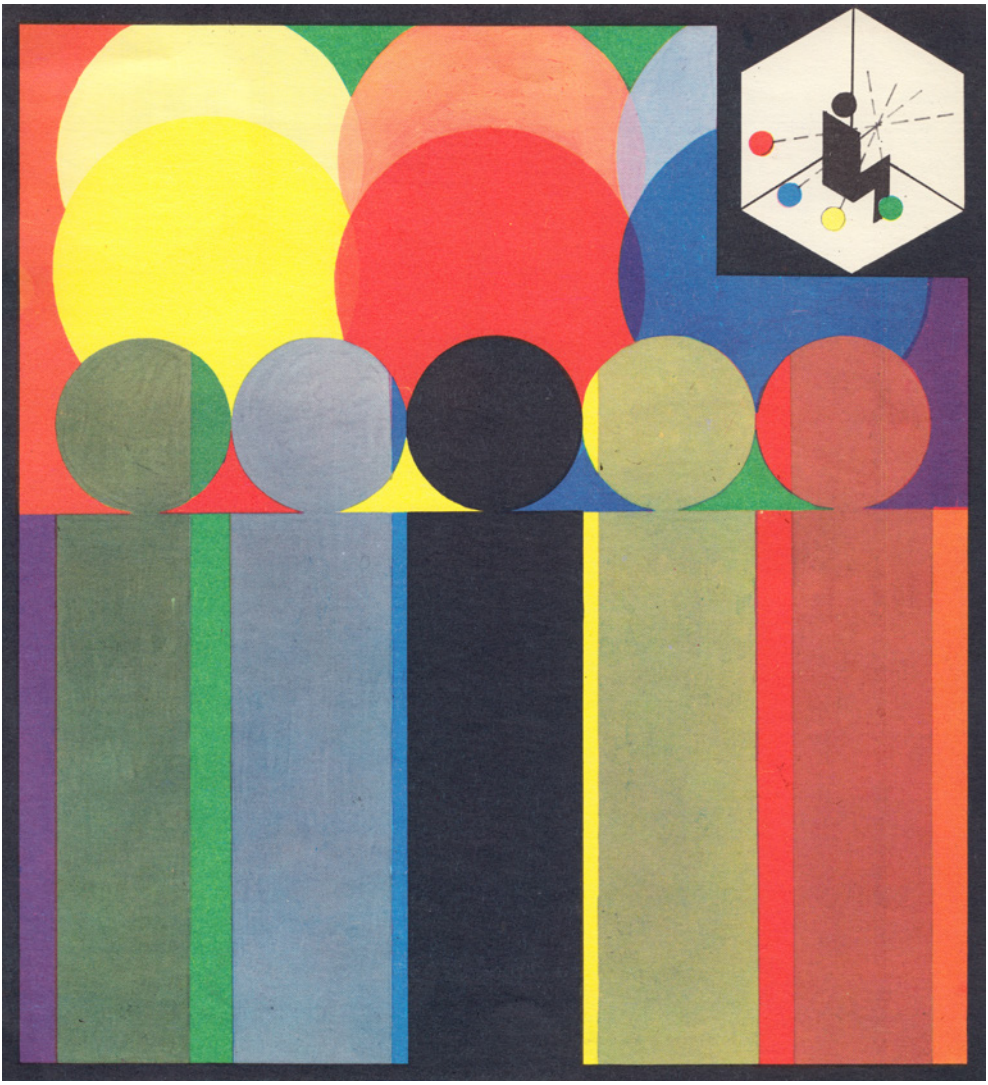
Andres Kurg

BOUNDARY DISRUPTIONS

Late-Soviet Transformations in Art, Space and Subjectivity in Tallinn 1968–1979



Dissertationes Academiae Artium Estoniae 15

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Late-Soviet Transformations in Art, Space and Subjectivity in Tallinn 1968–1979

Institute of Art History
Estonian Academy of Arts
Tallinn 2014

Doctoral thesis

Boundary Disruptions:
Late-Soviet Transformations in Art, Space and Subjectivity
in Tallinn 1968–1979

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On the cover
Sirje Runge, illustration to article “Colour Music at Home”,
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Several ideas from the introductory chapter were first drafted as a position paper for Clark Art Institute seminar "Thinking Art History in East-Central Europe", which took place in the Institute of Art History in Tallinn in 2010. I am grateful to the group of respondents, led by Michael Ann Holly, for their valuable comments to my paper.

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In such a constellation it was abundantly clear that the transgression of boundaries – one could think for instance of the hordes of girls in Kafka's trial, oozing through every doorcrack – are evidence of the collapse of the disciplinary regime, or at the very least that they prefigure it.

— Joseph Vogl, De-totalized Forms of Encounter.[1]

1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the relationship between alternative art in the Soviet Union and changes in its spatial context and in the formation of the subject from the late 1960s onwards, and asks whether the notion of unofficial art is adequate for its characterisation. The description of late-Soviet art as divided between the official and unofficial is studied here as part of a wider dichotomy between the public and the private, which has structured several existing accounts of everyday life in state-socialist societies. I will argue that, rather than being secluded within autonomous islands of private life, the alternative artistic practices of the period are better characterised through their interconnections and contacts with the spheres and spaces outside them. I take this breaking of boundaries to be one of the dominant symptoms in a broader chain of transformations wherein changes in late-Soviet society, including restructurings of everyday life and of forms of culture and leisure, were combined with the global forces of modernisation (or postmodernisation) and its corresponding subject formations. In particular, I look at a group of artists and designers working in Tallinn from the late 1960s onwards, whose work grew out from the new discourses and institutions of the Khruschev Thaw and its aftermath – design or technical aesthetics, information theory and cybernetics – and who went on to provide a critique of those ideas in the second half of the 1970s.

Methodologically, I have been inspired by critical spatial concepts in recent cultural and social theory that see the specificity of a place or locality as emerging out of interconnections and interactions with exterior processes rather than interior ones, and that provide dynamic models for associating spaces with activities and programs. These theories include: Henri Lefebvre's ideas of the social space and spatialisation, as they have been interpreted and expanded in cultural geography (Doreen Massey); Jürgen Habermas's study of the transformation of the bourgeois public sphere, and his commentators in social and political theory (Nancy Fraser, Seyla Benhabib, Craig Calhoun); and Michel Foucault's ideas of disciplinary society and subjectification, as extended in political theory (Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri). As for the existing historiography about the Soviet period, this framework aims to undo it on two levels, suggesting more dynamic ways of relating spaces and identities, but also making a transition away from the perspective of exclusive national histories (written extensively in the newly-independent states following the breakup of the Soviet Union) towards trans-national trajectories and connections.

1 De-totalized Forms of Encounter. Interview with Joseph Vogl. – An Architektur. Produktion und Gebrauch gebauter Umwelt, no. 10 (September), 2009, p. 10.

Research methods employed in this study included working with archival sources (including the private archives of artists and architects), close readings of texts by artists and critics from the period, and critical comparison of those texts with later analyses of the art of the period (including oral history). Equally important for the development of the present argument were close readings and analyses of artworks, designed objects and architectural works, revision of previous interpretations and, in the case of newly-uncovered material, presentation of new and original readings. This new knowledge has been brought together with critical accounts of art and architectural history and cultural and social theory in the West, keeping in mind the different intellectual and cultural context in which that material emerged and the risks that accompany transposing it to the Soviet context. (The translation and transposition of Western critical theories and vocabulary – theories which are often indebted to Marxism –, for use in the analysis of state-socialist Eastern Europe, is simultaneously also an enquiry into the possibility of using them in this context.)

Main sources

Spanning the fields of art, architecture and design, this research draws together a broad network of sources, representing often different viewpoints and voices. My aim is to examine not only art, design and architectural objects, but also to describe the more extensive web of interrelations and influences in which alternative art and architecture practices operated in state-socialist society. The writings of artists and architects from the 1970s have been a significant resource in this process. Leonhard Lapin's texts – his notes, manuscripts, criticism in art and architecture, and also books written retrospectively in the 1990s – have served as an invaluable resource. Of equal importance were critical articles from the 1970s by Vilen Künnapu, Ando Keskküla and Andres Tolts. These artists' writings are contrasted with art and architecture criticism of the same period: by Ene Lamp, Boris Bernštein, Jaak Kangilaski, Tamara Luuk, Eha Komissarov and Sirje Helme. Among the retrospective accounts, Jaak Kangilaski's and Sirje Helme's *Short History of Estonian Art* (1999) and Mart Kalm's *Estonian 20th Century Architecture* (2001) have served as standard texts on the period and as starting points for my own arguments. Significant re-readings of the period were provided by Katrin Kivimaa's *National and Modern Femininities in Estonian Art 1850-2000* (2009) and Mari Laanemets's *Between Western Modernism and Soviet Avantgarde. Unofficial Art in Estonia 1969-1978* (2011) – the latter account emphasises the interdisciplinary character of unofficial art in Estonia during the period.

