

# POINT OF NO RETURN

## Attunement of Attention

# Third Curator

**Ann Mirjam Vaikla**  
Exhibition curator



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**Tanel Rander**  
Invited writer



# Third Curator

Ann Mirjam Vaikla

Exhibition curator,  
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1. Co-curator of the exhibition  
Saskia Lillepuu.

2. Narva Art Residency will be  
referred to by the abbreviation  
NART from hereon in the  
text.

3. M. Eensalu-Pihel,  
*Muinsuskaitse eritingimused.  
Kreenholm direktori  
Karri elamu reg.nr. 14017  
restaureerimiseks. Tallinn:  
Eensalu & Pihel OÜ, 2015,  
p. 4.*



*Somewhere in mid-ocean during his return to New York, a revelation strikes a melancholy Roxy. Staring at a sunset, he receives the "Annunciation" of his theater: it is to be an incarnation of this sunset.*

I remember receiving the first letter from Saskia<sup>1</sup> in 2019 with the proposal to organize an exhibition at Narva Art Residency. We met on a sunny spring day in Narva that would mark two years from the planned exhibition opening. Why am I speaking of time and its linearity in relation to a process that had its starting point in the Anthropocene? Because I believe this exhibition is centred around the notion of time, around a time-space continuum where there is *no point of return*. Can time exist without space?

It feels as if I have started to share my curatorial position with NART<sup>2</sup>. As if it has become the *Third Curator* of this exhibition by taking care, shaping, echoing and also resisting and weakening artistic ideas and experiments with its bothersome physical presence – a rigid architectural shell from 1893.

In the midst of this red brick shell, built over a century ago for the director of Kreenholm Manufactura, I wonder what the dreams, trials and desires were of humankind back then? The fruits of the Industrial Revolution were shaping the world on both sides of the Atlantic, paving the way to an all-embracing modernity. Kreenholm, founded on top of waterfalls of the Narva River, became the most prominent textile industry in Europe and Russia, employing over 12,000 people at its peak. The district served as a city within the city, with its own school and kindergarten, Lutheran and Orthodox churches, expansive hospital complex, stores, bakeries, detention centre and clubhouse.<sup>3</sup>

*From the beginning, Roxy insists on the literalness of his metaphor. Within the rectangular section and plan of the Hall's external envelope, the sunset theme is established through a series of consecutive plaster semicircles that diminish toward the stage to create a vaguely uterine hemisphere whose only exit is the stage itself.*

The industrial era of Kreenholm has made us move in a *tick-tock* kind of choreography, where one works a certain number of hours a day, driven by effectiveness, acceleration and flawlessness. As a result, modern society, imbued with the idea of progress and driven by a desire for modernity, tends to reshape landscapes. As a consequence, it has forgotten what was there before. Elaine Gan, Anna Tsing et al. have said: "Forgetting, in itself, remakes landscapes, as we privilege some assemblages over others. Yet ghosts remind us. Ghosts point to our forgetting, showing us how living landscapes are imbued with earlier tracks and traces"<sup>4</sup> – therefore recognizing how every landscape is haunted by the past ways of life.

The ghosts who inhabit multispecies landscapes disturb our conventional sense of time, where we measure and manage one thing leading to another. They emphasize how besides the time of human, Western colonialism, modernity and metronomic synchrony – there is the time of bacteria, fungi, algae....<sup>5</sup>

*This exit is "masked by the beautiful contour curtain" made of a specially developed synthetic fabric whose reflectivity makes it an acceptable substitute for the sun.*

The empty waterfalls of Kreenholm appear as ghostly reminders of the industrial development<sup>6</sup> – exposing the bare river bottom where the water used to stream and fall down from the limestone brinks. Marit Mikklepp's installation *Mineral Everybodyies* engages with a deep time of stones collected from the same riverbed. The rocks, carried there by thawing ice sheets thousands of years ago, now lie on the wooden floor as individual entities. When moved by a human, they start to resonate. Moving, vibrating stones, they cut into the *marrow* of beings:

There was a word inside a stone.  
I tried to pry it clear,  
mallet and chisel, pick and gad,  
until the stone was dropping blood,  
but still I could not hear  
the word the stone had said.

I threw it down beside the road  
among a thousand stones  
and as I turned away it cried  
the word aloud within my ear  
and the marrow of my bones  
heard, and replied.<sup>7</sup>

4. E. Gan, A. Tsing, H. Swanson, N. Bubandt, "Introduction. Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene," *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet. Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*. Eds. A. Tsing, H. Swanson, E. Gan, N. Bubandt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017, p. G6.

5. E. Gan, A. Tsing et al., "Introduction," pp. G9–G10.

6. The Narva Hydroelectric Station (constructed in 1950–1955), located on the east bank of the river, is fed by the Narva Reservoir on the Narva River.

7. E. Gan, A. Tsing et al., "Introduction," p. G11. Ursula Le Guin's poem "The Marrow" was first published in U. Le Guin, *Hard Words, and Other Poems*. New York: Harper & Row, 1981.



8. G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*. New York: Penguin, 2014, p. 126.

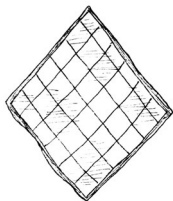
9. A. Tsing, "More-than-Human Sociality. A Call for Critical Description," *Anthropology and Nature*. Ed. K. Hastrup. New York: Routledge, p. 8.

*The "rays" from the curtain continue along the plaster arches, reaching around the entire auditorium. The arches are covered in gold to better reflect the purple of the setting sun and the glow of the red velvet, which Roxy insists on for the chairs.*

Flora Reznik's installation *Change In Y, Change In X* is located at the north end of the exhibition hall that is covered in darkness. The installation, consisting of a video, a series of photographs, kinetic sculpture and a map printed on textile, shows the viewer a landscape – the artist's brother's leg, which resembles a mountain range rising up from the sea. The leg grows at a rhythm of its own, slower than the rest of his body. A scar that is a result of numerous surgeries has become a place to inhabit fictive territories and various temporalities. It reminds me of a *mollusc's motto* by Gaston Bachelard: "One must live to build one's house, and not build one's house to live in"<sup>8</sup>. He describes a mollusc who exudes its shell by letting the building material seep through. It is a process of distilling its marvellous covering with no distinct beginning or ending – when the seeping starts, the house is already completed. It is a mystery of a form-giving life, the mystery of a slow but continuous formation.

If we keep the mollusc's perspective and return to the notion of the *Third Curator*, the sense of linear time dissolves. It appears as a constant repetition of a sun rising, and setting again. It does not exist on its own as a piece of architecture or as a forever-lasting institution but always in relation to others. The *Third Curator* is there to frame the unknown – a long day or a night – manifesting in a gathering of voices to *attune our attention* towards entanglements of humans and more-than-humans creating the ecological reality we live in. The shell, the marvellous and amorphous covering has become inseparable from the living body, from a vibrant entity that is in a constant movement, involving a multiplicity of temporalities and beings.

