of the Tallinn school returning to its aesthetic in the form of neo-functionalism as an act of resistance to the Soviet mass production of architecture, celebrating the centennials of notable functionalist architects, starting historical research projects etc.⁵⁵¹ Obviously, the 1970s turn towards functionalist heritage signified something much wider: it meant cherishing pre-war independence-era cultural values and, for the more daring, the idea of sovereignty, grandly described as an '*idea of national independence embodied in stone*'.⁵⁵² With the re-establishment of independence, these connotations grew even stronger. Architectural production went through a '*third phase of functionalist aesthetics*',⁵⁵³ supported by heavy promotion in professional and mainstream media, where, in addition to national connotations, white functionalism acquired overtones of progressiveness and economic success.⁵⁵⁴ This also meant the re-actualisation of the 1930s heritage, with intensified research supported by the establishment of the Estonian Museum of Architecture in 1991, largely dedicated to the research and preservation of 20th century architecture, and even more so by initiating the national working party of DoCoMoMo international. They jointly organised a survey exhibition of Estonian functionalism and neo-functionalism at the Finnish Museum of Architecture and Tallinn Art Hall in 1993, and an exhibition of Estonian pre-war functionalism at the Estonian Museum of Architecture in 1995. They published guidebooks on 20th century architecture (1995) and books focused on functionalist heritage (1998), and initiated a process of adding a number of buildings to the national heritage list. These activities were embedded in a wider socio-political context characterised by a general trend of restoration and restitution. In 1993–1994, a functionalist beach hotel in Pärnu by Olev Siinmaa (1936) was thoroughly restored, becoming an architectural herald of this restorative mindset, with the first guest,

551 See Mart Kalm, Krista Kodres (eds.), *Teisiti*.

552 Leonhard Lapin, *Funktsionalism ja rahvuslik identiteet*. – *Ehituskunst* 1996, Vol. 15, p. 2.

553 See Ingrid Lillemägi [Ruudij], *Valgete majade kolmas tulemine*. – *Maja* 2002, No. 3, pp. 18–21.

554 See Epp Lankots, *Eesti ärieliidi enesekirjeldusmudelid ruumilises keskkonnas*. – *Eesti kunsti sotsiaalsed portreed. Lisandusi Eesti kunstiloole*. Tallinn: Kaasaegse kunsti Eesti keskus, 2003.

President Lennart Meri, writing in the guestbook that *'restoration of the hotel to its pre-war qualities is a miniature model of restoration of the republic itself'*.⁵⁵⁵ This statement explicitly characterises the general discourse surrounding architectural heritage from the inter-war era and its symbolic role as a supporter of national identity. The newly independent republic was unambiguously based on legal continuity, conceptualised as restoring the previous, pre-war state instead of proclaiming a new state, and for the first years of the 1990s all of the political steps taken were motivated by a desire to return to pre-war laws, traditions and institutions, and rehabilitating relationships that had been destroyed during the Soviet period: the whole tendency being so overwhelming as to generate the nickname *'republic of historians'*.⁵⁵⁶ With history used as a science of legitimation,⁵⁵⁷ everything associated with the pre-war republic could be used as a source of gaining, justifying and preserving power in the new social situation of transition. Thus the project of restoring the Art Hall became a social capital greatly enhancing the public visibility, reputation, and value of the institution of the Art Hall itself.

NEGOTIATIONS, FINANCES AND CONSTRUCTION: THE ARTIST WORKING AS A CROSSBENCH PRACTITIONER

In 1992, however, financial capital was a more urgent issue. After his first visit to Tallinn, Steinmann immediately committed to fundraising. Hopes were raised by a basic decision of the Swiss government in January 1992 to extend the list of countries entitled to Swiss monetary aid, including all ex-socialist countries of Eastern and Central Europe, instead of the initial Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia; the aid limit for Estonia, allocated either as direct monetary aid or credit guarantees, was 20 million Swiss francs. The initial response Steinmann received from the Swiss foreign ministry office for cooperation with Eastern Europe (Departement für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, Büro für die Zusammenarbeit mit Osteuropa, BZO) was negative.⁵⁵⁸ But in December 1992 the Estonian and Swiss governments signed an agreement granting non-reimbursable financial assistance to help Estonia transition to a market economy and to mitigate the economic and social costs of adjustment. The

555 Pärnu Rannahotellis avatakse Lennart Meri sviit. – Postimees 7 September 2006.

556 Marek Tamm, *The Republic of Historians. Historians as Nation Builders in Estonia (late 1980s–early 1990s)*. – *Rethinking History* 2016, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 154–171.

557 Ibid.

558 George Steinmann archive at the Bern Art Museum, A.2007.100/096.

contribution was to be utilised for priority infrastructure and rehabilitation projects, with particular emphasis on projects in the social, healthcare, environment and infrastructure sectors, and to projects supporting the development of the emerging private sector. A cultural object, such as the Art Hall, not to mention an art project as it was framed by Steinmann, clearly did not fall into these categories. But the Office for Foreign Economy (Bundesamt für Aussenwirtschaft, BAWI), which was to deal with distributing the funds, explained to Steinmann that essentially the choice of projects depended primarily on the preferences of the Estonian government. So the head of the Art Hall, Anu Liivak, backed up with several letters of support from various Swiss cultural institutions affirming the credibility of Steinmann,⁵⁵⁹ managed to persuade the Office for Foreign Cooperation at the Estonian Ministry of Finance to declare the restoration of the Tallinn Art Hall a national priority project, effectively making it the first project to gain assistance from the infrastructure funds of the Swiss monetary aid.⁵⁶⁰ Negotiations and budgeting went on for the first half of 1993, and by September the project received preliminary financing approval, with money to be granted in two parts, first for the design and preparatory stage, and upon presentation of a detailed budget of the construction work and contracts for the additional money to be obtained from the Estonian side, the second part would be paid. By the end of December a deal for financial aid of 137,000 Swiss francs was signed. Simultaneously there were negotiations with the Tallinn city government for additional financing, and the Art Hall organised a charity auction, counting on the solidarity of Estonian artists, although only 25 artists were willing to donate their works.⁵⁶¹

By the beginning of 1994 the architecture historian Liivi Künnapu had compiled a detailed historical overview of the building, together with special conditions for heritage conservation, and by April the interior architect Rein Laur had drawn up a reconstruction design project. At the beginning of September 1994 the actual work started, including the restoration of the glass ceiling of the main hall, with the substitution of new non-breakable light-diffusing glass, the restoration of all original wooden-framed windows, except the main façade window, where a new metal-framed one from Finland was required, the restoration of all interior doors, walls and ceilings, cloakroom furniture, stairs and the grand first floor wooden bench, the instal-

559 Ibid.

560 Conversation with George Steinmann, 1 December 2017.

561 Anu Liivak, *Tagasivaade 1990. aastate kunstimaastikule*, p. 34.

lation of new oak parquet floors in the exhibition halls and stairs and a linoleum floor in the foyer to replace the original terrazzo floor, and the installation of new tile floors and new sanitary equipment in the WCs (ill. 65, 66, 67).⁵⁶² A precondition for the Swiss aid was that all necessary construction materials, paints, varnishes, sanitary equipment and the like would be ordered from Swiss companies,⁵⁶³ this also coincided with Steinmann's firm wish to use only the most sustainable finishing materials, which were not yet possible to obtain in Estonia.⁵⁶⁴ Initially, the project did not involve restoring the exterior of the building, but in the course of the work it turned out that the contrast would be too stark and render the remarkable efforts in the interior futile; also, upon changing the façade window it turned out that there were significant cracks in the façade that definitely required fixing. For these reasons, and also because of the rise in all local costs and salaries for the workmen, Steinmann managed to secure additional financing from BAWI in the amount of 121,000 Swiss francs for the local work, plus 25,500 francs to be paid directly to the Finnish company providing the façade windows.⁵⁶⁵ In addition, the Swiss and Estonian governments reached an agreement that the Swiss goods and materials sent for the Art Hall would be exempted from customs duties.⁵⁶⁶ Under these conditions, despite minor misunderstandings mainly between the Art Hall and the interior architect, the work was carried out on schedule, and the festive opening of the project *Revival of Space* took place on 15 February 1995 with probably the highest ranking local and international officials, politicians and diplomats to ever attend an art event in Estonia.

George Steinmann's efforts in conceptualising the project and especially in negotiating with the various involved parties, including, on the Estonian side, the Art Hall, the Estonian Artists' Union, the Tallinn city government, the Estonian Ministries of Finance and Culture, art and architecture professionals and different construction companies and, on the Swiss side, Swiss embassies, the Ministries of Culture and Foreign Economy, the Swiss Union of Artists, Sculptors and Architects, the Bern city government, the Pro Helvetia foundation, and numerous private individuals, clearly exceeded the conventional framework of an artistic project. This high-level participatory process was executed from a position that Markus Miessen has called that of a 'crossbench practitioner': essentially, an uninvited

562 Aruane Tallinna Kunstihoone restaureerimis- ja rekonstrueerimistöödest 1994–1995. Koostanud arhitektuuriajaloolane Liivi Künnapu. Tallinn, 1995. Archive of Tallinn Urban Planning Department.

563 Ibid., George Steinmann archive at the Bern Art Museum, A.2007.100/096.

564 Conversation with George Steinmann, 1 December 2017.

565 Amounts stated in contracts kept in Steinmann's archive at the Kunstmuseum Bern. In a lecture held in Tallinn on 10 January 2016 Steinmann said that the total costs of the renovation were 455,000 CHF, of which 415,000 CHF amounted to Swiss monetary aid.

566 George Steinmann archive at the Bern Art Museum, A.2007.100/096.

outsider.⁵⁶⁷ According to Miessen, a crossbench practitioner is an independent and pro-active individual with a conscience, intervening in social and political processes without a political mandate, and retaining autonomy of thought, proposition and production. This role, in a given context, means that one neither belongs to nor aligns with a specific party or set of stakeholders, but can openly act without having to respond to a pre-determined set of protocols or consensual arrangements.⁵⁶⁸ For Miessen, writing from the perspective of today's social and political situation, the conceptualisation of a crossbench practitioner serves the purpose of criticising the general acceptance of consensus-based democratic processes unable to effectively serve this purpose. Outlining this concept, Miessen's ideas have mainly been based on the ideas of agonistic democracy by Chantal Mouffe,⁵⁶⁹ as well as the views of Edward Said, as described in his essay *Representations of the Intellectual*.⁵⁷⁰ For Said as well, the ideal intellectual works marginally, as an exile or an amateur, as somebody who tries to speak the truth rather than providing expert advice for pay, in contrast to the normal situation of the specialist or the insider who has a clear predefined agenda. The fact that one is operating outside of one's professional boundaries enables one to articulate concerns that transcend individual or particular benefits. On the other hand, Chantal Mouffe has called for finding modes of participation that acknowledge the antagonism of the various parties involved. For Mouffe, the essence of democratic processes is pluralistic: there is democracy only as long as existing conditions and arrangements may be contested, and the conflicting aims of participants are acknowledged. Mouffe calls for more antagonistic modes of participation in social processes, and this also pertains to the sphere of the arts, where, according to Mouffe, an avant-garde radical critique is no longer productive. Instead, critical artistic practice should find ways of meaningful engagement and intervention within the processes of democratic politics.⁵⁷¹

The artistic position of Steinmann definitely adhered to the pursuit of finding means of engagement to make an impact in the wider public sphere. In the context of the transition at the beginning of the 1990s in Estonia, the protocols and regulations of initiating processes were still in the making and the social and political landscape was much less institutionalised, generating a real possibility of such a cross-

567 See Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation. Crossbench Praxis as A Mode of Criticality*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011.

568 Crossbenching. Interview with Markus Miessen. – *Common. Journal für Kunst & Öffentlichkeit. Konjunktur und Krise* No. 2, 2013. <http://commonthejournal.com/journal/konjunktur-und-krise-no-2/crossbenching-interview-with-markus-miessen/>, accessed 29 March 2018.

569 See more: Nikolaus Hirsch, Markus Miessen (eds.), *Critical Spatial Practice 2. The Space of*

Agonism. Markus Miessen in Conversation with Chantal Mouffe. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012.

570 Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual. The 1993 Reith Lectures*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

571 Chantal Mouffe, *Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces*. – *Art & Research. A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* 2007, Vol. 1, No. 2. (Summer), <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html>, accessed 25 March 2020.

bench intervention. Due to the smallness of the country, the pervading optimistic and more or less informal mentality, and a general openness and welcoming stance towards Western visitors, it was relatively easy to approach institutions and officials from an outsider's position, such as Steinmann's. One should also not underestimate the Swiss background of Steinmann, coming from a country with a tradition of very specific direct democracy, investing its citizens with confidence in such possibilities. The fact that the Swiss government was willing to enter into legal agreements involving such large sums with Steinmann as a private individual, the artist acting as an institution, also demonstrates the unusual level of participatory politics possible in Switzerland. The model, first developed and tested with the Art Hall, was also used in Steinmann's later projects, most notably for a project in the Komi region of Russia, where he attempted to establish a centre for sustainable forestry in the Komi capital Sytyvkar: a research institution that would gather and preserve local indigenous knowledge and pursue contemporary scientific methods to make use of them in developing sustainable strategies for managing primeval forests. Based on several research trips to the heavily exploited taiga forests, where Steinmann familiarised himself with local heritage concerning the practices of forest management, as well as the spiritual and healing qualities of nature, he developed a project for an institution that, once again, would have been established in cooperation among the local people and organisations, the Finnish architects Mikko Heikkinen and Markku Komonen, who drafted the architectural project, and Swiss institutions, who would have provided know-how and financial support.⁵⁷² However, the ten-year-long (1997–2007) project did not turn out as planned, due to the Russian Duma issuing a law severely curtailing the operation of NGOs, and the ignorance and corruption of the local administrations.⁵⁷³

In both cases, Steinmann developed a project that through the processes of its execution created a new type of public participation, empowering the participants in new ways, and thus remarkably extending the existing public sphere. In the case of the Art Hall, the process of building up a network did not stop with the completion of the renovation process but also involved facilitating Anu Liivak's research trip to Swiss cultural institutions two years later in an effort to build up further contacts for the future programming of the Art Hall.⁵⁷⁴ While Steinmann stressed that his practice primarily emanated

572 Helen Hirsch, *Von Heidelbeeren und Menschen. – Call and Response. George Steinmann im Dialog*. Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess und Kunstmuseum Thun, 2014, pp. 15–19.

573 E-mail conversation with George Steinmann, 8 February 2019.

574 George Steinmann archive at the Bern Art Museum, A.2007.100/096.

from the encounter with a particular place,⁵⁷⁵ it is clear that place for him was not merely a physical location but rather a complex discursive entity, best characterised with the help of Doreen Massey's definition as '*a constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus /.../ which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local.*'⁵⁷⁶ The place that Steinmann engaged with was the Art Hall as a physical architectural entity and the institution as a social space incorporating an exhibition and events programme, events and gatherings and all of the local and international social networks it generated, as well as a broader discursive space created by art as an agent in the public sphere. Caring for the institution's well-being after his own project had basically ended, and the fact that the documentation of the *Revival of Space* as assembled for later display at the Kunstmuseum Bern archives⁵⁷⁷ included photographs of various exhibitions that took place at the Art Hall after the renovation, testify unambiguously that, for Steinmann, the work was primarily processual, a 'growing sculpture' as he called it,⁵⁷⁸ serving as a catalyst for future events and various user groups. In that sense, the following exhibitions at the Art Hall effectively became part of his work.

LOCAL RECEPTION AND ENSUING USAGE PRACTICES

At the same time, exhibiting the empty space as a work in itself with a grand opening, invitations and posters, and regular opening hours for the normal duration of an exhibition, embedded the project in the tradition of gestures of the void, which started with Yves Klein at the Iris Clert gallery in Paris in 1958⁵⁷⁹ and continued with Robert Barry, Robert Irwin, Michael Asher, Laurie Parsons and many others who explored the possibilities of exhibiting empty space from the perspectives of human perception, institutional critique, artistic ethics or the readymade.⁵⁸⁰ Leaving a gallery empty and refusing to display any

575 Ruumi naasmine. George Steinmann. Tallinna Kunstihoone. Catalogue. s.l.: George Steinmann, 1995; see also, *Mind Map*. George Steinmann archive at the Bern Art Museum, A.2007.100/097.

576 Doreen Massey, *A Global Sense of Place*. – Trevor Barnes, Derek Gregory (eds.), *Reading Human Geography*. London: Arnold, 1997, pp. 315–323.

577 George Steinmann archive at the Bern Art Museum, A.2007.100/089; A.2007.100/092; A.2007.100/083; A.2007.100/085; A.2007.100/086; A.2007.100/076; A.2007.100/077; A.2007.100/078.

578 Helen Hirsch, *Von Heidelbeeren und Menschen*.

579 *The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility* [La spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée], usually referred to as *The Void*, was a work where Yves Klein removed everything in the gallery space except for one cabinet, painted all surfaces white, and staged an elaborate opening ceremony. This work is generally considered the first occasion of exhibiting an empty gallery.

580 For a more comprehensive genealogy of artistic gestures involving exhibiting empty spaces, see *VOIDS. A Retrospective*. Zürich: JRP/Ringier Kunstverlag AG, 2009.

artworks would, of course, most readily resonate with the tradition of the institutional critique, as an acknowledgement of the white cube as a space that is not neutral, and as a stance against the institutionalised, commercial art world. In a certain sense, the *Revival of Space*, paradoxically, seems to have been the opposite of the institutional critique, as here the institution most directly benefited from the project that remarkably facilitated its ensuing operation in the mainstream art world and its entrance into international networks of artistic and knowledge exchange. Indeed, a project directly inspired by the *Revival of Space*, Maria Eichhorn's *Money at Kunsthalle Bern* (2001), which similarly consisted of a building renovation using the budget allocated for her exhibition, has been discussed in terms of the artist's willingness to let herself be instrumentalised.⁵⁸¹ Eichhorn did not see this as a problem and did not see herself as doing a favour for the institution but rather insisted that her aim was to shift the relationship of the artist and the institution: the institution did receive very material and practical benefits from the project but at the same time its internal mechanisms of funding, practices of upkeep and communication strategies with artists were made public in ways that were not always comfortable for the institution.⁵⁸² Similarly, Steinmann's project highlighted not only the aesthetic qualities of a pre-war representational public space restored to its original appearance as meticulously as possible, but also a complex of social, economic and political relationships required to not only make the renovation project a reality but also to keep such an institution working on a daily basis. Besides the architectural space, Steinmann clearly saw human relationships and different kinds of social networks as the main material, medium and essence of his work, corresponding to a more widespread social turn in the visual arts that started to gain more ground in the mainstream art world over the course of the 1990s.⁵⁸³ According to Claire Bishop, the social turn also brought about an ethical turn: a tendency to appreciate and judge artworks primarily by their ethical merit and the social good they were able to generate. While broadly sympathetic to the position that all kinds of social participatory art are equally important and successful in that they help to strengthen social bonds and foster an art public, Bishop nevertheless warns that the conceptual density and artistic significance of such projects might be sidelined or downplayed in favour of highlighting the art's success as a social work.⁵⁸⁴ Similarly, Jane Rendell has stated that the main failings of

581 Mai-Thu Perret, *Building Works at Kunsthalle Bern. – Voids, A Retrospective*. Zürich: JRP/Ringier Kunstverlag AG, 2009, p. 147.
582 Ibid.

583 Claire Bishop, *The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents*. – *Artforum* 2006, February, pp. 179–185.

584 Ibid.

public art have resulted from the urge to provide solutions to problems before asking questions or instead of asking at all.⁵⁸⁵ With George Steinmann's artistic position emphasising primarily his ethical mission in the sustainable renovation of an existing architectural masterpiece, supporting the development of a cultural institution, and bringing into existence previously missing social, economic and political networks, the *Revival of Space* could have easily succumbed to the ethical turn described by Bishop. Yet, at the same time, the physical manifestation of the project elevated it beyond mere social work and also managed to add more conceptual layers, entering into dialogue with previous practices of exhibiting the void. Additionally, the critical stance of Steinmann's project lay specifically in its durational dimension, which involved open-endedness and made possible the materialisation of future projects that might cohere cumulatively, creating a spatio-temporal constellation of artworks and projects over time: a durational approach that has been seen as one of the most sensible and fruitful strategies in terms of art addressing the public sphere.⁵⁸⁶

However, the same pristine physical manifestation of the project – the immaculate empty white art space – had such an intense affective impact on viewers that most were unable to grasp the project's conceptual side beyond the aesthetic beauty of the pre-war building and the mere lucky 'gain' of the institution. The notes and comments left in the exhibition's guestbook mainly praise the renovation work and thank the financiers, or remark upon the revealed beauty of the building or certain architectural details, testifying to the primarily aesthetic perspective the project was publicly seen from.⁵⁸⁷ The media reviews also mostly praised the excellent quality of the renovation work and the superb spatial experience of the halls, primarily appreciating Steinmann's project as an enormous practical and material gain, something one could only dream of happening to other cultural institutions in critical condition.⁵⁸⁸ Indeed, calling Steinmann ingenuous⁵⁸⁹ and his project a welfare society's act of redemption and goodwill⁵⁹⁰ perhaps masked an inferiority complex in the face of such a large amount of foreign money, but naturally also reflected the inevitable neo-colonial nuance of such structural aid projects. Later art historical reflections described the project merely as 'a trick used to renovate the Art Hall'.⁵⁹¹

585 Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture*, p. xiii.

586 Paul O'Neill, Claire Doherty, Introduction. *Locating the Producers. An End to the Beginning, the Beginning of the End.* – Paul O'Neill, Claire Doherty (eds.), *Locating the Producers. Durational Approaches to Public Art.* Amsterdam: Valiz, 2011, pp. 1–15.

587 See more: Siim Preiman, *Kaasaegse kunsti publikureseptioon 1990. aastail Tallinna Kunstihoone näitel.* Bakalaureusetöö. Eesti

Kunstiakadeemia Kunstiteaduse instituut. Tallinn, 2015, pp. 28–32.

588 *Kunstihoone õnnelik saatus.* – *Rahva Hää* 16 February 1995.

589 Sisu: 12. Ruumi naasmine. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/sisu-12>, accessed 31 March 2018.

590 Meelis Kapstas, *Remont kui kunstiteos.* – *Päevaleht* 16 February 1995.

591 Karin Hallas-Murula, *Tallinna Kunstihoone 1934–1940*, p. 154.

The project also involved the publication of a presentable three-language catalogue (ill. 68).⁵⁹² It was a noticeable aspect at a time when such an addition to a personal exhibition was not a norm yet; indeed, the lack of any decent published material concerning artists and their work was seen as the one of the main failures of the Estonian art scene at the time, significantly hindering possible international networking; making up for this lack was stated as one of the primary tasks of the Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts Estonia (established in 1992), the main agent in the internationalisation of the local art world.⁵⁹³ The catalogue included an introduction by Reinhard Voegele, the head of the culture department at the Swiss foreign ministry office for cooperation with Eastern Europe and the main enthusiast of the project among the Swiss authorities, an essay on Steinmann and his project by Anu Liivak, and an essay on the Art Hall's architectural and social history by the architect Leonhard Lapin, plus a thorough list of all institutions, organisations and private individuals involved in the negotiations, design, preparation and renovation process, as well as, unprecedentedly, all construction companies and suppliers of materials.⁵⁹⁴ At the same time, there was no artist's statement by Steinmann himself, although his main points were covered in Liivak's essay. The work itself was represented by an abundance of black and white photographs of the renovated spaces by the Finnish architectural photographer Jussi Tiainen. The carefully composed photos, displaying the empty halls and the minute interior details, adhered to the tradition of representing modernist interiors in an elevated, sublime manner. With the aesthetics of the pristine empty functionalist interiors dominating the visual side, accompanied by Lapin's celebration of the building as a heroic example of pre-war architecture, the catalogue further reinforced the reception of the project as a feat of architectural restoration and an elevation of the status of the institution.