The literature on Soviet unofficial art has been broad. Three books, the latter two grown out from exhibitions, represent a Western discourse from the Cold War era, which privileged unofficial art as an expression of individual freedom standing against the oppressive state: Paul Sjeklocha and Igor Mead's *Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union* (1967), Igor Golomshtok and Alexander Glezer's *Unofficial Art from the Soviet Union* (1977), and Norton Dodge and Alison Hilton's *New Art from the Soviet Union* (1977). The range of perspectives on this art diversified following the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, when several new volumes presented their accounts of the period: Andrei Erofeev's *Non-Official Art: Soviet Artists of the 1960s* (1995), Boris Groys's *The Total Art of Stalinism* (1992) and *History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism* (2010), Victor Tupitsyn's *The Museological Unconscious* (2009), and more recently Ekaterina Andreeva's *The Corner of Noncorrespondence: The Schools of Nonconformism in Moscow and Leningrad 1946-1991* (2012). While authors like Groys and Tupitsyn have presented bold new interpretations of artworks and artists' groups in Russia, others have brought to light previously unseen material and introduced new knowledge. Nonetheless, in all of these works the notion of unofficial art has remained unquestioned. Moreover, it continues to be used by a new generation of researchers. Susan E. Reid's work is an exception to this, drawing attention to the intertwining of the official and the unofficial realms in the 1960s (as demonstrated in her 1996 dissertation *Destalinization and the Remodernisation of Soviet Art: The Search for a Contemporary Realism, 1953–1963*).

Contiguous with accounts of unofficial art I have also made use of studies of Soviet society in the 1960s and 1970s: Moshe Lewin's *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation* (1991) maps the changes that occurred during those decades as leading toward *perestroika*; Stephen Kotkin's *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse 1970-2000* (2001) portrays the same period as leading to the demise of the USSR. Janos Kornai's *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (1992) and Katherine Verdery's *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (1996) provide a background and vocabulary for describing Soviet economy and enable it to be contrasted with the terms used in critical literature in the West. Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle's edited volume *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (2002) proposes a new and unconventional perspective on the long period of Leonid Brezhnev's rule and reconsiders a term often used in relation to this period – "stagnation". As an overview of the history of cybernetics in the Soviet Union, Slava Gerovich's *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (2002) has been most useful and, in offering a way out from thinking of Soviet society in terms of binaries, Alexei Yurchak's *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (2005) is indispensable.

My thinking of the ways in which everyday life and material culture functioned in the state-socialist society owes a lot to three volumes edited by David Crowley and Susan E. Reid that deal with the entire Eastern bloc: *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (2000), *Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (2002), and *Pleasures in Socialism. Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (2010). Equally, in thinking of the ways in which global modernisation related to architecture and subjectivity, I have profited from groundbreaking studies in architectural history on post-war experimentation and postmodernisation in the West: Reinhold Martin's *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media and Corporate Space* (2003) and Felicity Scott's *Architecture or Techno-utopia: Politics after Modernism* (2007). In parallel with these, Branden Joseph's *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage* (2008) investigates the encounters of the artistic avant-gardes of the post-war years with emergent information technologies and the ways in which they were placed vis-a-vis these new networks.

The theoretical underpinning of this work draws upon Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1974), Doreen Massey's *For Space* (2005), Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1961), Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1* (1976), and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Labor of Dionysos* (1994) and *Empire* (2000). The latter, in addition to extending theories of the subject to include processes of informatization and immaterial labour, also provided the coordinates for situating developments in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s within the context of global change. For extending the discussions on the separate spheres in Habermas, and comparing them with the research material, several edited volumes have been useful: Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar's *Public and Private in Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy* (1997); Lewis H. Siegelbaum's *Borders of Socialism. Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (2006); and two books by N Katherine Hayles, *Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science* (1990) and *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (1999), which have helped me to understand how cybernetics related to broader cultural and political phenomena and to see the tensions in and implications of Norbert Wiener's work.

Plan of the work

The work proceeds in two parallel threads. The first engages critically with the representation of the Soviet domestic sphere and its association with unofficial art. In accounts of unofficial or non-conformist art, starting already in the

late 1960s, homes were portrayed as untainted islands of private life standing against the hostile public sphere, offering both a refuge and the autonomy required for the production of art. The relationship between the private sphere and unofficial art was often a fixed one, ruling out alternative spatializations or identities. Against this, I have aligned my work with recent research that emphasises the permeability of borders between the private and the public, whereby the imaginary autonomy of the private sphere has been replaced by a more complex understanding of the interconnection between "interior" and "exterior".

The second thread looks at the implications of technological changes, discussions concerning consumerism, and the redefinition of everyday life in the work of a group of artists from Tallinn. Many of these artists had a professional background in architecture or design, and they took the environment on the whole as a territory for artistic intervention. By embracing new developments in technology and adapting them to everyday life, their designs for the surrounding environment encompassed not only the aesthetic sphere but also the social sphere, and imagined a new kind of viewer and a new kind of engagement. Thus, their works may be regarded as offering a variety of responses that recognise the potential of new technological means, media and communication systems for restructuring subjectivities, and as an attempt to use these new means in art, design and architecture, thereby inserting alternative meanings to those determined by the dominant ideology. The redefinition of the boundary between the inside and the outside thus becomes significant for both threads: in the case of the domestic sphere, the distinction between the public and the private is questioned; in the case of the subject, explained among other things through continuous processes of information exchange, the partition between the autonomous interior and the outer world becomes blurred.

The introductory chapter is divided into three parts. First, I will introduce the group of artists and architects working in Tallinn in the 1970s, looking at the changes instigated by their practices and giving an overview of discussions of their work in Estonian art–historical literature. I will then turn to the historiography of the notion of unofficial art, looking at its use in the context of artistic practices in the Soviet Union and in this way relating Estonian material to the broader Soviet context. The second part will introduce the theoretical background of the work, looking first at the use of the notions of the private and the public in the context of the socialist state and then at recent spatial theories as a way of redefining this dichotomy. The third part will put forward the idea of the emergence of a new kind of subject in the context of modernisation in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 70s, relating it to the work of the artists and architects under discussion.

1.1 UNOFFICIAL, NON-CONFORMIST, OTHER

1.1.1 Estonian art of the 1970s and the discourse of unofficial art

This study explores developments in the works of a group of artists, architects and designers who began their careers in the late 1960s and early 1970s while studying at the Estonian State Art Institute in Tallinn: Tõnis Vint (graduated 1967), Mare Vint (1967), Sirje Runge (1975), Leonhard Lapin (1971), Andres Tolts (1973), Ando Keskküla (1973) and Jüri Okas (1974). Although most were educated in the faculty of architecture rather than fine art, they nevertheless took an active part in the art life of the period, displaying their work at exhibitions of students' independent work, the youth exhibitions of the Artists' Union, annual survey exhibitions and independent exhibitions organized by the artists themselves. Their works were actively discussed from the early 1970s onwards in art journals, cultural journals and a weekly cultural newspaper. Simultaneously, these artists were active in other fields outside fine art, ranging from animated film (Keskküla, Runge and Lapin) and graphic design (Vint, Lapin) to heritage protection (Lapin) and design of industrial architecture (Okas). Rather than focusing on their individual practices and their subsequent place in the art-historical canon, I am interested in the particular relationship of the works of this loosely-knit group of friends and colleagues to what at the time was called "the surrounding environment" and how changes in their material context had an effect on human subjectivity: how their works displayed and constructed different ways of knowing and acting for human beings in transforming social and spatial circumstances.

In the early 1970s art critics were already referring to a shift away from the concerns and values of the previous generation, emphasising instead the interest among young artists in the changing everyday life, mass culture and (often obsolete) industrial architecture. Since the mid-1960s, Tõnis Vint and his followers in artists' group *Ank '64* had substituted the dominant, moderate, modernist reformism of the Khrushchev Thaw years (the so-called "rough style") with greater attention towards geometric motifs, abstractionism and the autonomy of the image; they propagated the idea of a painting as "a surface covered with colours in a certain proportion, rather than a narration."[2]

2 Ene Lamp, Maal ja aeg. – Töid kunstiteaduse ja –kriitika alalt 2. Artiklite kogumik. Tallinn: Kunst, 1978, p 37. On Ank '64 and Tõnis Vint see: Eha Komissarov, Tõnis Vint. – Noorus, no. 2, 1974, p. 34; Eha Komissarov, Tõnis Vint. Tallinn: ENSV Riiklik Kunstimuuseum, 1987; Anu Liivak, ed., ANK '64. Näituse kataloog. Tallinn: Tallinna kunstihoone, 1995; Elnara Taidre, ed., Tõnis Vint ja tema esteetiline universum. Tõnis Vint and his Aesthetic Universe, Tallinn: Art Museum of Estonia 2012. My use of the name Ank not in capital letters follows the suggestion of Enno Ootsing in: Enno Ootsing, Peegelpilt: Mälestusi ja mõtteid. Tallinn: Enno Ootsing, 2010, pp. 61–83.