*The consequence of Roxy's dream is that, while the effect of a sunset is successfully achieved when the lights of his auditorium are dimmed, the return of electricity in the intermissions and at the end of each performance corresponds to a sunrise.*



"Our doings are a way to trace the doings of others,"<sup>9</sup> Tsing declared, elaborating on a beginning point of how humans can become involved in multispecies worlds. Sepideh Ardalani and Sandra Kosorotova have turned the hidden premises of the Kreenholm area into a garden for *more-than-humans*. This work has been brought into being in order to support a contingent flow of life, to exist on the terms of its inhabitants, not its gardener or to satisfy a human desire. Here an exhibition becomes a window where moments of an evolving process are exposed to a wider audience.

Can we apply the thought of contingent flows of life to all elements of this exhibition, and in the long run to all elements of NART? Can *Point of No Return. Attunement of Attention* deepen and expand the empathy, care and connections amongst its participants and community as well as with the environment and the multiple species that inhabit it?

*In other words, the 24-hour cycle of day and night is repeated several times during a single performance at Radio City Music Hall.<sup>10</sup> Day and night are drastically reduced, time accelerated, experience intensified, life – potentially – doubled, tripled....<sup>11</sup>*

In contrast to Roxy, "the most brilliant showbiz expert in the hysterical New York of the twenties"<sup>12</sup> and his Radio City Music Hall where *The Fun Never Sets*, we have lit a candle of the artwork *brace, brace, brace* by Nina Schuiki. White candles, almost as high as the ceiling, form a sanctuary-like space where there is no room for *reduction, acceleration and intensification, or life to be doubled, tripled....*, which showbiz tends to do. The only time left is the time of paraffin turning into a hot gas wherein hydrocarbons become molecules of hydrogen and carbon. It feels as if the self-absorbing silence and captivating physical process of material transitioning from one state to other has silenced the pilot's emergency call: *brace-brace-brace!*

Instead of compressing our bodies into entities as small as possible to survive the "plane (planet?) crash" we have crawled out from the shell and stretched our limbs as the mollusc would lengthen its tentacles. As if we've just learned how to dance, the *danse macabre*, from the point where there is no point of return.

10. Radio City Music Hall is a historic entertainment venue located at 1260 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, New York, NY.

11. All paragraphs in italics are from R. Koolhaas, *Delirious New York. A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. New York: Monacelli Press, 1997, p. 210.

12. R. Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, p. 208.



# Inheriting Habits, Inhabiting Stories

Saskia Lillepuu

Exhibition curator

1. D. Haraway, *Staying with Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016, p. 1.

2. Biodiversity and ecosystems are in decline mainly due to overexploitation of the natural environment and large-scale agriculture, but also pollution, habitat disturbance and loss, climate change and invasive species, all of which are caused by human industrial activities. M. Grooten, R.E.A. Almond (eds.), *Living Planet Report – 2018*. Aiming Higher. Gland: WWF, 2018. [https://s3.amazonaws.com/wwfassets/downloads/lpr2018\\_summary\\_report\\_spreads.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/wwfassets/downloads/lpr2018_summary_report_spreads.pdf) (accessed 20.07.2019).

*In urgent times, many of us are tempted to address trouble in terms of making an imagined future safe, of stopping something from happening that looms in the future, of clearing away the present and the past in order to make futures for coming generations. Staying with the trouble does not require such relationship to times called the future. In fact, staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or Edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as moral critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings.<sup>1</sup>*

The beginning of this project seems exceptionally far in the past, especially because the global pandemic has split my sense of time to a pre- and post-COVID period, pushing the first into another temporal dimension altogether. I became increasingly attentive to environmental distress and ecological issues in 2018, when I was studying art curating at the Estonian Academy of Arts. The two interests came together in the idea of making a group art exhibition that would attend to the question of what being human means in these troubled times. The ecological distress pulsating throughout the planet is unquestionably related to human activity, specifically to human industrial activity driven by profit-oriented global capitalism. The main environmental issue this way of life causes is the decline in biodiversity and damage to ecosystems,<sup>2</sup> making more and more parts of the planet increasingly less habitable for a multitude of beings, including humans.

However, the exhibition *Point of No Return. Attunement of Attention* does not embody some sort of clear answer or conclusion, nor does it

provide solutions or an overview of the ecological crisis we are living in. It is not didactic. Rather, the exhibition can be seen as a window, open at a particular moment in time and in a particular space, showing how 17 artists have been thinking about the intimate, interdependent relationship between environment and bodies, human and other-than-human. Making this exhibition has been a privileged learning process, allowing me to explore how artists have been thinking about complex environmental issues, which are also always political, social and ethical. Art, in my understanding – influenced by my anthropological training – is first and foremost a creative practice through which human beings make sense, relate and inhabit the world. It allows us to face the ambiguity of human life in a poetic way, as a proxy in the sense that Jeanette Winterson has described storytelling:

*[M]y commitment to story-telling, like my commitment to love, is a commitment to discomfort, not security. To adventure, not satisfaction. To possibilities, not answers. [...]*

*Stories are full of questions. What if? What is? Who am I? Who are you? What do I believe? Why do I believe it? We ask these questions in other ways – of course we do, politically, philosophically, spiritually. We address them head-on.*

*And that's the difference I guess because, as Freud worked out at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, human beings cannot always, or even optimally, address the big, the dark, the difficult, the shameful, the guilty, the criminal, the crazy head-on. We have to go sideways, downwards, away from – without running away. We use a proxy or an avatar. And that's what stories let happen.<sup>3</sup>*

What kind of stories we tell matters.<sup>4</sup> We have become aware of the troublesome impact the industrialised world, with its cycles of production and consumption, has on the natural world: extreme weather and rising sea levels, the rapid extinction of species, decline of biodiversity and impoverished ecosystems, destroyed habitats and increasing toxicity of environments. This way of life runs on the old story of human exceptionalism, of the supremacy of man over a passive, subordinate nature. Homo sapiens. Blind nature. Nature is the background to our stories; it's a resource that fuels our lives. We have inherited this habitual assumption from modernity, that opera house in the middle of the rainforest, as Tanel Rander describes it in his essay. Although it seems that we have moved on from modernity, its ghosts still haunt our landscapes, our bodies and minds, shaping current ways of life and being.<sup>5</sup>

...

