

**Cultural Heterologies and Democracy  
Culture in the Baltic Countries  
in the 1990s**

**Viinistu  
17–19 August 2021**

**Tartu–Tallinn 2021**



Program Committee:

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Luule Epner, TLU  
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Editor: Merily Salura, EAA  
Layout: Andrus Laansalu, EAA

Organiser: Research Group of Contemporary Estonian Culture (Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn University, University of Tartu)

<https://nyydiskultuur.artun.ee/en/>

Supporters:

PRG636 “Patterns of Development in Estonian Culture of the Transition Period (1986–1998)”  
Estonian Academy of Arts, Research Foundation

ISBN 978-9916-619-28-5 (print)

ISBN 978-9916-619-29-2 (pdf)

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# Program

## 17 August

1 pm to 2 pm	Arrivals and registration Lunch
2 pm to 2.45 pm	<b>Chair Jaak Tomberg</b> <b>Epp Annus</b> Scaling Change
2.45 pm to 3.15 pm	<b>Juhan Saharov</b> The Birth of Alternative Politics in Soviet Estonia (1986–88)
3.15 pm to 3.45 pm	<b>Eglė Juocevičiūtė</b> Same Problems, Different Solutions: Cinema, Music, Art and Theatre in Lithuania 1985–1995
3.45 pm to 4.15 pm	Coffee break
4.15 pm to 4.45 pm	<b>Chair Ingrid Ruudi</b> <b>Viktorija Jonkute</b> The Discourse of the Revival in the Lithuanian and Latvian Cultural Press During 1988–1992
4.45 pm to 5.15 pm	<b>Ieva Astahovska</b> Mapping the Transformations in Latvian and Baltic Art in the 1990s and Later Decades
5.15 pm to 5.45 pm	<b>Virve Sarapik and Alo Paistik</b> Ethnofuturism Among Futurisms
5.45 pm to 7 pm	Free time
7 pm	Dinner

## 18 August

9 am to 9.30 am	<b>Chair Viktorija Jonkute</b> <b>Kārlis Vērdiņš</b> and <b>Jānis Ozoliņš</b> Tolerance, National Culture, and Queerness in Post-Soviet Latvia
9.30 to 10 am	<b>Piret Viires</b> The First Manifestations of Queer Literature in Post-Soviet Estonia: Paradoxes and Ambiguity
10 am to 10.30 am	<b>Maija Burima</b> Perestroika and Power Constellations in Arno Jundze's Prose
10.30 am to 11 am	Coffee break
11 am to 11.30 am	<b>Chair Piret Viires</b> <b>Dalia Satkauskytė</b> Before Explosion: Projections of Lithuanian Literary field in 1988 (on the material on literary review Pergalė)
11.30 am to 12 pm	<b>Joosep Susi</b> The Transformation of Subjectivity in Estonian Poetry of the 1990s
12 pm to 2 pm	Tour in the Viinistu Art Museum and free time
2 pm to 3 pm	Lunch

## 18 August

3 pm to 3.30 pm	<b>Chair Eva-Liisa Linder</b> <b>Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča</b> A Decade That Shook the World – Latvian National Opera and the 1990s and 2000s from today’s perspective
3.30 pm to 4 pm	<b>Luule Epner</b> Between Past and Future: Aesthetic Innovation in Estonian Independent Theatre Field in 1987–1992
4 pm to 4.30 pm	<b>Zane Kreicberga</b> Baltic Theatre Festivals in the 1990s as Agents of Change. The Case of Homo Novus
4.30 pm to 5 pm	Coffee break
5 pm to 5.30 pm	<b>Chair Neeme Lopp</b> <b>Loreta Mačianskaitė</b> Aesthetic Identities of the Younger Generation of Lithuanians in the 1990s
5.30 pm to 6 pm	<b>Anneli Saro</b> Diffusion as the Process of Democratisation in Estonian Theatre at the Turn of the 1990s
6 pm to 6.30 pm	<b>Tõnis Kahu</b> Art Ideology in Soviet Estonian Popular Music and its Demystification in the 1990s
7.30 pm	Dinner



## 19 August

9 am to 9.30 am	<b>Chair Ieva Astahovska</b> <b>Krista Kodres</b> Democratising Estonian Art History in the 1990s: Critical Art Historiography in the Making
9.30 am to 10 am	<b>Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus</b> The Fine Art of Financing Arts in the Early 1990s
10 am to 10.30 am	<b>Līna Birzaka-Priekule</b> Curating 90s. The Case of the Exhibition “Gone Crazy / Roof Gone” in kim? Contemporary Art Center in Riga
10.30 am to 10.45 am	Break
10.45 am to 11.15 am	<b>Chair Alo Paistik</b> <b>Ingrid Ruudi</b> Heterogeneous Publics and Public Spheres at the Freedom square
11.15 am to 11.45 am	<b>Teet Teinmaa</b> “You have not heard this story before”: Nostalgia, Different Temporalities, and Meeting the Western Gaze in the TV series “Bank” (2018)
11.45 am to 12.30 pm	Coffee break
12.30 pm to 1.30 pm	Roundtable discussion: Revisiting Post modernism in the Baltics <b>Chair: Jaak Tomberg</b> Participants: Epp Annus, Ieva Astahovska, Eglė Juocevičiūtė, Andres Kurg, Piret Viires
1.30 pm to 1.45 pm	Closing words
1.45 pm to 2.45 pm	Lunch
3.30 pm	A walk on Pārispea peninsula Departures



# Abstracts

# Scaling Change

## Epp Annus

Drawing on the work of human geographers and political philosophers, this talk explores the late 1980s–1990s transition period in the Baltics as a transition in scalar imaginaries and in tangled scalar hierarchies. I suggest that commonly acknowledged, socio-politically defined nested system of local, national and global scales can be juxtaposed with aesthetically tuned non-nested scales of the intimate and the infinite. In researching the 1990s, attentiveness to multiscalarity of social and aesthetic processes might help understand the plurality of aesthetic democratization, bring out era-specific dominants and intensities, and highlight transgressive potential of the 1990s loose scalarity.

In human geography, the research focus can vary from global processes to individual personal space, and the analyses of tangled hierarchies of scale have produced hybrid terms such as glocalization. Political philosophy has complemented spatial social thinking with questions about the hegemonic formations of different scale and with investigations of discursive constructions of social scales. The emphasis on the aesthetic field brings in the question of the autonomy of the arts and/ or the relationship of the arts, politics and economy. Yet how to make sense of the interscalar effects and tangled hierarchies of scale in a period of intense change, when various fields and localities go through processes of renewals and redefinitions in different formats and in different speed? How does multiscalar thinking complicate categories of modernity-postmodernity and coloniality-decoloniality? How to theorize the 1990s in the Baltic states, while staying tuned for singularities and differences?

