

At the centre of Ann Pajuväli's artwork are 3D drawings and spatial representations of graphics, which delicately, almost imperceptibly shift perception – lighten gravitational force and linear perspective.

The artist studies everyday objects, different items, tools, prototypes, products, combining, assembling, classifying and archiving them endlessly from her catalogue of drawings. Unbeknownst to herself, Pajuväli would appear to be following the KonMari organizational method developed by the famous Japanese Marie Kondo: "Sort objects by their category, not their location." By changing the location of the objects, their function also changes.

Pajuväli is fascinated by the universal recognisability of forms and games on the borderlands. What is real anyway, and what is just an illusion, a mirage conjured up by the artist's stroke? The manual illustrations of lines and spaces may manifest themselves in 3D space, too, to be reflected back again on to the surface of a screen. In her drawings, the planar has several dimensions, each spatial image created has its own form-related and physical restrictions and rules. If she throws a ball into her line-space, it need not bounce back but hang suspended.

The artist, who lives in Õismäe, has chosen as inspiration for her work, *Over the Edge, Around the Pond*, displayed at the Artishok Biennale, the central hub-and-spokes design of Õismäe where the prefabricated buildings make up a conceptual framework around the park and central pond. The cartographic images of Õismäe inspire the creation of Oriental floral paintings and art deco like ornaments on the drawing. Here, too, the goal was to influence spatial perception through different levels. The framing of the 2.6-metre-wide drawing with actual concrete kerbstones effectively conveys the fixed logic of the artist's glass-covered world of line-space and the alienation from the external world in the Baroque foyer of Kadriorg Palace.

Artist:

Pajuväli

Text:

Säde

Anna Mari Liivrand's works merge sculpture and drawing into fragile and ethereal installations. With her works, she attempts, using everyday materials and objects, to study the secret desires attributed to them.

What interests the artist at the Artishok Biennale is how to copy and imitate the tactics used by Tallinn Old Town souvenir shops to trap and seduce tourists. A branch motif, first drawn with a delicate hand and then executed in wrought iron, is adorned by additional gizmos made of amber and little LEDs. The little LEDs blink on and off slowly - like a will-o'-the-wisp, as the artist says - to tempt walkers to deviate from their route.

The work installed in three different locations copies itself. A souvenir tries to imitate handicraft and authenticity related to a place. Both wrought iron and amber often figure in kitschy folk art and are materials much used thanks to the tourism industry operating in the early medieval Tallinn Old Town. Although amber shops are numerous in the Old Town, the fossilized tree sap isn't actually found in Estonia. In the present, it, like many other minerals, has been granted esoteric functions - to convey love, positivity, self-confidence and everything else a person happens to need. Liivrand does not critique either souvenirs or the New Age crystal healing industry with this work; rather, she tries - with only minimal intervention in the urban space - to draw attention to how the traits and qualities attributed to materials are so susceptible to manipulation, relative and derived from the contextual system.

Without actually having seen how the work will look like in the urban space, it is very difficult to imagine based solely on 3D drawings whether the work will spark the associations described above or whether it will be neutralized and become just another Christmas decoration on the building facades.

Artist:

Text:

Let's start with the facts. The work exhibited at the Artishok Biennale, *White City*, consists of architectural models of a standardized project that are situated on two custom-made tables. Both tabletops measure 89 × 209 cm, and the tables are situated on 77 cm high sawhorse legs. Painted wood was used to prepare the six models. A total of 1404 squares were cut from 404 plywood strips. The number of pieces will be equal to the number of windows in the six models. The prototype for the building is a nine-storey prefabricated building that could be seen on Kaselaan's photographs that lined concrete doll heads in the installation *Square of the Dolls* (2014). *White City* is the reference system used for *Square of the Dolls* and a further variation on that work.