The domination of the aesthetic dimension and the perception of spatial qualities in the reception of the work were further increased by the Art Hall itself deciding to incorporate during the *Revival of Space* an additional temporary event by the painter Aili Vint (ill. 69).⁵⁹⁵ Vint's light sculpture *Sunset*, exhibited for five days (1–6 March 1995), highlighted the sublime spatial qualities of the main hall and especially its 'altarspace', the top-lit niche on the central axis at the very end of the hall, often reserved for works

592 George Steinmann. Ruumi naasmine. *Revival of Space. Die Rückkehr des Raumes*. S.I. George Steinmann, 1995.

593 Sirje Helme, The Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts, Estonia in the Extreme Decadal. – *Nosy Nineties. Problems, Themes and Meanings in Estonian Art on 1990s*. Tallinn: Centre

for Contemporary Arts, Estonia, 2001, p. 39.

594 George Steinmann, Ruumi naasmine. *Revival of Space. Die Rückkehr des Raumes*.

595 Üks pilt. Aili Vint: Skulptuur päikeseloojangust. ETV 1995. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/uks-pilt-aili-vint-skulptuur-paikeseloojangust>, accessed 31 March 2018.

serving as counterpoints of exhibitions displayed at the Art Hall. Aili Vint had set an acrylic painting consisting of chromatic stripes on the floor of the 'altarspace', with floodlights directed towards it at specific calculated angles to project an illusion of a sunset onto the white back wall of the space. The work focused on optical qualities of colours and light, on the perceptual illusion resulting from manipulating the light and the space, and the emotional affect the situation generated in viewers. In this sense, it was embedded in the tradition of minimalist light sculptures, shifting the focus from the work itself to the perceptions of the viewer, and the qualities of the space that enable such an encounter. As Aili Vint emphasised, her aim with the work was to heighten the human perception but even more to generate an overarching sense of goodness:⁵⁹⁶ her belief in the healing qualities of art was in fact quite in tune with Steinmann's own intentions. Additionally, during the five days of the exhibition, Vint invited friends and students to temporarily occupy the space as if it were a real beach at sunset: instead of a conventional gallery experience, people were invited to sit on the floor, make music, recite poems, play badminton and interact informally.⁵⁹⁷ These semi-staged performative events added a social dimension, where the artwork was seen as a mere facilitator or a trigger of the actual art experience, which consisted of the moment of heightened social awareness of the participants. As such, *Sunset* can be seen as an exemplary of Nicholas Bourriaud's concept of 'relational aesthetics', distinguished from socially engaged practice, such as Steinmann's, in that it is primarily interested in human interaction in relation to the circumstances of space, temporality, fiction and design, a meaningful temporary experience rather than a more wide-reaching social gain.⁵⁹⁸ Finally, one more aspect where the underlying impulses of Steinmann and Vint converged was the New Age sensibility that informed the work of both of them: in the case of Steinmann, as a general holistic world view with inclination towards Zen Buddhism, and in the case of Vint, as a quite vaguely defined spirituality going back to the artistic position of the ANK '64 group she was a member of.⁵⁹⁹

Thus the display of the empty premises of the Art Hall was embedded in the discourse of architecture renovation, and in that of a spectacular spatial experience conforming to the 'experiential turn',⁶⁰⁰ more or less downplaying the aspects of durational partici-

596 Heie Treier, *Meditatiivne valguskulptuur "Päikeseloojang"*. – *Kunst* 1995, No. 2, p. 52.

597 See Üks pilt. Aili Vint: *Skulptuur päikeseloojangust*.

598 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*. Transl. Simon Pleasance & Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland. Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2002.

599 See Anu Liivak (ed.), *ANK '64*. Tallinn: Tallinna Kunstihoone, 1995.

600 Dorothea von Hantelmann, *The Experiential Turn*. – Walker Living Collections Catalogue. Volume I. On Performativity. Walker Art Center, 2014. <http://walkerart.org/collections/publications/performativity/experiential-turn/>, accessed 31 March 2018.

patory practice, sustainability in the face of global ecological issues, and the artist's ethical stance, hoping for art to fill the void in a post-religious era.⁶⁰¹

However, by restoring the architectural premises of the Art Hall to its original glory, the project also effectively restored the original conventions of a white cube exhibition space. In its purity and whiteness, especially in contrast to the other, more or less Soviet-flavoured art spaces in town, the Art Hall stood out as a space where art could start to reclaim its position as an agent in the construction of the public sphere and as a serious topic of conversation, as well as a market commodity. The new and shining premises, together with the contacts acquired in the process, surely marked a new level of performance for the institution. The developments were supported by the establishment of the Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts, Estonia and its initiative to organise annual curated exhibitions of contemporary art, starting in 1993, which used the Art Hall as the main venue (with the exception of the 1994 exhibition *Non-Existent Art*, when renovation work in the Art Hall was underway).⁶⁰² From 1995 onwards, the following three annual exhibitions of the Soros Centre took place in the renovated Art Hall, introducing to the local art scene the curatorial institution, importing a new discourse of art as social commentary, and helping to mould a specific phenomenon of contemporary art that combined the reflection of local post-socialist experience with a preference for new media.⁶⁰³ This process of fostering a more or less coherent phenomenon of internationally addressed and relevant contemporary art was definitely supported by the opportunity to exhibit it in a venue that now conformed to international standards of the white cube.

Yet the renovation of the premises also implied a restoration of certain behavioural conventions and ways of engagement with art. Indeed, the documentation of the *Revival of Space* kept as an artwork in itself in the Kunstmuseum Bern includes historical photographs not only of the building but also of the social activities that took place in the building in the 1930s, with formally dressed male artists posing in front of the Art Hall, people partying in the club downstairs, and other activities nostalgically implying a return to not only the original purity of the space but to the social life generated by it as well.⁶⁰⁴ This intimate connection was not lost on reviewers, who noted: '*The Art Hall is beautiful, like memories of the pre-war republic: decent young*

601 The latter is perhaps most clearly expressed in Steinmann's essay comprising of quotes by the painting philosophy of Shin Tao, see George Steinmann. Ruumi naasmine. – Ehituskunst 1995, Vol. 12, pp. 5–9.

602 See Sirje Helme, The Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts, Estonia in the Extreme Decimal.

603 Anders Härm, On the Genealogy of 'Soros Realism'. The 'Making of' International Eastern European Art (1989–2004). – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi / Studies on Art and Architecture 2018, No. 4, pp. 7–30.

604 George Steinmann archive at the Bern Art Museum, A.2007.100/005; A.2007.100/008.

*people, cafés without alcohol, national home embellishment campaigns, academic corporations, vacations in Narva-Jõesuu, recurring thank yous and you're welcomes...*⁶⁰⁵ This and other similar reactions show how the material and physical 'rebirth' of a pre-war space was perceived as intimately connected to the 'rebirth' or continuation of the pre-war republic.

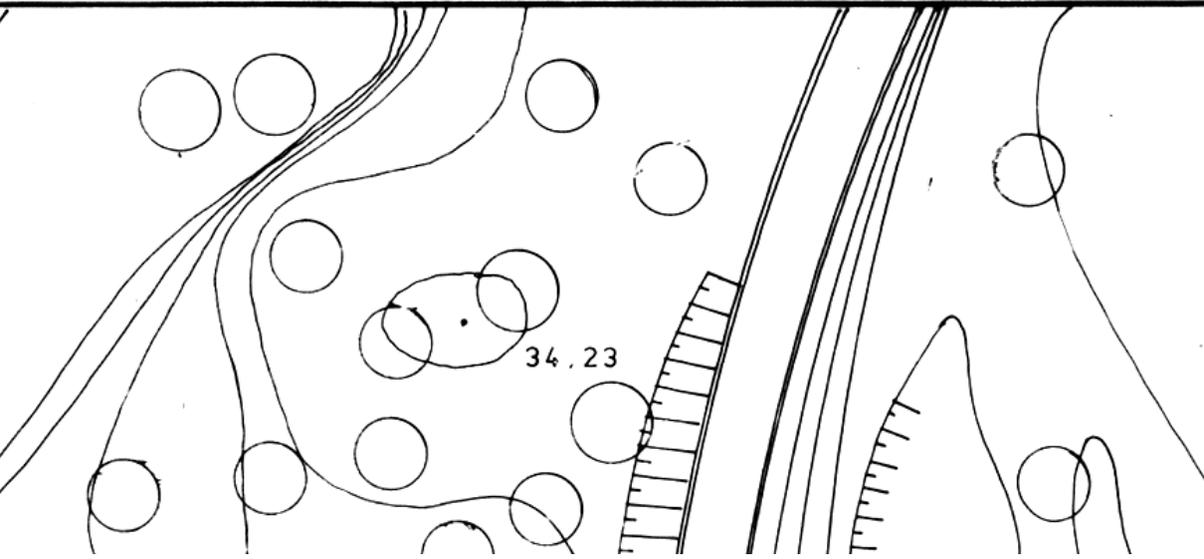
CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Tallinn Art Hall hosted art projects with very different agendas and different strategies regarding art's participation in the processes of the construction of a public sphere, and art's position in relation to the simultaneously unfolding social processes of the transition state. Addressing the architectural space of the Art Hall and art's ability to engage various groups of people was essential in forming a new understanding of an art project's potential to participate in social processes. George Steinmann's *Revival of Space* project played an active role in the unfolding processes of building up a democratic society, providing an idealistic example of the intervention of an outsider with a conscience and, under the circumstances of the openness of the transition era, succeeded in bending the not-yet-rigid institutional frameworks in an advantageous way. The project, unfolding over three years, managed to build up previously non-existent networks between the spheres of art, politics and finance, broadening the scope of operation of all participating entities, and acting as a catalyst for future cooperation and projects. The project worked on two levels, and possessed a certain internal controversy: the immaculate restoration of the premises of the Art Hall involved the reinstatement of classic white cube conventions, contributing to re-framing art in terms of the aesthetic. Internationally, in the 1990s art institutions painstakingly reinvented themselves to avoid being seen as passive depositors and exhibitors of artworks and to assume the essential role of sites of production and, in terms of the public, to produce active participants instead of passive enjoyers. *Revival of Space* as a processual project may definitely be regarded as a site of production in itself, as its effects and the networks it generated existed long after the official closing of the exhibition. Yet the physical manifestation of

605 Harry Liivrand, Vabariigi naasmine. – Eesti Ekspress 23 February 1995.

the project as a cherished example of functionalist heritage, fitting into the general restitutorial mentality of the era, resulted in a return to a more conventional and more representative relationship of art, space and the public. The restored aesthetic of the building helped to elevate art's position in the eyes of non-art society but it did so at the price of losing some of its subversive potential. The reasons for this were obviously practical as well as ideological, following the developments of the young democratic society itself.

CONCLUSION



34.23

This dissertation started with the desire to understand the spatial developments of an in-between era that had hitherto been conventionally presented as an insignificant gap in Estonia's architectural history, and was informed by the conviction that many characteristics of today's spatial discourse and architectural culture hark back to this dynamic period. One of the aims of the thesis was to acknowledge this interregnum period as a significant historical time in its own right, and to challenge the conventional periodisations we have come to operate within, based on the neat dividing line of 1989, 1990 or 1991 and grounded in narratives that tend to stress the qualities of rupture and social and political breaks. While the thesis acknowledges the essential differences between late and post-socialist spatial regimes, it nevertheless aims to counter the narrative of a clean break by focusing on the hybridity, continuity and unevenness of the changes, highlighting the struggles and incoherences found in the processes of adaptation. Thus, in order to make sense of the spatial environment surrounding us today, it is necessary to look back at the period when the foundations of the social space of the new republic were being laid. The experiences of the preceding late socialist period were re-evaluated and adapted, new incoming international influences were (mis)trans-

lated and absorbed, and new spatial relationships for a democratic society were negotiated. All of these processes took place on very many different levels, manifesting themselves in conventional architectural designs and urban planning, as well as in more daring utopian visions, artistic proposals, performative actions and written, spoken and exhibition discourse. The aim of the thesis was to examine these different manifestations in an interconnected manner, as parts of a complex common network, to see how these developments informed each other in the multilevel processes of spatial production. For this purpose, the thesis examined a number of diverse case studies that, upon close reading, revealed several common features, determining factors, aspirations and effects.

The tendencies are most obvious in the unbuilt architectural designs and urban planning projects that were discussed in the first chapter. One of the most telling signs of the changing times was the shift of focus from individual buildings to the urban scale and urban public space, as exemplified in the vast number of urban planning competitions and directly commissioned urban visions. Whereas during the late Soviet era planning as a field was largely dominated by bureaucratic and ideological concerns, and technically the same procedures remained in place up until the actual change in the political regime (and even after that, the Soviet-era general planning projects nominally continued to be in force until relevant new laws were passed and new planning projects approved); a renewed enthusiasm for having a say in the development of important urban matters was felt among the architects during the last years of the 1980s. As exemplified in the projects for Mere Blvd, the Süda-Tatari competitions and the central Tallinn visions compiled for the Milan international architecture exhibition, architects eagerly envisioned a new, dense and multifunctional urban space where public functions – cultural, commercial, entertainment and administrative typologies – would prevail. The distribution and arrangement of the architectural programmes ignored the official Soviet planning economy restrictions, at times demonstrating previously unheard-of audacity and anticipation of profound political and social changes, as exemplified in Emil Urbel's proposal to situate the opera theatre in the Soviet coastal defence zone. At the same time, there was no up-to-date research underlying the planning, and thus architects largely followed intuitive paths and their own free imagi-

nations of liberal democratic urban space. In these imaginations, civic space was, to a great extent, presented as commercial space: indeed, the emergence of new commercial typologies was one of the most conspicuous features of the era. The conceptualising of these typologies and the mechanisms of their commissioning were analysed via the examples of the Astlanda (Estar) commercial centre and the Estimpeks (Amerest) hotel, detailing the long and uneven design and development processes, and the search for modes of cooperation with new types of private clients, showing the impact of brand new financing and managing mechanisms. Procedures of detail planning and design management were invented alongside the design processes, as demonstrated in the case of Naissaar in Chapter 2 and, while being modelled on existing international examples, the negotiation processes were still unusually open and welcoming to the most daring input. At the same time, the forging of democratic spatial planning procedures did not mean letting go of a certain top-down mentality characteristic of the previous era: there was still a strong belief in the supremacy of the professional know-how of the architect and architects' role in devising spatial visions, so attempts at civic participation were mostly regarded as anachronistic in professional circles, as in the case of Sūda-Tatari, described in Chapter 1, and Tensta in Stockholm, introduced at the Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial of 1990, and analysed in Chapter 3.

The abundance of both urban and architectural projects imagining new public spaces and design typologies and shaping ideas about ways to inhabit urban and architectural space greatly contributed to the development of the public sphere. In conjunction with general social developments, architecture's role in negotiating the ways of living together as a society was increasingly acknowledged. In numerous instances, a greater eminence and social resonance was actively sought, either by initiating a large-scale international platform, such as the Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial, or by proposing a grandiose new settlement on Naissaar island, envisioning a space that was to break new ground from the architectural, urban, political, financial and spiritual points of view. In order to achieve these ends and to participate in public debates more generally, it was also important to transcend professional boundaries. On one level, this tendency is revealed in the reciprocal interest and active interaction between the realms of architecture and art. But the urge to be heard and intervene

in public spheres beyond the design realm was even more profoundly manifested in Tõnis Vint's choice of presentation channels and strategies, preferring mainstream media and national broadcast outlets over traditional exhibition formats, and by Group T's TV series and special sections in the weekly newspaper *Eesti Ekspress*. Such communications often led to meaningful intersections with important issues in the fields of politics, finance, commerce and pop culture, resonating with questions actively debated in the society, such as the national identity, as exemplified in numerous unbuilt projects and discussed at the architecture triennial, in heritage protection and restitution, touched upon in the context of Steinmann's restoration of Tallinn Art Hall, and in community and commonality, created in the performative events of Group T.

One creative strategy that continued to be trusted and valued after the late Soviet period was the great emphasis on issues of representation. Both the visual and formal execution of unbuilt architectural and urban projects and Vint's Naissaar vision reveal the striking visual imagology that conveyed the innovative aspects of the ideas. The new space was often imagined as a complex of visual signifiers denoting the new and liberal, socially open and commercially thriving urban life that would gradually be filled with corresponding spatial practices: a tendency that has been described as building a simulacrum city. Similarly, the aspirations of Group T for design expression that was critical of conventional practice and constituted an autonomous experimental sphere were, to a great extent, channelled into re-imagining the representational aspect in their architectural drawings and project presentations. Also, compared to their Western colleagues, the local participants in the Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial exhibition relied heavily on the poetic force of architectural representation and the artistic qualities of their installations. While the architects' written output declined, they relied all the more on the basic tools of the profession to participate in the discussions concerning the production of space for the society in the making.

The issue of the architect's agency and role in intervening and shaping design and development processes definitely form one of the aspects that runs through all of the case studies. As detailed in Chapter 1, for the practising architects, having set up their own, usually quite small, architecture offices on the basis of the dissolution of the Soviet state design offices, establishing and maintaining author-

itative professional positions in society was a struggle, especially in the first years of the 1990s, when commissions underwent a significant decline. However, the ideal image of the architect-artist, characteristic of the late Soviet period, was highly cherished and most practitioners clung to it tightly, displaying remarkable unease towards architecture's commercial side, and distancing themselves from marketing options. The desire to maintain such an elevated professional position was strongly reflected in the discourse fostered at the Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennials, where the Baltic architects displayed a common belief in architects' creative autonomy and special position in society, stressing their paradoxically greater creative freedom compared to their Western colleagues, and reinforcing the image with various artistic installations at the triennial exhibitions. In the second and even more in the third triennial, the difficulties encountered with the increasingly commercial everyday life of the architect led to ever stronger reactions, bordering in some instances on silent withdrawal to the ivory tower. Similarly, the architects of Group T demanded full artistic autonomy bordering on a nihilistic approach to design and competition briefs and representational strategies, initially as a reaction to the restrictive and highly bureaucratic design conditions of their workplace, the Estonian Industrial Project office, but increasingly as a valid creative position in its own right, as necessary opposition to the social mainstream, striving for a consolidation of liberal capitalism and nostalgic nationalism. However, their performative practice was not so much an escape to art driven by anguish of the architectural reality as an active way to search for a critical position under the changing circumstances and a manner of testing out alternative modes of space and spatial communities with an immediacy not attainable by purely architectural means. At the same time, some of the most persuasive efforts to broaden the creative individual's agency in spatial matters came from artistic projects, as exemplified by Vint's Naissaar and George Steinmann's *Revival of Space*, dealt with in Chapter 5. Both displayed an unusual degree of ambition in terms of vision as well as in actively intervening in the procedures and conditions determining the production of space. Whereas, strictly speaking, Steinmann may be considered the more successful of the two, as his project to renovate the Tallinn Art Hall with the help of self-generated international lobbying and funding networks was successfully fulfilled, the impact of Vint's vision was just as significant, launching extensive

discussions in professional and mainstream media, and testing the limits and possibilities of the detail-planning process.

An important aspect of professional assertion and self-regard was the constant dialogue with international models and influences. Strong admiration for Western trends and influences was already present in the late Soviet period, but the relationship became clearly more complex in the interregnum era. The professional relationship towards architectural developments in the free world that had recently become accessible combined a feverish and indiscriminate absorption of all kinds of information, an occasionally credulous trust in international know-how, and a great desire for adequate outside reflection, as well as a certain feeling of defensiveness, occasionally growing into arrogance. In any case, the question of relating to outside impulses and information was of utmost importance. The gradual opening up of the world at the end of the 1980s was eagerly used to participate in competitions, attend workshops and study courses, and in the last years of the decade to gain professional work experience, primarily in Finland. Many of the encounters grew out of contacts established during the late Soviet period, based mainly on the success of the Tallinn school, but other new opportunities also emerged. International feedback was actively sought and highly valued, as exemplified in participation in the Milan exhibition with the central Tallinn visions and inviting Henning Larsen to join the jury for the Hansapank competition. The thirst for theoretical input from abroad was equally intense, as the case of Group T shows. Various intellectual trends were imported and interpreted quite freely, assembling them into a creative amalgamation suitably reflecting the messiness of the local situation. Similarly, the theoretical content of *Ehituskunst* magazine, relaunched in 1991, consisted almost exclusively of translated essays and international examples, with the strongest focus on Finland, reinforcing the already strong Nordic orientation of the Tallinn school generation of architects. However, the Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial was an attempt to be not only on the receiving end intellectually but to establish a platform for a dialogue of equals, advancing the local architecture culture considerably and also greatly boosting the self-confidence of the local participants and organisers. Yet the regionalist focus of the triennials and the issue of local identity in the face of globalisation and the establishment of the European Union also acknowledged the incompatibilities between wanting to immerse

themselves in all the latest international trends and strengthening local and regional benefits. Nevertheless, the very optimistic self-image and conviction in the great potential that the opening Estonian society contained also pertained to the architecture and art worlds of the interregnum era: great interest from Western investors, as well as from architecture and art professionals was clearly expected. This conviction was most strongly manifested in Vint's Naissaar project, foreseen as a unique meeting place for Western and Eastern cultures, commerce and technologies that would entail a huge developmental leap culturally, financially, socially and spiritually. At the same time, the trust in international know-how, which was perhaps even greater among officials and developers, led to cases where the mere fact of an architect being of Western origin was the most important factor, eliciting bitter commentaries from the local practitioners. Similarly, Steinmann's reception by various Estonian officials and government departments was most likely greatly aided by seeing in him the representation of Western know-how and agency.

As the case studies demonstrate, the Estonian architecture culture at the end of the 1980s–beginning of the 1990s was far from in hibernation: quite the contrary, it was unprecedentedly vigorous and operated in active dialogue with other processes in the production of space for the new society. Making use of the radical openness of the era, the architecture of the interregnum built upon the previous late Soviet experience and realised some of its desires. It also tested out new impulses connected with the opening up of the society. The experiments stemmed from a belief in creative individuals' essential role in imagining future space and their right to participate in the public sphere, thus helping to keep open up the discussions of possibilities. The spaces thus produced might have been intangible but they were nevertheless vital in shaping the social life of the interregnum.

EXCURSIONS

Denmark HENNING LARSEN

ONE-DAY excursions on September 27 USD 45

Trip to Læsø, Læsø National Park
Pinnis National Park, Hirtsholms Vig
Læsø National Park, minor houses (50 persons)

Norway EIVIND FEHN

TWO-DAY excursions on September 27-28 USD 100

Kviteseid (Gaustadalen) (40 persons)

Sweden CARL NYREN

LONG excursions on September 27-30 USD 400

Säffo - Riga - Vilnius - Tallinn (40 persons)

Finland AJZANI PALLASMAA

Excursion fee included transportation, board and guide services.

Estonia GEDIMINAS BARKANAVIČIUS

ADVICE

If you want to stay in another hotel in Tallinn, we advise you to choose PALACE. Please book your room before June 15, by tele 173247 (PALACE).

Latvia KODRIS GILZE

Single room USD 145 a day 190-240

Double room 140 170

Full board 190 230

Auto with extra 235 270

SAB Entained gives you a 10% discount.

GUEST LECTURERS INVITED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

GURHAN ERKERTS - USA
JAAK INKILÄ - SWEDEN
GERHARDT AYOUBI - GERMANY
ALDO VAN EYCK - HOLLAND
KENNETH FRAMPTON - USA
PETER WALTON - AUSTRALIA

DATE AND PLACE

The Triennial will be held on September 24-26, 1990, in the Saunalahti Exhibition Centre, Pöytä tee 23, Tallinn, Estonia.

ORGANIZERS

The Baltic and Nordic Associations of Architects.

WORKSHOP

For students there will be a workshop at Anjalaalms near Tallinn on September 17-23.

LANGUAGE

The official language of the Triennial is English.

EXHIBITION REPORT

A summary will be published after the Triennial and sent to all participants.