However, their younger colleagues – artists such as Leonhard Lapin, Andres Tolts and Ando Keskküla, who showed their first works in the late 1960s under the name *Soup '69* – embraced the plurality of means of art making that had been utilised in Western art since the 1950s: assemblage, collage, montage and happenings. In their own words, they aimed to replace the "aestheticism" of *Ank '64* with the "more banal" means of representation associated with mass culture.[3] This change in art can be viewed alongside the extensive wave of transformations in culture from the second half of the 1960s onwards, which affected the outlook and lifestyles of the younger generation – innovation in Estonian literature, the numerous theatre experiments that appropriated the language of Western avant-garde happenings, and the boom in rock music at the end of the decade.[4] For this generation, Kazimir Malevich and Robert Rauschenberg stood side by side with Jimmy Hendrix and Frank Zappa as idols of the era.[5] Drawing upon artefacts of local mass-culture and the banalities of everyday Soviet life, Pop Art manifested a revision of the earlier approach, which had seen the artwork as a carrier of autonomous values, and this new model preferred art that represented "architectural sensibility"[6] and demonstrated a desire to contribute to the production of a new living environment.[7]

The group of artists presently under discussion has indeed often been described in terms of their interest in the "artificial environment" or the "world

3 Leonhard Lapin, ed., Ando Keskküla. Näituse kataloog. Tallinn: ENSV Riiklik kunstimuuseum, 1986, unpaginated.

4 For the relationship between theatre performances and the art of the 1960s and 1970s see: Anu Allas, Tagasipöördumine ja taktika. Mängu idee 1960. aastate eesti kultuuris ja happening „Mannekeeni matmine". – Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi, vol. 17 (4), 2008, pp. 9–30; Anu Allas, Nõukogude absurd. 1960. aastate eesti kunst eksistentsialismi taustal. – Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi, vol. 19 (1–2), 2010, pp. 41–67.

5 Leonhard Lapin, Arhitektuur kui kunst. – Arhitektuur. Kogumik ettekandeid, artikleid, vastukajasid, dokumente ja tõlkeid uuemast arhitektuurist. Ed. Leonhard Lapin. Tallinn, 1980. pp. 1–7. [manuscript] Museum of Estonian Architecture.

6 This is a phrase from Lapin's speech at the opening of the student exhibition in State Art Institute in April 1971, "Art designing the environment". Leonhard Lapin, Taie kujundamas keskkonda. – Leonhard Lapin, Kaks kunsti. Valimik ettekandeid ja artikleid kunstist ning ehituskunstist 1971–1995. Tallinn: Kunst, 1997.

7 This also explains the role of the works of Kazimir Malevich, primarily in Leonhard Lapin's work. Lapin was first introduced to Malevich in 1968 through a Polish translation of Non-objective World, which was available in local bookshops. In 1975 he came into contact with Pavel Kondratiev, a student of Malevich's and Pavel Filonov's who gave him access to the Russian translation. That same year Lapin and Runge visited George Costakis's collection of Russian avant-garde art, including works by Malevich. In a later text on Malevich, Lapin explains his relationship to the concept of non-objectivity, proposing that while, in Black Square, Malevich had given up objectivity, he nevertheless created a new type of objectivity, "a reality of concretized feelings." Furthermore, according to Lapin, Malevich's architektons should be seen as a radical return to the objective world, "although this world is imbued with the spiritual." Leonhard Lapin, Musta ruudu maagia. – Leonhard Lapin, Kaks kunsti. Valimik ettekandeid ja artikleid kunstist ning ehituskunstist 1971–1995. Tallinn: Kunst, 1997, p. 90.

of things" and in their objective approach to representation, which superseded the previous painterly tradition inherited from the art of the inter-war period.[8] "Emotion" was superseded by "intellect", which for some critics was associated with coldness while others saw in this an ethical concern for the changing environment.[9] Indeed, machines and mechanisation were a source of inspiration to Lapin throughout the decade, and Tolts's and Keskküla's interest in artificial objects was related to their training in the industrial design department, which professed the role of the designer as taking care of the urban environment in its totality. Peeter Urbla, one of the companions of the *Soup '69* group, put it this way in 1970: "The aim [of the work of Tolts and Keskküla] is not so much a representation, as a projection; art that organises a field for thoughts and ideals."[10] Other contemporary authors also pointed to the relationship of these artists to their professional training in design and architecture and how motifs of everyday life intertwine with art making, calling it something that was done "as an aside to home decoration."[11] Art historian Sirje Helme saw this "rhetoric of new space", which emerged in the works of Tolts, Keskküla and Lapin, as related to the ideologies of new urbanity that appeared during that time.[12]

Far from celebrating large-scale manufacturing plants, as the art of the 1950s had done, critics at the time noted that this new fascination with the industrial environment preferred industrial structures devoid of active life, neglected and forgotten (if not yet in ruins).[13] The wastelands and city fringes were romanticised as these artists preferred to investigate the strangeness, or even the mysteriousness, of these structures.[14] Thus an intellectual and rational approach drawn from the fields of design and architecture, existed side by side with an irrational one. As Lapin put it in 1986:

8 Evi Pihlak, Ando Keskküla. – Uued põlvkonnad. Artiklite kogumik, 1. vihik, Irina Solomõkova, ed. Tallinn: ENSV TA Ajaloo Instituut, Kunstiajaloo sektor, 1988, p. 54; See also: Evi Pihlak, Ando Keskküla maalid. – Sirp ja Vasar, 12 September 1975, p. 9.

9 Artist Peeter Urbla put it this way: "To nature is added the artificial environment, artificiality as such; it is seen as cold and uncomfortable, but not unpleasant; it is approached not on the basis of emotion but intellect." He sees here a link to "actual social problems." Peeter Urbla, Kunstipõlvkond 1970. – Noorus, no. 12, 1970, p. 69.; Art historian Ene Lamp wrote that the new generation has been situated in an era for the arrival of which they have not done anything and for which they are not responsible: "Things and situations have been given to them in a ready-made form. … cold indifference could in this way be seen as a philosophical standpoint." See: Ene Lamp, Maal ja aeg, p. 41. For an interpretation that sees it as an ethical concern see: Enn Põldroos, Midagi on toimunud. – Sirp ja Vasar, 26 May 1972, p. 8; Ando Keskküla, et al, Ümmarguse laua juttu noorest kunstist. – Noorus, no. 9, 1975, pp. 44–47.

10 Peeter Urbla, Kunstipõlvkond 1970, p. 64.

11 J.K (Jaan Klõšeiko), Kodukaunistamise kõrvalt, Noorus, no. 1, 1970, p. 64.

12 Sirje Helme, Artforumi ajad. – 1970ndate kultuuriruumi idealism. Lisandusi eesti kunstiloole. Ed. Sirje Helme. Tallinn: Kaasaegse kunsti Eesti keskus, 2002, p. 13.

13 Evi Pihlak, Ando Keskküla, p. 60.; See also: Anu Liivak, ed. Andres Tolts. Tallinn: ENSV Riiklik Kunstimuuseum, 1986.

14 Enn Põldroos, Midagi on toimunud, p. 8.

> "One often walked in the city fringes in order to get to know its multi-layeredness, to discover in addition to the postcard images of beautiful old Tallinn the "ugly" areas. We were drawn to slum motifs, discarded objects, the reality of the railway, warehouses and garbage heaps. Apparently it was here that the spark that ten years later burst into flames in the new architectural movement was ignited, which, leaving behind the soulless geometricism of new towns and machine-like typification, gained a strong local and irrational colouring."[15]

It is this trajectory, from investigations of the environment by artists and architects at the beginning of the 1970s to the architectural projects and exhibitions at the closing of the same decade, that this study and the following chapters set out to follow.

Lapin, Tolts and Keskküla were often joined on their walks in the city fringes by their younger colleagues and friends: Sirje Runge, Jüri Okas, Vilen Künnapu, among others. Some of these walks led to happenings which were in turn documented in film and photography by Jüri Okas.[16] Many of these photographs and film stills later found their way into Okas's graphic works and montages, and Runge used the places discovered during the course of these walks as a basis for her environmental design projects. This same group of artists took part in several significant exhibitions organised by Lapin: in Harku in 1975; in the exhibition of monumental art in Tallinn Art Hall in 1976; and in an architecture exhibition in the Academy of Sciences library in Tallinn in 1978.[17]

In December 1975, speaking at the symposium which accompanied a non-institutional art exhibition on the premises of the Institute of Experimental Biology in Harku, near Tallinn, Leonhard Lapin introduced the term "objective art" to characterise the approach of the group (and the whole generation).[18] According to Lapin, it was a response to the industrialisation and

15 Leonhard Lapin, Ando Keskküla, unpaginated.

16 Although in their choice of "forgotten" areas and aimless wandering the walks come close to similar endavours among post-war Western avant-garde groups like Situationists, there is no knowledge that the artists in Tallinn had any information on these practices. See: Mari Laanemets, Pilk sotsialistliku linna tühermaadele ja tagahoovidesse: happening'id, mängud ja jalutuskäigud Tallinnas 1970. aastatel. – Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi, vol. 14 (4), 2005, pp. 139–172.

17 I will investigate this material in subsequent chapters. See also: Andres Kurg, Official Architecture, Unofficial Art. – Architecture+Art: New Visions, New Strategies. Eds. Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, Esa Laaksonen. Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Academy, 2007, pp. 176–188.