In 2021, I stand in a familiar orange corridor with ten other chronically ill people. A submicroscopic infectious agent, able to replicate itself only inside the living cells of an organism, has been travelling and multiplying in human beings across the globe for over a year now, making palpable how globally connected we are. Some people in this corridor are waiting for the

3. J. Winterson, *Love*. London: Penguin Random House UK, 2017, pp. 32–33.

4. D. Haraway, *Staying with Trouble*.

5. E. Gan, A. Tsing, H. Swanson, N. Bubandt, "Introduction. Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene", *Arts of Living on A Damaged Planet. Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*. Eds. A. Tsing, H. Swanson, E. Gan, N. Bubandt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017, pp. G1–G14.



6. S.F. Gilbert, “Holobiont by Birth. Multilineage Individuals as the Concretion of Cooperative Processes”, *Arts of Living on A Damaged Planet. Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*. Eds. A. Tsing, H. Swanson, E. Gan, N. Bubandt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017, pp. M73–M89.

7. E. Cohen, “My self as an other: on autoimmunity and ‘other’ paradoxes,” *Medical Humanities* 30, 2004, pp. 7–11, here p. 10.

8. S. Jonsson, “On Pia Arke,” *Afterall* 44, 2017, pp. 13–21, here p. 13.

9. E. Cohen, “My self as an other,” p. 8.

10. E. Biss, *On Immunity. An Inoculation*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2015.

11. S.F. Gilbert, S. Gilbert, “Understories: a common ground for art and science,” *Alma Heikkilä. Kiasma Commission by Kordelin*. Ed. S. Oksanen. Helsinki: Museum on Contemporary Art, 2019, pp. 35–39.

12. E. Cohen, “My self as an other,” pp. 9–10.

vaccine, others are waiting to see if post-injection side effects appear. We are waiting to become *immune* to the virus, which is ironic because we live with a chronic autoimmune condition. When my sister heard I was getting vaccinated, she wondered if I would turn into an alien. But I am already an alien. About half the cells in human bodies are bacterial, and our non-human symbionts help us develop and stay alive, keep our immune and nervous systems functioning. They make “the human” possible.<sup>6</sup> Without these others, these aliens, we would be “dead meat”.<sup>7</sup>

The process of making this exhibition has coincided with a period in my life where my bodily discomfort has become more frequent and intense. I’ve been trying to wrap my body-mind around two parallel situations, two bodies/environments I inhabit – my uncomfortable body and the damaged planet. I weave connecting lines between the two, inspired by the artistic principle of the Greenlandic-Danish artist Pia Arke, one of the artists in *Point of No Return*: “I make the history of colonialism part of my own history in the only way I know, namely by taking it personally.”<sup>8</sup>

20<sup>th</sup> century natural sciences split organisms from their environments. Individual entities compete for survival – that was the story of life then. The immune system was said to protect the organism by distinguishing between the “self” and the “non-self”, and waging war on the latter. The foundational assumption of Western political rationality is that to be a person means to “have”, to “own” a singular and unified body. Under normal circumstances the “self” should coincide naturally with the body. This scientific paradigm depicts autoimmune illness as a living contradiction, a paradox – *horror autotoxicus*.<sup>9</sup> The self that mistakes the self for non-self. The human that mistakes nature for Other.

The truth is, though, that these are just ways we have been used to describe the world. Some contemporary immunologists prefer to use words other than “self”/“non-self” or war metaphors – there is nothing biological or scientific that would make these inherited narrative habits more true or correct.<sup>10</sup> But the stories we tell matter; they become ways of living. 17 years ago, I was told that my body was attacking itself. Two years ago, I was told that my treatment would make some of my blood cells explode. These kinds of images harm the psyche of chronically ill people.

21<sup>st</sup> century biology has revealed that there is much more to bounded entities – life nests in multi-species cooperation, relationships, processes, plasticity, mutualistic symbioses.<sup>11</sup> Self/non-self distinction is contextual; organisms cannot be conceived as separate from their environments.<sup>12</sup> We are, inevitably, entangled in symbiotic relationships of life and death. I find comfort in knowing that I am not inherently at war with myself, that I am literally not alone in this aching body, that if I take care of the bacteria inside me, they will take care of me.

...

As Flora Reznik’s work *Change in Y, Change in X* takes me through an eerily skin-like mountain range, I feel at ease inhabiting my personal corporeal discomfort. The terrain is explored by water, sound and sight touching its surface, in movement and stillness. A faint chatter at the periphery of perception, a dialogue that hints but does not explain. I’m taken through

a mountain range that used to be a silicone mould, that used to be the fibrous collagen tissue of a scar, that used to be the waterproof, protective wrap over someone’s leg that grew at a slower rhythm than the rest of the body. As I explore, I feel at ease that my own body is “offbeat”. As the water slowly rises over the mountain range, I also feel strangely at ease with the “offbeat” humanness running amok on the planet.

How to inhabit an uncomfortable body? How to inhabit a damaged planet? How do you become present when the present is distressful? Try staying with what is – a scar, a discomfort, a trouble. When you are ready, explore what else this situation might reveal. A mountain range, familiar yet strange – a different story to inhabit. Perhaps we can practice turning the deep-rooted belief in human exceptionalism on its head and find our ground in the vulnerability we share with all living beings.<sup>13</sup> Flora’s installation, and I hope this exhibition as a whole, is an invitation to think, witness, explore and play with ways of being otherwise human.

...

Back at the hospital, a man tells the nurse he hopes this vaccine works. It has to, says the nurse, and taps on the “Vaccinated” pin she is wearing proudly. A tenacious species we are. 15 minutes of post-vaccination waiting is up, and no one has had any allergic reactions. Six of us get in the lift, equipped with an air-purifier and a reassuring sign “Clean”. As we go down, I want to ask my fellow travellers about their experience with the pandemic. Have they also felt strangely equipped for such uncertainty because of the heightened unpredictability of our bodies? But the ride is too short for existential musings. On the first floor we step out of the lift, over and past the black and yellow biohazard signs plastered on the floor and walls. “Life is a window to vulnerability”<sup>14</sup> – the opposite of immunity.



13. F. Reznik, “Of Asymmetrical Legs, Scars, Infrastructures and Exile,” *Unknown Grounds. The Reader*. Leeuwarden: VHDG, Tresoor, 2019, pp. 34–41, [https://issuu.com/florenciareznik/docs/unknown\\_grounds\\_reader\\_online\\_version](https://issuu.com/florenciareznik/docs/unknown_grounds_reader_online_version) (accessed 27.01.2021).

14. D. Haraway, “The biopolitics of postmodern bodies: constitutions of self in immune discourse,” *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 224.