A doll is usually a reduced copy of a person, but Kaselaan's dolls are larger than life and the models of the prefabricated buildings have been reduced to dollhouse size. Copy, casting in a mould, and manipulation of sizes are an important part of being a sculptor. Kaselaan himself claims the work process is not important here, yet he describes the routine nature of cutting pieces of wood as a monotonous and alienating assembly line work. Manually producing the models for the standardized houses attempts to bring the human dimension into mass production - the idea of a flaw and imperfection being something unavoidable and essential for life.

What is left of humanity when it is forced into a box with windows? Kaselaan is interested in the human soul vs. technical progress, finishing vs. a suitable degree of robustness. Drawing inspiration from Nikolai Baturin's novel *Apocalypse*, where a soulless person is no better than an unfeeling robot who acts cold-blooded and for whom art no longer exists. Technology co-opted to serve the powers that be - a drone flying through a manually copied white city and its emptiness - conveys well the sense of a person's alienation from the environment they themselves have created.

Artist:

Kaselaan

Text:

Säide

I still remember the indescribable feeling when I first found myself on the `aaaaarg.fail` or `ubu.web` page. A real sense of hitting the jackpot, a goldmine. I downloaded all the texts that seemed remotely interesting and there were many of them. It was my first open-source date, an absolute catharsis. I have yet to open most of those PDFs. Yet these files give me licence to belong to information society, attesting to the fact that I know the laws of downloading, that I know the code.

I am quite tired of computers; a large portion of the day is spent on communicating via computer or with the computer itself. Am I really sure I don't want to install that update? I click "Remind me tomorrow". That tomorrow has lasted a long time.

Can there even be dialogue between algorithm and a person? The last time I changed an impossible flight connection generated by a computer, this is the answer I got from Finnair's AI customer service associate, SISU: "Unfortunately I can't answer your question but I will put you in touch with my human colleague who will definitely be able to help you." I wrote "Yes" and waited. The human colleague never contacted me, they were probably already sleeping, phone in airplane mode and laptop shut.

My 93-year-old grandmother never understood how the internet worked. "It's like a telegram, only without paper and much faster," I said in my last attempt to explain it to her. Each time she saw me at the computer, she asked with a slight grin: "Hasn't that telegram arrived yet?"

The floor is lava, I jump back, shackled to my computer. I don't want more code; I want less code. I don't want to know whether it is allowed by law, whether you have enough battery, whether it is personal, whether it is in a different language, whether it is meta. If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of this revolution!

Artist:

Text:

Johanna Ulfsak is the only artist I know whose primary medium is a loom. Ulfsak's work is sensitive and distinctive; she is interested in the hierarchies prevalent in society - life's fragility along with its conflicts and humour. The long and meditative work process is important for her works. It's a process where signs of manual activity become the main navigational markers: the imperfections, flaws of woven fabric, the added stitches.

The work created for Artishok, *Soft Copies*, is a conceptual sequel to *Old Scar*, which depicted Naivist human figures locked in a power struggle, painted on a fabric stretched over hospital patient screens. Who will come out on top or on the bottom, who is in and out? *Soft Copies* consists of two 9 × 1 m hand-woven parts stitched together, pulled taut between two volleyball net posts. The woven net depicts slightly abstract and weird larger-than-life babies floating in the air without umbilical cords.

In this work, the artist has captured quite a lot of controversial topics - the emotional work attributed to women, children as a taboo theme for contemporary art and also neo-conservative slogans connected to forced pregnancy and the pro-life movement. Knowing Johanna, I can't fail to mention the sci-fi, dystopian interpretation of the work.

Ridley Scott's series *Raised by Wolves* - where human "copies" gestated outside the uterus are being raised by artificial intelligence on a distant planet far away from conservative views and religious wars - offers plenty of thematic material.

The net does not only separate high and low, us from them, or soft from hard, but also joins, in one space, amateur mass sports events with elitist biennale art, and the conservatives' notions of human reproduction with far-out sci-fi visions. It remains to be hoped that Ulfsak's net functions in Estonian society as a massive dream catcher that will capture the EKRE far-right-populist party's "sporting interest" in making women's choices about their bodies for them.