18 The exhibition included artists Sirje Runge, Jüri Okas, Kaarel Kurismaa, among others. As a link with the previous generation of innovators however the exhibition was opened by Tõnis Vint's happening, where he stepped through a paper installed on the entrance door to the exhibition hall. According to Vint, it was Lapin's idea and he had asked Vint to symbolically open the exhibition in this way. Oral information from Tõnis Vint, 10 August 2007.

urbanisation of the late 20th century, to the growing significance not only of mechanical but also of electronic machines in everyday life, and to the emergence of the man-made environment. Rather than representing this environment, the new art should intervene in it and even participate in its production. Lapin positioned this objective approach in contrast to "lyrical-romantic art" – art that offers only sensuous pleasure, relying on traditional means of representation and on a play with forms and colours that contradicts the needs of the contemporary environment. Whereas lyrical-romantic art depended on the artist's personal handwriting and was thus "subjective", this new art, participating in the construction of a new kind of environment, needed to be "objective", free from emotions and having universal aspirations.[19]

This notion of "objective art" also brought together important sources that shed additional light on the underlying ideas that were important to the artists at that time. Firstly, Lapin related the objective tendency to the avant-garde art of the 1920s – to Russian suprematism and constructivism, to the Estonian constructivists group, and to Bauhaus and De Stijl. Secondly, his sources included the Pop and conceptual art of the period and *nouveau realisme*, as introduced and defined by Pierre Restany. Indeed, at the end of his speech, Lapin's call for art to descend onto the streets, for museums to become information and production centres and for static monuments ("fetishes") to be replaced by dynamic ones, was directly indebted to Pierre Restany's 1968 manifesto-like book, which ably described the radicalism of the period.[20]

If other critics identified a similar "objective" tendency in the works of the younger generation emerging in the 1970s, they drew different conclusions from it.[21] Jaak Kangilaski wrote of the change in mentality in the 1970s on the basis of the paintings of Tolts and Keskküla (Tolts and Keskküla did not participate in the 1975 exhibition in Harku and in the second half of the decade turned away from Pop towards hyperrealist painting), seeing their objectivity as a sign of waning optimism and as a response to the growing environmental consciousness:

19 Leonhard Lapin, Objektiivne kunst. – Leonhard Lapin, Valimik artikleid ja ettekandeid kunstist 1967–1977. Tallinn: 1977, pp. 48–63, [manuscript] Leonhard Lapin's archive.
20 On Restany's White Book, see: Romy Golan, Point de chute: Restany à Domus. – Le Demi-Siécle de Pierre Restany. Ed. Richard Leeman. Paris: INHA, 2009, pp. 408–409.
21 See: Ene Lamp, Maal ja aeg, pp. 40–41. Similarly, Evi Pihlak, writing on painting in 1972 detects "objectivity" in the works of a younger generation of painters, describing the works of Ludmilla Siim, closely associated with Tolts and Keskküla at the time. Evi Pihlak, Mõtteid 1972. aasta maalist. – Töid kunstiteaduse ja -kriitika alalt 1. Artiklite kogumik. Tallinn: Kunst, p. 70.; Sirje Helme has later characterised this as "neutrality": "neutrality is not indifference, but a conscious attitude, which manifests the artwork's possibility as objective, thus being an inevitable fact, an object or document inevitably belonging to the environment. […] Neutrality has gained many layers in Estonian culture; in addition to an attitude characteristic to urban culture it has also become a certain sign of resistance culture, resignation from the demands posed by the state." Sirje Helme, Artforumi ajad, pp. 15–16.

> "Reality conquers the works of Tolts and Keskküla as an inevitable dominant force, becomes a material that cannot be considered to be inexistent or deceptively overthrown in a new situation. […] The self-affirmation of an individual is not represented in a romantic forgetfulness of reality or a demonstration of a victory over it – in every work we see an attack of an object, its distancing […] In their understanding of inevitability and freedom, object and subject, Tolts and Keskküla belong more to the art of the 1970s than the '60s, correspond more to the psychology of 1970s, which had to consider the limits of growth, as opposed to the euphoria of growth and the absolute freedom of the '60s."[22]

In art-historical literature, several discursive threads concerning the new content and changed means of representation have been brought together under the umbrella of Pop. Sirje Helme has described Pop as providing the keyword for signifying the broader cultural changes in the 1960s, preceding the digital revolution: Pop undid the hierarchies between high and low culture, and introduced rock music and the world of fashion as legitimate sources for art.[23] Helme has identified the groups *Ank '64* and *Soup '69* as successive phases of this movement, each juxtaposing themselves in contrast with the official youth culture that emerged in the late 1950s.[24] This endeavour to find a Soviet / Estonian analogy to Western Pop was also named Union-Pop by local practitioners. It utilised elements of the mass culture widespread in the Soviet Union, but in different economic and political circumstances (this, for example, found its way specifically into the assemblages of Andres Tolts).[25] Pop also affected the art medium, so that existing hierarchies between painting, sculpture and printmaking were questioned and, instead of a time-consuming,

22 Jaak Kangilaski, Nelja maalija näitus. – Kunst, no. 1 (61), 1983, pp. 51–52.

23 Sirje Helme, Popkunst forever: Eesti popkunst 1960. ja 1970. aastate vahetusel. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2010, p. 5.

24 Sirje Helme, Popkunst forever, p. 6.

25 In 1983 Jaak Kangilaski saw the emergence of Pop in Estonia in the 1960s as a response to similar social processes to those that had taken place in the West: technological progress, urbanisation, questions of ecology. This did not imply that local artists copied directly from Western sources: "The same system of form […] could in a different social and artistic context have a considerably different meaning." Jaak Kangilaski, Nelja maalija näitus, p. 51. Sirje Helme has later described this transposition as a critique of the Soviet environment: "a dominance of commercialism in the one-dimensional Western world was replaced by the sloppiness, poverty and chaos of the Soviet environment, which made it one-dimensional too." Sirje Helme, Pokunst forever, p. 187. See also: Sirje Helme, Sõjajärgse modernismi ja avangardi probleeme Eesti kunstis. Dissertationes Academiae Artium Estoniae 12. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2012, p. 36.

skilled approach specific to each particular medium, a more generalised, rapid aesthetic became the norm.[26]

Interdisciplinarity and the "sublimation" thesis

A common feature of the changes that occurred in the 1970s was the intertwining of art, design, architecture, animation and photography, and the erasure of the strict borders that had existed between the various professional spheres. As opposed to the narrow specialisation of the previous generation, this group sought an active dialogue and cooperation with other cultural fields. From an architect's point of view, Tiit Kaljundi, a close associate of Lapin and Okas, later observed:

> "The traditional master-architect approach to design and corresponding self-assurance, was left in the background. […] Leo [Lapin] declared from the outset that in order to do something in architecture, you should explore other fields. It was a kind of conceptual and literary approach – refusing to be squeezed down a single corridor, but instead grounding oneself in a second and third field."[27]

This crossover between different fields and disciplines has been interpreted, retrospectively, as a strategy for survival in the Soviet context, in which the teaching of painting and sculpture was ideologically determined and strictly regulated. The faculty of architecture (which included both design and architecture) enabled a freedom for experimentation unseen in the world of fine arts, including the opportunity to investigate abstraction in the name of decoration or compositional analysis.[28] This approach recalled the constructivist aesthetics of the 1920s, where art was seen not only as a reflection of reality, but also as constituting a new kind of reality.[29]

26 As Ando Keskküla stated in a TV programme: "we did not attempt to outdo our colleagues in skilfulness. Pop, by combining objects, allowed us to create a new syntax. It did not require special skills, its spirit could turn up very quickly and radically, just by combining random objects." – Jaanus Nõgisto, Mariina Mälk, Soup '69. Tallinn: ETV, 1990. [TV broadcast].

27 Tiit Kaljundi, The Chronicles of the Tallinn School (answers to a questionnaire). – Environment, Projects, Concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972–1985. Eds. Andres Kurg, Mari Laanemets. Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 2008, pp. 313–314.

28 Sirje Helme, Popkunst forever, p 100.

29 Jaak Kangilaski, Realismi mõiste metamorfoosid nõukogude kunstiteoorias. – Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi, vol. 12 (1–2), 2003, p. 21.; Eduard Tinn, Esteetika õppetunnid. – Kunst, no. 1 (55), 1979, pp. 5–6.; The danger in this kind of argument is to reduce design only to a certain kind of style of abstract art. For a warning against this see Bruno Tomberg: "one should not see in design an aspiration towards style, but an inspiration towards new kind of life." Bruno Tomberg, Disainimõtteid – Kunst, no. 1, 1986, p. 42.