# Igniting Conversations

**Kerttu Juhkam**

Curator of the education programme



1. J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*.  
New York: Penguin Group,  
2005, p. 26.

*Art celebrates with particular intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is.<sup>1</sup>*

Creative people are curious. Contemporary art is expanding further to a plethora of disciplines, as the conditions and aims for making art question various ways of being. The international group exhibition *Point of No Return. Attunement of Attention* meditates on the topics of sustainability, ecology, health, being, climate change and social issues through diverse experimental mediums. The objective of the educational programme was to address and reflect the aforementioned themes with the public.

How to approach the public? Engage the local youth.

I wanted to bring together a group of people to discuss, think and make. My focus was process paired with dialogue. I invited the youth of Narva to get involved with the exhibition and Narva Art Residency (NART). The educational programme grew out of necessity on two levels. First, we wanted to engage local youth; second, we needed guides. Guides to the local community – for us and some of the participating artists, guides to mediate contemporary art in Narva and tour guides for the exhibition.

But what's the best way to create connections between the artworks, the concepts of the exhibition and the young people involved? Walk through the back corridors of NART – physically and metaphorically. My aim was to convey the contemplations in making art by allowing the participating

artists to introduce themselves and their methods. By introducing young people to the curators, the artists and the processes of artistic and curatorial practices, we were able to delve into the concepts of the exhibition and reflect through our own experiences. And a group of young Narva people became NART volunteers.

*Getting something out of art won't just mean learning about it – it will also mean investigating ourselves.<sup>2</sup>*

Our initial gathering took place greatly thanks to active local Vadim Markov, who spread the word to people who might be interested. We also looked for volunteers from the audience of the independent magazine *Narvamus*. During our first meet-up, we got to know each other. We drafted aims and plans for the educational programme and the volunteers' expectations and needs.

We had a joint meet-up with the film programme curator Piibe where we watched a documentary while expressing ourselves through clay. We explored stream of consciousness writing and shared views on other-than-human, cultural identity and habits. We drifted with yellow cups, concepts of takeaway and dumpster-diving led by artist and art educator Vera Anttila. Inspired by transient moments, we wandered around NART and shared uncaptured snapshots of places that resonated with us.

At the next meet-up we had a live stream presentation and discussion with the artist Alma Heikkilä whose art centres around objects that are beyond normal human perception. In addition, NART volunteers had to prepare and present visual essays on what inspires, activates, agitates and represents them.

Thus followed a two-day event with the exhibition curators (Saskia and Ann Mirjam) and the artist Manfred Dubov. Curators and volunteers discussed and examined NART as an institution, involvement in the local community and possibilities to initiate their own projects. The meeting with Manfred consisted of a presentation by the artist, a small first aid training and large-scale expressive painting workshop.

We ended the year with a festive Zoom chat with artist Sandra Kosorotova who had been in residency at NART that summer where she worked on a community garden project. The volunteers and Sandra had a chat about life issues and options for the future, how to organise your life if you want to be an artist, as well as eco products. Sandra is creating a project with the artist Sepideh Ardalani. The new year was greeted by a virtual visit to Massia Residency and with the artistic practice of Sepideh who introduced us to plant-based tools for alternative ways of relating and gave homage to both decay for life and practice-based knowledge.

Throughout the year we have had fruitful discussions about the state of things, the legacies of human activities, sustainability, local and global effects, grass-root projects, the adaptability of art, human vs nature, soil and the meaning of otherness culturally and existentially. And what to expect

2. A. de Botton, J. Armstrong,  
*Art as Therapy*. New York:  
Phaidon Press, 2013, p. 67.

from ourselves. By discussing different topics and keeping the exhibition artworks in mind, we are finding ways for NART volunteers to express themselves through personal guided tours. The educational programme gives them advocacy, experience and empowerment through practical and creative skills.

My aim was to create a programme that I would have liked to take part in as a young person. A programme that is not just knowledge transference but ignition. NART volunteers are encouraged to recognise connotations and different ways of thinking. We use art as a tool to foster transdisciplinary thinking and find personal meaning. We examine play with materials, ideas, insecurities and strengths to show the humanity and trials of creation, rather than only the final product and what it is meant to say.

I believe the educational programme has served as a support structure for the volunteers. The programme has grown and shifted with the participants, and it has been wonderful to share the journey. *Adjustment* is the key word for the past year. And the process of attunement: how to adapt, let go and rephrase TOGETHER.

The initial duration of the educational programme of the autumn semester (August to December 2020) has expanded into 2021 and will culminate in the opening of the exhibition; tours and workshops will be held during opening times.



NART volunteers and film programme curator Piibe exploring plant-life around the residency. Photo by Kerttu Juhkam.



Volunteers and exhibition curators in Manfred Dubov's first-aid and painting workshop. Photo by Kerttu Juhkam.



The film programme  
will take place in June.

# You're Running. Everyone's Got Holes

Piibe Kolka

Curator of the film programme



You're the only new acquaintance I made last year. We met in December. It happened like this:

At the city centre, a partially regulated crossing, traffic islands, several lanes of travel in both directions; on the far right, a right-turn-only lane with no light, probably for public transport, while the other two lanes go straight, unidirectional. There is a traffic light for crossing these lanes, and there's one for the intersecting street as well. And there, too, is a traffic island. We're coming from a lunch offer at the library cafe and head towards an office building with small rental units. You come uphill, from where the buses turn, and round a sharp corner.

Your thighs are fiery red, muscles taut from the climb.  
Your thighs are fiery red, in shorts, it's December.  
Your thighs are fiery red, you have a startled expression.  
Your thighs are fiery red, no, you have a serious look of resolve.

You're a daily jogger, a young woman, and you're running. You cross the road, pull even with us at the traffic island, pass us, cross the other lane. I look back – there's plenty of joggers these days, I myself run from time to time, but something about your bearing catches the eye. And your thighs are fiery red.

Just when you've hit the opposite sidewalk, you suddenly turn around. You head back, make it on the same green light and you're with us again on the same island. It all takes a couple of seconds; I jump with a start: what the – you just ...? Was it because I was observing you so intently?

Sorry, I didn't mean to ... well it's true it must have looked like I was scowling ...

I hide my eyes, feign indifference, mumble something.

You run past us, back to the kerb where you came from, no need to wait for the green light, you're fast, there are no cars coming, my surprise wears off until... now what? Back again! You ran only a few strides and now you're coming back across the road to the same island, we're still stuck there dumbfounded, I don't even know what we're waiting for, there're no cars coming.

Why did you turn around again?