**Epp Annus** is associate professor with Tallinn University, Institute of Humanities (Estonia); she also regularly teaches at the Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures, Ohio State University (USA). Her recent books include *Soviet Postcolonial Studies: A View from the Western Borderlands* (Routledge, 2018) and *Coloniality, Nationality, Modernity: A Postcolonial View on Baltic Cultures under Soviet Rule*, ed. by Epp Annus (Routledge, 2018). Her research interests include Soviet and post-Soviet Baltic cultures, postcolonial studies and phenomenology of everyday life. Her second novel is forthcoming in late 2021. Her full list of publications is available here: [https://www.etis.ee/CV/Epp\\_Annus/est?lang=ENG](https://www.etis.ee/CV/Epp_Annus/est?lang=ENG)  
e-mail: [epp.annus@gmail.com](mailto:epp.annus@gmail.com)

# The Birth of Alternative Politics in Soviet Estonia 1986–88

Juhan Saharov

The start of the perestroika period in the Estonian SSR (1985–86) brought along a new speech situation for the public authors. Previously neutral technoscientific concepts became politically significant (e.g., „self-regulation“, „objectivity“, „feedback“, and „emergent“), as they were used for attacking centralist management (while defending decentralisation) and therefore opening terrain for alternative politics. By combining scientificity, progressiveness, and „new thinking“ through the perestroika’s discourse (described by Rein Veidemann as a „creole language“ for the local authors), it became a tool for breaking down the prevailing ideological orthodoxy and proposing radical decentralist reform plans for the republic. In September 1987, Estonia became the first Soviet Republic to initiate and then promote a plan for an economic decoupling from the Soviet Union, known as the quest for the “territorial self-management” (in Estonian *territoriaalne isemajandamine*). The presentation looks at how the perestroika’s speech situation and the so-called “expert languages” enabled this invention, tracing its links to those in broader Soviet, but also in global scientific milieus since the 1960s.

However, the unintended consequence of the process was an even greater radicalization of the reformist claims in 1988. Therefore, the presentation sets the question, how exactly to understand the impact of this “early language of transition” during the perestroika? For solving this puzzle, I propose a concept of “conceptual innovation” which I define as the “conceptual process through which the meaning of a term is radically altered so that it can serve eventually as a conceptual platform for new political claims”. Navigating the constraints of the semi-closed and still censored public sphere, reform-minded academics in Soviet Estonia radically expanded the original meaning of *isemajandamine*, which ultimately provided an argumentative spin-off platform for declaring new claims, like the republic’s “sovereignty” within the Soviet Union in autumn 1988. The presentation brings out the linguistic, political, and transnational dimensions of this conceptual innovation, which had serious and yet unintended consequences for all republics in the Soviet Union.

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**Juhan Saharov** (PhD) is a Research Fellow of Political Theory at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies at the University of Tartu. His research focuses on the role of state-socialist experts in the political change during the late Cold War period and the conceptual history of reform socialism in East-Central Europe (focusing on “self-” concepts). Saharov has published articles on the “self-management” movement in Estonian SSR and its relation with the collapse of the Soviet Union (1987–1991) in journals like *Contributions to the History of Concepts* and *Europe-Asia Studies*.  
e-mail: juhan.saharov@ut.ee

# Same Problems, Different Solutions: Cinema, Music, Art and Theatre in Lithuania 1985–1995

Eglė Juocevičiūtė

The presentation will draw on experience of curating the exhibition titled “Times of change. Cinema, Music, Art and Theatre 1985–1995” (working title) in the Centre for Civil Education, hosted by the Presidential Palace in Vilnius. Together with visual arts researcher Jolanta Jurašienė, musicologist Edvardas Šumila, researcher in theatre studies Daiva Šabasevičienė and researcher in cinema studies Sonata Žalneravičiūtė, an attempt was made to look for reaction to the rapid political and social changes in different art forms. The research project presented the curatorial team with expected and unexpected results, both similarities and differences among the artistic fields.

The enthusiasm of the young and frustration of the formerly established, the common topics, connected to the changing memory and identity, the short-lived political and social engagement of the artists apolitical before and after the period of interest, attempts towards interdisciplinarity could be named as the main processes unifying the cultural space. However, varying connections to important international cultural agents, leading both to uneven dissemination of contemporary artistic knowledge at home and to differing success of representation abroad, inconsistent financial opportunities and separate administration strategies resulted in the fractured and fragmented cultural space.

This overview of the different survival strategies suggests insights into the structural problems and solutions we inherited and are still clambering up today.

**Eglė Juocevičiūtė** is a visual arts researcher, based in Vilnius, Lithuania. In 2012 she received a master degree in Vilnius Academy of Arts in the Department of Art History, Theory and Criticism. After finishing her PhD studies at a joint doctoral studies program of the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute and Academy of Arts in Vilnius in 2020, she is now working on her dissertation titled *Discourses on Fine Arts in Lithuanian Mass Media 1987–1993*. Since 2012 she is working as a curator at the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius. Her articles of art criticism and art research were published in the Lithuanian and Baltic magazines and journals.  
e-mail: [egle.juocevicute@gmail.com](mailto:egle.juocevicute@gmail.com)

# The Discourse of the Revival in the Lithuanian and Latvian Cultural Press, 1988–1992

Viktorija Jonkutė

The period of the late 1980s and early 1990s was marked by a multifaceted process of change: a societal breakthrough, an intense, dynamic and comprehensive transformation that led to the restoration of independence in three Baltic countries. The two names most famously applied to these events “the Awakening” and “the Singing Revolution” identify the poetic form and sensual expression. But the discourse in contemporary publications was much more diverse and controversial. The Revival appeared to be an intense mass national, civic, political, cultural, social reform movement, distinguished by specific ethics and aesthetics. During the last thirty years of independence, a new wave of discussions, interpretations and critical reflection on the Revival has been arising, but questions of terminology and chronology still remain unsettled.

The Lithuanian and Latvian cultural press of the period 1988–1992 employed several images and phrases to describe on-going events: the year of possibilities, the situation of becoming, the time of returning, the pathological liminal in-between state, the process of breaking stereotypes and taboos, spiritual awakening, etc. In addition to a considerable use of metaphor, many of the descriptors used contain abstract idealistic, moral, axiological dimensions. Some even suggest interpretations about mystical spirit or God.

The aim of this presentation is to briefly introduce and compare the major semantic and poetic tendencies found in publications of the weekly *Literatūra ir menas* (Literature and Art), the monthlies *Pergalė*, since 1991 *Metai* (Victory, since 1991 *The Year*) and their almost analogous Latvian counterparts *Literatūra un Māksla, Karogs* (Flag). These tendencies reveal not only (re)constructed poetic images of the Revival and ideological, cultural changes, but also socio-cultural representations of the society of that time. The comparison of such textual and contextual elements of two relative Baltic nations helps to highlight their imagological differences and similarities.