On the other hand, graduates of the industrial design department seldom brought their works into industrial production. Instead they chose the career of the freelance artist, producing paintings, animation films and graphic design, and using these media to introduce new ideas relating to the new environment. (In Chapter 3, I will look at the home decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu*, edited and designed by Andres Tolts after he graduated from the industrial design department). Sirje Helme has described this as a "sublimation" to other fields: designers could not realise their ideas in the field in which they had been professionally trained and neither could they move into the fine arts, which had a strong ideological control; thus they were forced to remain in the margins.[30]

Andreas Trossek later developed a similar argument concerning animation film. For Trossek, animation constituted an alternative field which, because it was predominantly intended as a medium for children, was subjected to weaker ideological constraints and thus enabled artists greater freedom to experiment.[31] However, I argue that this interest in animation films and in the home decoration magazine, should be seen not so much as a "sublimation" – as a substitution for the "real thing" due to a lack of better opportunities in fine art practice – but as following from the changed concept of art that had been introduced via diverse practices in the 1960s, practices that brought artists to techniques and topics previously considered outside the sphere of "art". Thus animation was not so much a "sublimation", but a way of extending traditional art that corresponded with ideas about the emergence of a new kind of public. Likewise, according to official ideology home decoration was regarded as secondary in the cultural superstructure, but this was not so for those artists for whom the Pop paradigm had introduced homes and everyday life as a subject for new art.[32] (In many ways it was Pop that led to the collapse of the hierarchy of media.)

30 Sirje Helme, Artforumi ajad, p 13.; Sirje Helme, Popkunst forever, p. 160–161. If the withdrawal of designers from production was indeed true, the reasons for this could also lie in the attractiveness of the art profession.

31 Andreas Trossek, Eesti NSV joonisanimatsioon 1970. ja 1980. aastatel kui "kunst" ja filmikunst. Magistritöö. Käsikiri. Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2007.; Andreas Trossek, Eesti popanimatsioon 1973–1979: joonisfilmist lähikunstiajaloo kontekstis. – Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi, vol. 18 (1–2), 2009, pp. 69–107.

32 Writing in 1970 about the tasks that the new generation of artists had in front of them in the coming future, Urbla states: "This would include … a rise in social activities, an active introduction of one's creation and its principles of viewing, in order to overcome the unhappy divergence of art and public as the inclusion of the viewer seems nowadays to give art new possibilities." Peeter Urbla, Kunstipõlvkond 1970, p. 69.; The specificity of the studies in design faculty lied in its sense of social responsibility of the designer's work. Bruno Tomberg: "We do not only demand from the graduates a finished product, but also a social analysis of their work, in which the graduate justifies their work in terms of a social need." Jaak Olep, Pilguga tulevikku. Vastab ERKI disainikateedri juhataja dotsent Bruno Tomberg. – Sirp ja Vasar, 4 August 1972, p. 9.

In a recent article, Mari Laanemets has argued that interdisciplinarity was a characteristic trait of this group of artists: the "blurring of the boundaries between disciplines, working in the context of design and monumental art."[33] Laanemets sees this interdiscipinarity not as a "back door" at a time when official art was strongly regulated, but as a programmatic feature of a group that was motivated partly by a critical response to the institutions in which they had been educated and from which they had become detached, and which also enabled them to overcome the marginalisation of their practice as a solely private affair.[34]

I will argue that among the sources of this interdisciplinarity was the involvement of these artists in the discourses of informatization, and their interest in the language of cybernetics in particular. Cybernetics had developed its own language on the basis of various disciplines and, in striving for a universal (scientific) vocabulary, acted also as a metalinguistic model for overcoming the borders between different fields.

The issue of "sublimation" leads to the issue of the status of this art in the 1970s, in relation to what in the Soviet context has been termed "unofficial art." Although researchers have rightly pointed to the more liberal atmosphere and the different relationship of artists to the institutional framework in the Baltic countries from that of Moscow and Leningrad,[35] it has nevertheless been the model of unofficial art as a withdrawal and "resistance to official art policy" that has been adopted in the literature of Soviet art.[36] Here is how Sirje Helme put it:

> "I believe that in the Estonian context it would also be most suitable to use the word "unofficial", in reference to its most important feature – non-correspondence to the prescribed expectations of the art ideology of the Soviet Union. Undoubtedly "nonconformism" is not wrong either, referring to a lifestyle which stays true to one's beliefs and thus voluntarily gives up several privileges."[37]

33 Mari Laanemets, Kunst kunsti vastu. Kunstniku rolli ja positsiooni ümbermõtestamise katsest eesti kunstis 1970. aastatel. – Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi. Studies on Art and Architecture, vol. 20 (1–2), 2011, p. 61.

34 Mari Laanemets, Kunst kunsti vastu, p. 89.

35 For the difference of Baltic art life from the rest of the Soviet Union see: Eda Sepp, Estonia: Art as Metaphor of Its Time. – Baltic art during the Brezhnev era: noncorformist art in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Ed. Norton Dodge. Exhibition in Toronto, June 3 through 27, 1992, Toronto: 1992, p. 9.; Stephen C. Feinstein, The Avant-Garde in Soviet Estonia – New Art from the Soviet Union. Eds. Norton Dodge, Alison Hilton. Washington: Acropolis Books, 1977, p. 31.

36 Sirje Helme, Mitteametlik kunst. Vastupanuvormid eesti kunstis. – Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi. Studies on Art and Architecture, no. 10, 2000, p. 253–254.

37 Sirje Helme, Mitteametlik kunst, p. 255.

This relationship between unofficiality and nonconformism as concerning lifestyle, rather than artistic style or its recognisable formal features, is significant for my argument here, as it binds art with the surrounding social space. Describing various tactics of unofficial art from the 1950s onwards, Helme associates artistic withdrawal with spatial withdrawal: "every Estonian's dream was to be offered the possibility of seclusion, a space where she herself could decide."[38] In later discussions unofficial artists were often seen as representing an exceptional lifestyle in the context of Soviet uniformity, utilising the domestic sphere to enable autonomy regarding individual agency and art making. According to Helme, this withdrawal was also characteristic of Tõnis Vint's production. (This is discussed further in Chapter 2). However, Vint's circle was a breeding ground for a rebellious youth culture that chose intervention as its tactic. As Helme puts it: "the decade of the 1970s is characterised by an active practice of young artists outside the system and in spite of it."[39] During the 1970s this "unalienated" artistic lifestyle was represented and disseminated in Estonia in the home decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* ("art and home"), which to a certain extent saw artists' homes as a model for all other homes. (This is examined at length in Chapter 3).

For Helme, the unofficial was also underwritten by national resistance, what she calls the "defence mechanism" of Estonian art: features of colour and form that referred back to the inter-war independence period and thus aimed to keep alive the tradition of national art. Helme sees this kind of defence mechanism as having played a role in restoring aesthetic values and the idea of the artwork's sovereignty. This went hand in hand with the idea of aesthetic value and the autonomy of the artwork, which Helme has posed as a kind of passive resistance, an attempt to preserve something "of one's own."[40] According to Jaak Kangilaski, (who has explained the changes in post-war Estonian art through a tripartite schema – he regarded art of the period as being structured by a rivalry between official, national-conservative and avant-garde or Western oriented forces) the tradition of aesthetic autonomy was rejected by Pop Art and Lapin's objective art, thus causing confusion among national conservative circles at the time.[41]

A slightly different interpretation was given by art critic Tamara Luuk. According to Luuk, because Pop and hyperrealism originated in the context

38 Sirje Helme, Mitteametlik kunst, p. 262.

39 Sirje Helme, Mitteametlik kunst, p. 264.

40 Sirje Helme, Mitteametlik kunst, p. 259. Helme's account differentiates between "many ways of being silent", drawing a wedge between withdrawal in the context of Stalinism and withdarwal of the Vint's circle, who saw in "silenence an ethical and aesthetic event." See also ch. 2 of this work.

41 Jaak Kangilaski, Paradigma muutus 1970-ndate aastate lääne kunstis ja selle kajastus Eesti kunstielus. – Rujaline roostevaba maailm. Tartu: Tartu Kunstimuuseum, 1997, pp. 3–8.

of the United States, where they were based in alienation and anti-art, they did not coincide with the social situation in Estonia where "cultural reality was the only reality capable of [being used for] a constructive and structural function" and the original orientation toward destruction was inconceivable.[42] As a result, Pop, hyperrealism and conceptualism were adapted by the addition of an aesthetic "surplus". In counterbalance to the destructive power of happenings, was pictorial production using traditional media and the skilful technical mastery of these means: "Take, for example, the conscious randomness, bordering on naturalism, of the film frames of J. Okas, and the beauty of prints based on them", wrote Luuk.[43]

In *A Concise History of Estonian Art*, Helme and Kangilaski proposed an additional thesis of two "times" operating in parallel in Estonian art. They argue that, although some Estonian artists at the turn of the decade did follow closely the tendencies of the Western avant-garde – Pop, the happenings, concrete poetry, land art – this occurrence was merely "imaginary" because such works could only be seen from within the closed circle of artists themselves. This gave rise to what the authors describe as "living as if in two times":[44]

> "in one, real life and its demands were followed […] In the other time, artists attempted to follow the logic of contemporary art, always searching for contacts with it, and, unable to participate in it in a natural way, re-creating it as a myth, a model of the virtual West and its art world, based on the professional articles and picture books that had reached Estonia."[45]

The accounts of Luuk, Helme and Kangilaski are close to those explanations of Estonian cultural history of the Soviet period in which researchers have underlined the centrality of safeguarding national identity against the oppressive Soviet (and Russian) "other". Belonging to a discourse of history writing that has become dominant in the post-Soviet period, these histories have underlined an image of the Soviet period as a deviation from the "normal" development that started during the independent Estonian Republic of the inter-war period, understanding this deviation as a rupture healed by the return to an independent Estonian Republic at the beginning of the 1990s.[46]

42 Tamara Luuk, Modernkunstist Lääne-Ida-vahelises Eestis. – Eesti kunstikontaktid läbi sajandite II. Ed. Mart-Ivo Eller. Tallinn: Eesti Teaduse Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, Kunstiajaloo sektor, 1991, p. 79.