REGISTRATION

Participation is limited to 250. Registrations will be accepted in order of receipt. Please use enclosed registration form.

PARTICIPATION FEE

The participation fee will be approximately USD 250. For students the participation fee will be USD 150.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from the Office of European Architecture, Ltd 205, 00010 Tallinn, Estonia (00358 90 7 2342 342) 327 80179, telex 1 0362 44779 or the Finnish Association of Architects, Oulunkyläntie 22 A, 00210 Helsinki, Finland, tel. 268 0 640 867, telex 208 0 468 123.

**NORDIC
BALTIC
architectural
Triennial
TALLINN
Sept. 24 - 26
1990**



ARCHITECTURAL TRIENNIAL

The Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial has been organized to support progressive activities forming in Nordic and Baltic countries. Although the geographical and climatic conditions in the region are the same and the traditions of these countries are inseparable, political and economic conditions in the Baltic and Nordic countries have been very different during the past years. It is widely known that political and economic conditions are always preliminary reflected in architecture. Still, on both sides of the Baltic Sea historical identity has been preserved and respected by architects.

The Triennial courses becoming a part of United Europe and the Baltic countries opening in Europe is foreseeable in the near future. What should be the role of architecture in order to prepare national identity, organized Europe? Is it justified to use architecture as a form of resistance or to discuss influence? What can the history of architecture tell us? Where can the pulse of the modern world be felt? Architectural ideas may suggest surprising answers to these questions. The theme of the Triennial "Architecture and Revolution" is the first step.



PROGRAMME

- 04.00 Registration
- 08.00 Opening of the Triennial - Three Ministers of Estonia, His Royal, Baltic countries, Gunnar Adamius, Nordic countries
- 10.10 Lecture: Sten Kormanik, Estonia
- 11.00 Lecture: Aldo van Eyck, Holland
- 12.00-13.00 Lunch
- 13.10 Lecture: Kenneth Frampton, England/USA
- 14.00 Lecture: Gunnar Behrens, USA
- 14.50 Coffee
- 15.15 Opening of the exhibition
- 16.30-18.30 Guided tour in Old Tallinn

PROGRAMME

- 08.00 Lecture: Gediminas Barkanavicius, Lithuania
- 08.50 Coffee
- 10.10 Lecture: Svein Petter, Norway
- 11.00 Lecture: Carl Nyren, Sweden
- 12.00-13.00 Lunch
- 13.10 Lecture: Igme Paik, Estonia
- 14.00 Lecture: Henning Larsen, Denmark
- 14.50 Coffee
- 15.15 Student's workshop
- 16.30-18.30 Guided tour: 20th century Tallinn
- 20.00 Music and film evening at Orehusea

PROGRAMME

- 09.00 Lecture: Modris Ceklis, Latvia
 - 09.50 Coffee
 - 10.10 Lecture: Julia Eckles, Germany/England
 - 11.00 Lecture: Peter Wilson, Germany/England
 - 12.00-13.00 Lunch
 - 13.10 Lecture: Aizart Pallasmaa, Finland
 - 14.00 Coffee
 - 14.50-17.00 Panel discussion: Conclusions
 - 19.00 Gala Reception
- Organizers reserve the right to make changes in the programme.



33. Opening of the I Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial, 1990. Courtesy of Irina Raud.

34. I Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial, 1990. Exhibition view. Courtesy of Irina Raud.



35. | Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial, 1990. Exhibition view. Courtesy of Irina Raud.
36. | Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial, 1990. Exhibition view. Courtesy of Irina Raud.

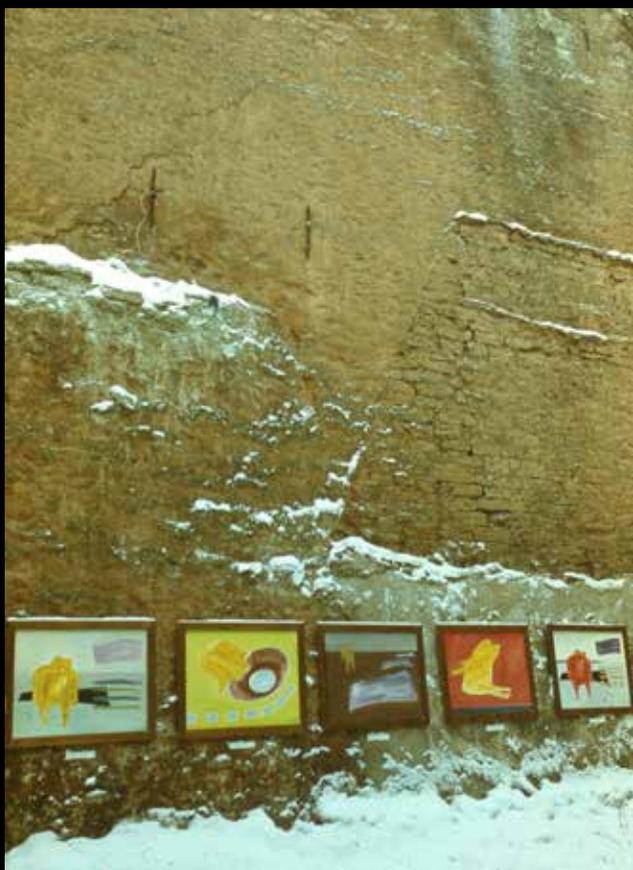


37. II Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial, 1993. Opening performance.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

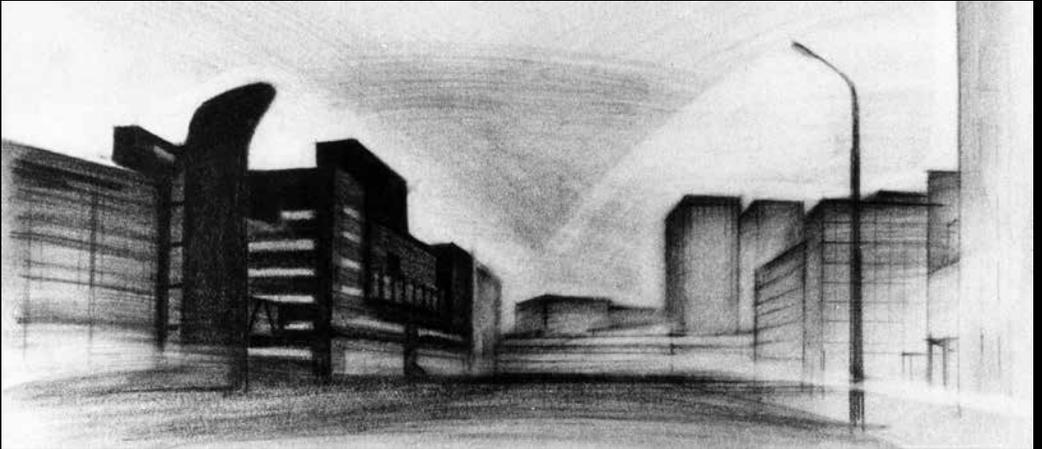
38. II Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial, 1993. Exhibition view.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.



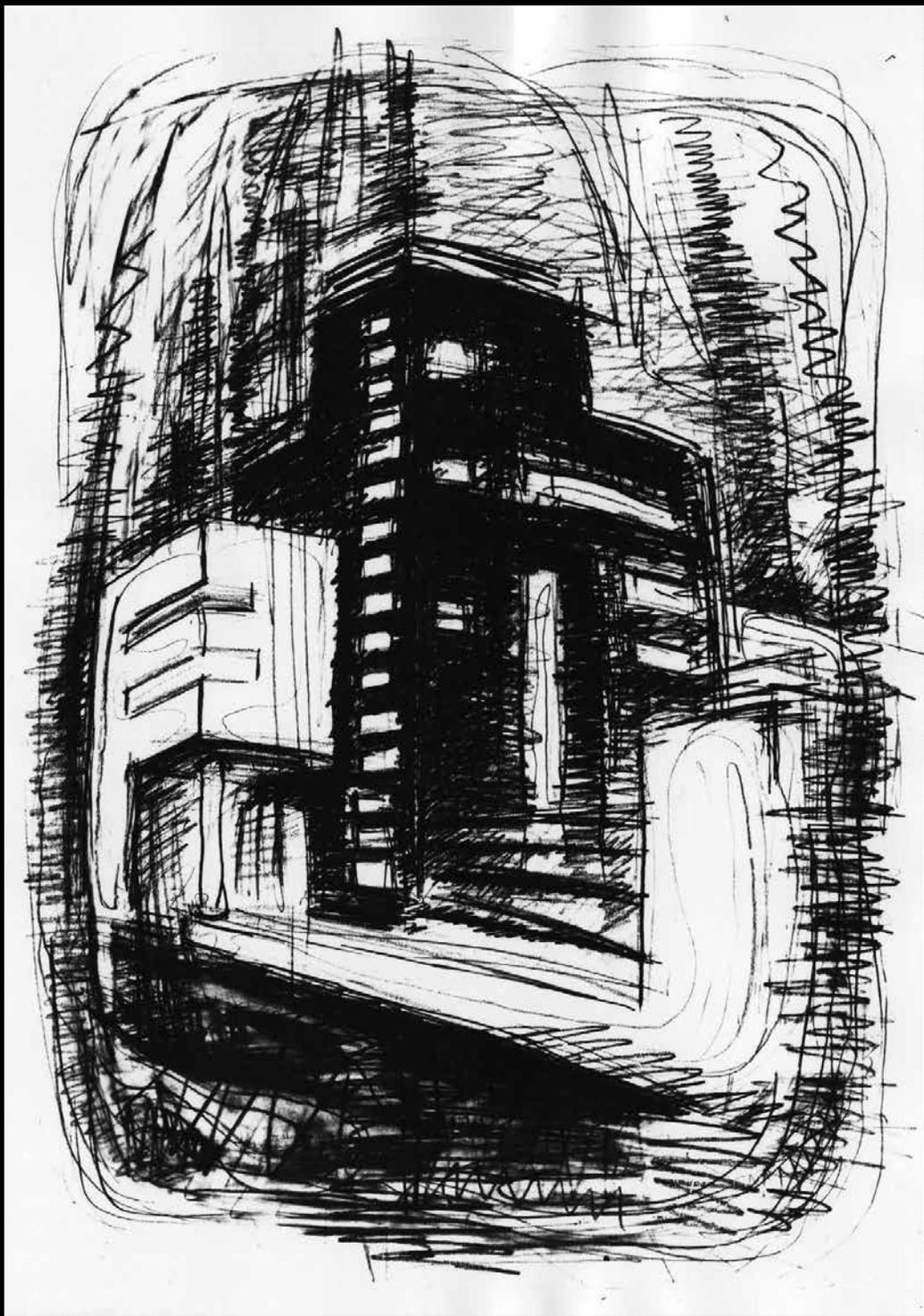
**39.–40. II Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial, 1993. Exhibition views.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.**

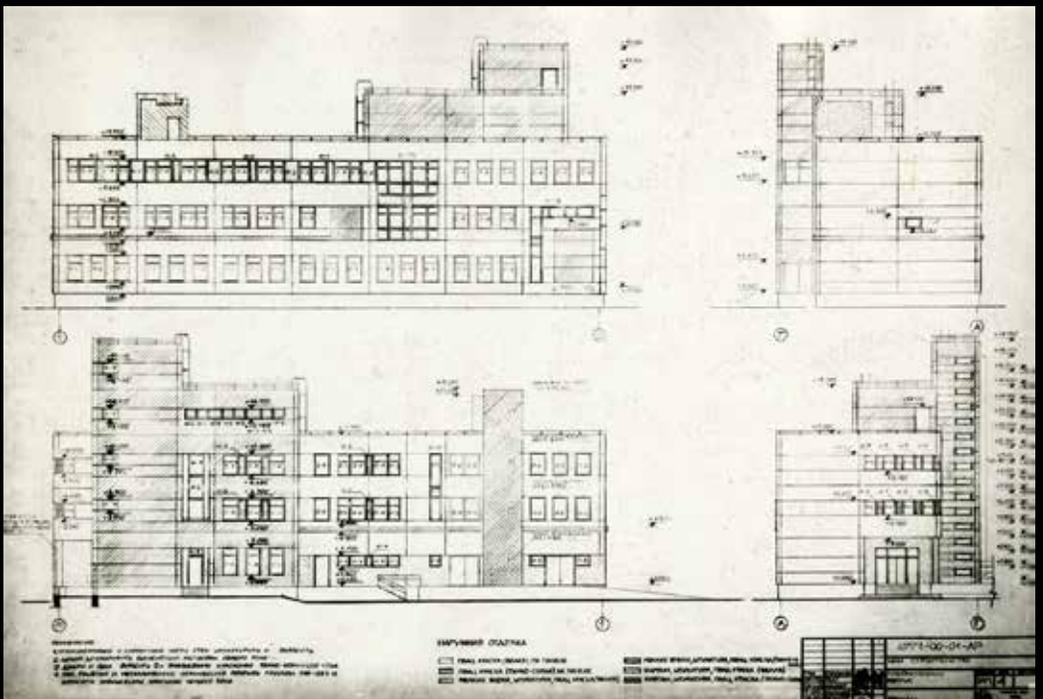


**41–42. Group T. Exhibition in the back yard of Adamson-Eric Museum, 1986.
Courtesy of Centre for Contemporary Art Estonia.**

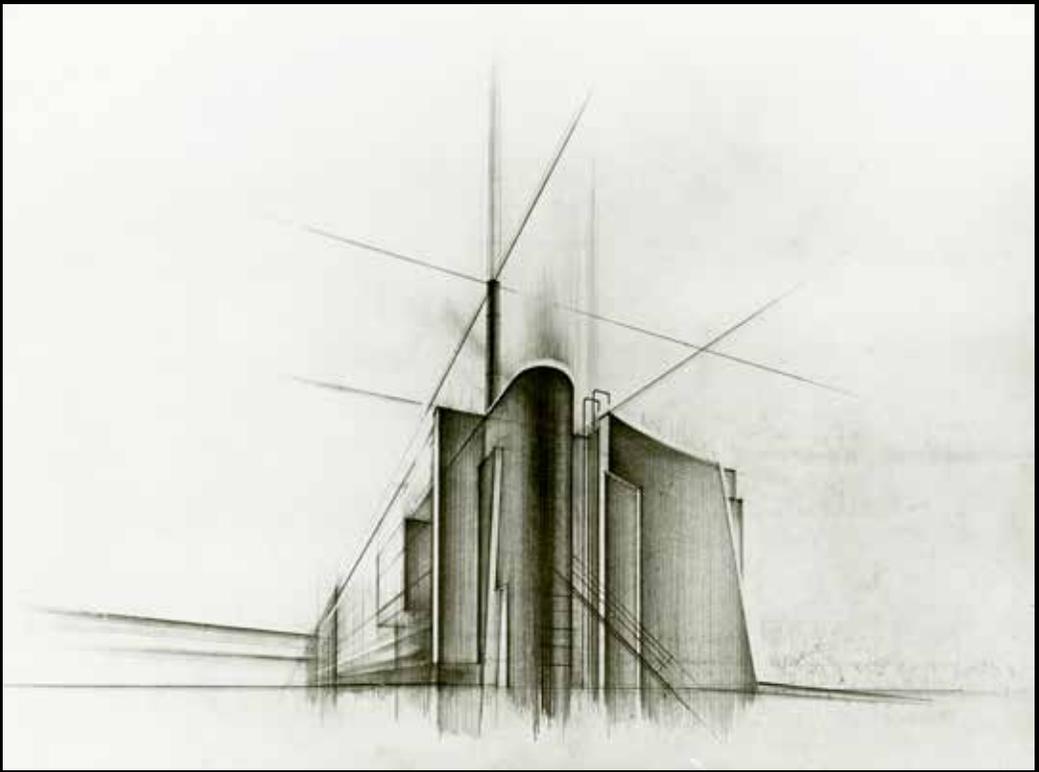


**43-44. Raoul Kurvitz, Urmas Muru. Tallinn Fashion House, 1985.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.**

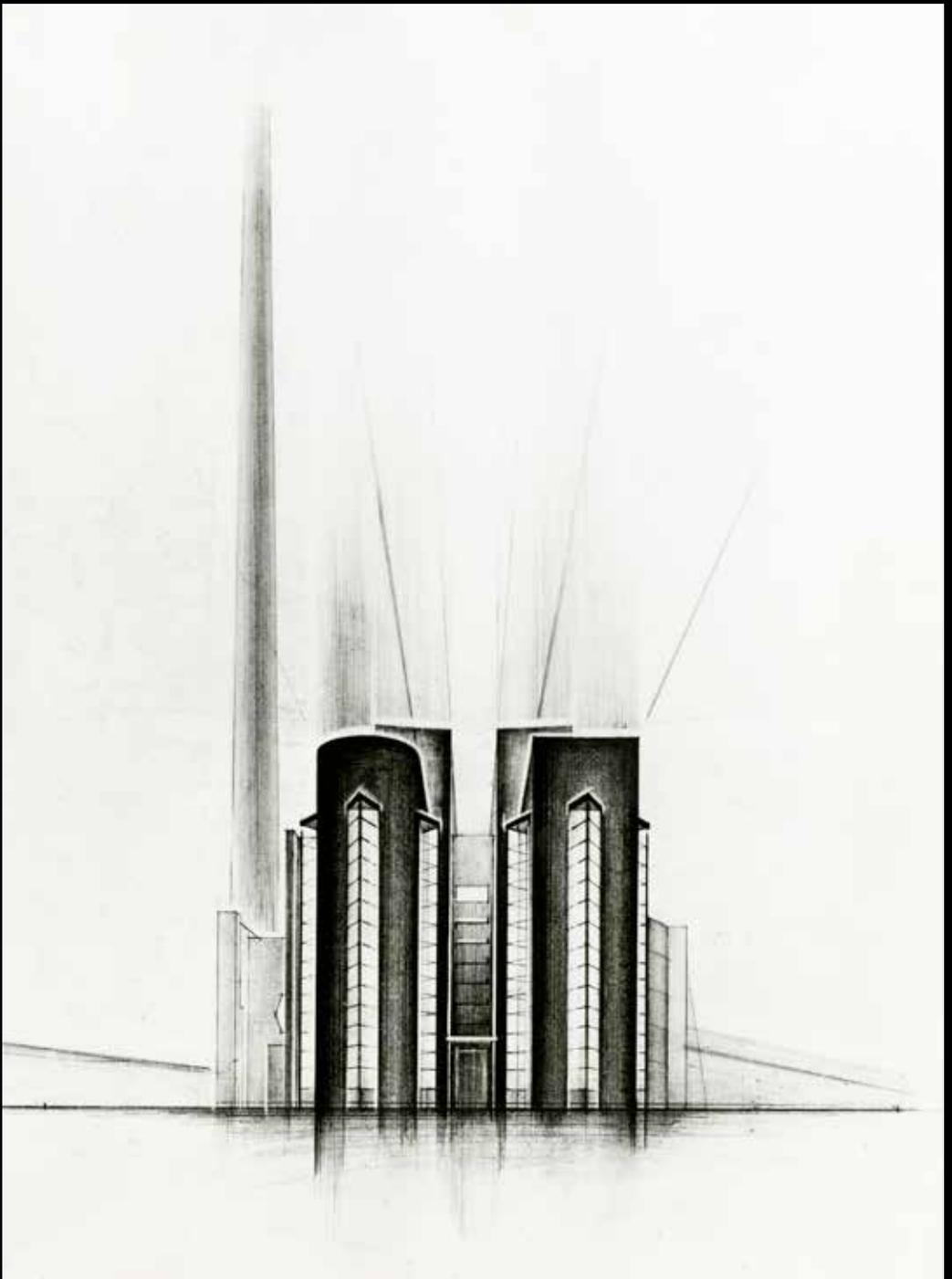




45. Raoul Kurvitz. Laboratory building in Männiku, 1986. Courtesy of Raoul Kurvitz.



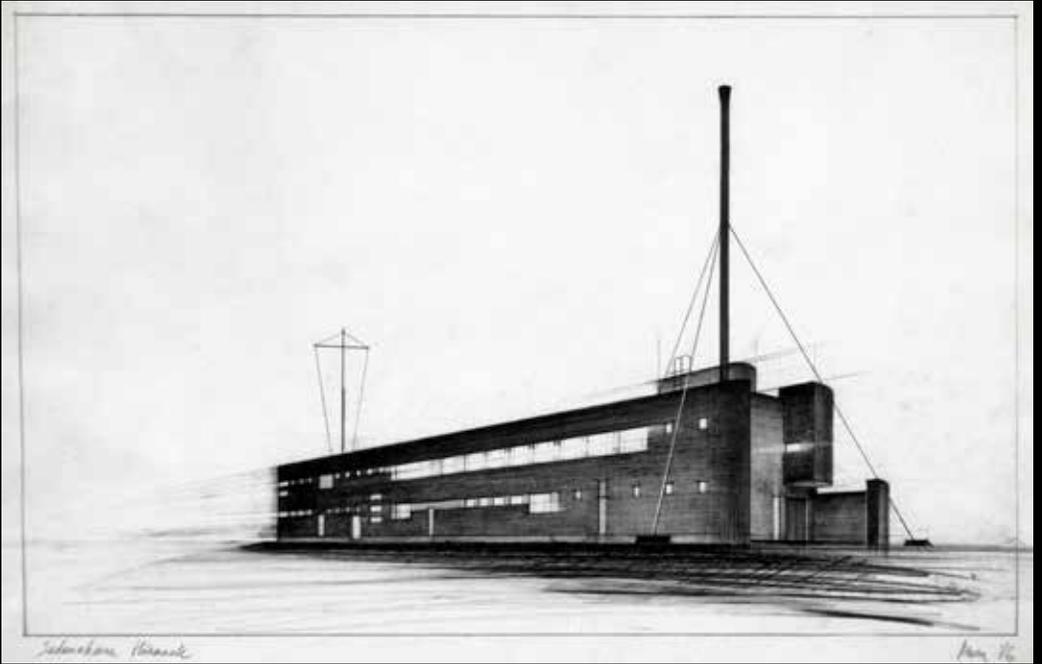
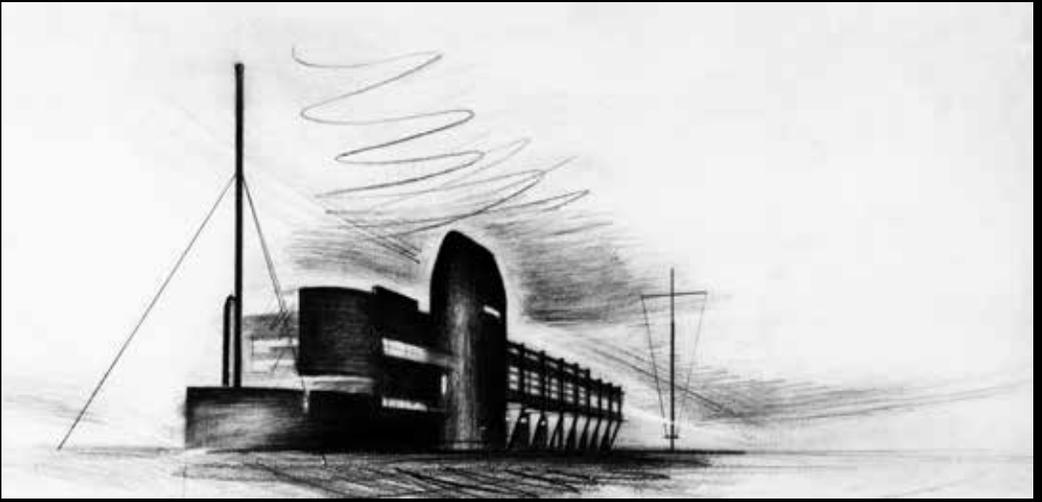
46. Urmas Muru. Heating plant in Elva, 1987. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.