**Viktorija Jonkutė** is a junior researcher at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore. She has a BA degree (2010) in Lithuanian philology (Baltic studies) and a MA degree (2012) in Semiotics, both from Vilnius University. As an exchange student, she was studying cognitive semiotics at Aarhus University in Denmark. She finished her PhD in literary studies at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore and Vilnius University, defending doctoral thesis “Collective Memory in the Lithuanian and Latvian Literary Press during the National Revival of Late 20th Period” (2020). She did internships twice at the University of Latvia. During recent years, she has been working in cultural, educational institutions, participating in scientific and cultural projects of Baltic studies. She has received the Baumanis Grant for the documentary film Closer to the Land beyond the River by The Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies in US (2017).  
e-mail: viktorija.jonkute@gmail.com

# Mapping the transformations in Latvian and Baltic Art in the 1990s and Later Decades

Ieva Astahovska

In my presentation I would like to focus on issues how the transformations from nationally-driven post-socialist to transnationally oriented capitalist society in Latvia – and through comparative gaze also in other Baltic countries – have been reflected in contemporary art in the 1990ies and later decades.

A particular place in this context has the exploration of the recent past and the life between “after-” and “not-yet” completed changes, the traces or memories of socialism living in a capitalist world. Metaphorical interpretations of the past that were typical in the 1990s have been replaced by experiments with the narrative structures and ‘archaeological’ strategies in the recent decades, varying the documentary and pseudo-documentary approaches. Interaction of art with visual anthropology and documentarism, archival and artistic research are narrating those experiences through individual stories, while evoking broader layers of cultural memory. Through this interest about the past the artists attempt to analyze the present, the contemporary economic, social and political reality, its alternative political and social promises and also failures

I would like to reflect on these issues through such discursive perspectives as gender, memory, post-socialist and postcolonial entanglements and through the works of different generation artists, as well as through exhibition projects that have addressed them in the Baltic context (Adjord’hui les Baltis (1993), Misfits (1995) Personal Time (1996), Baltic Security! (2000)).

**Ieva Astahovska** is an art scholar, critic and curator. She works at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, where she leads research projects related to art from the socialist and post-socialist period. Astahovska has compiled and edited a number of research-based publications: *Valdis Āboliņš: The Avant-garde, Mailart, the New Left and Cultural Relations during the Cold War* (2019), *Workshop of Restoration of Unfelt Feelings: Juris Boiko and Hardijs Lediņš* (2016), *Revisiting Footnotes: Footprints of the Recent Past in the Post-Socialist Region* (2015) and *Recuperating the Invisible Past* (2012). Her curatorial projects include the exhibitions *Difficult Pasts. Connected Worlds at LNMM, Riga* (2020), *Valdis Āboliņš or How Fluxus Came to Aachen at the Ludwig Forum, Aachen* (2018), *Visionary Structures: Form Johansons to Johansons at Bozar, Brussels* (2015) and the Latvian National Library in Riga (2014), and *Parallel Chronologies: Invisible History of Exhibitions in Riga* (2011).  
e-mail: [ieva.ast@gmail.com](mailto:ieva.ast@gmail.com)

# Ethnofuturism among Futurisms

Virve Sarapik and Alo Paistik

This joint presentation discusses the characteristics and inherent ambiguities of the Estonian literary movement Ethnofuturism, which emerged in the late 1980s, and proposes to consider it in relation to other futurisms that have emerged since, in particular Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms.

Ethnofuturism (etnofuturism) – a term that was coined in 1989 but whose deeper historical roots can be extended to Estonian literary and visual modernism of the early 20th century and perhaps even reaching back to the mid-19th century age of national awakening – was a fairly short-lived but no less intense literary movement that accompanied Estonian culture through the re-establishment of its independence into the late 1990s. Since then, the movement petered out, with its members leading their individual literary paths and the term itself making occasional appearances in historical, theoretical, and political contexts.

While Ethnofuturism was a dynamic movement of cultural self-determination pursued through inventive literary works of a close-knit group of writers and poets, by way of manifestos, programs, and meetings with the representatives of other Finno-Ugric peoples, it holds in itself several contradictions and poses a series of questions. Most notably, how to approach the constituent notions – ethnicity and futurism – of the movement, and for what reasons the highly productive concept dissipated after a decade of activity? One way to approach these questions is to look at other cultural self-determination movements that have come to their own since then.

The past three decades have seen the formation of a number of futurist cultural movements such as Indigenous Futurisms, Africanfuturism, Latinx Futurism, Chicanafuturism, Asian Futurism, Gulf Futurism, Queer Futurism, and Crip Futurism. All of these movements have at their inception drawn inspiration from Afrofuturism, whose name was coined in 1994 and which in the 21st century has gained increasing visibility and encompasses music, art, architecture, fashion, film, dance, and DJing.

As part of this discussion, we propose to examine the forms and context of Ethnofuturism, comparing them to the revendications, aspirations, and tensions of Afrofuturism and one of its recent vibrant outgrowths, Indigenous Futurisms. While it may be tempting to see these

movements as part of one large future-oriented project, one of our aims is to ask in what distinct ways each of them is anchored in the cultural, social, and political present from which they emerged.

**Alo Paistik**'s main research interests include media history and politically engaged media practices. He is the co-editor of upcoming books on the oeuvre of the Italian artists-filmmakers Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, on the cinema of the American filmmaker and educator John Gianvito, and on filmic practices elaborated within autochthonous struggles.  
e-mail: alopai@hotmail.com

**Virve Sarapik** (PhD) is professor of art theory at the Institute of Art History, Estonian Academy of Arts. She has been the editor-in-chief of the academic journal *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* (Studies on Art and Architecture), 2003–2021. She has published widely in the fields of visual semiotics, interrelations of visual art and verbal discourse, space-and-time relations in literary texts, etc.  
e-mail: virve.sarapik@artun.ee

# Tolerance, National Culture, and Queerness in Post-Soviet Latvia

**Kārlis Vērdiņš and Jānis Ozoliņš**

As contemporary scholarly work on the post-Soviet Baltics has shown, 1990s can be seen as a period when Soviet coloniality ended (Epp Annus), when the futuristic project of Soviet modernity collapsed, leaving the people of the region “futureless” (Madina Tlostanova), or when European-oriented integration processes began eventually leading the Baltic states to become members of EU and demanding their post-soviet societies to attend the “school of Europeanness” to be able to facilitate tolerant and inclusive societies (Dace Dzenovska).

One part of these processes was recreating of civic society as a platform of co-existence of several ethnic and social groups, including the LGBT / queer population of the region. Following the representations of this group in Latvian literary culture, it is possible to see how ignorance and prejudices gradually turn into interest and support or denial as well as how the figure of queer gradually turns from Other to Self. Our paper would examine several Latvian short stories of early 1990s, written by the young generation of Latvian prose writers (Andra Neiburga, Eva Rubene, Gundega Repše, Valdis Felsbergs) against the work of LGBT historians and queer theorists. Their stories are early examples of post-Soviet cultural production that focuses on queer characters, establishing their presentation in Latvian literature as heroes with fragmentary presence and precarious role in society.