We get going, the corner of a building is nearing, I don't look anymore, I promise I won't look anymore, the corner is here, even if I turned around, you'd probably be out of sight, yes, no doubt you're going your own way now and we are going our separate ways and we won't see each other again and in reality I won't ask, why on earth? That wasn't logical, was it? Everyone saw that it was weird, right? To take the same way back is already a bold choice. But to turn on your heel so suddenly? After a few steps? To cross the same road you'd just crossed? It wasn't coincidental in any way. There must be a determined decision for turning around. If I hesitate where to go next, I start making a vague arc, with no rush. But you spun around on your heel. Did you know in advance you'd do this? Did you make the decision at the moment your foot landed on the other side of the road? It just seemed like the wrong place? Was it some kind of technique? Like a shuttle run? You saw the light was still green? And figured you could get in one more length? You'd take the maximum out of the green? Why? Were we disturbing you? Were we a part of the game? Did you realize we'd become acquainted?

I keep seeing you throughout December. And in January. Usually it's late in the afternoon, we come from our discount lunch, sometimes the sky is red like your thighs. The sun starts setting later: I realize you're catching the daylight for your run, taking a break in the middle of the day when it isn't yet/still rush hour, schedule your running for a time you aren't too full or hungry. I like thinking you have a plan. Or maybe not at all – your running just happens, you wheel around on your heel when you need to. I try to be more discreet about my staring, I'm aware that this acquaintance is one-sided, voyeuristic. But still, I don't want to miss your movement and your rhythm.

...

Sixty-nine-year-old *butō* dancer Eiko explains how she tries to bypass human emotions while dancing and seek a connection with everything else: "The image I often use with my students is an amoeba. It's not about studying the outside look of it, but to allow yourself to say, 'I'm related.'"<sup>1</sup>

The passage above is both a confession and a letter of apology to a jogger who unknowingly became an obsession of mine for weeks. I sought kinship with her in the same way that Eiko did with an amoeba. It was a rhythmic kinship, which poses questions about the body's oscillations, about the intervals in movements and their interplay.

1. W. Perron, *Through the Eyes of a Dancer: Selected Writings*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013, p. 197.

The programme of artists' films at the exhibition *Point of No Return*. *Attunement of Attention* stems from the same interest. These films are close to bodies – people and others – and reflect different oscillating frequencies. Bodies that look for a place in physical space and landscapes, bodies that move in time, bodies that perform measured gestures and find a rhythm in relationships with others.

Everyone in a moment captured into an audiovisual artefact where a global connection with many others is inevitably clear, but there is only one sole body for reacting, taking a step, turning around or standing still. Before the rhythm becomes a repetitive, self-perpetuating mode of being, rhythm is a matter of decision and attention. I got caught by the jogger. I don't know exactly what the recognition of kinship in frequencies results in, I'm not sure if there is any result. But it could happen that for an instant, attunement is possible, some boundaries will blur. Because

*"[E]veryone's got holes.[...] No amount of disintegration or porousness makes us any less human. One can remain human while being mixed up – because to be human is to be mixed up."*<sup>2</sup>



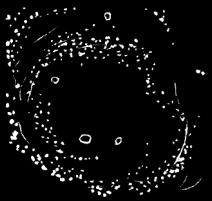
# Life in a Transition Era

Kaja Tael

Ambassador at Large for Climate and Energy Policy,  
Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.  
invited writer



My bookshelf at home holds an outstanding album from 1939, *Old Narva*. It was a gift to my mother, who spent her childhood in pre-war Narva. The album is in four languages – Estonian, English, German and Swedish – and the introductory sentence remarks in passing – for surely this was obvious to readers of the day – that Narva is well-known for its charms as a tourist town. The pictures of the Baroque Old Town leave no doubt, of course. This is a Narva almost no one today knows as Narva shared the fate of hundreds (or was it thousands? has anyone tallied them all?) historical centres across Europe destroyed in the Second World War. Unlike the Dresden Frauenkirche or Warsaw's Old Town, Estonia's lost city has not risen again. Point of No Return? My mother wasn't able to spend time in that city without shedding tears, but still wrote a sanguine book of memoirs late in her life. Doubtless because of this, I have my own special way of looking at Narva. The Germans have a saying: "One eye cries while the other laughs." My other eye rejoices over the new life in the town – just getting off the ground, which is to say that it is everywhere in the air like spring; not just in the brisk tourist activity along the restored promenade, or in Alexander's Cathedral or Hermann Castle but also the Narva College. There is no better place than Narva for asking yourself the big questions of life and beauty, good and evil, humans and nature. The answers are in the air here. Narva isn't unique in terms of either its history or its future. But Narva is symbolic. Its fate has the power to communicate across ethnic lines and different types of people; and the most pressing universal concerns are bound up in its present-day: the rise and fall of big industry, the impulse of people pursuing energy sources to be nature's overlords, and the painfully felt consequences of their failed stewardship. In the



19<sup>th</sup> century, the textile mills of Kreenholm were a point of pride. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Narva was proud of its electrical engineers, as all of Ida-Viru County celebrated its oil shale industry. Today, in the European Union, we have decided that atmospheric carbon emissions must cease by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And, of course, we're not unaware that one day, oil shale and fossil fuels will indeed simply run out. We are currently drawing two past centuries to a close at the same time. What lies ahead?

Economic restructuring with all of its expenses and the spectre of unemployment is a frightening perspective. But the consequences of climate change are even scarier. The European Union is a powerful economic bloc, in its visions a pioneer and a flagship of innovation. True, in reality it falls short of its dreams, but these watershed times and new challenges may just be the catalyst needed for a new ascent. Estonia would do well to recall the Tiger Leap, a programme to buy computers for every school in the 1990s that launched the country's rapid digitalization. While it's hard to make radical changes from a comfort zone, shuttered industries should think precisely about breakthrough steps, so called disruptive technologies that could confer an advantage on the market and help to restore competitiveness faster. The state can think about making investments into fields that will tick several boxes at once. For example, it would be wise for Estonia to use cheaper loan money as a stimulus for the construction sector – it will be good for employment, insulated houses are much more energy efficient and thus serve the goal of reducing emissions, and home heating bills will become more affordable. A consistent course toward reducing fossil fuel consumption will encourage companies to invest into R&D and bring totally new products to market. All of this together will create a new economy. An economy that doesn't shovel oil shale or coal into the furnaces, doesn't rely on gas, let alone oil, and which uses sun, wind and water as energy sources and turns renewable electricity into hydrogen fuel. Hydrogen will power trains – and they will go far, being a viable alternative to planes for tourists – as well as passenger cars (self-driving, naturally). This economy will not produce in excess or waste food; it will be capable of recovering the waste it generates, because consumers have developed greater awareness. Everyone's common goal in every walk of life will be sustainability and resilience. There is no going back, because even a child – especially a child – can see that we were living at the expense of the future. As long as this new economy is not here yet, we are in a transition period.