47. Urmas Muru. Heating plant in Rapla, 1989. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.



48. Urmas Muru. High-voltage control building in Tartu, 1988.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.



49. Urmas Muru. Harbour building in Lehtma, 1986.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.



50. Urmas Muru. Heating plant in Elva, 1987. Courtesy of Urmas Muru.



51. Peeter Pere. Hockey hall in Narva, 1989. Kunst 1989, No. 2.



Handwritten signature and date: 1900



**52. Urmas Muru. Idea competition for Tallinn Town Hall, 1992.
Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.**

KUI SAAKS ISE MAJANDADA!

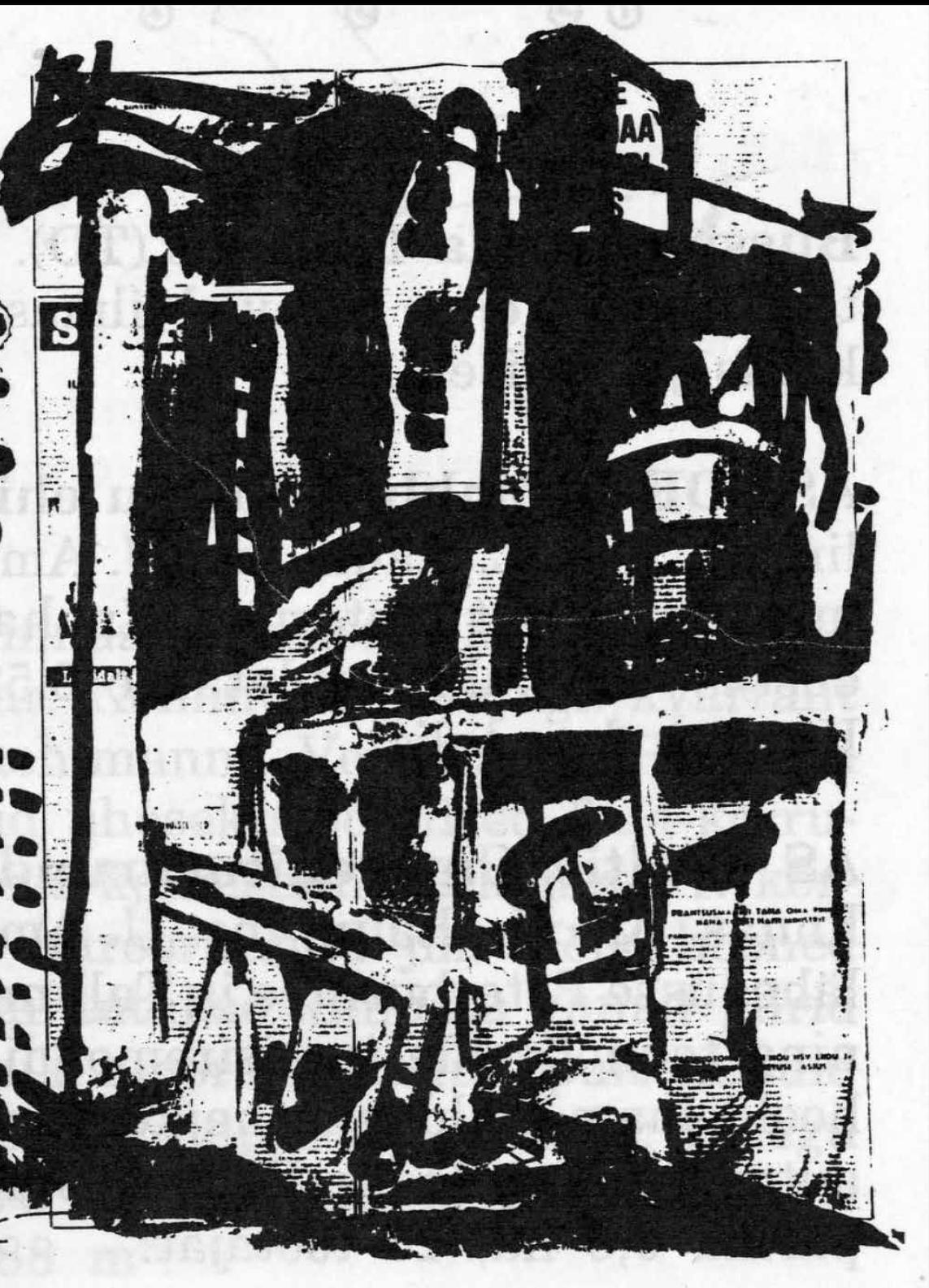


• POLITILISE MÕTISKLUSE •

INIMKOND, KLASS, RAHVUS, INIMENE

KUHU ON KADONUD KOHV?

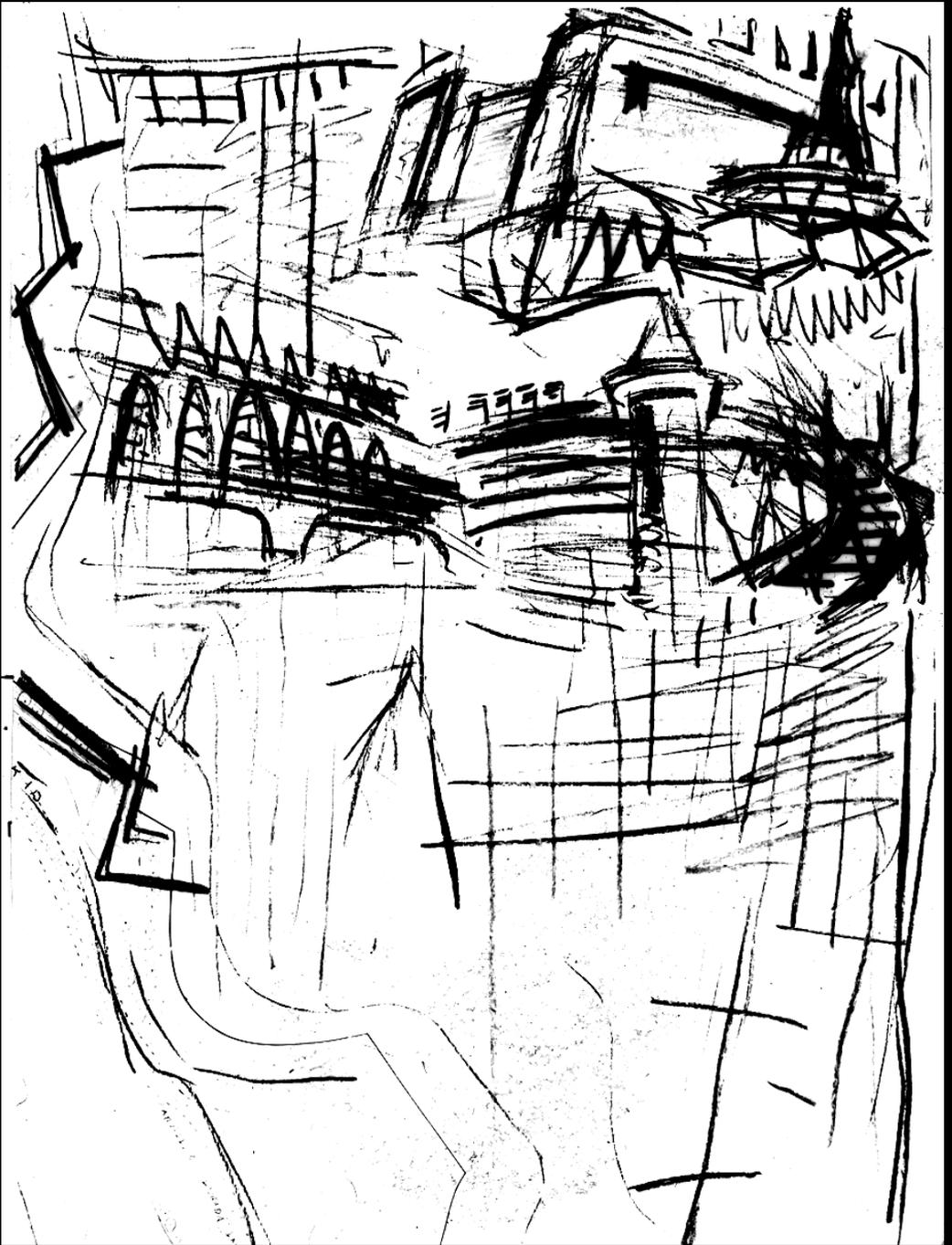
Homme ilm



53. Peeter Pere. Margarine factory in Lasnamäe, 1991. Arhitektuurikroonika '91.



54. Raoul Kurvitz, *Urmus Muru, Velle Kadalipp*.
Performance *Discipline and Anarchy*, 1987. Courtesy of Raoul Kurvitz.



55. Raoul Kurvitz, *Urmas Muru*. Competition for Kuressaare harbour area, 1988.
Courtesy of Raoul Kurvitz.



56. Raoul Kurvitz, Urmas Muru. Estonian Art Museum. Model in aquarium as displayed at the exhibition of I Nordic-Baltic Architecture Triennial, 1990. Courtesy of Raoul Kurvitz.



57. Raoul Kurvitz, *Urmus Muru*. Performance at the opening of Group T exhibition at the Song Festival Grounds, 1988. Courtesy of Raoul Kurvitz.



58. Raoul Kurvitz, Urmaz Muru, Peeter Pere. Performance *Oval* at the opening of Vaal gallery, 1990. Courtesy of Raoul Kurvitz.



59. Urmas Muru. Performance *À Rebours* at Vanha Ylioppilastalo, Helsinki, 1992. Courtesy of Urmas Muru.



60. Urmas Muru. *The Carpet*. Performance at performance week *Eleonora*, 1993. Courtesy of Art Museum of Estonia.

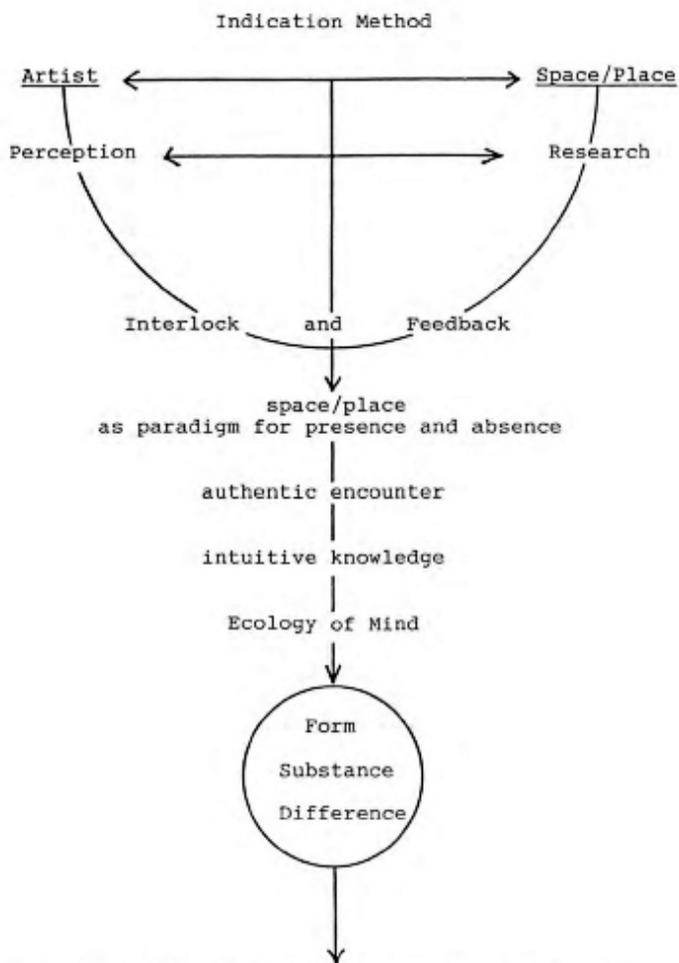
61. Raoul Kurvitz, Urmas Muru. Performance *Death of Marat* at *A Guide to Intronomadism*, 1991. Courtesy of Art Museum of Estonia.



62. Raoul Kurvitz, Maria Avdjushko. Performance *Wolf and Seven Little Goats* at *A Guide to Intronomadism*, 1991. Courtesy of Art Museum of Estonia.

63. *Lifestyles: Techno*. Stills from TV broadcast authored by Raoul Kurvitz, 1994.

Mind Map Tallinn Art Hall

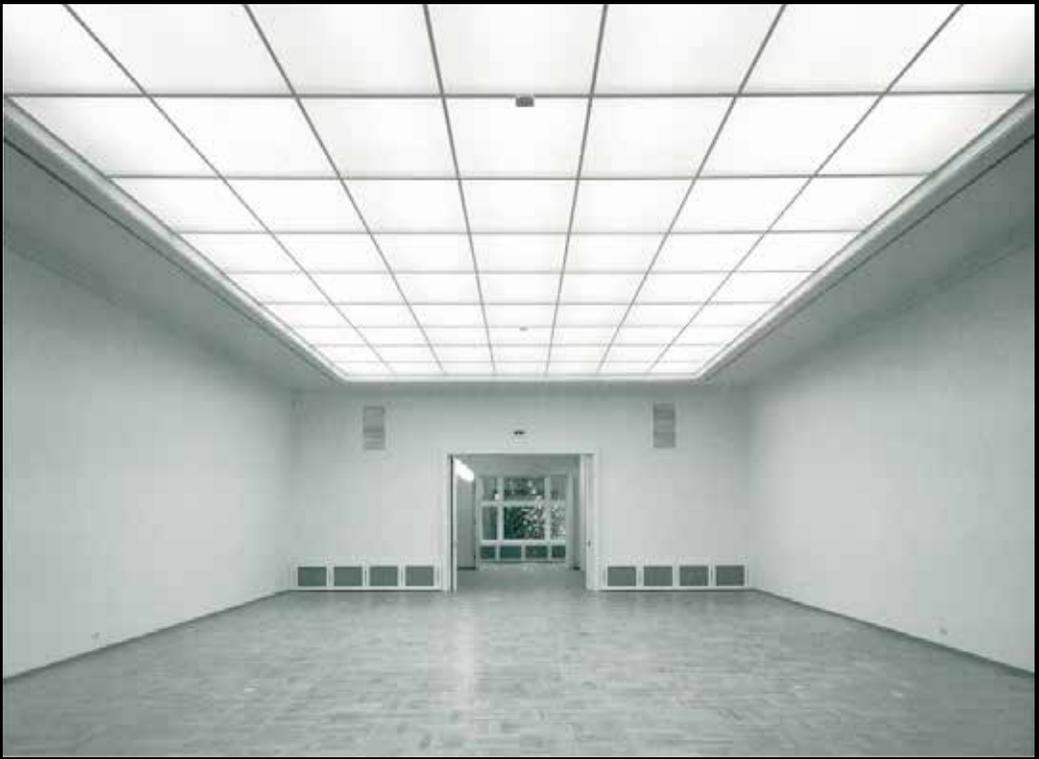


An approach towards a System of Ethics for the Future

Personal responsibility ← Network → Collective endeavour

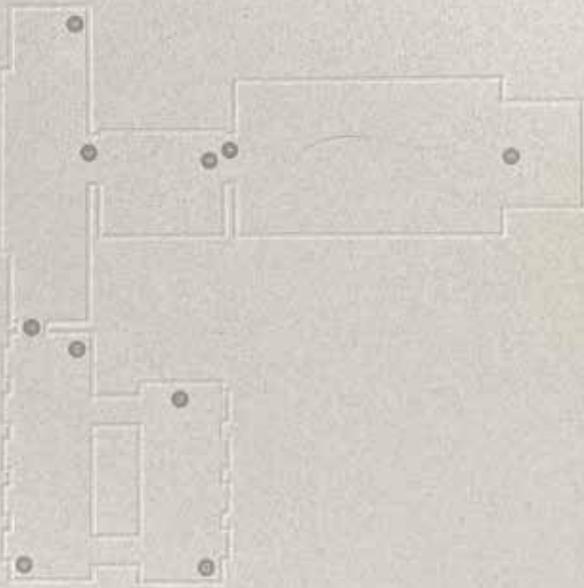


65. George Steinmann. *Revival of Space*, 1994. Courtesy of George Steinmann.



66.–67. George Steinmann. *Revival of Space*, 1994. Courtesy of George Steinmann.

George Steinmann Tallinna Kunstihoone

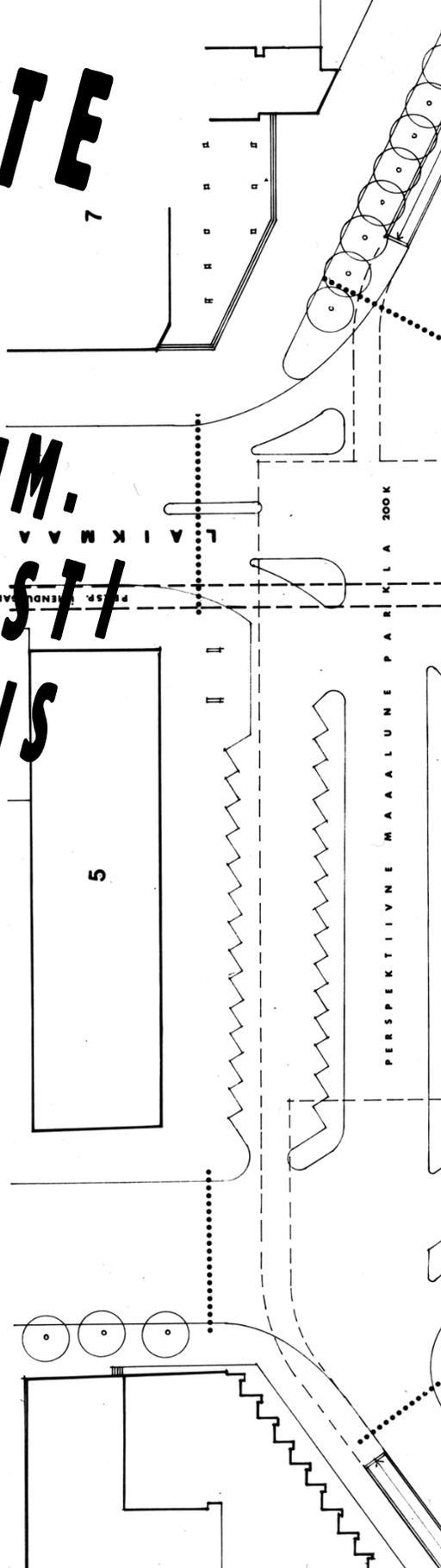




69. Aili Vint. *Sunset*. Installation integrated into George Steinmann's *Revival of Space*, 1994. Video still.

KOKKUVÕTE

RUUMILINE INTERREEGNUM. MUUTUSED EESTI ARHITEKTUURIS JA KUNSTIS 1986-1994



SISSEJUHATUS PROBLEEMIPÜSTITUS

Käesolev doktoritöö võtab vaatluse alla 1980. aastate lõpust 1990. aastate alguseni aset leidnud ruumilised muutused Eesti arhitektuuris ja kunstis. Keskendudes vahepealsusele kahe selgepiirilise ühiskondliku formatsiooni vahel, näitab töö selle seni tähelepanuta jäänud perioodi dünaamilisust ja muutuste ebaühtlust, kus ühtaegu jätkusid teatud hilisõukogude ajast pärit ruumilised ja sotsiaalsed praktikad, kuid samal ajal kohaneti kiirendatud tempos uute läänelike mõjutustega. Nii toimus üleminek ühest ühiskonnast teise, üht tüüpi ruumidest teisteks mitte selgepiirilise katkestusena, vaid pigem hāgusalt, hūbriidselt ja hūplikult. Uus ruumiline režiim väljendus väga mitmesugusel viisil nii linnaplaneerimises, arhitektuuris kui ka kunstis – töö analüüsib neid väljendusviise eesmärgiga selgitada, milline oli nende panus uue ühiskondliku teadvuse, avaliku ruumi ja demokraatliku avalikkuse kujunemisse. Lähtudes Henri Lefebvre'ilt pärit veendumusest, et ühiskondlik ja ruumiline korraldus on alati vastastikusel seoses, näitab doktoritöö, kuidas leidis uue ruumi tootmine aset väga mitmel tasandil, käsitledes nii ehitatud ja planeeritud ruumi, selle kujutlusi, visualiseerimist ja etendamist kui ka teoreetilist mõtestamist ja refleksiooni.

TEOREETILINE RAAMISTIK JA ALLIKAD

Kõige üldisemas plaanis lähtub töö Henri Lefebvre'i kriitilisest ruumiteooriast⁶⁰⁶ ja selle arvukatest edasiarendustest,⁶⁰⁷ kus ruumi mõistetakse dünaamilise ja mitmekihilise nähtusena, mis on ühevõrra nii aineeline kui ka sotsiaalne. See võimaldab näidata uue ja täiesti teistsuguse ruumi loomet näidete najal, mis tulenevalt ajastu eripäradeist hõlmavad väga vähe tegelikult valmis ehitatud arhitektuuri. Kuivõrd need näited pärinevad nii arhitektuuri, kujutava kunsti kui ka *performance*'i vallast, olen nende interdistsiplinaarse dialoogi põhisel tõlgendamisel toetunud paljus Rosalyn Deutsche⁶⁰⁸ ja Jane Rendelli⁶⁰⁹ arhitektuuri ja kunsti sünteesivale eeskujule. Deutsche tekstid, mis toetuvad teoreetiliselt Claude Lefort'i radikaalse demokraatia teooriale, on ühtlasi aidanud mõtestada kunsti ja arhitektuuri rolli avaliku ruumi ja avalikkuse konstrueerimisel, mille käsitlemisel

606 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. Tlk Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Blackwell, 1991.

607 Nt Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994; Doreen Massey, *For Space*. London: Sage, 2005; Mark Gottdiener, *The Social Production of Urban Space*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985; David Harvey, *The*

Condition of Postmodernity. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.

608 Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions*. Art and Spatial Politics. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996.

609 Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*. London: IB Tauris, 2007.

olen ühtlasi lähtunud nii Jürgen Habermasist⁶¹⁰ ja tema avalikkuse kontseptsiooni märkimisväärselt nüansseerinud Nancy Fraserist⁶¹¹ kui ka uurimustest, kus kaalutakse selle mõistestiku kohaldatavust Ida-Euroopa hilisnõukogude ja postsotsialistlikule kontekstile.⁶¹² Ruumi kui kogukonna konstrueerija rolli on aidanud mõtestada ka Jean-Luc Nancy ja Giorgio Agambeni teooriaid kogukondlikkusest.⁶¹³

Juhtumiuuringute analüüs toetub tugevalt teoste endi lähilugemisele. Kuivõrd vaadeldav periood on siinses arhitektuuriajaloos praktiliselt käsitlemata ja kunstiajalooski on seda puudutatud vaid möödaminnes, puuduvad kanoonilised käsitlused, millele toetuda või millega polemiseerida. Sama võib väita õigupoolest kogu Ida-Euroopa arhitektuuri- ja kunstiajaloodiskursuse kohta, kus hilisnõukogude käsitlused lõppevad tavapäraselt 1980. aastate keskpaigaga ning postsotsialismi nähakse üldisema, kohati kaasajani ulatuva nähtusena, pööramata sellele vahepealsuse ajale erilist tähelepanu tulenevalt vähesest käegakatsutatavatest tulemustest. Nii on siinse doktoritöö eesmärgiks selle vahepealsuse ajastu esmakordne teadvustamine omaette nähtusena, kus väljakujunenud protsessid, arusaamad, ootused ja tavad avaldasid hilisematele arengutele erakordselt tugevat mõju. Samuti on töö originaalseks panuseks tollase arhitektuuri, linnaplaneerimise ja kunsti vaatlemine omavahel seostatud ja dialoogilisel moel.