**Kārlis Vērdiņš**, Washington University in St. Louis / University of Latvia, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art.  
e-mail: karlis.verdins@lulfmi.lv

**Jānis Ozoliņš**, Latvian Academy of Art / University of Latvia, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art.  
e-mail: janis.ozolins@lma.lv

# The First Manifestations of Queer Literature in Post-Soviet Estonia: Paradoxes and Ambiguity

Piret Viires

1993 saw the publication of Emil Tode's (real name Tõnu Õnnepalu) novel „Border State” in Estonia. Its novelty attracted much attention and has remained one of the key literary works in the 1990s to this day. It might be said that „Border State” is a novel that could not have been written earlier as it tackles various topics characteristic of the transition period – tensions between Eastern and Western Europe, the changed world, people adapting to that changed world, and identity issues. The book also attracted wide attention abroad, and it has been translated into 18 languages, thus being the most translated work of the 1990s.

One theme that „Border State” strongly raised was the issue of gender identity. After the novel was published, the gender ambivalence of the protagonist caused much dispute and the critics' opinions were divided. The novel was considered either the first to openly depict homosexuality, or it was found that the gender identity of the main character was not actually determined. Some critics praised the brilliant depiction of women's psyche. This kind of ambivalence has been tackled in their research by, for example, Delaney Michael Skerret (2006), Eneken Laanes (2009), Helle Ly Tomberg (2015), Nele Tamson (2018).

At the same time, „Border State” introduced the gay theme into public discussion, which could occasionally emerge in a rather relief form. For example, Teet Kallas, a writer of the older generation, was bitter that the respectable Baltic Assembly Prize for Literature was in 1994 awarded to such “lavender-tinted” novel. The background can also be explained by the fact that the LGTB movement in Estonia began only after the conference “Homosexuality and Society” in May 1990. This was the first conference on sexual minorities in the Soviet Union. We should equally keep in mind that homosexuality was decriminalised in the Republic of Estonia as late as in 1992. Therefore, when “Border State” appeared in 1993, homosexuality was still somewhat a taboo topic.

The paper discusses the ambivalence and paradoxes associated with the publication of Emil Tode's “Border State”, the novel's role in enlivening the queer discussion and accepting the theme of homosexuality in the transition-period culture. There are also some examples of queer

literature in the following decades that were inspired by “Border State” (e.g. Ivar Sild’s „A Dancing City”, 2007, Marek Kahro’s „Paradise without the Sun”, 2012).

**Piret Viires** is a literary scholar and professor of Estonian literature and literary theory at Tallinn University. She defended her PhD (2006) in Estonian literature at the University of Tartu. Her main areas of research are: Estonian literature of the transition period in the 1990s, contemporary Estonian literature, postmodernism and post-postmodernism, the relationship between literature and technology, and digital literature. She has published books on Estonian literature and postmodernism, such as “Postmodernism in Estonian Literary Culture” (2012). Piret Viires is a vice-chairperson of the Estonian Writers’ Union and has also published fiction.  
e-mail: [piret.viires@tlu.ee](mailto:piret.viires@tlu.ee)

# Perestroika and Power Constellations in Arno Jundze's Prose

**Maija Burima**

Thirty years ago, a country named the USSR disappeared from the world map. The USSR was not prepared for the processes of perestroika – the explosion of nationalism, centrifugal tendencies in culture, national demands; therefore, it reacted spontaneously, adhering to the longstanding methods that facilitated the collapse of the USSR. While carrying out the analysis of perestroika as a Soviet project, several perspectives have been noticed.

The collapse of the political and economic regime initially captivated many former Soviet citizens, but later it acquired a range of destructive side effects: free market in its most primitive manifestations, development of criminal structures, emergence of financial pyramids, money devaluation, integration of Cheka agents into the politics of restored independent states, Soviet military heritage in degraded forms. At the same time, a process of transformation of the multinational political structure occurred, the consequences of which are still associated with polarized public opinion or nostalgic or oriental optics.

Arno Jundze's collection of stories "Gardo vistiņu nedēļa" / "The Week of Tasty Chicken" (2012), novels "Putekļi smilšu pulkstenī" / "Dust in the Hourglass" (2014) and "Sarkanais dzīvsudrabs" / "Red Mercury" (2017) focus on the political and economic practices of perestroika and the last decade of the 20th century that are related to Latvia's society during the transition from Soviet to post-Soviet society. By using extensive variety of realities of perestroika and the following decade, Jundze draws parallels and shows the interfaces between the constellations of official power and illegitimate forces, as well as their representation.

**Maija Burima** is a professor of the department of Latvian Literature and Culture, the Faculty of Humanities of Daugavpils University (Latvia); a visiting professor of the Faculty of Humanities, the University of Latvia. Since 2014 – an establisher and coordinator of the e-museum of oral history "Vita Memoriae" [www.vitamemoriae.eu](http://www.vitamemoriae.eu). Since 2016 she has been the head of the Centre for Latvian Studies at Daugavpils University. Her research interests include Latvian literature, comparative literature, modernism and modernity, Latvian literature in Russian, genre studies, translatology, postcolonial studies, area studies. She is a co-editor of the journal "Literature and culture: process, interaction, problems", the author of 2 books on literature and drama studies ("Ibsen in Latvia", 2006; "Concepts of Modernism in Latvian Literature at the Beginning of the 20th Century", 2011) and more than 230 articles in Latvian, English, Lithuanian, Estonian, Russian. Maija Burima is a Board member of the Latvian Writers' Union.



# Before Explosion: Projections of Lithuanian Literary Field in 1988 (on the Material on Literary Review Pergalė)

**Dalia Satkauskytė**

The year of 1988 was a crucial point of perestroika period. The process of democratisation accelerated in the Baltic States, the creation of national movements being the climax of it. Sąjūdis, established on 3 June of this year, made the huge impact on publishing strategies, discourse structure and evaluation of literary processes, and one can observe it re-reading the „official organ of Lithuanian writers union”, literary Pergalė (Victory), the national equivalent of Russian „Thick journal’.

The aims of my paper is to discuss the literary criticism, published in Pergalė of 1988 in two aspects: 1) the rhetoric shift and the formation of ideologically hybrid discourse, paying special attention on the imprints of soviet epoch; 2) to present the projections and caunter-projections (using the terms of Boris Dubin) of Lithuanian literary field, which began restructuring itself according to principle of partial autonomy.