In other words, we may know the goal but we don't know the exact way to get there. All of this is suspiciously reminiscent of a revolution. No revolution is easy to get through. Some are also followed by setbacks, counterrevolution that sends society back to the old ills. Until a new revolution, one that makes it possible to avow that there never was any going back. It only prolonged the tribulations. The great credo of the European Union in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is just transition: alleviating human suffering in the process of economic restructuring. This, too, is universal, but in Narva the local impact is particularly clear. Now is the right time to make the maximum use of the major European Union financial aid granted for this purpose, which until recently we couldn't even have dreamed of.

It will require a sophisticated art of compromise between the interests of people and nature, state and local government, Estonia and the European Union. Something is in the air in Narva, as said. That is literally the case. All through the history of industry in Narva, excess carbon dioxide has been released into the air. The solution isn't to destroy the economy but build a new one. The amounts available through investment programmes and banks – several times bigger than direct subsidies – require a new way of thinking. It is a chance for completely new companies, and it is highly likely that they will be ones that operate in the field of a breakthrough technology. Estonia should no doubt be up to the task to accomplish this new Tiger Leap.

People are always fragile during a transition era. Their hearts and minds also need sustenance. *Weltschmerz* gives birth to art on so many occasions. Even the European Union understands this, in its somewhat bureaucratic manner. Among other things, an experiment is underway to support a green ethos in architecture. Whether the European Bauhaus – still at the conceptual stage – will one day match the holistic aesthetics of its eponymous predecessor is of course unknown.

Every question asked, every answer given – including through art projects – has its sounding board. I think Narva is a very fertile bed. That is because I believe that Narva is still – or again – home to a *genius loci* – the intangible atmosphere that is part of a city's soul. Still tentative, underground, hiding in the shadows. Let the spirit into the room, feed it on your dreams, clothe it in ambitious plans. In Estonian fairy tales, advice is given by a pocket-sized wise man. Or a hedgehog – nature personified, after all. We just have to listen.



KAJA TAEL (1960) is Ambassador at Large for Climate and Energy Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tael graduated from the University of Tartu in 1983 with a degree in Estonian philology, and received a Soviet postgraduate degree in 1989. She has published scholarly works and translated political science works into Estonian (including John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* and Henry Kissinger's *Diplomacy*). She has worked in the Academy of Sciences and the Estonian Institute. From 1995 to 1998, she was foreign policy adviser to President Lennart Meri. From 1998 on, she held various positions at the Estonian Foreign Ministry, including ambassador to the United Kingdom and Germany and most recently, Estonian Permanent Representative to the EU in Brussels (2016–2019), a period during which Estonia held the presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2017. From 1995 to 2012, she was chairman of the board of the Estonian Institute. From 2011 to 2016, she was member of the supervisory board of the University of Tartu, and from 2018, the member of the board of the Estonian representation of the Swedish Environment Institute. She is the recipient of state decorations, including the Order of the Coat of Arms of the Republic of Estonia (3<sup>rd</sup> class) and the Service Cross of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

# The Itch

Tanel Rander

Invited writer

1. A thinker of Romanian origin whose book of aphorisms, *The Trouble with Being Born* (translated into Estonian by Tõnu Õnnepalu, published in 2012), is like a resource book for surviving amidst the existential absurd. As he himself says, “every book is a suicide postponed”. This book certainly is. I called upon Cioran in writing this text much as Dante invoked Virgil to get through hell and purgatory.

0.

It’s the darkest time of the year, I’ve cut myself off from the whole world and haven’t met a soul for months on end. Art has been replaced by the pandemic. Every cancelled project brings me the same joy as every closed school or grounded airliner. It’s a dark night, whose clear, revealing eye is useless for ordinary everyday activities. Yet it’s essential for allowing human rationality and the itch that comes with it to subside. I truly wish that for the whole human race.

1.

When the pandemic hit and someone predicted it would kill 60 million people, I told my friend jokingly that this could be our chance to contribute, with our modest little lives, to population decline. But isn’t the number too small to give our lives for? What number would be big enough for us to go forth fearlessly to meet our end? At times when I suspected I had the virus, I had to look the truth in the face. The truth being hope, the will to live and love for fellow humans. Emil Cioran<sup>1</sup> once said, more or less, that people flirt with death but when death comes knocking, they’re quickly out the back. The flight is instinctive, you can’t do anything about it.

2.

Misanthropic thoughts – directed at both self and others – come very easily. But then I am overcome by a tender feeling of universal love, and

I think that maybe humans aren’t the planet’s parasites after all, that the gloom comes from the same paranoid urge that made Americans line up outside gun stores at the start of the pandemic. But luckily my mind is clear enough to know that isn’t true, either. What is true is that an environmental catastrophe will kill us by our own hand, literally and figuratively.

3.

The brutality and gluttony embodied in Asia’s live animal markets knows no bounds. All of a sudden, amidst unimaginable suffering and injustice, Nature collected herself and came up with something that managed to slow people’s plundering advance. Anyway, I like thinking that that’s the way it was. I like thinking that miracles are possible, that good vanquishes evil. It gives hope even if you know you’re on the bad guys’ side and will end up losing.

4.

I sense that a narrative of universal, shared blame for environmental collapse is being advanced. And I also perceive my own tendency to talk about a universal human and his itch. The notion that we should all feel equally guilty – me as well as the employees of Eesti Energia, Rail Baltica and the State Forest Management Centre. Isn’t that unfair?

5.

Modernity is like an opera theatre built in the middle of a rainforest. A remnant in the wrong place and time, its beautiful form concealing hushed-up suffering. Aesthetics is the enticing trap of modernity – it breeds the same sudden thirst for living as when death comes knocking on the door. Anibal Quijano<sup>2</sup> linked modernity with colonialism and rationality. One doesn’t exist without the second and third. And there is no universal person or reality, either, although such a machinery has been foisted on the world ever since Columbus. The modernity that characterizes us is like a package that contains the itch, destruction and guilt.

6.

Modernity is typified by a constant need for novelty. Pentti Linkola<sup>3</sup> described how better food sanitation destroyed a key part of the archaic lifestyles. All of a sudden, society was crazy about freshness, hulking refrigerated warehouses rose and transport accelerated and expanded in the name of fresh food. In the TV adaptation of *The Snow Queen*, a wealthy refrigerated warehouse owner offers a poor grandmother big money to buy roses that had burst into bloom in the middle of winter. “Some things aren’t for sale,” says the grandmother, spitting in the face of the rational and thus at modernity and colonialism in the process.

7.

One of the most terrible things in the current world is the concept of “ecosystem services”. These “services” are benefits nature offers to people.

2. Peruvian thinker who is considered one of the main founders of the decoloniality/modernity movement.

3. A very radical Finnish philosopher (he has been called, among other things, an ecofascist) who wanted humankind to go back to a pre-industrial existence. His ideas and writings were matched in their radicalism by his lifestyle.