43 Tamara Luuk, Modernkunstist Lääne-Ida-vahelises Eestis, p. 79.

44 Sirje Helme, Jaak Kangilaski, Lühike eesti kunsti ajalugu. Tallinn: Kunst, 1999, p. 167.

45 Sirje Helme, Jaak Kangilaski, Lühike eesti kunsti ajalugu, p. 167.

46 See: Vello Pettai, Ühe poliitilise doktriini konstruktsioon: õiguslik järjepidevus Eesti taasiseseisvumispoliitikas. – Vikerkaar, no. 1–2, 2007, pp. 152–161.

Thus, one of the common ideas that has characterised the histories of cultural practices from the Soviet period has been that of resistance. Literary scholar Eve Annuk has regarded this kind of resistance as the defining feature of cultural production during the period:

> "Resistance was "written into" the hidden discourse of Estonian nationalism during the Soviet period: resistance to Soviet occupation, in order to preserve one's own language, culture and national identity, resistance to Soviet ideology, to the state, resistance as a way of life, resistance as a way of being Estonian."[47]

Viewing the notion of resistance in the context of post-Soviet Estonian memory-culture, literary theorist Eneken Laanes has regarded this idea as a way of coming to terms with the Soviet period – a period which is now deemed an abnormality to be cut out from the continuity of the two republics – and as a way of dealing with memories that are unconstructive from the national viewpoint:

> "from the viewpoint of national unity it would be more useful to remember that we all did resist, than to study the mechanisms that the occupying power used to establish itself by playing the subalterns against one another."[48]

Authors using postcolonial theory have brought new theoretical knowledge to the discussions of the analysis of the culture of the Soviet period and broadened the range of questions posed.[49] Although postcolonial vocabulary gives us new tools for investigating the complex relationship between oppression and resistance, it runs the risk of neglecting the specific Marxist-Leninist vocabulary (and logic) that dominated the period and reduces issues of class politics to that of cultural conflict between ethnicities (Estonians vs. Russians).[50]

47 Eve Annuk, Totalitarismi ja/või kolonialismi pained. – Võim ja kultuur. Tartu: Eesti kirjandusmuuseum, 2003, p 29.

48 Eneken Laanes, Lepitamatud dialoogid. Subjekt ja mälu nõukogudejärgses Eesti romaanis. Tallinn: Underi ja Tuglase kirjanduskeskus, 2009, pp. 58–59.

49 For an overview of discussions and sources in applying postcolonial theories to Estonian material see: Epp Annus, Postkolonialismist sotskolonialismini. – Vikerkaar, no. 3, 2007, pp. 64–76.; Epp Annus, The Problem of Soviet Colonialism in the Baltics. – Journal of Baltic Studies, vol. 43 (1), 2011, pp. 21–45.

50 Andreas Trossek has used the term "cultural doublespeak" to refer to the opposition between the unofficial Estonian and official Soviet (Russian) cultures in the Soviet period. However, from the hegemonic Marxist-Leninist viewpoint the opposition was not so much between cultures as between classes. Andreas Trossek, Rein Raamatu ja Priit Pärna joonisfilmid nõukogude võimudiskursuses. Ambivalents kui allasurutu dominantne kultuurikood totalitarismis. – Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi, vol. 15 (4), 2006. p. 113.

Art historian Katrin Kivimaa has described how the principles of national history writing have dominated the ways that oppositional (anti-Soviet) spheres and practices have been represented:

> "The category of a homogeneous national collective (or artistic collective) resisting the authoritarian or colonising state remains today one of the main principles in our (art) history writing, and has strongly been fixed in our emotional memory and popular historical understanding."[51]

The radical art practices of the 1960s and 1970s in Estonia, which also functioned as a means for national differentiation inside the Soviet Union, were framed discursively by ideas of the individualist and private character of art.[52] The mythologizing in retrospective accounts of the oppositional (private) space as a site of freedom, a space untainted by ideology, drew attention away from the differences in the private sphere and the relationships of domination within it. The allegedly private space of artists' studios and apartments was often also a site dominated by the masculine artist.[53]

So far in this discussion I have looked at previous accounts of Estonian art of the 1970s, including current standard explanations that emphasise art as resistance to the oppressive regime, as well as critical re-readings of the history of the period through postcolonial theory and questions raised by readings through feminist theory. Following a similar trajectory to the latter critical interpretations, in their demythologization of the private (national) space in its particular conjunction with unofficial art, this work will argue for an alternative understanding of the practice of the artists in question. I will show how the binary of unofficial and official is not suitable for describing the model of art-making in 1970s Tallinn, where radical artists worked in (or with) official institutions from which they drew support for their practice – practice that was not confined to the "private" space of studios and apartments. Rather than withdrawal, their work sought active contact with transformations in the everyday environment, changes in technology and communication systems, dissolution of hierarchies, and democratisation processes in culture. However, this does not imply that they capitulated to the hegemonic forces

51 Katrin Kivimaa, Rahvuslik ja modernne naiselikkus eesti kunstis 1850–2000. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli kirjastus, 2009, p. 146.

52 Katrin Kivimaa, Rahvuslik ja modernne naiselikkus eesti kunstis 1850–2000, p. 146.

53 Kivimaa points out that if the representation of nudes in the work of male artists (including artists like Vint and Lapin) was associated with individual and sexual freedom, something directed at a dialogue with the public sphere, then in the work of female artists similar representation bore the signs of the artists' private worlds. Katrin Kivimaa, Rahvuslik ja modernne naiselikkus eesti kunstis 1850–2000, p. 108, p. 141.

of the bureaucratic state. Instead, as I will argue, these artists occupied a deterritorialised position from which they could make claims regarding the changing environment and devise interventions via official institutions. In this way, clear-cut borders between the private and the public, inside and outside, were put into question and their work often conveyed ideas from one to the other: explosions in the total environment outdoors became implosions in interiors. (This relationship is established between Chapter 2 and Chapter 3).

Furthermore, in contrast to the thesis of national resistance to the Soviet (Russian) hegemony that has dominated history writing, especially of the early post-socialist period, I will shift the focus of enquiry to the significance of the (common) processes of modernisation (and postmodernisation) and view the works of the artists and architects of this period to be responding equally to the changing environment, technologies and their respective discourses. This was a time when mass housing became the dominant feature of the urban landscape, a time of rapid growth in the ownership of motorcars and the construction of motorways, but it was also the moment when there emerged new technological regimes of power and knowledge, regimes which re-inscribed the environment and the human being operating within it.[54] When Tallinn's wooden housing dating from the beginning of the century was replaced by prefabricated panel structures in the early 1970s it provoked passionate reactions from artists and architects who not only showed an interest in this heritage as referring back to the common national past, but who also demonstrated their desire for an alternative to mass modernisation. Yet the models put forward by architects in response to this modernisation did not directly contradict technological rationality, and several commentators from the previous generation accused them of still resorting to the authoritarian models of the avant-garde, differing now only in their aesthetic from.[55] Whereas artists of the 1960s had claimed an autonomous space for art, which had functioned also as a national space for resistance, the artists and designers of the 1970s operated with a changed notion of practice and proposed a different relationship to the changing (mass cultural) environment, a relationship that no longer referred unambiguously to national resistance but instead to a more general struggle against domination and subjectification.[56]

54 Jaak Allik argues against the popular idea of Russification in the 1960s and 70s through the logic of modernisation that Soviet Union followed. See: Jaak Allik, Jäi kestma Kalevite kange rahvas. – Eesti identiteet ja iseseisvus. Ed. A. Bertricau. Tallinn: Avita, 2001, pp. 170–171. On the need to adopt the viewpoint of modernisation see also: Karin Laansoo, Hanno Soans, In the Time of New Intimacy. Interview with Viktor Misiano. – Kunst.ee, no. 2, 2005.
55 Jaan Kaplinski, Autoritaarsest arhitektuurist. – Sirp ja Vasar, 6 October 1978, p. 9.
56 For a version of this shift from humanist-reformist 1960s to national resistance in the 1970s see: Epp Annus, Postmodernism kui hilissotsialismi kultuuriloogika. – Keel ja Kirjandus, no. 11, 2000, pp. 769–780.

Their work, moreover, crossed boundaries between different fields of art. This I interpret not as a "sublimation" of a lack of status within the official art world, but as a redefinition of their role as artists and designers in response to transformations in society and culture, rather than solely as a response to the repressive Soviet authority. This authority was also a modern authority, working toward the most efficient ways to discipline the population. Nationalism and national discourse were among the main forms of struggle against it, but in retrospective history writing this has overshadowed the fact that in the late-Soviet period this struggle existed in parallel with other forms of struggle and was often intertwined with them.