**Dalia Satkauskytė** (PhD), leading researcher at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore. Winner of the Lithuanian Sciences Prize in Humanities (2020). She published two monographs, more than 50 articles in Lithuanian, English, Russian, French, Polish and German, and edited three books, including *The Literary Field under Communist Rule* (2019). e-mail: satkauskyte@gmail.com

# The Transformation of Subjectivity in Estonian Poetry of the 1990s

Joosep Susi

The last significant shift in Estonian poetry took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s when poetry reacted extremely quickly to socio-political and technological processes. The poetry of this time is frequently characterized by fierce experimentality – postmodernist text strategies, conceptual games, and new forms of literature emerged, the schizophrenic sense of time and space became a basic condition for the construction of a poetic subject in many poetry collections. Poetry aesthetics of the period could be considered a kind of micromodel of broader tendencies, poetry is noticeably synchronous with social processes. This is especially evident in the grasp of media and genre boundaries, which in turn gradually shook the understanding of how to write poetry in the first place or what the archetype of a poem is in the so-called collective literary consciousness.

In the presentation I highlight these larger tendencies in Estonian poetry between 1986–1996 more concretely in the context of subjectivity. Concentrating on some of the most prominent poets of the time (e.g. Kalev Kesküla, Kivisildnik, Hasso Krull, Elo Viiding) I look at how the subjectivity of lyric poetry changed and what these changes say about lyricism as such by examining some key features of poetry at the time (the potential of immersion, polyphony, the tension between the empirical author and the lyric speaker, intertextuality).

**Joosep Susi** is a literary critic, a PhD student and a junior researcher in Estonian literature at Tartu University and junior lecturer of literature didactics and Estonian literature at Tallinn University. His main areas of research are Estonian contemporary poetry, the theory of lyric poetry and literature didactics.  
e-mail: joosep.susi@gmail.com

# A Decade That Shook the World – Latvian National Opera and the 1990s and 2000s from today’s perspective

**Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča**

On the one hand, the 1990ies are considered “Dark Ages” in opera genre in Latvia due to the capital improvements to the Latvian National Opera building from 1991 to 1995, when the maintenance and even survival of the troupe without interim premises for rehearsals and performances in harsh economic circumstances was a true challenge. On the other, the opening of the house in 1995 started a new era at Latvian National opera, bringing in postmodernism, new aesthetics and approaches in terms of artistic strategies in opera stage directing, paving the path to the status of the most progressive opera theatre in the Baltic region and Scandinavia in the first decade of the new Millennium. From today’s perspective, it was a decade (or a little longer period) that shook the world of the operatic scene in Latvia, particularly in terms of stage directing in opera. The paper is an attempt to analyse the presence of “heterologies” on operatic scene that have contributed to the development of the pre-pandemic contemporary opera directing in Latvia. Partially, the paper also refers to the newest collective monograph on Latvian theatre history “The Theatre of Independence” (2021), where I cover the subject in the context of theatre history that somehow turns out to be written differently than previously as the phenomena to be described often falls apart from traditional classifications, hierarchies or framings. What makes the subject and its discourse even more urgent and timely is the fact that pandemic effects regarding opera genre will be no less shaking in Latvia and elsewhere.

**Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča** holds a PhD degree in Arts by the University of Latvia (2018), she is music and theatre critic Latvia. Since 2019, she is the AICT/IACT and coordinator of international relations in Latvian Theatre Labour Association. Publishes theatre reviews and articles since 2004. In 2020, edited “Contemporary Latvian Theatre 2010–2020. A Decade Bookazine” in English. Currently works as a researcher at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music in the framework of the project CARD (Cultural capital as a resource for the development), dealing with music culture history of Latvia in the 20th century. e-mail: lauma.mellena.bartkevica@jvlma.lv

# **Between Past and Future: Aesthetic Innovation in Estonian Independent Theatre Field in 1987–1992**

**Luule Epner**

The paper discusses the emergence of independent theatre groups in 1987–92. i.e. in the first, breakthrough stage of the Estonian transition period from one of the Soviet republics to the newly independent democratic state. The late- and post-Soviet Estonian theatre provides a vivid example of how societal and ideological factors affect artistic changes. Looking briefly into institutional innovation, the paper focuses on the main aesthetic trends in new non-state theatres, in the first place, and explores the issues of how they related to the prevailing ideologies of the time and what were their key influences. Theatre processes of the transition period have been generally discussed in terms of re-westernization, but strong Western influences also intertwined with Soviet-time tradition of alternative theatre.

Three prevalent trends can be identified, all of them underrepresented or missing in state theatres at that time: 1) biographical and/or cultural-historical documentary theatre; 2) theatre based on the folklore and ethnic heritage; 3) the advent of postmodern aesthetics. The first trend (e.g. the students' group Valhalla; Merle Karusoo's Pirgu group) was most closely connected to the rise of the wave of Estonian nationalism. The second trend is best exemplified by the Tartu Children's Theatre which furthered the trend of Finno-Ugric theatre in the late 1970s – early 1980s. Thus, to a significant extent, documentary theatre and theatre based on ethnic heritage represented the artistic radicalization of Soviet-era search for alternative style and can be described by Alexei Yurchak's term "deteritorialized milieu". On the contrary, the third trend (the early VAT Theatre, the groups Ruto Killakund, and Gregor), affected by Western postmodern theatre, had practically no roots in the Soviet-era theatre tradition, nor did this trend have artistic parallels or equivalents in contemporary mainstream theatre.

**Luule Epner** is an Estonian theatre and literary researcher, Ph.D. She is Associate Professor at the School of Humanities of Tallinn University. Her main research fields are Estonian theatre history, theory and practices of postdramatic theatre, and drama theory. She has widely published on relevant topics in different journals. She is author of *Draamateooria probleeme I-II (Problems of Drama Theory, 1992, 1994)*, and co-author of *Eesti kirjanduslugu (Estonian Literary History, 2001)* and *Eesti sõnateater 1965–1985 (Estonian Drama Theatre 1965–1985, 2015)*. Her recent book *Mängitud maailmad (Worlds in Play)* was published in 2018.  
e-mail: epner@tlu.ee

# **Baltic Theatre Festivals in the 1990s as Agents of Change. The Case of Homo Novus**

**Zane Kreicberga**

The paper will analyse and compare the processes in the Baltic theatre during the transition period of the late 1980ies and 1990ies. The aim is to reveal how the radical socio-political changes of this particular period have affected the creation of new theatre landscapes, both structurally and aesthetically, in three Baltic countries. On the basis of this analysis I would compare the developments in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and try to draw conclusions on what are similarities and differences that have constituted the way of how theatre exists and is perceived in these three countries nowadays.

The leading approach in research of the Latvian theatre focuses on primarily aesthetic analysis of theatrical phenomena without analysing the influences of economic, structural and ideological contexts. I would like to argue that the quick application of neoliberal market economy 'values' from the West that affected structural and organisational changes in Latvian and Baltic theatres in combination with the hegemony of the 'national values' has a certain influence on artistic choices of theatres and theatre makers and has shaped the aesthetics and the organisational structuring of the Latvian and Baltic theatre as well as the taste of Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian audiences. However, the landscapes and the policies of theatre in three Baltic countries differ significantly nowadays. My paper would propose an explanation why more or less the same initial circumstances have lead to different outcomes of the theatre landscapes in three Baltic countries.