Suur hulk doktoritöö empiirilisest materjalist – projektid, teosed, kavandid, aga ka kirjavahetus ja dokumendid – on seni käsitlemata ja eksponeerimata, pärinedes arhitektide, arhitektuuribüroode, kunstnike ja kultuurikorraldajate eraarhiividest, peale selle ka Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseumi, Eesti Kunstimuuseumi, Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskuse ja Riigiarhiivi fondidest. Teisalt sisaldab töö ka suurel määral diskursuseanalüüsi, aluseks tollane mahukas meediarefleksioon, mis teoretiseeritud käsitluste puudumise kontekstis on olnud hindamatu allikas, et mõista nii käsitletud projektide, visioonide ja kunstisündmuste vastuvõttu kui ka tollaseid intellektuaalseid ja ühiskondlikke arenguid laiemalt. Kolmandaks on suureks abiks olnud suuline ajalugu: töös käsitletud on aidanud selgitada arvukad intervjuud nii tollaste praktiseerivate arhitektide ja kunstnike kui ka kultuurikorraldajate ja muude asjasse puutuvate isikutega. Lõpuks, mõistagi ulatub vaadeldava ajastuni ka mu isiklik mälu, kuigi subjektiivne kirjutus ei ole selle töö valitsev lähenemisviis.

610 Jürgen Habermas, Avalikkuse struktuurimuutus. Uurimused ühest kodanikuühiskonna kategooriast. Tlk Andres Luure. Tallinn: Kunst, 2001.

611 Nancy Fraser, Rethinking the Public Sphere. A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. – *Social Text* 1990, No. 25/26, lk 56–80.

612 Marc Garcelon, The Shadow of the Leviathan: Public and Private in Communist and Post-Communist Society. – Jeff Weintraub, Krishan Kumar (toim), Public and Private in

Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, lk 303–332; Angela Harutyunyan, Kathrin Hörschelmann, Malcolm Miles (toim), Public Spheres After Socialism. Bristol: Intellect Books, 2009.

613 Jean-Luc Nancy, The Inoperative Community. Minneapolis, Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991; Giorgio Agamben, The Coming Community. Minneapolis, Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

PERIODISEERIMINE JA MÕISTED:
ÜLEMINEKUAEG, INTERREEGNUM,
POSTSOTSIALISM, HILISSOTSIALISM

Vaadeldav periood (1986–1994) on piiritletud eelkõige ühiskondlik-poliitiliste sündmuste alusel. Rahvusvahelises kunsti- ja arhitektuuri-diskursuses alustatakse postsotsialismi määratlustega tavaliselt 1989. või 1991. aastaga või kasutatakse lihtsamat kümnendipõhist jaotust. Ida-Euroopa postsotsialistliku kunsti kanoonilised käsitlused alustavad üldjuhul Berliini müüri langemisega 1989. aastal,⁶¹⁴ mis avaldas tegelikult mõju globaalselt, tekitades vajaduse horisontaalsema kunstiajalookirjutuse järele, mis oleks mitmehäälneline ja vaba geograafilistest piirangutest.⁶¹⁵ Eesti kontekstis on lähiajalugu periodiseeritud enamasti iseseisvuse taastamise alusel⁶¹⁶ või kasutatud kümnendipõhist jaotust.⁶¹⁷ Ometi võib Frank Ankersmitist lähtudes väita, et arhitektuuri ja ühiskonna vastastikuste seoste mõistmiseks tuleks kasutada sellist kronoloogilist raamistust, mis võimaldaks näha neid kõige komplekssemal moel.⁶¹⁸ Kirjeldatud sissejuurdunud mudelid seda aga ei paku: oleks lihtsustav arvata, et üks ajaloosündmus toob üheselt kaasa konkreetse ja jälgitava muutuse loomingu väljenduses. Vaja on mudelit, mis aitaks näha ka eelnevaid, muutust võimaldavaid tingimusi ning muutuste järkjärgulist ajas lahtirullumist.

Perioodi algusdaatum 1986 märgib perestroika ehk uutmise väljakuulutamist Mihhail Gorbatšovi poolt ning Eestis ka taasiseseisvumisprotsessi tugevalt panustanud muinsuskaitse liikumise algust.⁶¹⁹ Lõpudaatum 1994 viitab viimaste Nõukogude vägede lahkumisele kolm aastat pärast iseseisvuse taastamist. 1994. aastat on kirjeldatud ka kui piiritähist, millest alates hakkas elu Eestis tasakesi meenutama „normaalset“ riiki⁶²⁰ või kui arusaama, et „kõikide võimaluste aeg“, ühiskonna radikaalne avatus on lõppenud.⁶²¹ Kuigi esimest korda

614 Vt nt: Bojana Pejic, David Elliott (toim), *After the Wall: Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1999.

Arhitektuuris kasutavad sama periodiseeringut nt Neil Leach (toim), *Architecture and Revolution. Contemporary Perspectives on Central and Eastern Europe*. London: Routledge, 1999; Alfrun Kliems, Marina Dmitrieva (toim), *The Post-Socialist City. Continuity and Change in Urban Space and Imagery*. Berlin: Jovis, 2010.

615 Piotr Piotrowski, *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*. London: Reaktion Books, 2012, lk 15–52.

616 Nt Jaak Kangilaski (toim), *Eesti kunsti ajalugu 6. 1940–1991. I osa*. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2013.

617 Nt Sirje Helme, Johannes Saar (toim), *Ülbed üheksakümnendad. Probleemid, teemad ja tähendused 1990. aastate eesti kunstis*. Tallinn: Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2001; Sirje Helme (koost), *Kadunud kaheksakümnendad. Probleemid,*

teemad ja tähendused 1980. aastate eesti kunstis.

Tallinn: Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2010; Anu Liivak, Heie Treier (koost), *Valiku vabadus: Vaatenurki 1990. aastate Eesti kunstile*. Tallinn: Tallinna Kunstihoone Fond, 1999.

618 K. Michael Hays, *Notes on Narrative Method in Historical Interpretation*. – *Footprint 2007, Autumn*, lk 23.

619 Kaarel Piirimäe, Peeter Kaasik, Hirvepargi kõnekoosolek ja Eesti vabanemine. – *Hirvepark 1987. 20 aastat kodanikualgatusest, mis muutis Eesti lähiajalugu*. Tallinn: MTÜ Kultuuriselts Hirvepark, 2007, lk 32.

620 Läbilõök. Eesti majandus 1989–2009. Tallinn: Äripäev, 2009, lk 59.

621 1994. aastal avaldas Hasso Krull allegoorilise kirjelduse Eestist kui maast, kus üksisarvikutel ei ole enam võimalik elada, vt Hasso Krull, *Üksisarvede lahkumine*. – *Eesti Ekspress 30. XII 1994*. Ka Anders Härm on väitnud, et Eesti oli tõeliselt demokraatlik vaid aastatel 1988–1991/92, vt Anders Härm, *Eesti oligarhia*. – *Eesti Päevaleht 30. XI 2012*.

kuulutati ülemineku aeg lõppenuks seoses esimese taasiseseisvumis- aegse parlamendi kokkutulemisega 1992. aastal,⁶²² vaatlevad sotsiaal- teadlased Eesti siirdeperioodina pigem aega kuni Euroopa Liiduga liitumiseni 2004.⁶²³ Siirdeühiskond on omakorda jaotatud etappideks: 1988–1991 lalev revolutsioon; 1991–1994 radikaalsete reformide periood; 1995–1998 majanduse stabiliseerumine; 1999–2004 liitumis- läbirääkimised euroalaga; 2005–2008 uued väljakutsed Euroopa Liidus.⁶²⁴ Sellest mudelist puudutab käesolev doktoritöö kaht esimest etappi, kus muutused olid kõige intensiivsemad ja sügavamad. Just radikaalsete reformide periood 1991–1994 vastab kõige paremini Claude Lefort'i arusaamale tõelisest demokraatiast kui tühiruumist, kus võim on pidevate läbirääkimiste objekt.⁶²⁵ See igasuguse kindluse puudumine ja kõigi positsioonide võrdne legitiimsus debatis on Lefort'i mudeli produktiivsem osa sinise töö seisukohalt. Rosalyn Deutsche on näinud just selles avaliku ruumi kõige põhimisemat kvali- teeti,⁶²⁶ Andrew Arato aga rõhutanud tema kontseptsiooni sobivust 1989. aasta konteksti.⁶²⁷

Ida-Euroopa üleminekuaja ja postsotsialismi mõisted ei ole enesest- mõistetavad ega probleemivabad. Sotsiaalteadustes vaieldakse nii ülemineku ajalise piiratluse kui ka selle sisu üle⁶²⁸ ning kahtlemata on sinne töö nende debattidega dialoogis. Ülemineku mõistes kipub sisalduma eeldus, et selle lõppedes „naastakse normaalsusesse“ – see hindab arenguid normatiivse lääne perspektiivist, küsimus oleks justkui vaid selles, kas üleminek on liiga aeglane või piisavalt kiire ning kas siirdega ühele poole saamist mõõta poliitiliste või majan- duslike mõõdikute, elustandardi või mingite muude näitajate alusel.⁶²⁹ Sellist lähenemist on tugevalt mõjutanud Jürgen Habermasi juba 1990. aastal vermitud „tasategeva revolutsiooni“ kontseptsioon,⁶³⁰ mis kõlas Eestis kokku sõjaeelsete juriidiliste ja omandisuhete ning

622 Riigikogu deklaratsioon põhiseadusliku riigivõimu taastamisest. Riigi Teataja 1992, 40, 533, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/13031303>, vaadatud 9. I 2020.

623 Marju Lauristin, Peeter Vihalemm, Postkommunistlik siirde aeg Eestis: Tõlgendus- võimalusi. – Akadeemia 1998, nr 4, lk 677.

624 Marju Lauristin, Peeter Vihalemm, The Political Agenda During Different Periods of Estonian Transformation. – Journal of Baltic Studies 2009, Vol. 40, No. 1, lk 1–28.

625 Claude Lefort, The Question of Democracy. – Claude Lefort, Democracy and political Theory. Tlk David Mackey. London: Polity Press, 1988, lk 9–20.

626 Rosalyn Deutsche, Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy. – Social Text 1992, No. 33, lk 34–53.

627 Aandrew Arato, Lefort, Philosopher of 1989. – Constellations 2012, Vol. 19, No. 1, lk 23–29.

628 Vt nt Caroline Humphrey, Does the Category 'Postsocialist' Still Make Sense? – Chris Hann (toim), Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies

and Practices in Eurasia. London, New York: Routledge, 2002, lk 12–15; Zsuzsa Gille, Is There a Global Postsocialist Condition? – Global Society 2010, Vol. 24, No. 1, lk 9–30; A. Stening, Kathrin Hörschelmann, History, Geography and Difference in the Post-Socialist World: Or, Do We Still Need Post-Socialism? – Antipode 2008, Vol. 40, No. 2 (March), lk 312–335; Mariusz Czepczynski, Cultural Landscapes of Post-Socialist Cities: Representation of Powers and Notoim. London: Routledge, 2008.

629 Vt Anette N. Brown (toim), When is Transition Over? Kalamazoo: W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1999; Ave Roots, Kas siire Eestis on lõppenud? – Andu Rämmer (toim), Vaateid teelahkmetl: Sotsioloogia, sotsiaaltöö ja sotsiaalpoliitika aktuaalseid probleeme Eestis. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2008.

630 Jürgen Habermas, Tasategev revolutsioon ja pahempoolse revisjoni vajadus. Mida tähendab sotsialism täna? – Vikerkaar 1992, nr 9 ja 10, <https://www.vikerkaar.ee/archives/5139>, vaadatud 20. VI 2020.

üleüldise elukorralduse juurde tagasipöördumise taotlusega. Seda märgivad ilmekalt ka populaarsed väljendid „katkestuste kultuur“⁶³¹ ja „ajaloolaste vabariik“.⁶³² Ka varased postsotsialistliku Ida-Euroopa kunsti käsitlused võtsid üle arusaama ajutisest ja suunatud siirdest.⁶³³ Viimasel ajal on aga esile toodud, et suunatud vektorina mõistetud ülemineku idees sisaldub võltsevolutsioonilisus ja olemuslik läbikukkumine: süsteem kütab vaid järelejõudmise iha, kuid loodetud samastumist läänega ei saavutata kunagi.⁶³⁴ Normatiivse modernsusena mõistetud lääs asuks justkui postajaloolises vaakumis, samal ajal kui ida teeb järelejõudmiseks meeletu jõupingutusi, kuid jääb sellest hoolimata alati hiljaks, alati Teiseks.⁶³⁵

Analoogse „vektormõistena“ on nähtud ka postsotsialismi. On väidetud, et mõiste kaotab oma kasutusväärtuse, kui Ida-Euroopa riikides, Kuubal, Hiinas ja mujal on toimunud täielik põlvkonnavahtetus ja enamikul ühiskonnast puudub sotsialismiperioodiga isiklik suhe.⁶³⁶ Teisalt on nähtud vajadust postsotsialismi mõistet mitte sel moel koomale tõmmata, vaid vastupidi, laiendada: tegemist on globaalse seisundiga, mis mõjutas „esimest“ ja „kolmandat“ maailma samavõrd kui „teist“.⁶³⁷ Idabloki kokkuvarisemisega üheaegselt toimus ka läänes sotsialistlike ideede allajäämine neoliberalistlikule poliitikale,⁶³⁸ usu kadumine sotsialismi kui alternatiivi.⁶³⁹ Vastavalt võiks postsotsialismi mõistet kasutada pigem mitmuslikuna ja keskenduda selle reaalse kogemise uurimiseks „tegelikult eksisteerivatele postsotsialismidele“.⁶⁴⁰ Oluliselt vähem probleemne ja sisemiselt ebasidus pole ka hilissotsialismi mõiste, mis puudutab väiksemat osa siinsest tööst – olenevalt kontekstist võib selles näha nii allakäiku kui õitsengut,⁶⁴¹ kohati haaratakse postsotsialismi analüüsidesse aga näiteid ja nähtusi, mis rangelt võttes kuuluvad hilissotsialismi.⁶⁴²

Nii soovib ka sinne töö panustada realselt eksisteeriva postsotsialismi uurimisse, hõlmates selle mõiste kogu ulatust dialoogis globaalse kontekstiga. Kuid et vältida üleminekuaja kontseptsioonis sisalduvat

631 Marek Tamm, *The Republic of Historians: Historians as Nationbuilders in Estonia (late 1980s–early 1990s)*. – *Rethinking History* 2016, Vol. 20, No. 2, lk 154–171.

632 Hasso Krull, *Katkestuste kultuur*. Tallinn: Vagabund, 1996.

633 Bojana Pejic, *The Dialectics of Normality*. – David Elliott, Bojana Pejic (toim), *After the Wall: Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1999, lk 17.

634 Madina Tlostanova, *What Does It Mean to be Post-Soviet? Decolonial Art from the Ruins of the Soviet Empire*. Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2018, lk 3–4.

635 *Ibid.*

636 Caroline Humphrey, *Does the Category 'Postsocialist'...*, lk 12–15.

637 Zsuzsa Gille, *Is There a Global Postsocialist Condition?*

638 Anthony Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming. Postsocialist Art Against Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass., London: The MIT Press, 2015, lk 8.

639 Chris Hann, *Postsocialism – Farewell to the Socialist 'Other'*. – Chris Hann (toim), *Postsocialism: Ideas, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*. London: Routledge, 2002, lk 6.

640 Alison Stenning, Kathrin Hörschelmann, *History, Geography and Difference...*

641 Vladimir Kulic, *Introduction*. – Vladimir Kulic (toim), *Second World Postmodernisms: Architecture and Society Under Late Socialism*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2019, lk 1–13.

642 Stephen J. Collier, *Post-Soviet Social. Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics*. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.

ühesuunalise ja normatiivse arenguvektori ideed ja mitte näha kunsti ülemineku teenistuses oleva vahendina, eelistan vahepealsuse ehk interreegnumi mõistet, mis võimaldab paremini tunnistada nende arengute iseväärtust. Selle varem eelkõige legaalses kontekstis kasutatud mõiste töi laiemasse ühiskondlikku ja kultuurisfääri Antonio Gramsci, mõistes selle all vahepealsuse olukorda, kus varasemad reeglid enam ei kehti, uued pole aga välja kujunenud.⁶⁴³ Zygmunt Bauman on laiendanud interreegnumi kogu viimasele paarikümnele aastale, kirjeldades seda kui globaalset ebakindluse kogukonda, mida mõjutavad kriitilisel moel jätkusuutlikkuse ja üleilmse migratsiooni probleemid.⁶⁴⁴ Siinse töö kontekstis hõlmab interreegnum küll nii juriidilisi, sotsiaalseid kui ka kultuurilisi protsesse, kuid kronoloogilises mõttes märksa kitsamalt.

RUUM JA AVALIKKUS

Nagu Henri Lefebvre on postuleerinud, loob iga ühiskond oma ruumi.⁶⁴⁵ Nii on ruumis ja ruumiga aset leidvad muutused ka ühed kõnekamad ühiskonna uurimisel. Ruum ei ole kindlasti aga üksnes füüsiline ja aineiline, vaid selle tootmine toimub märksa komplekssemalt, haarates nii ehitatud keskkonna kui ka ruumi kontseptualiseerimise – kuidas sellest räägitakse, seda esitatakse, mõõdetakse, reglementeeritakse – ja kogemise – kuidas ruumiga päriselus kohaneatakse, seda subjektiivsete tähenduste ja praktikatega omaks luuakse. See ruumiline trialektika toimib üheaegselt ja vastavalt peab seda ka uurima kui üheaegset, vastastikku sõltuvat protsessi. Nii ei pea uurimistöö fookuses olema mitte niivõrd ruum ise, kuivõrd selle tootmise mehhanismid, keerukad sotsiaalsed praktikad ja eelkõige neis sisalduv vastuolulisus ja olemuslikult poliitiline loomus.⁶⁴⁶ Samas hoiatab Lefebvre suhtumast sellesse ruumilisse triaadi kui abstraktsesse mudelisse, rõhutades, et uurida tuleb eelkõige konkreetseid avaldumismorme, ruumi tegelikku väljendumist ja selle poliitilist toimet.⁶⁴⁷ See on julgustanud mind Lefebvre'i teoreetilisi lähtekohti küllalt vabalt kasutama, pakkudes siinse uurimistöö tarbeks välja omad, konkreetsetest juhtumitest välja kasvanud kategooriad: ehitamata, utoopiline, diskursiivne, performatiivne ja institutsionaalne ruum. Doktoritöö eesmärgiks ongi näidata, kuidas vähesest ehitustegevusest hoolimata toimus vaadeldaval ajavahemikul erakordselt aktiivne uue ruumi loomine, mis väljendus efemeersemates valdkondades – linnavisioo-

643 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: The Electric Book Company, 1999, lk 556.

644 Zygmunt Bauman, *Times of Interregnum*. – *Ethics & Global Politics* 2012, Vol. 5, No. 1, lk 49–56.

645 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. Tlk Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Blackwell, 1991, lk 31.

646 Lukasz Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space. Architecture, Urban Research, and the Production of Theory*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, lk ix.

647 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, lk 40.

nides, ehitamata jäänud kavandites, restaureerimises, kunstiprojektides, meediadebattides, konverentsidel, näitustel ja *performance*'ites. Need esmapilgul eraldiseisvad juhtumid olid ometi seotud vastastikuse mõju võrgustikku, võimaldades üksikisiku ja ühiskonna uutlaadi suhet.

Doktoritöö eesmärgiks on selgitada, kuidas need projektid loovad avalikku ruumi ja avalikkust. Ühise ruumi loome on demokraatia oluline alustala:⁶⁴⁸ ruum määrab paljus selle, millised inimsuhted on võimalikud, milline on üksikisiku roll ühiskonnas. Ruumil on ka tugev transformatiivne potentsiaal, võime toetada uute identiteetide ja praktikate vormumist; vastavalt ka väga oluline roll avalikkuse konstrueerimisel, mida mõistetakse ühtaegu nii avaliku arutlusena ühiste eesmärkide ja hüvede üle kui ka sellesamas arutluses moodustuvat kollektiivset kehandit.⁶⁴⁹ Normatiivne avalikkuse definitsioon pärineb Jürgen Habermasilt, kes mõistis seda vabade üksikisikute ratsionaalse ja huvivaba, konsensusele orienteeritud ühiskondliku debatina.⁶⁵⁰ Hilisemad uurijad on näidanud Habermasi mudeli eksklusiivsust ning ühe ühtse ja sisemiselt sidusa poliitilise ruumi olemasolu eeldamise idealistlikkust, sillutades teed kaasaegsemale avalikkuse kontseptsioonile, mis võtab arvesse mitmuslikkuse ja samaaegsete paralleelsete kontraavalikkuste olemasolu.⁶⁵¹ Seeläbi nähakse nii avalikkust kui kogu demokraatiat pigem protsessina, mis hõlmab enese lakkamatut taas- ja ümbermõtestamise. Claude Lefort, Chantal Mouffe, Jean-Luc Nancy ja teised radikaalse demokraatia teoretikud on rõhutanud, et ühiskondlikkus ongi lakkamatu debati objekt, kus ükski positsioon ei ole teisest apriorselt legitiimsem.⁶⁵² Agonistliku demokraatia kontseptsioon aitab näha konsensuse kui sellise kunstlikkust, kus hegemoonia tasalülitab liiga tugevalt vastanduvad seisukohad.⁶⁵³ Avalikkus sisaldab paratamatult antagonismi ning just avalik ruum on see väli, kus võistlevad ja vastanduvad seisukohad avalduda saavad.⁶⁵⁴ Doktoritöös käsitletav interreegnumi periood vastab kõige paremini sellisele radikaalse demokraatia definitsioonile: just sel ajal toimus aktiivne ja antagonistlik avalikkuse konstrueerimine, millesse panustasid ka arhitektuuri- ja kunstiprojektid, pakkudes nägemusi võimalikest tulevikuarengutest, visualiseerides teistsuguse ruumi ja ühiskonna võimalikkust, pakkudes radikaalsete alternatiivide ajutise kogemise võimalust. Sellega seostub ka autori agentsuse küsimus:

648 See Marcel Henoff, Tracy B. Strong (toim), *Public Space and Democracy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

649 Jürgen Habermas, *Avalikkuse struktuuri-muutus*.

650 *Ibid.*

651 Nancy Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy*. – *Social Text* 1990, No. 25/26, lk 56–80.

652 Rosalyn Deutsche, *Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy*. – *Social Text* 1992, No. 33, lk 34–53.

653 Chantal Mouffe, *Democracy, Power and 'the Political'*. – *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso, 2000, lk 17–35.

654 Chantal Mouffe, *Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces*. – *Art & Research. A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* 2007, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Summer) <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html>, vaadatud 18. V 2020.

doktoritöö uurib arhitektide ja kunstnike tegutsemisvõimalusi muutuvates ühiskondlikes oludes – millised olid ühiskondlikesse võrgustikesse sekkumise võimalused? Vaatluse all on nii arhitektide professionaalsed kohanemisstrateegiad ja enesepildi muutumine kui ka kunstnike ühiskondliku kõlapinna saavutamise taktikad; viimase puhul olen toetunud Markus Miesseni „kutsumata osalise“ (*crossbench practitioner*) kontseptsioonile, mille tuumaks on isiklike huvide puudumine ja tugev eetilise hoiak.⁶⁵⁵ Miessen toetub eelkõige Chantal Mouffe'ile, kelle järgi on kunstnikul hädavajalik roll ühiskondlike antagonismide nähtavale toomisel.⁶⁵⁶ Ühtlasi õnnestub sedalaadi sekkumistega kohati luua subaltern-kontraavalikkust, kui kasutada Nancy Fraseri mõistet⁶⁵⁷ – ajutisi olukorraspetsiifilisi kogukondi, mis kujutavad endast demokraatiale nii vajalikke radikaalseid ja antagonistlikke üksusi. Jean-Luc Nancy mittetoimiva kogukonna⁶⁵⁸ ja Giorgio Agambeni tulevase kogukonna⁶⁵⁹ kontseptsioonid on aidanud mõtestada selliseid momente, kus kunst loob ajutisi, spontaanseid, mitteeksklusiivseid kogukondi, mille liikmelisus ei ole taandatav ühelegi tingimatule ühisomadusele või veendumusele ning millel puudub „kõrgem“ eesmärgistatus, mida saaks poliitiliselt angažeerida.