In what follows, I will first turn to the history of the concept of the "unofficial art" in the context of the Soviet Union and specific spatial relations attached to its use. I will then turn to alternative models that may offer a method for undoing the still-prevalent dichotomy of opposition versus resistance in late-Soviet art. As several researchers have pointed out, the Soviet Union did not form a homogeneous society but included areas and republics with very different cultural backgrounds and standards of economic welfare.[57] Several authors have underlined the different status of the Baltic republics, first as a geographical annex of the Soviet Union in 1940,[58] but also as a prosperous area that served as a window display for presenting the Soviet Union to the West. Nonetheless, the notion of unofficial art, as it has been described in the Russian context, has been brought into touch with Estonian material by several common points of contact. From the 1960s onwards, direct connections existed between artists working in Tallinn and in Moscow, primarily through Estonian artist Ülo Sooster, who was a leading figure in the alternative art circles in Moscow. In later years, Tallinn also became a frequent destination for Moscow artists.[59] More broadly, it could be argued that the discourses of art that circulated in the official public sphere originated primarily from Moscow and were common to most Soviet republics, although subject to appropriation and diverging interpretations in the different republics.[60] Finally, my focus on modernisation enables me to argue that the processes of technological change and informatization were influential and had a common rationale in both Tallinn and Moscow.

57 Eve Annuk, Totalitarismi ja/või kolonialismi pained, p. 17.

58 Epp Annus, Postkolonialismi pealetung post-sovetoloogias: kas paradigmamuutuse künnisel? – Methis, no. 7, 2011, p. 21.

59 Yuri Sobolev, Virtual Estonia and No Less Virtual Moscow. – Tallinn-Moskva 1956–1985. Ed. Anu Liivak. Tallinn: Tallinna kunstihoone, 1986, pp. 11–62.

60 See: Jaak Kangilaski, Realismi mõiste metamorfoosid nõukogude kunstiteoorias.; For a recent case study on similar processes in Armenian SSR see: Vardan Azatyan, Disintegrating Progress: Bolshevism, National Modernism, and the Emergence of Contemporary Art Practices in Armenia. – ArtMargins, vol. 1 (1), 2012, pp. 62–87.

Periodization

This work will also argue for a different kind of periodization of the described phenomena. In *A Concise History of Estonian Art*, the period of radical changes that started from the late 1960s onwards is seen to have ended in 1975 with the non-institutional exhibition in Harku.[61] However, Sirje Helme suggests that the "avant-garde mentality" represented by Pop Art was to some extent continued in the hyperrealist painting of the second half of the 1970s. Jaak Kangilaski has proposed a transfer of the radicalism of art into the architecture of the second half of the decade and thus its continuation by other means.[62] These dates are primarily related to changes in the social context: the repression of ethnic diversity inside the Soviet Union; restrictions on sending works to Western exhibitions;[63] and also a growing conformist outlook among the general public. Indeed, several artists from the period have later emphasised the break in the second half of the decade: Mare Vint remembers how in exchange for a promise of a new studio space in 1977, she signed an agreement with the Artists' Union not to send any more works to foreign exhibitions.[64]

On the other hand, Mari Laanemets has recently argued that although the exhibition in Harku was the last non-institutional exhibition, it was not the last of the avant-garde ones. The ideas present in that exhibition were extended to the exhibition of monumental art in 1976 in Tallinn Art Hall, which redefined the role of the artist and instrumentalised Pop in the redefinition of monumental art.[65] Laanemets argues against seeing hyperrealism as the sole vehicle for radicalism in those years and also against the idea of the transfer of radicalism from one artistic field to another.

In line with Laanemets's periodization, I have further marked the period under study between two moments where personal history of the artists and architects intertwined with political history. The year 1968, marking the events of Prague spring and Paris student revolts, led to an aftermath which on the

61 Sirje Helme, Jaak Kangilaski, Lühike Eesti kunsti ajalugu, p. 192.

62 Jaak Kangilaski, Okupeeritud Eesti kunstiajaloo periodiseerimine. – Jaak Kangilaski, Kunstist, Eestist ja eesti kunstist. Tartu: Ilmamaa, 2000, p. 235.

63 Sirje Helme, Jaak Kangilaski, Lühike Eesti kunsti ajalugu, p. 186.

64 Mare Vint, Conversation with the author, March 5. 2007. The Artists' Union of the Estonian SSR, founded in 1944 and responsible to the Union of Soviet Artists, was one of the main institutions that organized art life in the Soviet period. It provided studio space and materials for its members, and organized sales and regular commissions through its sub-organisation the Art Fund. Membership in the union was needed also for freelance status – union members were required to participate regularly on public exhibitions. The magazines Kunst (Art) and Kunst ja Kodu (Art and Home) both operated under the auspices of the Art Fund. Other organisations that governed the art life of the period were the Ministry of Culture, controlling museums and museum acquisitions, and The State Art Institute, responsible for art education.

65 Mari Laanemets, Kunst kunsti vastu, pp. 59–91.

one hand has been characterised as a period of calming down, depoliticization and withdrawal, but in the case of the artists in Tallinn it was a moment that activated them and woke their interest in politics.[66] It was also a year when artists Mare and Tõnis Vint moved to their new apartment which they began to redesign and which became a well-known gathering place for alternative artists in Tallinn. (This is the focus of chapter 2). At the other end of the decade, in 1979 the group of artists and architects instigated a change of power in the Union of Estonian Architects, when in their Congress the long-time head of the Union was voted down and several members of the group took their position in the Union's board. It also marks a turning point in their approach which now pulled back to disciplinary boundaries and strove towards "classical order and clarity."[67] (This turning point will be followed in the last chapter). I will further relate the period to changes in subjectivity as they were mapped in the works of these artists and to the dynamics of subjectivity throughout the decade. I will return to this toward the end of the chapter.

1.1.2 A short historiography of Soviet unofficial art

The notion of unofficial or non-conformist art has dominated the histories of the art of the Soviet period as well as curatorial and exhibition practices for much of the past five decades. Emerging already in the 1960s in texts published in Western Europe and North America, the term "unofficial art" denoted a broad spectrum of post-Stalinist practices that were oppositional to the dominant Socialist-Realist canon, either proposing to expand artistic form (from symbolism and surrealism to collage and abstractionism) or diverging from the prescribed categories of subject matter (including religious, erotic and political subjects). Paul Sjeklocha and Igor Mead's *Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union* from 1967, among the first to use the term, divided the post-Stalinist art life in Soviet Union into two opposing camps, differentiating it on the basis of membership to the artist's union.[68] They later elaborate, however, that the unofficial included all phenomena that were not Socialist-Realist and which had emerged after Stalinism.[69] Two significant

66 Merike Vaitmaa, Ank ja muusika. – ANK '64. Näituse kataloog. Ed. Anu Liivak. Tallinn: Tallinna kunstihoone, 1995, unpaginated.

67 Vilen Künnapu, Kümme arhitekti Tallinna kunstisalongis. – Kunst, no. 2 (62), 1983.

68 Paul Sjeklocha, Igor Mead, Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, p. xi.

69 They differentiated between artists on the border of official and unofficial art, some of them were members of the Artists' Union and their work could be bought in art galleries. Unofficial artists however were those whose work was considered unacceptable, "they are in the forefront of the avant-garde, experimenting with various forms and styles." Paul Sjeklocha, Igor Mead, Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union, p. 119. A similar definition of unofficial culture was given by Boris Groys in 2010: "artists, poets, writers and intellectuals who were not […] dissident and politically involved but who practiced art […] that could not find a place within the official Soviet culture of that time." Boris Groys, History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010, p. 4.

publications ten years later, both accompanying a major exhibition, further popularised the notion of the unofficial. In Igor Golomshtok's and Alexander Glezer's *Unofficial Art from the Soviet Union* (published together with a major exhibition in London ICA in 1977), "unofficial" was meant to signify a more neutral term as opposed to "dissident" or "underground", pointing simultaneously to the lack of support from the Soviet state.[70]

Norton Dodge's and Alison Hilton's *New Art from the Soviet Union* accompanying an exhibition in the same year, adopted the notion of the unofficial, using it interchangeably with "nonconformist" and noting at the same time a large group of artists belonging to "a hazy area" between the official sphere and unofficial groups. Both publications underline the aesthetic claims of unofficial art: the artists in question struggle for the freedom to represent "new aesthetic concepts, new techniques, and new themes."[71] It was thus the artist's autonomous self or "inner world" that was counter-posed in representations of unofficial to the official Socialist-Realist occupation with "reality in its revolutionary transformation."[72]

Indeed, as later authors have also pointed out, the aesthetic of nonconformist art relied on the notion of the artist's self-expression, drawing a sharp distinction between the outer hegemonic political world and the freedom granted by the "loopholes for private life."[73] Unofficial art was portrayed as a retreat, which kept its contacts with the state-regulated public life to a minimum. This explanation was closely related to the account of the "shadow" realm of Soviet society to which Western Sovietologists during the Cold War had already assigned a significant role in furthering the alternative practices of everyday life associated with the informal or the private sphere. Relying in many cases on the so-called totalitarian model for describing the ubiquitous

70 Igor Golomshtok, Alexander Glezer, Unofficial Art from the Soviet Union. London: Secker and Warburg, 1977. See also: John Berger, Art and Revolution. Ernst Neiszvestny and the Role of the Artist in the USSR. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.