**Zane Kreicberga** has been trained as a Theatre Director at the Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC) where she is currently lecturing theory and practice of contemporary theatre. She is a research assistant at the Research Centre of LAC, and in 2015 Zane entered her doctoral studies at LAC. She is also Head of the MA Programme in Performing Arts and the Head of Performing Art Department at LAC. Zane is one of the founders of the New Theatre Institute of Latvia, where she was actively involved in curating the International Festival of Contemporary Theatre 'Homo Novus' until 2014.

# Aesthetic identities of the Younger Generation of Lithuanians in the 1990s

Loreta Mačianskaitė

The democratization of the aesthetic field at the start of the Lithuanian revival is primarily noticed in theater and cinema. It is related to the coming of the new generation and changing functions of art. Four tendencies are distinguished, we will discuss them in four cases.

Art that brings together communities. A puppet theater Šėpa, which operated on a voluntary basis in 1988–1992, pictured the issues of Lithuanian political lives in a grotesque fashion. For three years, the theater carried out the artistic function of education-agitatio, which was then highly necessary and has practically not existed in the Lithuanian scene previously.

Aesthetical revival through negation. Artistic innovation in Lithuanian theater begins with the student work of Oskaras Koršunovas and his classmates, which was built according to D. Kharms (1990) and opposed metaphorical Nekrošius' directing. The play ended up in the legendary Youth Theater whose Western-oriented managers were not afraid to give a chance to young but perspective artists that did not have an official status.

The restructuring of space and memory. In 1995 the professional artist and self-taught director Vega Vaičiūnaitė has created an environmental theater Miraklis that held performances in open spaces of Vilnius. Performances with stories from Lithuanian mythology were especially popular, and the theater brought back the Renaissance tradition of theatrical street processions. The performance Pro memoria Šv. Stepono 7 was one of the first attempts to honor Vilnius' Jews.

Critical reflection on the Soviet heritage. In 1992 a group of Lithuanian directors finish their studies in Georgia; later some of them were also trained in New York by the well-known cinema avant-gardist Jonas Mekas. A film Vienas Klausimas (1995) created by Artūras Jevdokimovas in an independent studio is an ironical montage of the Lithuanian Soviet films that uncovers the clichés of that time, and questions the aesthetics of "daddies" cinema, also by bringing up the question of soviet artists adapting to the system.

The processes of 1990s already allow grasping new directions that will become dominant and in which Lithuanian art will develop. On the other hand, it is also possible to recognize opportunities of creative

freedom that could not be realized anymore due to juridical or other restrictions.

**Loreta Mačianskaitė**, Pd. D. in Humanities. Senior Researcher in Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore. Associate Professor at Vilnius University. Research fields: Semiotics of Culture, Soviet studies, Interaction between literature and other arts.  
e-mail: loperpetua@gmail.com



# Diffusion as the Process of Democratisation in Estonian Theatre at the Turn of the 1990s

Anneli Saro

In the paper, I use the concept of diffusion as a metaphor and a methodological tool to investigate Estonian theatre at the end of the 1980s and in the first half of the 1990s.

Encyclopaedia Britannica defines diffusion as a process resulting from random motion of molecules by which there is a net flow of matter from a region of high concentration to a region of low concentration. Molecule in theatre system is understood as an actor as defined in the actor-network-theory by Bruno Latour, i.e. “any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference” (Latour 2005: 71). Accordingly, actors embrace not only people, groups and institutions but also objects (like, for example, texts and technology) and ideas. Diffusion is an ordinary process in every system but in culture, the process is more active in bigger and heteronomous systems without any controlling membranes.

Diffusion of people (theatre makers and spectators), objects (texts) and ideas (artistic principles) took place also in the theatre of Soviet Estonia but different membranes or obstacles (for example the division of theatres and theatre makers into categories, censorship, lack of currency, etc.) hindered free flow in the system. Estonian theatre was a part of the Soviet and European theatre system but different semipermeable membranes controlled the diffusion between the subsystems as well. In the paper, I analyse the influence of the breakdown of Soviet cultural policy on Estonian theatre and the diffusions that related to internationalisation (movement of people, texts and ideas over language and state borders) and semi-professionalisation (blurring of the border between professional and amateur theatre). In culture, diffusion is definitely a sign of development and democratisation but as a downside, might lead to homogenisation of the system.

**Anneli Saro** is Professor of Theatre Research at the University of Tartu (Estonia). Saro has published articles and books on Estonian theatre history and system, performance theory and audience research. Currently she is working on two projects: comparative analysis of amateur theatre fields in small European countries and poetics of playing.  
e-mail: anneli.saro@ut.ee

# Art Ideology in Soviet Estonian Popular Music and its Demystification in the 1990s

**Tõnis Kahu**

Idea that popular musical forms can be treated as “art” (as opposed to mere “entertainment”) became important and influential in Estonia in the 1970s and 1980s. This discourse helped musicians and audiences to deal with both repressive local power structures and globally defined commercial formulas. While this approach can be seen as liberating in many ways, it can also be interpreted as a form of discipline and control.

To explain this further, my presentation concentrates on the concept of “knowledge” in the field of popular music. To put it simply, “formal” knowledge belongs to musicians, to the sphere of musical education, whereas “non-formal” knowledge is the property of fans. The crucial question here is which of the two was able to play the dominant role at particular periods of time in Estonian popular music.

Particularly interesting case in the context is the so-called progressive rock, once hugely influential in Estonia. It was clearly the product of non-formal fan-knowledge in many ways. At the same time, progressive rock was organized around musicianly skills and it can be said that it was a musician, a Conservatory-trained professional, who dominated the popular music discourse in Estonia up until the 1990s. (And there were hidden political implications in this domination, too.) The 1990s on the other hand was a period when this first type of knowledge was almost completely destroyed and replaced by the second one.

**Tõnis Kahu** has been writing in Estonian media about popular music and other cultural matters for decades. His book about best Estonian pop songs was published 15 years ago. Today he reads courses on popular culture in Tallinn University.  
e-mail: toniskahu@gmail.com

# Democratising Estonian Art History in the 1990s: Critical Art Historiography in the Making

Krista Kodres

The art historian Tiina Abel wrote about the state of affairs in art history in 1995: “It seems that the time of creative narratives interwoven with abundant factology is now past [...]. Our academic art history is fond of scientific certitude, the security of universally acceptable methods and the position of advocate for humanist values [...]. Art history has to this point refused to exit its academic boundaries, or to use methods that open new perspectives....”.