Artist:

Ulfsak

Text:

Säde

Johanna

Marc Leschelier studied architecture and now works mainly in the medium of sculpture and site-specific performance. He dreams of architecture as a discipline, which instead of bureaucracy and regulations is in a much more immediate dialogue with art. Leschelier wishes to create architecture without design, reduce architecture to a skeleton to understand its components and give brick and mortar autonomy. By placing his practice in counterpoint to architecture and its principal operating mechanisms, he defines his activity as direct construction and pre-architecture – thus, still through architecture. But if we leave aside all of the artist's own definitions, the structures he creates can be viewed as an aesthetic homage primarily to brutalist architecture and, to a lesser extent, to *arte povera*.

Leschelier executes his works in three main categories – reduced models, performances with physical experience, and life-sized prototypes. Be it a brick or stone laying performance or public prototype, his masonry constructions seem at times like the ruins and residuals of some ritual. Documentation of the work, manipulation of proportions and post-processing of photos and videos become key to the presentations of works.

At the Artishok Biennale, the experience of the work through its documentation starts playing a major role: the artist executes his direct construction on EKKM premises and to gain the closest possible access to the material of interest, he documents his activities using a GoPro camera in direct cinema style. Cameras thus become the equal of other tools on the “construction site” and they are on display at the Kai exhibition. Even though it is a so-called direct construction, we can experience it only via the screen.

Artist:

Text:

#pieterjanginckels #nobull #ongoing #escaperoute
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#democraticatmosphere #mineyourhopesandfears
#duckfacedcaffinatedculture #instancesofenergy #innovation
#globalculture #sustainability #getgoing #greendeal
#globalworries #giveitbacktotheworld #coworkingspaces
#thisisgreat #therewillbemiraclesifyoubelieve
#therewillbeenergydrinksforeveryone #successwillfollow
#endlessmerch #freelapsforfans #coolmerch #energyharvest
#thefutureisalreadyhereitsnotjustevenlydistributed #yet
#cashwithwings #copycat #batmanscene #surrendertothescene
#oncetheroleplayisover #oncethepartyisover #copiesofcopies
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#fanofasituation #invincible #localfun #solarsafari
#lifewithoutobjections #surface #blogoshpere #endlessrender
#retromanicdepression #normcorecapitalist #hardcorecapitalist
#radicalsaturation #surroundertothesurface #ripoutthespine
#surrendertothe collective #enterGodmode #suspensionofbelief
#actorsinthesystem #beastieboys #pussyriot #davidbowie #prince
#becomeyourfears #conceptsturnintoalibis #ideafixes
#mirrortrends #capsulescapsule #identitypimp #identitybotox
#acceleration #projectrealisation #blogoshpereharbours #sadcoppy
#anticlimatictwin #fightfirewithfire #surfaceculture
#surfingthesurface #deepprobe #speedtripper #propopro
#architectureasperformance #pressureto perform #proveyourself
#dothings #goplaces #passionto perform #1805characters
#includinghashtags #becomethethingyoufearmost #followtheadvice
#wheredowegofromhere #nobullshit #exhaustionandexuberance

Artist:

Text:

Säde

Pieterjan

Erinckels

Architecture has always sought universal solutions for the creation of an ideal space. An ideal space requires an ideal person, re-designing its user and dictating which activities can be practised in a space in the first place.

Siim Karro has created a multifunctional aluminium cube that is as big as he is and which when unfolded can be used as furniture, a place for storing things, a platform for working out, or other purposes. Going against the standard, he has proceeded from his own measurements, but still, in the miniature environment of his devising in the spacious new development project, he is literally forced into a corner.

It seems that Siim Karro wishes to spotlight the conflicts prevalent in contemporary architecture. On one hand, modern design is moving toward a “custom-made” world – in other words, if you have resources, you can create your own system of measurements going by your foot, instep and elbow. If you don’t have resources, you have to settle for smaller volumes: a mini-house, container, tent or, as Karro proposes with a touch of irony, a fold-up cube.