EHITAMATA RUUM: REALISEERIMATA ARHITEKTUURI- PROJEKTID JA LINNAVISIOONID

Konventsionaalses Eesti arhitektuuriajalookirjutuses laiutab 1980. aastate teisest poolest 1990. aastate keskpaigani justkui auk – tulenevalt poliitilis-majanduslikust olukorrast leiab sellest ajast väga vähe arvestatavat ehitustegevust. Ometi oli periood arhitektidele erakordselt aktiivne, kuid enamik tellitud projektidest ning arhitektuuri- ja planeerimiskonkursside võidutöödest jäi paberile: ainuüksi Tallinnast ja suurematest linnadest leiab mastaapsemaid ehitamata jäänud hoonete projekte üle saja.⁶⁶⁰ Projektide põhirõhk on uue avaliku ja poolavaliku ruumi loomisel. Uutes tüpoloogiates, ruumiprogrammides ja asukohtades peegelduvad suured muutused maaomandis, majandusmudelites ja üldistes väärtushinnan-

655 Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010, lk 191.

656 Nikolaus Hirsch, Markus Miessen (toim), *Critical Spatial Practice 2. The Space of Agonism*. Markus Miessen in Conversation with Chantal Mouffe. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012.

657 Nancy Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, lk 123.

658 Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*. Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

659 Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*. Minneapolis, Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

660 Hinnang põhineb Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseumis 2015. aastal toimunud näituse „Ehitamata. Visioonid uuest ühiskonnast, 1986–1994 / Unbuilt. Visions for a New Society, 1986–1994“ tarvis tehtud uurimistööil arhitektide ja arhitektuuribüroode arhiivides ning Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseumi, Eesti Rahva Muuseumi ja Riigiarhiivi fondides.

gutes, sealhulgas varem militaar- või tööstuskasutuse tõttu suletud piirkondade tagasisaamine, nõudlus uut tüüpi hoonete järele, nagu ärikeskused, pangad, meelelahutus- ja meediakeskused või kirikud, kuid ka akuutne vajadus tegeleda representatsiooni küsimusega ja arhitektuuri rolliga rahvusidentiteedi vormimisel. Omaette alajaotuse moodustavad arvukad välismaistele konkurssidele tehtud projektid, mis peegeldavad aktiivset soovi taassuhestuda rahvusvahelise arhitektuurieluga.

Ühe ajastuomase tendentsina torkab silma arhitektide taastärganud huvi linnaplaneerimise vastu, mis hilisnõukogude ajal oli bürokraatiseeritud ja jäik valdkond, ning esitatud planeeringuvisionide tugev imagoloogiline laetus. Sellest andsid märku 1989. aasta konkursid Mere pst kaubanduskeskuse (tänapäevase Rotermanni kvartali)⁶⁶¹ ja Süda-Tatari kultuurikeskuse lahenduste leidmiseks. Neist esimene otsustati poole konkursi pealt avada pretsedendina ka rahvusvahelistele osalistele Tallinna sõpruslinnadest Kotkast ja Kielist – laekus 8 Soome ja 10 Eesti tööd. Endise Rotermanni tööstuskvartali kohandamine linna olulisimaks kaubanduskeskuseks oli värske mõte, mis haakus rahvusvahelise tööstusalade ümbermõtestamise suunitlusega, eeskujuks Londoni dokid või arendused Ruhri piirkonnas Saksamaal. Emil Urbeli ja Ülo Peili ajaloolist ja kaasaegset arhitektuuri kombineeriv võidutöö taotles kvartali sujuvat ühendust ülejäänud linnaga, nähes selleks ette tõstetud käigutee Viru väljaku suunas ja Mere puistee sulgemise autoliiklusele, kuid julgeima ettepanekuna laiendas visiooni seni kinnise piiritsoonina toimiva Admiraliteedi basseini, kuhu oli paigutatud uus ooperiteater.⁶⁶² See oli ühtlasi kommentaar samaaegse Süda-Tatari konkursi probleemistikule, millega ooperiteatrile asukohta otsiti. Süda-Tatari konkursi võitnud Jüri Okase ja Marika Lööke töö pakkus alale veenva kesklinnaalse segahoonestuse ja pargi, lammutades enamiku kvartali puithoonestusest⁶⁶³ – otsus, mis pälvis muinsuskaitset ja kohalike pahameele, viies kohalike elanike küsitlusel põhineva Mall ja Tiit Tomiste alternatiivettepanekuni, mida võib pidada esimeseks kaasava planeerimise katseks Eestis.⁶⁶⁴ Kõige enam tähelepanu pälvis aga Andres Siimu ja Hanno Kreisi kolmanda koha töö, mis viis autoliikluse tunnelisse, rajades selle kohale efektse väliskaubandusesinduste riba koos 21-korruselise hotelli, kunstikeskuse, teatri, kontserdimaja ja täpsemalt määratlemata kommunikatsioonikeskusega.⁶⁶⁵ „Tallinna uue cityna“ pealkirjastatud

661 EAM 5.7.6. Tallinnas Mere puistee kaubanduskeskuse arhitektuurivõistluse tingimused, žürii protokollid, ekspertarvamused, seletuskirjad.

662 EAM 5.1.60. Tallinna Mere puistee kaubanduskeskuse hoonestamise konkurss. Võistlustöö „1154“, I preemia. Arhitektid Emil Urbel, Ülo Peil.

663 EAM 5.1.18. Tallinna Süda tänava kvartali planeerimise konkurss, võistlustöö „Süda“, I preemia. Arhitektid Jüri Okas, Marika Lööke.

664 Ell Väärtnõu, J. Tamm. Süda tänava kvartal. – Öhtuleht 19. VI 1991.

665 EAM 5.1.11. Tallinna Süda tänava kvartali planeerimise konkurss, võistlustöö „Azalp“, III preemia. Arhitektid Andres Siim, Hanno Kreis.

töö imagoloogiliseks eeskujuks olid ühemõtteliselt lääne kommertslikud suurlinnakeskused. Veelgi tugevamalt kandsid liberaalkapitalistlikku iseloomu 1991. aastal Milano arhitektuurinäituse jaoks valminud Tallinna kesklinna visioonid, kus integreeriti selleks hetkeks arendajatelt tulnud uusehituste plaanid arhitektide nägemusega Viru väljakust Maakri kvartalini ulatuvast alast. Eriti Okase ja Lõokese lahenduses omandas selles keskse koha kõrghoonestus kui ühiskondlikult liberaalse ja majanduslikult eduka tuleviku lubadus.⁶⁶⁶ Nagu iseloomulik ka teistele selle perioodi Ida-Euroopa riikidele,⁶⁶⁷ oli kujutisel ja visuaalsel imagoloogial keskne ja tugevalt laetud tähendus – seda kapitalismi esteetilise esitlemise fenomeni on käsitletud ka simulaakrumi mõiste kaudu.⁶⁶⁸ Ehitamata projektides väljendub see nii hoonestuse kõrguses, neokonstruktivistlikus esteetikas, hoone- ja ruumitüpoloogiates, projektiplanšettide graafilises disainis kui ka inglise keele kasutamises. Teisalt kanaliseerus küsimus arhitektuuri representatiivsusest ja sümboolse kuvandi loomise võimest märgilistesse rahvusidentiteediga seotud projektidesse, nagu Eesti paviljon Sevilla maailmanäitusel⁶⁶⁹ (1992), Eesti Rahva Muuseumi⁶⁷⁰ ja Eesti Kunstimuuseumi arhitektuurikonkursid⁶⁷¹ (1994) ning arvukad 1980. aastate teise poole religioosse buumi väljendusena sündinud kiriku- ja projektid. Nõukogude ametliku ateismiajastu järel kandsid viimased samuti tugevat rahvuslikku paatost, jagades vormilises mõttes aga edu-Eesti arhitektuuriks nimetatud⁶⁷² neofunktsionalismi nn kolmanda laine esteetikat.

Ettekujutus uue ühiskonna ruumist väljendub kõige läbitöötatumal moel ilmselt Jüri Okase ja Marika Lõokese Estari (Astlanda) ärihoone projektis, mille multifunktsionaalsus nii horisontaalsel kui vertikaalsel tasandil, urbanistlik tihedus, kaine konstruktivistlik vorm ja rafineeritud materjalide esteetika võtab kokku ootused kommertslik-avalikule ruumilisele keskkonnale.⁶⁷³ Astlanda planeerimise pikk saaga toob esile Eesti arhitektuurivälja keeruka suhte välismaise oskusteabega – ambitsioonika projekti rahvusvaheliste investorite osalustingimuseks oli lääne päritolu arhitekt,⁶⁷⁴ mistõttu telliti samale krundile uus (kuigi Okase ja Lõokese omast ilmselgelt inspireeritud) lahendus Kanada väliseesti arhitektilt Tõnu Altosaarelt. Eesti arhitektide suhtumine

666 EAM 5.1.74. Ärikeskus Tallinna citysse. Projekt 1991. a Milano näitusele „The Future of the Cities“. Arhitektid Jüri Okas, Marika Lõoke.

667 Vt nt Lukasz Stanek, Postmodernism is Almost All Right: Polish Architecture After Socialist Globalization. Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2012, lk 73.

668 Anders Härm, Tarmo Maiste (toim), Simulacrum City. La Biennale di Venezia, 7th International Architecture Exhibition. Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektide Liit, 2000.

669 EAM 5.4.1–5.4.4. 1992. aasta Sevilla maailmanäituse Eesti paviljoni konkursiprojektid.

670 EAM 5.4.18. Eesti Rahva Muuseumi uue hoone konkursitöö „Põhja konn“, I preemia (asendiplan, korruste plaanid, lõiked, vaated). Arhitektid Tanel Tuhala, Ra Luhse; ERM EJ 584. Eesti Rahva Muuseumi arhitektuurikonkursi projektid.

671 Eesti Kunstimuuseumi arhitektuurikonkurs. Maja 1994, nr 1 lisa; Jüri Okase arhiiv.

672 Mart Kalm, Valged kastid – edu-Eesti arhitektuur. – Maja 2003, nr 4, 28–31.

673 Arhitektibüroo J. Okas & M. Lõoke arhiiv.

674 Neeme Brus, Astlanda ärikeskus tuleb. – Äripäev 26. XI 1991.

sellesse ja mitmetesse teistesse lääne või väliseesti arhitektide projektidesse peegeldab ilmekalt üleminekuaja kahetist suhtumist: ühelt poolt juba hilisnõukogude pärandina kõige lääneliku fetišeerimine, teisalt ärritus ja üleolek, kui arendajad seadsid kohalike arhitektide kompetentsi muutunud oludes kahtluse alla.⁶⁷⁵ Otsides ise aktiivselt võimalusi varem raudse eesriide taha jäänud riikides õppida või praktiseerida⁶⁷⁶ ning pannes oma võimed proovile arvukatel rahvusvahelistel konkursidel,⁶⁷⁷ püsis Eesti arhitektide eneserefleksioon 1980. aastate Tallinna kooli edu toel jätkuvalt keskse narratiivina ettekujutus oma avangardisusest ja vormiuuenduslikkusest. Projekteerimise reaalsus tähendas aga suurte institutsioonide lagunemist, erabüroode asutamist alates 1989. aastast⁶⁷⁸ ja tellimuste drastilist langust 1990. aastate algul, eriti alates krooni kasutuselevõtust 1992. aastal. Kuigi oli ilmne, et varasem arhitekt-kunstniku positsioon ei ole enam pädev ning tarvis on pigem „postmodernistlikku projektimanageri“,⁶⁷⁹ hoidsid paljud arhitektid visalt kinni arhitekti kui unikaalse ruumilooja kuvandist⁶⁸⁰ ning kriitika ootas samuti arhitektidelt jätkuvalt kommertsile vastukaalu pakkuvat avangardsust.⁶⁸¹ Siiski oli ka positsioone, mis nägid selles ebaproduktiivset jäikust ja vajadust ületada ühe objekti kui kunstiteose keskne mõtlemine üldisemate linnaliste protsesside suunamise nimel.⁶⁸²

UTOOPILINE RUUM: TÖNIS VINDI NAISSAARE TULEVIKUVISIOON

Mõneti üllatavalt pärineb ajastu suurejoonelisim linnavisioon kunsti kontekstist: aastatel 1993–1996 arendas Tõnis Vint ideeprojekti, mille eesmärgiks oli seni Nõukogude sõjaväebaasina kasutatud Naissaarele uue rahvusvahelise äri-, kultuuri-, teadus- ja tehnoloogiakeskuse rajamine. Vindi senist kunstipraktikat edasiarendavas ja laiendavas projektis põimusid kontseptuaalne utopia ja reaalsed ühiskondlike muutuste taotlused.

675 Neeme Brus, Astlanda ärikeskus tuleb; Jüri Okas, Kommentaar artiklile Vilen Künnapu. Soositud või tõrjutud? – Luup, 14. X 1996.

676 Juba 1980. aastate lõpust läks Eesti arhitekthe ajutiselt või mõnel juhul ka jäädavalt tööle Soome (nt Kalle Vellevoog, Margit Mutso, Meeli Truu, Mai Šein, Tiivi Torim, Andres Põime, Oona Masso, Erki Valdre), Saksamaale (Andres Alver) ja USA-sse (Andres Alver, Raivo Puusepp); kasutati võimalust end koolitada (näiteks Urmas Muru Holbaekis, Pille Lausmäe Helsingis, Emil Urbel ja Hanno Kreis Šveitsis jt); rahvusvahelisi *workshop*'e korraldati ka kohapeal (esimesed Otepääl 1991 ja Pärnus 1992).

677 Vt täpsemalt Ingrid Ruudi, Ehitamata. Visioonid uuest ühiskonnast 1986–1994. Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 2015.

678 Esimestena asutasid oma arhitektuuribürood Toomas Rein; Jüri Okas ja Marika Lõoke; Ado Eigi; ning Emil Urbel ja Ülo Peil.

679 Krista Kodres, Vaikne hooaeg ja Tallinna II arhitektuuritriennaal.

680 Katrin Maack, Künnapu: Tallinn on kolgas. Padrik: Muinsuskaitse pidurdab. – Äripäev 17. V 1995.

681 Mart Kalm, Mis on saanud arhitektuurist? – Eesti Ekspress 21. V 1993.

682 Andres Alver, Tugevusest ja nõrkusest. – Maja 1994, nr 2, lk 72–73.

Püüdest sekkuda reaalsesse ellu andis märku teema esitluskanalite valik: kontseptuaalsete arhitektuurijoonistustega illustreerituna ilmusid tema vastavateemalised artiklid esmalt nädalalehes Eesti Ekspress (1993, ka 1995)⁶⁸³ ning seejärel ajakirjades Elu Pilt (1993)⁶⁸⁴ ja Ehituskunst (1995),⁶⁸⁵ teemat tutvustas ETV keskkonnasaade „Osoon“ (1994),⁶⁸⁶ samuti produtseeris rahvusringhääling ideeprojektile pühendatud erisaate „Tuleviku linn“ (1995).⁶⁸⁷ Alles 1996. aastal eksponeeriti projektiga seotud graafilist materjali omaette seeriana kunstikontekstis – Stuudio 22 näitusel „Tornid ja väravad“ Rahvusraamatukogus. Projekti tuumaks oli rajada Naissaarele ida ja lääne kultuuri-, äri- ja teadussuhtlust võimaldav rahvusvaheline keskus, mis koosneks kõrghoonestusega asundustest saare põhja- ja lõunatiipul, mida ühendaks tõstetud rööbastransport. Vindi idiosünkraatilisele mõtlemisele kohaselt lähtus projekt ühelt poolt esoteerilistest kaalutlustest – Tallinna geomantilisest analüüsist, millest järeldus uue võimalikult kõrge hoonestuse vajadus linna *feng shui* energetika parandamiseks – ja teisalt Hongkongi ja Macau vabakaubandustsoonide majandusmudelid. Projekti esimestes esitlustes keskendus Vint eelkõige tekstile, illustreerides artikleid sinimustvalgete lippudega täiendatud Jakov Tšernihovi „Kompositsiooniga nr 29“ (1929), mis rõhutas vene avangardiga sidumise kaudu esitatud ideede totaalsust ja vajaliku transformatsiooni radikaalsust. Seejärel lisandusid algupärased visuaalid, mis esitasid võimaliku hoonestuse madalamaid ja kõrgemaid variante – lähtudes osadele joonistustele integreeritud, klassikalisele Manhattani kõrghoonestusele viitava Empire State Buildingu mastaabist, varieerus see 400 meetrist kuni umbes 1200–1500 meetrini.⁶⁸⁸ Joonistused andsid tunnistust visuaalse imago- loogia olulisusest, kus pilvelõhkujate, nagu Empire State Building, läänelikud märgid toimisid kapitalismi esteetiliste tähistajatena.

Artiklites äri- ja kultuurikeskusest ning uuest majandusmudelidest rääkides on Vint viidanud inspiratsiooniallikana Sulo Muldia 1990. aastal avaldatud ettepanekule rajada Naissaarele vabakaubandustsoon, mis maksuparadiisina tõmbaks ligi rahvusvahelisi riskikapitaliste, kujundaks saarele elava äri- ja meelelahutuskeskuse ning annaks kiirenduse kogu Eesti majandusarengule.⁶⁸⁹ Vindi artiklites taastõstatatud idee kaalumiseks moodustas Vabariigi Valitsus 1994. aasta sügisel komisjoni, mis pidi hindama erimajandustsooni rajamise mõttekust ja kaaluma asukohtadena nii Naissaart kui ka uue

683 Tõnis Vint, Kas Naissaar suudaks päästa Eesti tipptheaduse ja kõrgkultuuri? – Eesti Ekspress 16. IV 1993; Tõnis Vint, Naissaar. Kaks teed tulevikku. – Eesti Ekspress 12. I 1995.

684 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar ja Tallinna geomantiline selgroog. – Elu Pilt 1993, nr 4, lk 22–24.

685 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar – tulevikuvision. – Ehituskunst 1995, nr 11, lk 4–10.

686 Osoon. Elu võimalikkusest Naissaarel. ETV 10.01.1994, <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/osoon-elu-voimalikkusest-naissaarel>

687 Tuleviku linn. Režissöör Mariina Mälk. ETV 1995.

688 Tõnis Vindi arhiiv.

689 Sulo Muldia, Pilvelõhkujad Naissaarel. Rikas Eesti kuus aastat hiljem. – Eesti Ekspress 19. I 1990.

tehissaare rajamist Tallinna lahte. Ekspertarvamuse tellis komisjon Suurbritannia ärimehelt David O'Grady Roche'ilt, kes soovitas uue jurisdiktsiooni rajamist Gibraltari või Iirimaal asuva maailma esimese vabakaubandustsooni Shannon Developmenti eeskujul.⁶⁹⁰ Uus haldusüksus nimega Livonia pidanuks O'Grady Roche'i nägemuses olema siiski eelkõige juriidilis-majanduslik skeem; Naissaarele suuremahulise taristu ja hoonestuse ehitamist pidas ta vähemalt esialgu ebatõenäoliseks. Vindi ja O'Grady Roche'i erinevad nägemused Naissaare vabakaubandustsooni olemusest peegeldavad kaasaegseid rahvusvahelisi majanduspoliitilisi arenguid. 1970. aastatel ÜRO poolt kolmanda maailma riikidele arengukiirendina soovitatud erimajandustsoonide hulk oli 1990. aastate alguseks mitmekordistunud, samal ajal oli tuntavalt muutunud tsoonide endi olemus.⁶⁹¹ Kui algselt tähendas tsoon eelkõige juriidilist erikorda toorainete või tööjõu maksuvabastuse näol, ametiühingute keelamist, leevendusi keskkonda puudutavates regulatsioonides, lihtsustatud tollimenetlusi või muud sarnast, suhtudes ruumilisse aspekti erakordselt utilitaarselt, siis just 1990. aastate alguseks oli tsooni mudel muutumas: järjest enam olid need arenemas iseseisvateks linnalisteks moodustisteks, moodustamas hübriidseid üksusi koostöös sadamate, teadus- ja infotehnoloogia linnakute, turismisihtkohtade või isegi ülikoolide või muuseumidega. Riiklikest seadustest kammitsemata tsoonid olid arenemas globaliseerunud kapitalismi sõlmpunktideks, mis lähtusid eelkõige riikideüleste korporatsioonide huvidest ja teostasid võrgustunuina omaenda poliitikat; nende tõhususse riikide arengu tõukejõuna suhtuti järjest kahtlevamalt.⁶⁹² Selles kontekstis, kui O'Grady Roche'i raportis kirjeldatud vabakaubandustsoon lähtus n-ö klassikalisest, peamiselt leevendatud regulatsioonides seisnevast tsoonimudelist, siis Vindi visioon korreleerus pigem uue, n-ö hübriidiseerunud tsoonimudeligas, kus äritegevusega on liitunud teadusarendus, turism ja kultuur ning sellest on saanud kindlate omadustega linnaline üksus.

Riigi tasandil loobuti Naissaare vabatsooni ideest seoses valitsuse vahetusega 1995. aasta kevadel. Vindi ideekavand kaasati aga saare detailplaneeringu protsessi, mille hulka kuulus Soome keskkonnaministeeriumi rahastatud pilootprojektina ka keskkonnamõju hindamine. Mitu aastat väldanud protsess üritas näidiskaasusena juurutada demokraatlikku planeerimispraktikat, sealhulgas kaasava planeerimise ideid, kaaludes eri huvigruppide ettepanekuid.⁶⁹³ Pealkirja all „Project East-West“ planeerimisdokumentidesse kaasatud Vindi visioonist

690 Plaan maksuvaba piirkonna asutamiseks Tallinnas. – Rahva Hääl 23. I 1995.

691 Thomas Farole, Gokhan Akinci, Introduction. – Thomas Farole, Gokhan Akinci (toim), Special Economic Zones. Progress, Emerging Challenges, and Future Directions. Washington: The World Bank, 2011, lk 1–21.

692 Keller Easterling, Extrastatecraft. The Power of Infrastructure Space. London: Verso, 2014.

693 ENTEC OÜ arhiiv, töö nr 59/95. Naissaar.

sai üks kolmest tulevikustsenaariumist keskkonnamõju hindamise dokumendis; planeeringusse oli haaratud ka Vindi õpilaste grupeeringu Etteaim mõneti edasiarendatud, teadusinnovatsioonikeskne nägemus. Lõplikus planeeringus on mõlemast loobutud, põhjenduseks infrastruktuursete küsimuste (saare varustamine elektri ja veevärgiga, transpordiühendus) ebaselgus, mida sedavõrd suur ettenähtud asukate arv (10 000 inimest) kaasa toonuks. Planeeringuprotsessi dokumentides tulevad esile kommunikatsiooniraskused demokraatlikku, ratsionaalsele konsensusele orienteeritud planeerimistava juurutada püüdvate osapoolte (eelkõige planeeringut vedanud ENTEC OÜ) ning utoopilist tulevikunägemust esitava avangardkunstniku vahel. Selles kontekstis ilmneb Vint antagonistliku agendina, kes püüab ülal hoida üleminekuperioodi radikaalset avatust ja esitada väljakutse kujunevale domineerivale avalikkusele.