Abel was stressing the need to critically address the validity of the claim of universal truth and methodology in art interpretation, which can be seen as a call for the democratisation of art history. I am interested in examining this process and its key elements. No doubt, one of them was open access to the international art history scene. In the 1990s Estonian art history became familiar with the then most avant-garde discourse: New/Critical Art History (CAH). This necessitated inquiry into the historical and social backgrounds of art, which, in turn, made it impossible to reproduce the idea of the universal values of art.

Secondly, CAH highlighted the researcher-subject who shaped the art historical narrative in the context of a certain time, place and disciplinary framework. I argue that the idea of the complexity of art as a socially, temporally, internationally and locally embedded aesthetic phenomenon, which at the same time is/can be an active socio-cultural agent, forced Estonian art historians to critically revisit the existing narratives of art history, and question the conditions and methodologies of the historicisation of art. However, this process did not evolve smoothly. In my presentation, I intend to closely examine art historical texts expressing different viewpoints and look at their status in regard to the democratisation of the discipline.

**Krista Kodres** is a professor at the Institute of Art History and Visual Culture of Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn, Estonia; editor-in-chief of “History of Estonian Art” (6 volumes). Fields of research: history and theory of art historiography; history of art and architecture of the Baltic region in Early Modern period; history of architecture and design of the Soviet period.

Books: “Beautiful House and Room” (2001), “History of Estonian Art, vol. 2, 1520–1770”(2005); „Presenting Oneself. The Early Modern Tallinn (Reval) Citizen and his House”(2014). Chapters in the books „Lutheran Churches in Early Modern Europe“ (ed. A. Spicer, Ashgate 2012); „Art History and Visual Studies in Europe. Transnational Discourses and National Frameworks“(eds. M. Rampley et al., Brill 2012). Recently edited international books: “A Socialist Realist Art History? Writing Art History in the Post-War Decades (co-editors K. Jõekalda, M. Marek, Böhlau 2019); “Indifferent Things? Objects and Images in Post-Reformation Churches in the Baltic Sea Region“(Co-editors M. Kurisoo, U. Nürnberger, Imhof Verlag 2020).

e-mail: krista.kodres@artun.ee

## **The Fine Art of financing arts in the early 1990s**

**Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus**

There is a growing number of discussions held among art historians about Transformation and the change in artistic paradigm, however one issue tends to be overlooked – the economic circumstances of artistic activities. It is necessary to comprehend the reality of the planned economy, where the free market didn't exist and the artistic profession was a fully paid state post for a lifetime. Transformation generated a vacuum and striped artists from all their privileges and secured positions, the so called statism. Therefore artists wouldn't have competed on the free market or adjust their art to the art market needs and requirements or think about marketing strategies. Art galleries served only as an exhibition space, where artists submitted their works, that in turn must have been accepted by the gallery jury under the supervision of selected representatives. Many professional artists enjoyed life-time state posts and profits from the state patronage and did not concern themselves with the commerce, marketing and selling rates.

The early years of Transformation saw the deep economic crises and the collapse of the state patronage. There were no more guaranteed financing, no guaranteed sales and no guaranteed opportunities to display one's art. The art field remained out of the principles according to which the money was distributed. It was the international NGOs, especially the Soros Foundation with its Centers for Contemporary Arts Network and grant system that made an attempt to fill the void by offering financial support to artists, art critics, curators, art historians and local galleries.

In my paper I would like to investigate multiple aspects of economic influence of the Soros Foundation over Estonian art field in the early 1990s. I will address problems of money distribution, the beneficiaries of the new funding system and conflicts these system created.

**Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus** is a researcher in art history. She received her PhD from the Institute of Art at the Polish Academy of Sciences, where she works now. Her publications include the book "Synchronised over Network. Soros Centers for Contemporary Arts – four models: Budapest, Kiev, Tallinn, Warsaw" (2016, in Polish) and texts: "Normative Practice and "Tradition Management" in the Polish Art and History of Art of the 1950s" (in: "A Socialist Realist History?: Writing Art History in the Post-War Decades," 2019) and "The corporate and market strategies for contemporary art in Eastern Europe in the 1990s" ("Proceedings of the Art Museum of Estonia," 2019). She currently writes the book "Global contacts of the Polish People's Republic: An artistic exchange between the 'Second World' and the 'Third World' in the 1950s."  
e-mail: karolina.labowicz-dymanus@ispan.pl

## **Curating 90s. The case of the exhibition “Gone Crazy / Roof Gone” in kim? Contemporary Art Center in Riga**

**Līna Birzaka-Priekule**

The object of the analysis of the presentation is the contemporary art exhibition, which will be opened in September 2021 at kim? contemporary art center and which will be dedicated to the research of 90s. The title of the exhibition is “Gone Crazy / Roof Gone”, which was chosen to refer to the method of usurpation of power practiced by criminal groups in Latvia in the 1990s, when commercial units established in the new Republic of Latvia were “guarded” or “roofed”. This “umbrella” metaphor and its consequences and the continuation of this influence (metastasis) today is the objective of the research. This “roof” is essentially a version of the “Iron Curtain” – levitating and seemingly invisible or imperceptible, but still a ubiquitous and neo-capitalist-style successor to the Cold War.

The 1990s was a time of radical change in Latvia in the social, economic and political spheres. This time is filled, on the one hand, by the passion of national exaltation and, on the other, by painful disappointment and confusion. While a generation born between the early 1980s and early 1990s remembers this time as chewing gum, raves, hip hop, graffiti and Twin Peak, the generation before them mostly wants to erase a whole from their memory. A decade of minimal money, high crime, racketeering and proud entry into the capitalist zone.

1990 was a time when, after the Awakening, there was an opportunity to restore an independent state by making a decision, what do we want to be? However, just before the new concept of the state is implemented in real life, a strange world is emerging in which “playing in countries” takes place without following any rules – dealers and criminals, bribes and cheap plastic goods, counterfeits and extravagances, easy profits and violence, the shadow economy and huge gap between Latvians and Russians. The creators of the exhibition want to ask to what extent the country in which we now live have been influenced by the reality of 30 years of history and has it changed at all?

The presentation will analyze the research conclusions of the exhibition that gathers cultural-historical, artistic, political and emotional and sentiment-based evidence (episodes, works of art, memories) in order to prove the “viability” and “infinity” of a particular period 30 years “after

the fact". The report will study the rich documental visual material from 1990s in order to offer a reading on the topic of the 90s – a decade that is still here.

