



Contemporary art in Estonia - Multifaceted artistic perceptions

The show of contemporary art from Estonia, which is being staged in cooperation with Eesti Pank, the Estonian central bank, continues the exhibition series entitled "Contemporary art from the Member States of the EU" which aims, first, to showcase the diverse range of each country's artistic output and, second, to highlight some of the key ideas that are informing the general artistic discourse at the moment. It is a fine moment to present art from Estonia as the country is celebrating its one hundredth anniversary of independence this year.

The 21st exhibition in the series presents over 50 pieces created by 14 artists and artist groups. Their practice embraces leading-edge issues, such as today's fast-changing visual and digital culture and the ways it is shaping our perception and behaviour, and at the same time critically investigates the relationship between the object and its representation or between the image-taker and the beholder. The duality public space/private space is not only a seminal notion in a broader socio-cultural context, given the "e-Estonian" priority on the development of information technology, but also looms large in the general debate on privacy versus information-sharing.

Other artworks grapple with the big-picture themes of nationalism, feminism and capitalism in post-Soviet Eastern Europe. While the Estonian people as a whole have been living for centuries with the reality of being a gateway between the "European West" and the "Russian East", the exhibiting artists specifically belong to a generation that personally experienced radical existential and socio-cultural dislocations early on in their lives, notably the post-Soviet transformation with its attendant insecurities and the challenges of finding and defining new ways of living and a new identity.

Naturally, the artists featured in the exhibition explore not only the past but also the present and the future. Some take a wide-angled look at the macrocosmic chances and risks in today's globalised world, e.g. the implications of human interaction with the earth's ecosystems, while others zoom in on the human microcosm – on each individual's immediate environment and his/her perception of and interaction with it. This complex is exemplified by works featuring the medium of photography with a special sensitivity to light as well as by paintings that seek to heighten the viewer's awareness of colour. Another group of artists create installations involving ceramics and other materials with a view to generating charged atmospheres that engage all our senses.

Although at first sight Estonia might seem to be located more at the periphery of Europe, the country in fact hosts a vibrant art scene that, for one thing, is at the centre of contemporary art discourses and, for another, also contributes a particular Estonian note, both on an aesthetic and on a contextual level.

Merike Estna
Flo Kasearu
Kristi Kongi
Paul Kuimet
Kris Lemsalu
Marko Mäetamm
Marge Monko
Krista Mölder
Katja Novitskova
Kaido Ole
Kristina Õllek & Kert Viart
Laura Pöld
Taavi Suisalu
Sigrid Viir

Guided tours

The exhibition will be open for public viewing via guided tours. Precise dates and registration details will be published on the European Central Bank's website (under "About" -> "Arts and culture") once the exhibition begins.

If you would like to be kept informed about art tours and art activities at the ECB, please email art-events@ecb.europa.eu so that your name can be added to the ECB art newsletter.

Centrefold:
Laura Pöld
Much Later We Go For A Swim, 2017
(detail of the installation)
Ceramic and found objects, various dimensions
© Laura Pöld
Photo: Rachel Schenberg

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ESTONIA CONTEMPORARY ART FROM