Vindi Naissaare visiooni vaimsed allusioonid ja eesmärgid seavad tema positsiooni aga mõnevõrra keerukamasse valgusesse. Naissaare vabamajandustsoon ja uushoonestus olid Vindi jaoks vaid vahendid saavutamaks sinna rajatavate konstruktsioonide piisavat kõrgust, et need hakkaksid tööle kogu Tallinna ja Eestit mõjutava „linna akupunktuurina“, mis „kosmilist energiat“ akumulereides suudaks tasakaalustada nõukogude aja kultuurilist hävitustööd nii füüsilises keskkonnas kui ka inimeste vaimsuses.⁶⁹⁴ Vindi mitmesugustel ida praktikatel ja mõttesüsteemidel tuginevat maailmavaadet võib vaadelda uusvaimsuse ideoloogia kontekstis, mis oli 1960.–1970. aastatel üks olulisi kontra-kultuuri aluseid nii läänes kui ka Nõukogude Liidus.⁶⁹⁵ 1990. aastateks oli aga uusvaimsus teinud läbi sisemise muutuse, haakudes järjest enam kapitalistliku *yuppie*-mentaliteedi ning hedonistlike elustiilivalikutega.⁶⁹⁶ Eri orientaalset allikaid miksiv uusvaimsus rõhutas järjest enam äärmuslikku individualismi ja üksikisiku vastutust elu kõigis sfäärides, sobitades sujuvalt neoliberalismi ideoloogiaga. Uusvaimsuse kultiveeritav passiivse vaateleja hoiak takistab aga nägemast kiirete ühiskondlike muutustega kaasnevates probleemides kapitalismi dünaamikat ja laiemaid struktureid põhjuseid.⁶⁹⁷ Sedalaadi mentaalne häälestatus võimaldab üleni osaleda hiliskapitalismi tarbimisspektaaklis, uskudes samas omaenda sisemist distantseeritust ja sõltumatute kõrgemate eesmärkide teenimise võimalust. Just sellist hoiakut on võimalik

694 Tõnis Vint, Naissaar ja Tallinna geomantiline selgroog.

695 Vt nt Maria Popova, *Underground Hindu and Buddhist-inspired Religious Movements in Soviet Russia*. – *Usuteaduslik Ajakiri* 2013, nr 1, lk 99–115; Paul Heelas, *The New Age: Values and Modern Times*. – *Lieteke van Vucht* Tijssen, Jan Berting, Frank Lechner (toim), *The Search for Fundamentals. The Process of Modernisation and the Quest for Meaning*. Dordrecht: Springer, 1995, lk 143–171.

696 Hugh B. Urban, *The Cult of Ecstasy: Tantrism, the New Age, and the Spiritual Logic of Late Capitalism*. – *History of Religions* 2000, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Feb.), lk 268–304.

697 Peter Sloterdijk, *Eurotaoisumus. Zur Kritik der politischen Kinetik*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989; Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief*. London: Routledge, 2001, lk 12–15.

täheldada ka Vindi Naissaare projektis, mis esitab ekspluateerivat vabamajandustsooni ja reeglistamata meelelahutustööstust paradoksaalselt ühiskonna kõrgema spirituaalse transformatsiooni vahendina. Sellisel moel esituv uusvaimsus töötab kaasa ärkamisajale iseloomuliku kollektiivsusmentaliteedi asendumisele liberaalse individualismiga ning üleminekuaja avaliku sfääri avatuse järkjärgulisele konventsionaliseerumisele ja sulgumisele.

DISKURSIIVNE RUUM:
PÕHJA- JA BALTIMAASE
ARHITEKTUURITRIENNAALID
RAHVUSVAHELISES DIALOGIS

Interreegnumiaegse arhitektuuriloomingu tingimuste kiire muutumine nõudis erialalt ka ajakohast eneserefleksiooni, samuti oli vaja suhestuda niinimetatud vabast maailmast saabuvate uute ideede ja intellektuaalsete hoovustega. Ometi toimub võrreldes hilisnõukogude ajaga, mil avangardsemalt meelesstatud arhitektid otsisid aktiivselt eneseväljendusvõimalusi nii teksti- kui ka näituseproduktiooni kujul, 1980. aastate lõpul ja 1990. aastate algul sedalaadi väljundites märkimisväärne langus – ilmselt ei jätnud kiired muutused ning tellimuste ja konkursside suur hulk kirjalikuks eneserefleksiooniks kuigipalju aega.⁶⁹⁸ Nii saab arhitektuuridiskursuse muutumisest parima ettekujutuse pigem ajastu kõige ambitsioonikama arhitektuurielu ettevõtmise – Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaali – najal. Aastatel 1990–2005 iga kolme aasta järel aset leidnud triennaali eesmärgiks oli luua rahvusvaheline platvorm Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektide ideedevahetuseks ja koostööks. Siinses töös on vaatluse alla võetud kaks esimest triennaali aastatel 1990 ja 1993. Peatükis uuritakse nii post-sotsialistlike ja lääne arhitektide diskursiivsete positsioonide erinevusi, nende erinevaid ootusi ja eesmärke seoses sündmusel osalemisega, triennaali sotsiaalset ja poliitilist tähendust kummagi poole arhitektide jaoks, kui ka asjaolusid, mis tegid sellise mastaabiga rahvusvahelise ürituse korraldamise kiirelt muutuvast poliitilisest ja majanduslikust kontekstist üldse võimalikuks. Kahe esimese triennaali võrdluses tulevad esile ka kolme aastaga toimunud muutuste kiirus ning Balti- ja Põhjamaade arhitektide erinevad reaktsioonid arhitektuuriloomingu muutunud tingimustele ja arhitektile esitatavatele rolliootustele.

698 Triin Ojari, Sissejuhatuseks. – Triin Ojari (toim), Positsioonid. Lugemik uuest Eesti arhitektuurist. Tallinn: Solness, 2012, lk 8.

Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaal oli Eesti arhitektide algatatud koostööplatvorm, mis hõlmas Eesti, Läti ja Leedu ning Soome, Rootsi, Norra, Taani, Islandi ja Fääri saarte esindajaid. 1990. aasta septembris aset leidnud esimene triennaal seadis laias laastus paika ka kõigi järgnevate ülesehituse: kolmepäevane sümposium, kus esinesid kõigi osalevate riikide arhitektid ja paar kutsutud peakõnelejat; näitus, kus iga osalejariik kureeris oma väljapaneku iseseisvalt; rahvusvaheline tudengite *workshop* vahetult triennaali eel; ning lõpupidu ja arhitektuuriekskursioonid sündmuse järel. Igal triennaalil oli korralduskomitee määratud üldteema, millega väljapanekud ja esinejad otsesemalt või kaudsemalt haakusid. Triennaali idee pärines Irina Raualt, korraldamisega alustati 1988. aastal. Algusest peale oli eesmärgiks mitte piirduda olemasolevate idabloki koostöövõrgustikega, vaid võtta ambitsioonikalt sihikule nn päris-lääneriigid.⁶⁹⁹ Olles 1988. aastal mitteametlikult Rootsi väliseesti arhitektide kaudu pinda sondeerinud, saadeti esimesed ametlikud kutsed Soome ja Rootsi arhitektide liitudele.⁷⁰⁰ Sama aasta sügisel toimunud Põhjamaade arhitektide liitude nõupidamine andis positiivse tulemuse ning nende osaluse koordineerimise võttis enda peale Soome Arhitektide Liit (SAFA). Põhjamaade arhitektid olid pikalt tundnud puudust teoreetilisemast koostööplatvormist, mille vajadust oli 1980. aastate keskel rõhutanud näiteks Henning Larsen,⁷⁰¹ ning varasemate kümnendite Põhjamaade modernismi menu kuhtudes nähti selles head võimalust end rahvusvaheliselt taasaktualiseerida, peale selle ahvatles võimalus tutvuda seni raudse eesriide taha jäänud arhitektuurikultuuriga. Baltimaade arhitekthe motiveeris peamiselt nii lootus otsekontaktideks lääne kolleegidega kui ka võimalus end ühiselt tugevamalt kehtestada, mida kinnitas ka ühise Baltimaade esindatuse saavutamine Rahvusvahelises Arhitektide Liidus (UIA) juba enne Nõukogude Liidu lagunemist 1990. aastal.⁷⁰²

Esimese triennaali üldteemat „Metropolism ja provintsialism“ mõtestasid eri osalised küllalt erinevalt.⁷⁰³ Põhjamaade arhitektide jaoks oli keskne regiooni eripära säilitamine ning euroopalikkuse ja arhitektuurikultuuri globaliseerumisega seotud küsimused peatse Euroopa Liidu moodustamise eel. Baltimaade arhitektid suhtusid palju vaidlusi tekitanud provintsialismi mõistesse eneseirooniaga, manifesteerides nii ettekannetes kui näituseprojektides ürgse omaolemuse otsinguid pikaajaliste välismõjutuste kiuste. Eesti arhitektide veendunud ja edukas „müüdi loome“ jätkas Tallinna kooli senist

699 Vestlus Irina Rauaga, 1. XII 2017.

700 Soome Arhitektide Liidu arhiiv Soome ametiühingute arhiivis (Toimihenkilöarkisto). Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaali dokumendid.

701 Vestlus Juhani Pallasmaaga, 6.03.2018.

702 Vt lisa Eduard Tüür, Nigeerlane eestlastele kohtunikuks? – Öhtuleht 18. VI 1990; Arhitektide Liidus. – Reede 30. XI 1990; Arhitektide Liidus. – Sirp 26. IV 1991.

703 Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial Tallinn Sept. 24–26, 1990. Catalogue. Published by the NBAT II Committee, s.l., pagineerimata.

retoorikat, rõhutades ettekannetes oma erilist seisundit Nõukogude Liidu kontekstis ning kombineerides näituseprojektides traditsioonilisi viiteid kaasaja tehniksismiga, kasutades triennaali eelkõige rahvusliku narratiivi konstrueerimiseks. Joonistuvad välja erinevad ootused: tugeva varasema kontseptuaalse praktikaga Tallinna kooli arhitektid ja nendest mõjutatuna ka teised Eesti osalised keskenduvad eelkõige näitusele kui kontseptuaalsete projektide ning arhitektuuri vaba eneseväljenduse areenile; mõneti haakuvad sellise üldistava ja kunstilise lähenemisega ka soomlased. Põhjamaade, eriti Rootsi ja Taani arhitektid esitlevad aga heaoluriigi tugevat ehituskultuuri ja arhitektuuri sotsiaalseid aspekte käsitlevaid projekte, oodates sündmuselt suuremat probleemikesksust ja vähem suurejoonelisi žeste.

Lahknevad ootused, aga veelgi enam korralduslikud erimeelsused ja arvestatust oluliselt suuremad rahalised raskused tekitavad olukorra, kus loobutakse algsest rändnäituse ideest ja kavast korraldada iga järgnev triennaal eri asukohas.⁷⁰⁴ Majandussurutise tingimustes soovivad soomlased järgmise triennaali edasi lükata. Eestlaste jaoks on aga aset leidnud triennaal, kus ühiskonnas järjest süvenevate iseseisvusmeeleolude kontekstis toimub võrdne rahvusvaheline kolleegisuhtlus, märkimisväärne eduelamus, ning otsustatakse jätkata ka järgmise triennaali ettevalmistamisega Tallinnas. 1993. aasta triennaal üldteemaga „Arhitektuur ja individuaalsus“ jätkab teoreetilise positsiooni mõttes eelmisel korral pooleli jäänut ja ka rahvusvaheline esindatus ei jää esimesele korrale alla, ometi näivad eri osapoolte erisused veelgi süvenevat.⁷⁰⁵ Eesti arhitektid keskenduvad taas valdavalt arhitektuuri sümboolsetele omadustele ja representatsiooni küsimustele, samal ajal kui lääne esinejate temadeks on kaasav planeerimine elamuehituses ja arhitektuuri ökoloogilised aspektid. On ilmne, et Tallinna kooli postmodernistidele ei ole järele tulemas teoreetilises plaanis samavõrd tugevat nooremast põlvkonda; ühtlasi peegeldab triennaal ja selle edendatavat diskursust toetav, 1991. aastast taas ilmuv ajakiri Ehituskunst arhitektkonna püüdu säilitada arhitekti kui sõltumatu looja kuvand ja positsioon. Mida raskemini hallatavaks muutub üleminek kapitalismile ja mida väiksemaks muutub arhitektide võime toimuvaid ruumilisi protsesse suunata, seda kõvemini kostavad üleskutsed säilitada arhitektuuri igavesi ja vaimseid väärtusi. Siiski ei paku taandumine arhitektuuri idealistlikku sfääri reaalspoliitikale produktiivset vastukaalu, pigem toetab see tegelikult heterogeenseid võimuvõrgustikke.⁷⁰⁶ Rahulolematust Eesti arhitektide

704 Soome Arhitektide Liidu arhiiv.

705 Teine Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaal. 10.–12. september 1993, Sakala kultuurikeskus Tallinn. Arhitektuur ja individuaalsus. The Second Nordic-Baltic Architectural Triennial. September 10–12, 1993,

Cultural centre Sakala, Tallinn. Architecture and Individuality.

706 Reinhold Martin, Utopia's Ghost. Architecture and Postmodernism, Again. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, lk 9.

vähese enesekehtestamisega väljendub veelgi intensiivsemalt kolmanda triennaali arvustustes, kus süüdistatakse juba otsesõnu triennaaliga kaasnenud avalikkusesse sekkumise võimaluste kasutamata jätmises.⁷⁰⁷ Teatavast „tõlkes kaduma läinud“ dialoogist hoolimata oli Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaali asutamine ja korraldamine siiski oluline verstapost Eesti interreegnumi aja arhitektuurikultuuris, mis pakkus hädavajalikku eneserefleksiooni, mitmekesistas märkimisväärselt kohalikku arhitektuuridiskursust ning lõi hulga erialaseid kontakte, mis päädisid mitmete arhitektide jaoks ka reaalsete töödega mujal, eelkõige Soomes.

PERFORMATIIVNE RUUM:
RÜHM T ARHITEKTUUR
JA PERFORMANCE'ID

Ajastu arhitektuuripildis eristub üks rühmitus, mis otsib aktiivselt vastukaalu üldisele optimistlikule meelsusele, asudes positsioonile, mis on kriitiline nii hilisõukogude stagneerunud ühiskonna kui sellele vastanduvate rahvusromantiliste tendentside ja esimese iseseisvusaja nostalgia suhtes. Kui seni on arhitektide Raoul Kurvitza ja Urmas Muru poolt 1986. aastal asutatud interdistsiplinaarset kooslust Rühm T käsitletud ainult kujutava kunsti ja *performance*'i kontekstis, siis siinses peatükis analüüsitakse nende tegevust arhitektuurist lähtudes, vaadeldes Kurvitza, Muru ja Peeter Pere arhitektuuriprojekte, arhitekturseid joonistusi ja *performance*'eid ruumilisest vaatepunktist. Sel moel osutub Rühm T tegevuse taotluseks olevat astuda vastu arhitektuurile kui olemuslikult ühiskondlikule ja distsiplineerivale nähtusele, tühistada arhitektuuri konstruktiivne põhiolemus ning leida *performance*'ites tekkiva ajutise jagatud ruumi kaudu alternatiivse kogukondlikkuse võimalusi.

Kurvitz (tollal Kurvits) ja Muru sisenesid Eesti arhitektuuriellu 1985. aastal, võites Tallinna Moemaja arhitektuurikonkursi võistlustööga „Rühm T“.⁷⁰⁸ See keeruka ruumiprogrammiga hoone, mis sisaldas kergetööstuse ministeeriumi kontoreid, rõivakauplusi, ajakirja Siluett toimetuse ruume, moedemonstratsioonide saali, kohvik-sööklad kui ka rõivaste tootmisruume, oli kaalukast kesklinnalisest asukohast hoolimata ette nähtud ehitada tüüpdetailidest.⁷⁰⁹ Kurvitza ja Muru projekt oli postmodernistlikult mänguline, käsitledes mitmeid kujund-

707 Krista Kodres, *Meie arhitektuuri tänapäev on meie enda nägu*. – Kultuurimaa 25. IX 1996.

708 Tallinna Moemaja arhitektuurivõistlus. Aet Pikk (koost). *Arhitektuurikroonika '85*. Tallinn: Valgus 1987, lk 146–147.

709 ENSV Kergetööstuse Ministeeriumi Teaduslik-Tehnilise Keskuse ja Tallinna Moemaja arhitektuurikonkurs. Võistlustingimused ja žürii protokollid. Eesti Riigiarhiiv ERA.R-1951.1.541.

likke viiteid kui tühje tähistajaid. Pikast projekteerimisprotsessist hoolimata hoone ehitusse ei läinud, nagu juhtus ka enamiku teiste kolmiku Eesti Tööstusprojekti valminud arhitektuuriprojektidega. Viimase nõukogude kümnendi võõrandunud projekteerimispraktika tingimustes pühendusid Kurvitz, Muru ja Pere järjest enam projektide graafilistele väljendusvahenditele kui asjale iseeneses. Kurvitz projektigraafika ja konkursitööde pastellid ning Pere jõulised, sageli guaššidega ajalehtedele vormistatud hoonete visualiseeringud on tugevalt ekspressionistlikud, samas kui Muru peen mustvalge projektigraafika viitab otseselt Vene konstruktivistidele. Asjaolu, et need visuaalid on projektide asemel esitatud ka muidu vaid kainet projektiinformatsiooni avaldavas „Arhitektuurikroonikas“,⁷¹⁰ annab tunnistust nii kontseptuaalse arhitektuurijoonistuse väärtustamisest kui vastuhakust praktilise arhitektuurimaailma reeglistikele ja arhitektuuri distsiplinaarsusele laiemalt. Joonistuste visionaarset kvaliteeti ja kaalukat rolli ajal, mil konventsionaalne arhitektuurilooming ei suuda ühiskondlikele väljakutsetele vastata, rõhutas Muru ka kahes arhitektuurset graafikat kui omaette väljendusvahendit käsitlevas artiklis.⁷¹¹ Ainsaks Rühm T arhitektuurigraafika tõlgenduseks on senini jäänud rühmituse mitteametliku ideoloogi Hasso Krulli idiosünkraatiline käsitlus, kus ta vaatleb joonistamist nihilistliku praktikana, mis tõukab arhitektuuri ebastabiilsusse, kus fikseeritud positsioonide lagunedes kaotavad mõtte positiivse/negatiivse, kultuuri/looduse või elu/surma vastandused ning eri tõlgendused on üheaegselt võimalikud.⁷¹² Selles protsessis hävitatakse nii objekt, selle tähendus kui ka subjekt.⁷¹³ Kurvitz, Muru ja Pere samaaegsetes konkursiprojektides kajastub paralleelselt järjest enam destruktivne suhtumine arhitektuuri kui ruumi struktureerijasse, alates loetamatuseni segaselt vormistatud töödest⁷¹⁴ kuni maketi esitlemiseni sogase veega täidetud akvaariumis,⁷¹⁵ viidates ühtaegu nii dekadentlikule hävingu nautimisele kui ka vastuhakule arhitektuurile kui sümboolse tähenduse kandjale.

Rühm T tuumliikmete arhitektitaust muutis nad tavapärasest tähelepanelikumaks kunstiteose ja ruumi vastastikmõju suhtes ka *performance*'i praktikas, millega nad olid paralleelselt tegelenud rühmituse loomise algusest peale. Lähtudes Georges Bataille' kontseptsioonist arhitektuurist kui ühiskonna superegost, mis

710 Nt Kreenholmi hokihall Narvas. – Arhitektuurikroonika '89. Tallinn: Ehituse teadusliku uurimise instituut, 1992, lk 128–129; Ropka tsentraalkatlamaja laiendus Tartus. – Arhitektuurikroonika '88. Tallinn: Ehituse teadusliku uurimise instituut, 1991, lk 130–131; Lõuna kõrgepingevõrkude dispetšerpunkt Tartus. – Arhitektuurikroonika '88. Tallinn: Ehituse teadusliku uurimise instituut, 1991, lk 131–132; ENSV statistikalitsuse info-arvutuskeskus Pärnus. Arhitektuurikroonika '88. Tallinn: Ehituse teadusliku uurimise instituut, 1991, lk 133.

711 Urmas Muru, Arhitektuurised nägemused. – Noorus 1988, nr 9, lk 32–33; Urmas Muru, Mälestused tunnetest. – Kunst 1989, nr 2, lk 22–23.

712 Hasso Krull, Urmas Muru: Majad ja varemed. 713 Hasso Krull, Androgütünsed varemed, tekst, *ibid*.

714 EAM_4883 Ar 5.7.6. Tallinnas Mere puistee kaubanduskeskuse arhitektuurivõistluse tingimused, žürii protokollid, ekspertarvamused, seletuskirjad.

715 Metropolisism ja provintsialism. – Eesti Elu 1990, nr 7, lk C6–C7.

tuleb lammutada,⁷¹⁶ suunasid nad destruktiivse energia ka ruumide vastu. Nii rühma varaste näituste avamisi saatnud *performance*'eid (Adamson-Ericu muuseumis 1986, Tammsaare muuseumis 1987, Lauluväljaku hoones 1988) kui juba valdavalt tegevuskunstile pühendatud sündmusi „A Guide to Intronomadism“ (1991) ja „Eleonora“ (1993) Kunstihoones võib käsitleda kui ajutist teistsuguste ruumiliste reeglitega olukorra kehtestamist; neis kõigis väljendus ka agressioon arhitektuurse ruumi terviklikkuse suhtes. Erinevalt tavapärasest näitusepraktikast mõtestasid *performance*'id oma asukoha ümber sündmusruumina, kus toimuv on lakkamatult muutuv, aktualiseerides ajalise ning mõtestades ümber nii osaliste kui ka vaatajate rolli. Kui Rühm T *performance*'ite rituaalsust on tihti tõlgendatud etendaja kui pseudošamaani seisukohast,⁷¹⁷ siis riituse mitte vähem tähtis aspekt on osaliste kogukonna loomine. Kunstikogemus, mis koosneb kahe nädala jooksul toimuvate sündmuste jadast, tekitab spetsiifilise ajatunnetuse, teravdatud taju ühisest hetkes olemisest, luues sedakaudu ajutist kogukonda. Kuigi Rühm T eesmärgiks pole kunagi olnud etendajate ja pealtvaatajate vaheliste piiride kaotamine, tekitas sündmuse kestvuslik iseloom igal õhtul osaleda viitsinud publiku hulgas teatava ühtekuuluvustunde. Tavapärase kunstipublik ei olnud sellise intensiivsusega harjunud, küll aga leidis ürituse tänulikult üles teistlaadi publik – Vabaduse väljaku punkarid või *queer* 'id, kel linnas nn oma ruum üldse puudus.⁷¹⁸

Selles suhtes oli ilmekaim näide Tarvo Hanno Varrese *performance* „Acid House Dancing Party“, mis, nagu nimigi ütles, oli olemuselt *house*'ipidu. Hämmeldunud tavapubliku asemel võtsid Kunstihoone peagi üle uue klubimuusika huvilised. Tuleb märkida, et 1991. aasta algul ei saa Tallinnas veel mingist klubimuusikaskeenest rääkida, esimese ametliku peoni läks veel pool aastat aega,⁷¹⁹ nii et „Acid House Dancing Party“ mõjus ilmselt sama eksperimentaalselt kui rühma ülejäänud *performance*'id. Kuid tehnokultuuril oli oluline koht Rühm T loomingus ka laiemalt. Nii tutvustati Raoul Kurvitza saatesarja „Elustiilid“ teises, tehnokultuurile pühendatud saates Rühm T 1988. aastast pärinevat „Tehnodeelilise ekspressionismi manifesti“ ning seati nende varasemad projektid tehno konteksti.⁷²⁰

Kui algusaegadel oli Rühm T seotud pungiskeenega, mida on eelkõige käsitletud 1980. aastate vastupanu-subkultuurina,⁷²¹ siis liikumine tehno suunas tähistas nihet rühmituse enesemääratluses ja -kehtestamises. Pungi pretensioonika eituse asemel valitseb tehnomen-

716 Dennis Hollier, *Against Architecture. The Writings of Georges Bataille*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995.

717 Nt Hanno Soans, Peegel ja piits.

718 Vestlus Urmas Muruga, 18. X 2017.

719 Airi-Alina Allaste, *Klubikultuur Eestis. – Ülbed ühelsakümmendad. Probleemid, teemad ja tähendused 1990. aastate Eesti kunstis*. Tallinn:

Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2001, lk 69.

720 Elustiilid. Tehno. ETV 1993. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/samast-seeriast/elustiilid-techno/default/1>, vaadatud 31.03.2018.