**Līna Birzaka-Priekule** is a curator and art historian. She has studied Italian language and culture un the Latvian Academy of Culture and in Sienna University. She has graduated from the Latvian Academy of Art with a master's degree in the History of Art. She is currently studying for a PhD in the Latvian Academy of Art, researching the social-political criticism and activism in Latvian contemporary art scene. Since 2016, she has worked as a curator and the head of the Creative Studio in Latvian National Museum of Art exhibition hall Arsenāls. Līna Birzaka- Priekule has worked with numerous emerging artists' exhibitions, including those of Amanda Ziemele, Atis Jākobsons, Elīna Vītola, GolfClayferman and others. Currently she is working on Viennese Actionist exhibition in the Latvian Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, as well as working on a group show about 90ties in Baltics in kim? Contemporary Art Centre. Since 2019 she has been a lecturer in the Latvian Academy of Arts. She regularly publishes in leading Baltic culture and art media. Since 2019 she has been the head of the Purvītis Prize Expert Panel as well as the member of Latvian Ministry of Culture Visual Art Expert Panel.  
e-mail: lina.priekule@gmail.com



# Heterogeneous Publics and Public Spheres at the Freedom square

Ingrid Ruudi

The paper aims to take a close look at the physical and mental transformations of a highly loaded urban locus – the Freedom square in Tallinn. After the square was successfully renamed and thus symbolically 'regained' in 1989, nothing much visually discernible happened there for the next ten years. Nevertheless the space worked as an arena of constructing and negotiating different public and counterpublic spheres through various projects and interventions from art, architecture and everyday practices.

Architecturally, the decade saw two urban planning competitions (1993 and 1998) with a wide range of propositions; an addition of two office buildings to the square's farther ends by emigré architects introducing sought-after international know-how and controversial commercial taste; and the renovation of 1934 Art Hall building as a conceptual project of Swiss artist George Steinmann with connotations ranging from return to the golden pre-war age to neocolonialism through European structural aid funds.

At the same time, the artistic interventions ranged from an ironic display of Soviet luxury car above the pedestrians' heads (Toivo Raidmets, 1993) to explorations of urban and psychic subconsciousness in subterranean tunnels (Jaan Toomik, 1993) to a poetic cathedral of the homeless (Raoul Kurvitz, 1999). Artist Tõnis Vint continued his pursuit of urban acupuncture by proposing a 58-metre tower as a Tree of the World and a replacement of the St James Church with a spiritual hall; yet the only amendment the city government was able to accomplish was the painting of colourful flowers on the asphalt (Hannes Starkopf, 1998). Looking at these projects in dialogue, as they form dense layers of meaning to a precise locus, enables to grasp the heterogeneity of the era, at the same time highlighting the potency of unexecuted projects and temporary interventions in constructing diverging and competing public spheres.

**Ingrid Ruudi** (1978) is an architecture historian, curator and critic, working as a researcher and visiting associate professor at the Institute of Art History and Visual Culture at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Her research interests concern architecture and public space from the second half of the 20th century to present day, the contact points between art and architecture, and feminist aspects of architecture and built environment. See also [ingridruudi.ee](http://ingridruudi.ee).

e-mail: [ingrid.ruudi@artun.ee](mailto:ingrid.ruudi@artun.ee)

## **“You have not heard this story before”: Nostalgia, Different Temporalities, and Meeting the Western Gaze in the TV series “Bank” (2018)**

**Teet Teinemaa**

In this paper I will discuss the Estonian TV series “Bank” (2018), which via the development of a fictional bank represents Estonia’s recent history after the fall of the Soviet Union. I will analyse the series from the aspect of nostalgia and explore its aim to address the Western audience via narrative-aesthetic devices and representation of different temporalities. The series from its very beginning suggests that the Western spectator is not aware of what actually happened in Estonia during the regime change and that they are only familiar with the official version of the events. Locally, on the other hand, the voice over narrator stresses, time moved differently than outside Estonia. Yet, what becomes increasingly apparent as the series progresses – although only represented at the margins of the TV series – is that the rapid speed with which time unrolled for the bankers was not experienced as such by everybody. However, not only were many people excluded from enjoying the fruits of Estonia’s rapid development, but also the bankers soon found themselves outmatched by their Western peers and their ways outdated because of the implementation of new business models by foreign investors. In attempts to emphasise the uniqueness of the early 1990s, “Bank” creates a strong sense of nostalgia for the period, and thus differs drastically from the current writing on nostalgia (Imre, Mihelj, Reifová, Vidmar-Horvat, and Volčič) that addresses the longing for the Soviet period.

**Teet Teinemaa** received his PhD from the University of Warwick and works as a lecturer in Film Studies at Tallinn University. He serves as the co-editor of *Baltic Screen Media Review* and his articles have appeared in journals such as *Film International*. His current research interests are post-Soviet masculinities, nostalgia, and irony in Eastern European film. e-mail: teinemaa@tlu.ee

# Roundtable Discussion: Revisiting Postmodernism in the Baltics

Chair: Jaak Tomberg

Participants: Epp Annus, Ieva Astahovska, Eglė Juocevičiūtė, Andres Kurg, Piret Viires

In “Break, Period, Interregnum,” written in 2011, Brian McHale stated that the peak years of postmodernism were definitely behind us and that “enough time had elapsed for us to be able to discern more of the internal articulation of the era.” But even if postmodernism could be considered a single “monolithic moment” or an underlying “cultural logic” of a particular world-historical phase, this logic nevertheless expressed itself in different forms in different historical, regional, political, cultural, and/or national circumstances. The present roundtable attempts to grasp the specificity of postmodernism in the Baltics. With this concluding discussion, we seek to delineate, (re)consider, and discuss some or all of the following:

The specific historical, ideological, political, and cultural conditions of the emergence of postmodernism in the Baltics.

The comparative differences of postmodernism in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The specific disciplinary differences of its onset and perception (in literature, architecture, art, music, film, but also education, and so on).

The distinct nature and status of (local?) modernism that postmodernism continued or reacted to.

The relationship between postmodernism and postcolonialism in the Baltics.

The generational differences of perceiving postmodernism in the Baltics.

The possibility of a “late socialist” postmodernity.

Each roundtable participant will hold a short presentation (5–7 minutes) from their point of view, followed by questions and discussion.

**Andres Kurg** is professor of architectural history and theory at the Institute of Art History, Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn. His academic work specialises on the art and architecture of the Soviet period, with a special focus on the influence of technological transformations and changes in everyday life to the built environment from 1960s to 1980s. He has published articles in *AA Files*, *ArtMargins*, *Home Cultures*, *Journal of Architecture* and *Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi—Studies in Art and Architecture*; and contributed to several collected volumes and exhibition catalogues. He has curated exhibitions on Soviet architecture and design, including *Centrifugal Tendencies: Tallinn, Moscow, Novosibirsk* at the Museum of Architecture Drawing in Berlin, 2017, and held guest fellowships at the Getty Research Institute and Yale University.  
e-mail: andres.kurg@artun.ee

**Jaak Tomberg** is a senior researcher of Contemporary Literature in University of Tartu, Estonia. His research focuses on science fiction, realism, utopia, and the philosophy of literature. His two monographs focus on the poetics of Science Fiction, and the third will be about the utopian implications of the current close relationship between realism and Science Fiction. Besides research, he has written a lot of literary criticism, edited the Estonian Avant Garde magazine *Vihik*, and written two plays.  
e-mail: jaak.tomberg@gmail.com

**Notes**