Talk of services is sure to be followed by bills. Modern industrial civilization sees nature as a resource and a passive object. Consequently, only a person can present the invoice. We can expect a new gold rush on yet undiscovered spheres and everything that people haven't yet had a claim to.

8.

A lawyer recently expressed the opinion that the forest can't be taken as self-evident – the owner's rights and responsibilities are attached to the forest, he said, and if a forest is a place for spending free time and preserving biodiversity, then that should be viewed as an ecosystem service provided by the forest owner, something that can't be free. That opinion exposes two important truths: a) there's a bid to portray capitalistic industrial civilization as the natural original condition. Before I see a tree growing, I think about property. In essence the world has been turned upside down and the unnatural is now natural and the other way around; b) this betrays the real face of ecosystem services; nature has been commodified and nothing can be left in peace. Not a single blade of grass can grow without belonging to someone's accounting system. No tree can stand without the blessing of the forest owner. Birds and beasts are entered on to the financial statements at their price per kilogram and their life is spent between trailcams and optical sights. But the idea that a land owner provides ecosystem services is religious in its nature. Here we see that people feel something that isn't theirs belongs to them.

9.

From time to time, I still believe in the existence of a universal human. *Homo universalis* did not evolve from apes but from beavers.

10.

The Ministry of the Environment declares that ecosystem services are conservationist, social and economic benefits that ecosystems offer to humans. I imagine how easy it is to popularize this ideology by talking about how every blade of grass is an asset and is recognized in accounting, and that every insect has an economic influence. And note that the one doing this talking is a country that practices extractivism and cannot control its own deepening urge to turn its own forested territory into a clear-cut. What else would you expect from such a country but a lawyer who bills you for breathing fresh air?

11.

In fact, ownership isn't anything self-evident or absolute. Ownership exists in the context of general interests and it is subordinate to them. Yet more and more, we see individual interests coming to the fore at the expense of general interests. It can be assumed that humankind has an instinct for survival, not suffocating in a steamy greenhouse-like atmosphere. Yet even stronger is humanity's instinct to satisfy selfish needs, get immediate gratification. And so, our country lets the destructive urges swarm out of control and calls it

freedom. Even as the existence of statehood gives us a superb opportunity to delegate the superego's control of the dark urges to someone else.

12.

At some point, it might become clear that a private owner is a bad owner for a forest. Just like the consensus reached in the past that the state is a poor owner for companies. If a private owner thinks that they can just loosen and tighten the ecosystem's faucet as they see fit; if they assert ownership of something that was there long before people existed; if they subjugate living nature to their own materialistic interests, then they should be reminded that their ownership or its scope is the consequence of an unquestionably poor societal decision and that decision can be amended. It can be amended without violence, without revolution. All it takes is for officials to do their work well. Does that sound more dystopian than "ecosystem services"?

13.

The current state is a bad owner for a forest. Our Constitution, which sees nature as merely a resource, is a relic of the colonial era. Inspired by Ecuador and Bolivia, there's now talk of the idea of giving nature status as a legal subject. We, too, could have a law that lets nature impose limits on human activity, not the other way around. It would require big changes in all of society and a great cleansing of minds and hearts. Without that, laws would not have any power. We have grown used to laws saying one thing but people doing another in real life.

14.

The world we know began in the post-Columbian plantation economies. It was based on three elements – stolen land (America), stolen labour (Africa) and the ill-gotten gains concentrated in the hands of a minority (Europe). That old plantation archetype still exists today. Social welfare states maintain sacrificial areas that are generally far away, in a former colony or in some periphery. A hole has to be created for a castle to rise. Estonia's main sacrifice area is Ida-Viru County. A naturally amazing place, Estonia's taiga, the beginning of the boreal forest zone.

15.

When forest owners of Alutaguse learned that their woodlands were inhabited by the flying squirrel, they started destroying the habitats to prevent the forest from being placed under protection. "In permitting man, Nature has committed much more than a mistake in her calculations: a crime against herself," wrote the patron saint of suicides, Cioran. For some reason, that quotation in particular came to mind.

16.

The invisible radiation emitted by the Chernobyl disaster turned everything ordinary and familiar potentially deadly. Many who had to evacuate didn't



understand what was going on. How do you abandon your home in the middle of spring with everything in bloom? The containment crews have recalled that they had to improvise their own “dosimeters” out of wire and piece of wood to persuade the inhabitants. It worked like an amulet – something that pointed to the existence of invisible truth and reading. Just a piece of wood would not have been enough to convince Soviet people. Wire is of human origin, it conducts electricity, brings news. Wire is a door open to change. What might convince climate change sceptics in a world with wireless internet?

17.

In the middle of the pandemic, I’ve been amazed by the machine-like art sector, which continues overproduction in spite of everything. There’s no change to be seen besides the facemasks that have appeared in works. The world continues in the same mode, like an incessantly operating logging harvester that can’t be idled for a second lest it cease to turn a profit. It’s as if the pandemic is some annoying, secondary trifle. Like bad weather, which can be overcome with the right clothing and an umbrella. Perhaps rubber boots and a boat, at some point.

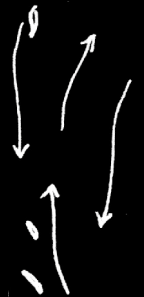
18.

Once I was sitting by the Miljacka River in Sarajevo. Near the bridge where Franz Ferdinand was killed, setting off the First World War. The river was very dirty, forced to flow between high stone embankments in a series of terraces. A large school of fish had gathered by one of them. They were trout – the freshwater mountain river species. They tried to jump over a weir upstream. They were in their home river, even if it had been turned into a rock-lined channel. Even in this situation, they continued their innate behaviour. Eels do, too, as they migrate from Lake Võrtsjärv, down the River Emajõgi, Lake Peipus and ultimately to the Sargasso Sea, slipping through the turbines of the Narva hydroelectric plant, where 12% die. All creatures want to survive. All creatures – besides humans – want to stay who they are.


19.

Living in a slow-motion train wreck kind of catastrophe means living in a world where everything familiar gradually proves illusory, space junk, because you have discovered that Mother Nature and the law of life itself have turned against human existence. Against you. Can this even be written about? Words are familiar, after all, but are the things behind them familiar? Maybe writing and speaking, people as such and one person to another are the only things that we have left.