So what is the absolute minimum for a person? It’s something we’ve all probably thought about during the coronavirus pandemic. At a time when our homes became our workplace and gym, school and extracurricular activity zone for our kids, the home interior had to be reorganized into mini-environments that could be rolled out and folded up, allowing all of the necessary activities to be continued on limited floorspace.

Siim Karro doesn’t give up. Through the cube he created, he enters an apartment in a new development during move-in phase. As his own measurement unit, he performs self-measurement as some hard to define move-in ritual and strains to get a workout that would stand in for physical labour, as if asking, are you satisfied with your place, your cube?

Artist:

Text:

Kaisa Sööt and Koit Randmäe create objects and environments and dream of a more inspiring public space and living environment. Getting their inspiration from the under-table worlds experienced in childhood, they created a playground called *Board Game* for Artishok. It brings different generations and their ways of spending time to and under the same multi-level table.

Playgrounds are places where creativity and control, art and architecture meet. They have an extremely important place in child development, offering a possibility of meeting other kids and to “practise” freedom, albeit generally under the vigilant supervision of a parent. Set inside a sandbox, *Board Game* requires a creative approach and requires both kids and parents to leave their usual comfort zone. Turning hierarchies partially on their head offers the youngsters a hiding place away from constant parental care and supervision, while parents can rest momentarily from meeting the child’s needs and enjoy socializing with other parents.

Through abstract elements, openings and other connections, the table surface offers different alternatives for potential contact between the two worlds. Any sort of room is practised through the activities that take place there; on a playground, connection and disconnection are closely intertwined with the nature of play and imagination. In a story in *One-Way Street*, Walter Benjamin astutely describes how in children’s imaginations, all sorts of oppositions disappear and boundaries blur: “Standing behind the doorway curtain, the child becomes himself something floating and white, a ghost. The dining table under which he is crouching turns him into the wooden idol in a temple whose four pillars are the carved legs.”

But how to avoid the potential risk that the parents will be working at their laptops behind the table and the children begin imitating that situation at their own table?

Artist:

Text:

Säde

Kaisa Sööt

Koit Randmäe

Let's start with a joke. What anniversary took place in 1974? Answer: 50 years without Lenin.

In the work Ann Mirjam Vaikla and Szymon Kula created for the Artishok Biennale, *Monument to (R)evolution*, the artists examine Soviet-era relicts - namely, monuments to Lenin. The monuments recall the enigmatic objects that strike artists as uncanny, recalling a society in which they did not participate themselves.

Born in the 1990s, both artists believe that their generation lacks a unifying collective memory in regard to monuments to Lenin and that the past in post-socialist countries is neither related to the present day nor a preparation for the future. Out of their desire to make the past more accessible for their own generation, they create a monument as a moving picture, in line with the aesthetics of the internet - a hybrid of a boulder and Lenin.

For these artists, a monolith is a symbol that might best convey the internet generation's vacuum and void on this topic. And yet the technical execution of their idea is realized from another relict - a children's calendar with a moving lenticular image. I see it as a very solid memory link connecting two young artists from Eastern Europe.

For the Artishok Biennale, a lenticular print measuring 1.2 × 3.6 m, will be displayed during a performance on Iceland Square. But what can this 10-15-minute-long performance - a quick flash of Lenin on a boulder - communicate in the public space? Is the message that what happens in the physical space is no longer the only layer in our reality? That visual memory from what is experienced only on a screen is biased? That a streaming society can't have a common past or future, duration or continuity? Without having seen the performance, it is hard to say but one more joke in closing. Why did the Tegur rubber factory start producing Lenin figures? Answer: so that anyone could inflate them as much as their heart desired.

Artist:

Text:

Ann Mirjam Vaikla

Szymon Kula