721 Pirjo Turk, *Eesti punk. Müütsast presidendini. – Airi-Alina Allaste (toim), Subkultuurid. Elustiilide uurimused*. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2013, lk 79–118.

taliteedis teadlik selge sõnumi ja ideoloogilise positsiooni puudumine. Tehnot on kirjeldatud kui „olevikulisuse laboratooriumi“⁷²² – see loob pseudorituaalse ühtsustunde, mis eksisteerib ainult käesolevas hetkes, tantsivate kehade kohalolus, keda väljaspool sündmust ei seo ükski ühisnimetaja. Tehnosündmuse „kollektiivses elevuses“ sündiva ühtsustunde keskmes on tühimik, mitte mingi tähenduslik tuum. Selles valguses võib kogu Rühm T *performance*’ite kaht nädalat vaadelda kui kestvat pidu, mille käigus sündiv ajutine kehade kogukond jagab „kollektiivse elevuse“ kaudu justnimelt sellist teravdatud olevikutunnet. Jean-Luc Nancy on küsinud selles peituva poliitilise potentsiaali järele – kas see võiks kujutada endast kogukondlikkust, mis ei eelda mingisuguste ühisnimetajate olemasolu?⁷²³ Kui ühiskondlik meelsus oli 1991. aasta algul ühemõtteliselt suunatud ajaloolisel järjepidevusel põhineva Eesti Vabariigi taastamisele ja kogukondlikkust määratleti sellega seoses erakordselt kitsalt, eelkõige rahvuspõhiselt, siis Rühm T ajutine aegruum tõstas küsimuse, kas kogukondlikkus saaks seista ka mingitel teistel – komplekssematel, hägusamatel ja ajutisematel – alustel.

INSTITUTIONAALNE RUUM: TALLINNA KUNSTIHOONE JA GEORGE STEINMANNI „RUUMI NAASMINE“

Tallinna Kunstihoone renoveerimine Šveitsi kunstniku George Steinmanni protsessuaalse kunstiprojektina „Ruumi naasmine“ oli interreegnumi perioodi mastaapsemad teoseid, mis hõlmas nii arhitektuuri suuremahulist restaureerimist kui ka rahvusvahelise ühiskondliku, majandusliku ja poliitilise võrgustiku loomist. Peatükis analüüsitakse, kuidas see kohaspetsiifiline teos arhitektuurse ja institutsionaalse ruumi ümber mõtestas ning millise avalikkuse loomist toetasid kunstniku esteetilised ja eetilised valikud, mis asetisid paratamatult ajastu tugeva pärandihuvi ja restitutsioonilise mentaliteedi konteksti.

Saksa Kunsthalle mudelil põhinev Kunstihoone valmis Anton Soansi ja Edgar Johan Kuusiku projekti alusel 1934. aastal.⁷²⁴ Asukoht peaväljaku ääres ja moodne funktsionalistlik esteetika osutasid nii kunsti olulisusele ühiskonnas kui ka eksponeeritud kunsti edumeelsetele taotlustele. Ka nõukogude aja jooksul jätkas Kunstihoone

722 Michel Gaillot, *Multiple meaning. Techno: An Artistic and Political laboratory of the present*. Paris: Editions Dis Voir, s.a.

723 Interview with Jean-Luc Nancy. – Michel Gaillot, *Multiple Meaning. Techno: An Artistic and Political laboratory of the present*, lk 87.

724 Hoone ehitusloost ja arhitektuurist põhjalikumalt vt Karin Hallas-Murula, *Tallinna Kunstihoone 1934–1940. Ehitamine ja arhitektuur*. / *Tallinn Art Hall 1934–1940. Construction and Architecture*. Tallinn: SA Tallinna Kunstihoone Fond, 2014.

linna peamise uue kunsti eksponeerimispinnana, kuid rahanappuse ja hooldamatuse tagajärjel tervitasid 1980. aastate lõpu küllastajaid algse puhtuse esteetika asemel kulunud põrandad, logisevad aknaraamid, mittetoimivad WC-d ja elektriprobleemid.

1992. aasta septembris Tallinna külasthanud Steinmann vaimustus Kunstihoone ruumidest ja pakkus välja idee ruumi renoveerimisest protsessuaalse skulptuurina. Projektile lisatud kunstnikukreeros „Tulevikku suunatud eetilise süsteemi võimalus“ kirjeldab Steinmann seda osana kõikehõlmavast eetilisest hoiakust, mille keskmes on globaalsetest kaalutlustest lähtuv jätkusuutlikkus ja kogukondlikkuse väärtustamine kunstniku individualistlike eesmärkide asemel.⁷²⁵ Steinmann näeb oma rolli katalüsaatorina, kes lükkab käima laiemat muutust esile kutsuvaid protsesse. 1990. aastate algul polnud keskkondlikest kaalutlustest lähtuv kunst peavoolus kuigi levinud. Veel vähem haakus see kunsti arengutega Eestis, kus keskkonnakaitsel oli olnud taasiseseisvumisvõitluses küll oluline roll, kuid millegi uue loomisest hoidumine kui globaalset ületootmist kritiseeriv positsioon ei jõudnud postsotsialistlikus tarbimisihaluses siiski kuigivõrd kohale. Samas oli arhitektuuripärandi restaureerimine aspekt, mis haakus ühiskondlike arengutega seda tugevamalt. Kui Tallinna kooli arhitektid olid hakanud funktsionalismi väärtustama juba 1970-ndatel, siis taasiseseisvumise käigus muutus sõjaeelse pärandi sümboolne väärtus veelgi tugevamaks. Oli ju vabariik taastatud ühemõtteliselt sõjaeelse riigi õigusjärglasena ning kõigi 1990. aastate poliitiliste sammude eesmärgiks soov naasta sõjaeelsete seaduste, traditsioonide ja institutsioonide juurde sedavõrd valdav, et teenis ära nimetuse „ajaloolaste vabariik“.⁷²⁶ Kuivõrd ajalugu kasutati legitimatsioonivahendina kõigis ühiskonna sfäärides, muutus ka Kunstihoone restaureerimine sotsiaalseks kapitaliks, mis suurendas märkimisväärselt selle institutsiooni avalikku nähtavust, reputatsiooni ja väärtust.

1992. aastal oli eelkõige puudus finantskapitalist, mille kogumisele Steinmann kohe pühendus. Ta panustas oma lootused Šveitsi valitsuse sama aasta jaanuaris vastuvõetud otsusele osutada endistele idabloki riikidele tagastamatut finantsabi, mille alusel sõlmitigi detsembris Eesti ja Šveitsi vahel koostöökokkulepe. Eesmärgiks oli toetada Eesti üleminekut turumajandusele ning tagastamatu abi sihtotstarbeks olid sotsiaal-, tervishoiu-, keskkonnakaits- ja taristuprojektid ning tegevused, mis toetaksid majanduse erasektori väljakujunemist. Mõistagi ei olnud Kunstihoone renoveerimine ükski nimetatutest.

725 George Steinmanni arhiiv Berni kunstmuuseumis.

726 Marek Tamm, *The Republic of Historians. Historians as Nation Builders in Estonia (late 1980s–early 1990s)*.

Läbirääkimised ja lobitöö viisid siiski Kunstihoone kuulutamiseni riiklikuks prioriteediks ja 1994. aastal sai ehitus alata.⁷²⁷ Restaureeriti peasaali klaaslagi, kõik puitaknad, siseuksed, seinad, laed, garderoobi-mööbel, trepid ja pink; Soomest telliti uus fassaadiaken; paigaldati uus tammeparkett, linoleum- ja plaatpõrandad ning sanitaartehnika.⁷²⁸ 15. veebruaril 1995 avati „Ruumi naasmine“ kui tühja ruumi installatsioon ilmselt seni kõige kõrgetasemelisemas rahvusvahelises seltskonnas.

George Steinmanni tegevus läbirääkimistel Eesti ja Šveitsi valitsuste ja kunstnike organisatsioonidega, Tallinna ja Berni linnavalitsustega, saatkondadega Eestis ja Soomes, eraisikute ja teistega ületas kahtlemata tavapärase kunstiprojekti raamid. Pigem võib teda mõista agendina, keda Markus Miessen on nimetanud sõltumatuks praktikuks (*crossbench practitioner*) ehk kutsumata sekkujaks.⁷²⁹ See on keegi, kes sekkub ühiskondlikesse ja poliitilistesse protsessidesse valmis poliitilise mandaadiga, autonoomselt ja südametunnistusest lähtuvalt. 1990. aastate alguse Eesti ühiskondlik-poliitiline maastik oli veel reglementeerimata ning soosis sedasorti kutsumata sekkuja tegutsemist tavapärasest enam. Oma rolli mängis Šveitsi otsedemokraatia traditsioon, kus valitsus oli valmis astuma sellise mastaabiga lepingulistesse suhetesse Steinmanni kui eraisikuga – kunstnik oli institutsiooniseeneses. „Ruumi naasmine“ projekti käigus sündis uut laadi avaliku osalemise pretsedent, mis laiendas kõigi osapoolte seniseid tegutsemispiire ja pani aluse edasistele arengutele. Sellegipoolest rõhutati ülevaadetes peamiselt projekti esteetilist külge ja renoveerimistööde praktilist väärtust, jättes tähelepanuta kunstniku ökoloogilise agenda ja teose kui pikaajalise osaluspraktika näite.⁷³⁰ „Ruumi naasmine“ võttis kaasava demokraatliku ühiskonna ülesehitamist toetava aktiivse rolli ning suutis tänu üleminekuperioodi avatusele veel mitte jäigastunud institutsionaalse raamistiku oma kasuks tööle panna. Kolme aasta jooksul aset leidnud projekt tekitas seni puudunud ühendusi kunsti, poliitika ja rahandussfäärade vahele, laiendades kõigi osaliste toimimisevälja. Samas taaselustati ruumide restaureerimisega aga ka teatavad käitumiskonventsioonid ja valge kuubiga kaasnevad sotsiaalsed normid ning nii toetas projekt – nii praktilistel kui ka ideoloogilistel põhjustel – kunsti, ruumi ja publiku pigem konventsionaalsemat suhet ning ettekujutust kunstist kui eelkõige esteetilisest sfäärist.

727 George Steinmanni arhiiv Berni kunstimuuseumis.

728 Aruanne Tallinna Kunstihoone restaureerimis- ja rekonstrueerimistöödest 1994–1995. Koostanud arhitektuuriajaloolane Liivi Künnapu. Tallinn, 1995. Tallinna linnaplaneerimisameti arhiiv.

729 Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation. Crossbench Praxis as A Mode of Criticality*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011.

730 Nt Kunstihoone õnnelik saatus. – Rahva Hääli 16. II 1995; Meelis Kapstas, *Remont kui kunsteos*. – Päevaleht 16. II 1995; Sisu: 12. Ruumi naasmine. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/sisu-12>, vaadatud 31. III 2018.

JÄRELDUSED

Doktoritöö eesmärgiks oli vaadelda uue ruumilise režiimi kehtestumist interreegnumi ajal kui spetsiifilisel ja iseväärtusega perioodil, kus hilisnõukogude ajast päritud praktikad põimusid uue ühiskonna nõudmiste ning läänest imporditud ja kohandatud hoiakutega. Mõistmaks nende protsesside mitmetahulisust ning arhitektuuris ja kunstis avalduvate ruumiliste transformatsioonide kompleksust ja vastastikust seotust ühiskonnaga, käsitles töö juhtumiuuringuid arhitektuuriprojektidest ja planeerimisvisioonidest teoreetilise diskursuse, näitusepraktika, kunstiprojektide ja restaureerimiseni. Analüüsides neid pealtnäha eraldiseisvaid juhtumeid ja projekte keeruka ühiskondlik-ruumilise võrgustiku osana, ilmneb hulk ühiseid tendentse ja suundumusi, mis on tugevalt mõjutanud Eesti ruumikultuuri arengut kuni tänapäevani.

Nagu ilmn esimeses peatükis, iseloomustas arhitekthe tugev taasleitud huvi linnaplaneerimise ja linnaliste protsesside suunamise vastu, samal ajal kujutleti uut avalikku ruumi eelkõige imagoloogilistest kaalutustest lähtuvalt ning pandi suurt rõhku projektide representatiivsetele ja sümboolsetele aspektidele. Uus avalik ruum oli olemuselt liberaalkapitalistlik ja ajastu uute tüpoloogiate hulgas domineerivad mitmesugused kommertsruumid; samas tegeletakse aktiivselt ka rahvusidentiteeti kandvate sümbolprojektidega, nagu kirikud, muuseumid ja Sevilla maailmanäituse rahvuspaviljon. Planeerimise ja projekteerimisega samaaegselt töötatakse välja uusi reeglilikke, mis modelleeritakse küll rahvusvaheliste eeskujude najal, kuid mille rakendamisprotsessid on interreegnumi ajal veel erakordselt avatud, nagu näitab teises peatükis käsitletud Naissaare juhtum. Samal ajal ei tähendanud demokraatlike planeerimisprotsesside juurutamine loobumist varasemast professionaalsusekesksest hoiakust ning kaasava planeerimise katseid peeti pigem anakronismiks.

Arhitektuuri- ja linnaplaneerimisprojektid, mis löid uusi tüpoloogiad ja kujundasid arusaama avaliku ruumi asustamise võimalustest, panustasid suuresti ka avaliku sfääri kujunemisse. Paljudel juhtudel taotleti aktiivselt senisest laiemat ühiskondlikku aktuaalsust ja vastukaja, näiteks suurejoonelise rahvusvahelise aruteluplatvormi – Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaali – asutamisega või Naissaarele nii arhitektuurilises kui ka poliitilises, finantsilises ja spiraatuaalses plaanis uut laadi kultuuri-, äri- ja teaduskeskuse rajamisega.

Avalikkuse kõnetamiseks oli oluline ka erialapiiridest väljamurdmine: seda tunnistavad ühelt poolt arhitektuuri ja kunsti siduvad projektid, teisalt aga laiem meedia kaasamine nii teavitustööks kui ka võrdväärse *locus*'ena iseeneses. Nii tekkis hulk tähenduslikke ristumisi ühiskonnas laiemalt aktuaalsete teemadega nagu rahvusidentiteedi väljendamine, mis kajastus nii ehitamata projektides kui ka arhitektuuritriennaalil; pärandikaitse ja restitutsioon, mida puudutas George Steinmanni Kunstihoone projekt; või kogukondlikkuse küsimus, millele andsid uue näo Rühm T *performance*'id.

Olulise loominguks strateegiana jätkus hilisnõukogude ajast pärit projektide representatiivse aspekti väärtustamine. Nii Tõnis Vindi Naissaare visioon kui ka muud ehitamata projektid panustavad ideede edasiandmisel tugevalt visuaalsetele tähistajatele; Rühm T otsib arhitektuurile autonoomset eksperimentaalset ruumi alternatiivsetest presentatsioonimeetoditest. Võrreldes oma lääne kolleegidega rõhutasid ka Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaali kohalikud osalised arhitektuurse representatsiooni poeetilist jõudu ja installatsioonide kunstilist külge – sõnalis-teoreetilise eneseväljenduse vähenedes panustasid arhitektid interreegnumi ajal eelkõige oma eriala olemuslikesse väljendusviisidesse.

Kõiki juhtumiuuringuid läbib ka arhitekti agentsuse küsimus muutuvates oludes. Püüd säilitada turumajanduse tuleku turbulentsis autoriteetne professionaalne positsioon kumab läbi nii kogu ajakirjanduse diskursusest kui ka arhitektide positsioonidest esimestel arhitektuuritriennaalidel. Samamoodi nõudlesid täielikku kunstilist autonoomiat ka Rühm T arhitektid, mis esialgu oli vastureaktsioon nõukogude lõpuaastate bürokratiseeritud projekteerimispraktikale, edasi aga järjest enam sõltumatu kriitilise positsiooni otsing, mis võimaldaks katsetada alternatiivseid ruumi- ja kogukonnavalome viise, mida konventsionaalne arhitektuur ei võimalda. Kõige jõulisemad püüdlused oma loomingulist agentsust laiendada on aga seotud kunstiprojektidega: nii Tõnis Vindi tegevus oma Naissaare visiooni nimel kui ka George Steinmanni panus „Ruumi naasmise“ teoks saamise protsessis kujutasid endast ebatavaliselt ambitsioonikat sekkumist mitte ainult arhitektuuri- ja kunstivälja, vaid ühiskondlikesse ja poliitilis-majanduslikesse protsessidesse laiemalt. Kui Steinmanni võib rangelt võttes pidada ses suhtes edukamaks – tema loodud rahvusvaheline koostöövõrgustik ja finantseerimisskeem võimaldasidki Tallinna Kunstihoone renoveerida –, siis Tõnis Vindi mõju ei olnud

väiksem, tekitades laiahaardelise ühiskondliku debati ja katsetades alles kujunemisel oleva detailplaneerimise reeglistiku võimalusi ja piire.

Oluline aspekt erialases enesekehtestamises ja enesepildis oli pidev dialoog rahvusvaheliste eeskujude ja mõjutustega. Lääne intellektuaalsete ja kunstiliste hoovuste imetlemine ja kohandamine oli iseloomulik juba hilisnõukogude aastatele, kuid ühiskonna avanedes muutusid need suhted märksa komplekssemaks. Selles ühendus kõikvõimaliku info palavikuline omandamine, kohati kriitikavaba välismaise oskusteabe usaldamine, iha adekvaatse väljaspoolse peegelduse järele ja kohati ka teatav enesekaitse ja isegi üleolek. Avanevaid võimalusi kasutati nii lääneriikides praktiseerimiseks ja õppimiseks kui ka sealsete ekspertide kaasamiseks žüriiliikmete või töötubade juhendajatena. Sama suur huvi oli uute teoreetiliste hoovuste vastu, mida, nagu näitab Rühm T juhtum, omandati läbisegi ja kohandati võrdlemisi vabalt. Soovi lääne teoreetikutelt õppida kajastab ka tõlkeartiklite domineerimine 1991. aastast taas ilmuv *Ehituskunstis*. Samas Põhja- ja Baltimaade arhitektuuritriennaali asutamine oli kindlasti kantud soovist mitte piirduda vastuvõtja rolliga, vaid saavutada võrdsete dialoog, kuigi üritus tõi kahtlemata esile ka osaliste erinevad positsioonid piirkondliku identiteedi, globaliseerumise ja üleüldisemalt arhitekti missiooni kontekstis. Nii triennaal kui ka teised juhtumiuuringud kinnitasid ühtaegu nii rahvusvahelise oskusteabe ja eeskujude kõrget hindamist kui ka Eesti arhitektide jätkuvalt kõrget erialast enesehinnangut.

Doktoritöös käsitletud juhtumiuuringud näitavad, et Eesti arhitektuurikultuur oli 1980. aastate lõpul ja 1990. aastate algul erakordselt vitaalne, arhitektid osalesid aktiivselt uut ruumi ja uut avalikku sfääri kujundavates ühiskondlikes protsessides. Kasutades ära interreegnumi ajastule omast radikaalset avatust, realiseeriti nii juba hilisnõukogude ajast pärit taotlusi kui ka katsetati avaneva ühiskonnaga saabuvasid uusi võimalusi. Ruumieksperimentide aluseks oli veendumus, et arhitektidel ja kunstnikel on määrav roll uue ruumi kujutlemisel ja loomisel ning õigus ja vastutus osaleda avaliku sfääri kujundamisel. Isegi kui neis protsessides loodud ruumid ei olnud käegakatsutavad, oli neil väga oluline roll interreegnumiaegse ühiskondliku ruumi vormimisel.

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Chapter 1 title page: Jüri Okas, Marika Lõoke. Competition for a luxury hotel for 500 guests, 1988, 1st prize. Fragment. Courtesy of Estonian Museum of Architecture.

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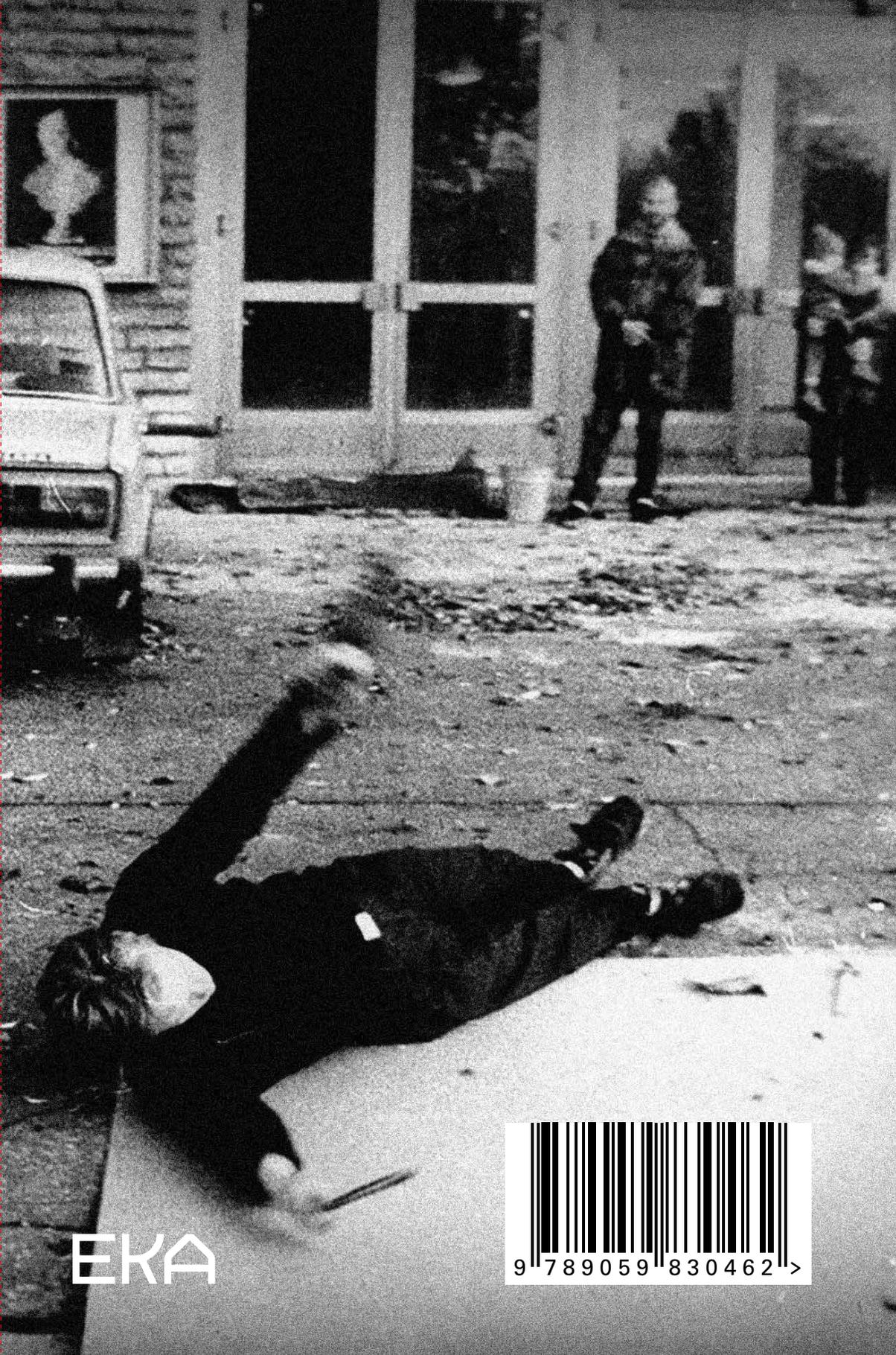
Chapter 4 title page: Raoul Kurvitz, Urmas Muru. Competition for Kuresaare harbour area, 1988. Fragment. Courtesy of Raoul Kurvitz.

Chapter 5 title page: Jüri Okas, Marika Lõoke. Annex to the Tallinn Art Hall, preliminary draft, 1992. Fragment. Courtesy of Jüri Okas.

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