TANEL RANDER (1980) is a freelance artist, curator and writer. Previously, he studied law and worked as an advocate and other positions in the legal profession. In 2008, he devoted himself exclusively to creative activity. He holds a master’s degree from the Estonian Academy of Arts interdisciplinary arts programme and for many years has been in doctoral programme at the same school. His past public works have mainly involved performance art and literary fields. For the last ten years, Eastern European identity and decolonialist criticism has been in the forefront of his work and he has taught the same topic at the academy for several years. In broaching social themes, he has always striven to preserve his own mythological world, where landscape, language and archetypal entities are a key part. This world has primarily manifested through his collaboration with Erkki Luuk. He has published several books: the novel *Kontrolli alt väljas* (Out of Control, 2008), an experimental work, *Tammeöö*, co-authored with Erkki Luuk (2012) and an anthology of theoretical texts, *Archives and Disobedience. Changing Tactics of Visual Culture in Eastern Europe* (2016), which he edited with Margaret Tali. He has also published many articles in the Estonian media and contributions to various exhibition catalogues and text collections. He curated the Y Gallery programme in Tartu and founded the Brivibas Gallery, which had a limited-time-only run in Valga. He has also collaborated in the field of performance art and theatre with the 10x10m group of artists, Karl Saks and Hendrik Kaljupärv. In 2019, in collaboration with the Sled group of artists, he curated a series of exhibitions related to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March deportations, *Siberian Childhood*. The exhibition was held in 16 venues across Estonia. In recent times, he has taken an interest in the psychological and therapeutic nature of art.







## Project team

ANN MIRJAM VAIKLA (1990) is an artist and curator and has been the director of Narva Art Residency (NART) since 2017. Her practice lies in the intersection of performing and visual arts working within various contexts at galleries, theatres and public spaces in Estonia and internationally. Nominated for a CEC ArtsLink fellowship, she is participating in a multi-year residency programme at the Triangle Arts Association and Grand Central Art Center in the US where she is researching the role and potential of social sculpture. In her research, she draws inspiration from her experience at NART, working mostly on curatorial projects that involve community engagement (*WEEDS FEED!*, 2021; Narva Urban Lab projects (*Re)configuring Territories*, 2019, and *Narva–Detroit: Postindustrial Cities on the Border – Where to?*, 2018). She studied Scenography (BA) at the Norwegian Theatre Academy and Culture and Arts (MA) at the Novia University of Applied Sciences in Finland.

SASKIA LILLEPUU (1986) combines anthropological sensibility, curating and non-fiction writing in her creative practice, sensing through potential contact points between anthropology and contemporary art. Her current interests are the ways humans perceive, deal with and address the global ecological crisis, along with the challenges it brings to our habitual human ways. Some of her companions in this research are post-humanist thinkers and the corporeal knowledge of non-normative bodies. Art as practice, as a way of inhabiting the world and its social role are topics that have interested her since her anthropological fieldwork in the audiovisual art scene of Barcelona in 2012–2013. She studied Social and Cultural Anthropology at Tallinn University (BA), Visual Culture Research (Graduate Certificate in Liberal Arts) and Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Australian National University. Currently, she is enrolled at the Estonian Academy of Arts in the Curatorial Studies MA programme.


MARJU TAJUR (1991) is an Amsterdam-based freelance producer, coordinator and fundraiser working in the fields of arts and culture. Her interests lie in the intersection of (contemporary) art and power dynamics, with a focus on social activism, conceptually-driven projects and collaborative work. She has assisted with developing the conceptual frameworks of exhibitions and public programmes for Marres, House for Contemporary Culture, with exhibition production at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht, and with exhibition coordination at Framer Framed, Amsterdam. As a freelancer, she has worked on multiple art projects and exhibitions involving transdisciplinary research. Currently, she is working with the digital collections of the International Institute of Social History, and with the exhibition management of Narva Art Residency. Tajur has studied Arts and Culture (BA) in Maastricht University and Arts and Society (MA) in Utrecht University.

KERTTU JUHKAM (1986) is an artist, graphic designer and art educator who is interested in finding personal connections using process-oriented and transdisciplinary approaches to art and education. Since 2018, she has organised educational and public programmes at the Tallinn Art Hall

contemporary art gallery and worked as an art teacher and graphic designer at Sally Stuudio Art School. She believes in taking a moment to slow down to weave conversations about ways of being – between art and the viewer, humans and other-than-humans. Doing so gives people agency and encouragement to think along, question, voice their opinions and participate in the world creatively. Juhkam studied Printmaking (BA in Fine Arts) at the Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn and at the Royal Academy of Arts in the Hague, Netherlands. In Autumn 2018, she began her MA studies in Educational and Developmental Sciences at Tallinn University.

PIIBE KOLKA (1986) is a film-maker, cinema watcher and artist who is interested in the divergent potential of the relatively young art form of film and its various crossover forms. She is drawn by the fact that auteur cinema is a personal artistic practice with ample room for experimentation and inquiry into the audiovisual, temporal and rhythmic peculiarities of the genre. By posing the questions “what is happening?” and “how is it?”, she delves into the intensity of the feeling of presence in films and exploring the facets of that feeling. Kolka has worked in New York as a cinematographer and editor of documentaries, feature films and auteur films. She is currently working on the Tütarakk short film and expanded cinema project, studying the multiple interpretations of gestures performed in front of a camera, and delights in footage recorded on audio cassette using a low-resolution camcorder, a pixelated, fluttering change of pace to extremely high-definition playback. Kolka studied anthropology at Tallinn University (BA 2010, MA 2015) and documentary film-making and general cinema at the New School in New York (MA 2014).

NARVA ART RESIDENCY (NART) is a cultural platform founded in 2015. It facilitates residencies, art exhibitions, talks and educational workshops. It is located in Narva city on the Estonian-Russian border on the historical Kreenholm site. The international artist-in-residency programme is open for artists operating across a wide range of disciplines, including Visual Arts, Music, Performance, Architecture, Design, Film, Literature, Curatorial Practices and more. It generates creative exchange between practitioners and strengthens links with the local community. The centre is located at the historicist villa, which was originally built for the director of Kreenholm Textile Manufacture. In close proximity stand the vacant factory buildings which once formed the largest enterprise of its kind in Europe (anno 1857). Narva Art Residency is operated by the Estonian Academy of Arts in collaboration with Narva Gate and is supported by the Estonian Ministry of Culture.



This publication accompanies  
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*Attunement of Attention*  
at Narva Art Residency  
24 April – 20 June 2021

#### Exhibition

Artists:  
Alma Heikkilä  
Anne Noble  
Felipe de Ávila Franco  
Flora Reznik  
Hannah Mevis  
Hans Rosenström  
Juss Heinsalu  
Manfred Dubov  
Marit Mihklepp  
Melanie Bonajo  
Nina Schuiki  
Pia Arke  
Saara-Maria Kariranta  
Sissel Marie Tonn  
Sepideh Ardalani and Sandra Kosorotova  
Vera Anttila

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