71 Alison Hilton, Norton Dodge, Introduction. – New Art from the Soviet Union: The Known and the Unknown. Eds. Norton Dodge, Alison Hilton. Wahington D.C: Acropolis Books, 1977, p. 9.

72 Christine Lindey points this out as a special feature of unofficial art: "Yet, what perhaps most differentiated the nonconformists' subject matter from that of official artists, was its intense preoccupation with the artist's or the individual's personal, and often inner, world." Christine Lindey, Art in the Cold War: From Vladivostok to Kalamazoo, 1945–1962. London: The Herbert Press, 1990, p. 155.

73 Josef Backstein, Nonconformist traditions and contemporary Russian Art. – Nonconformist Art The Soviet Experience 1956–1986. Eds. Alla Rosenfeld, Norton Dodge. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, p. 334.; Matthew Baigell has mentioned how bringing up the idea of "interior freedom […] a desire to create from a sense of inner necessity" was an anathema to the authorities. Matthew Baigell, The view from the United States. – Nonconformist Art The Soviet Experience 1956–1986. Eds. Alla Rosenfeld, Norton Dodge. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, p. 338.

party control over everyday life, the domestic was portrayed as its other, as being constituted of untouched islands of private life. A withdrawal to the allegedly autonomous private sphere allowed therefore the construction of an equally autonomous art that, in contrast to the model of Socialist Realism, would be untainted by official ideologies.

Andrei Erofeev's account from the 1990s is characteristic of this approach:

> "The home – for the most part, a flat or even a single room in a communal flat, in which the whole family, and, in that period of communal life, sometimes several families lived – this peripheral zone, exposed least of all to ideological X-raying and the stringent control of authorities, became the springboard for the development and manifestation of new cultural values […] Here it was appropriate to concentrate on the inner world, imagination, ideals, and subconscious inclinations of an individual and to make the private individual the main hero of creative art, immersed in the context of everyday life, so that the world was presented through their eyes."[74]

Such withdrawal was often represented according to a nineteenth century Romantic-liberal model whereby the private sphere, as opposed to the conformist and homogenizing public, guaranteed individuality and provided space for experimentation, invention, and originality while fostering the idea of the "inner freedom" of the artist.[75]

The institutional moment of this split between the official and the unofficial was the exhibition in Moscow's Central Exhibition Hall Manezh, in autumn 1962, celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of Moscow Artists' Union. The exhibition included on the first floor three halls of radical (abstract and surrealist) works by artists such as Vladimir Yankilevsky, Ülo Sooster and Ernst Neizvestny.[76] The exhibition was visited by the First Secretary, Nikita Khruschev, who, shown around by the conservative members of the Academy of Arts, held an agitated diatribe against such liberals

74 Andrei Erofeev, Nonofficial Art: Soviet Artists of the 1960s. – Primary Documents. A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s. Eds. Laura Hoptman, Tomáš Pospiszyl. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2002, p 39–40. See also: Andrei Erofeev, Non-Official Art: Soviet Artists of the 1960s. Lowestoft: Craftsman House, 1995.

75 For art as a means of withdrawal from the society that goes back to the Enlightenment and Romanticism see: Virve Sarapik, Kunst kui pelgupaik. Sotsialistlik utoopia ja utoopiline sotsrealism. – Keel ja kirjandus, no. 7, 2002, p. 465.

76 For a comprehensive overview of sources on the Manezh affair see: Susan Reid, In the Name of the People: The Manege Affair Revisited. – Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History, vol. 6 (4), 2005, pp. 673–716.

and proclaimed that the party would again take control of the arts.[77] The radical group had been added to the exhibition at the last minute, and without the union's knowing, and, as later researchers have shown, their inclusion was a well-staged provocation by the conservative forces in the art world to discredit the reformists. This put an end to a short period of open radical experimentation from the late 1950s onwards and led to some artists being expelled from the Union, while several others lost their opportunity to exhibit and many were deprived of state commissions (and thus support). More importantly, artists who before had seen the possibility of reforming the system from within, now gave up this hope, occasionally placing themselves outside the system altogether.[78] According to a widespread view, this marked the beginning of a gradual withdrawal from society, leading to the individualistic (even cynical) approach of the 1970s, with exhibitions taking place in artists' apartments and works being shown on the pages of samizdat publications.

Some authors have seen this withdrawal as relying on an autonomous infrastructure comprising conversational groups and schools meeting in artists' studios, information exchange, underground press and a black market for collectors.[79] Others, however, have pointed to the role of the state-sponsored research institutes and scientific institutions that became exhibition sites for artists whose access to the Artists' Union exhibitions was restricted. Researchers in such fields as physics, mathematics and cybernetic theory were ready to discuss abstract art and saw it as relevant for representing the new optimism and experimentation of the 1960s.[80]

A change in the status of the unofficial came in September 1974, following the destruction of an open-air exhibition in Cheryomushki district in Moscow.

77 See: Andrei Erofeev, Interv'ju s Vladimirom Jankilevskim, Voprosy iskusstvoznanija IX, no. 2, 1996, p. 590–593.

78 Vladimir Yankilevsky has described this change: "There was an illusion that we will open the eyes [of the viewers] to another reality – and it will be seen and it will be comprehended. In this we were really naive: we thought that it was self-evident, that we were talking about the contemporary world, that we were talking about the contemporary problematic, we read contemporary philosophy, we knew the questions of biology, physics – all this developed, matured in our fantasy, and we thought that we would be looking into the future, to the 21st Century, that it will be seen. That is why the reaction of Khruschev and the government was an enormous shock for us; for me it was a loss of innocence at the social level, but at the same time served as a powerful impetus for a more active and actual art." Andrei Erofeev, Interv'ju s Vladimirom Jankilevskim, p. 594.

79 See: Yevgeni Barabanov, Art in the Delta of Alternative Culture. – Forbidden Art. The Postwar Russian Avant-Garde. Eds. Donald Kuspit, John Bowlt. New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 1998, p. 8.

80 See: John E. Bowlt, Discrete Displacement. Abstract and Kinetic Art in the Dodge Collection. – Nonconformist Art The Soviet Experience 1956–1986. Eds. Alla Rosenfeld, Norton Dodge. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, p. 297.; In "Moscow Diary" from 1973,

The show's organising group, comprising Oscar Rabin and a number of other artists, used a legal loophole in the regulations of public space to enable it to be presented in an unusual location. The group sent an announcement to Moscow city council about their proposed activities, but on the day of the show a group of construction workers appeared at the same site and announced that they were going to commence building a park there.[81] They rolled over the assembled paintings in large trucks and bulldozers. This direct confrontation and the subsequent press attention, which also reached the West, led to an agreement to show art in Izmailovsky park during the same month. Thus, the phenomenon of unofficial art was subsequently transformed into a partially institutionalised movement.[82] The confrontation led to legalised exhibitions under the auspices of the United Committee of Graphic artists. On the other hand, the direct confrontation also led to a wave of emigration at the end of the 1970s and to the canonization of the unofficial movement in exhibitions in Western Europe and North America.[83]

The story of this unofficial art became canonized in art-historical texts and exhibition practices during the 1990s. A major wave of publications introducing the unofficial, non-conformist or "other" art, existing in parallel with the officially-promoted art of Socialist Realism or the Thaw-period "rough" style, appeared following the breakup of the Soviet Union, paving a way for this art to enter Western galleries and the wider art world. Publications aimed primarily at the Western audience continued to underline the rhetoric of nonconformism overcoming the restrictions of totalitarianism. Often politically engaged and presenting a liberal viewpoint against the state-socialist model, the majority of these publications on Soviet art emphasised the idea of the artist as an individual striving to stand against the oppressive outside.[84]

Czechoslovakian critic Jindřich Chalupecký paints a rather different picture on art life in Moscow. He acknowledges the difficulties after 1962, infuriated criticism and several private exhibitions that resulted from this, but says that now "modern artists in the Soviet Union are not forced to lead some kind of illegal existence and do not need to hide their work…. And it seems that they no longer experience serious difficulties from having their work published regularly abroad." He also does not use the term unofficial or non-conformist art in his text. Jindřich Chalupecký, Moscow Diary. – Studio International, vol. 185 (952), February, 1973, p. 95.

81 Paul Gardner, Art and Politics in Russia. – ARTnews, vol. 73 (10), December, 1974, pp. 44–46.

82 See: A Case Study: Repression. – Primary Documents. A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s. Eds. Laura Hoptman and Tomáš Pospiszyl. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2002, p. 65–77.

83 The most known case among these shows is the Biennale of Dissent in Venice in 1977. See: Maria-Kristiina Soomre, Dissidentluse biennaal '77. Arhiivid tõlkes. Näitus Kumu kunstimuuseumis, 14.09–11.11. 2007; Enrico Crispolti, Gabriella Moncada, eds., La Nuova Arte Sovietica. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, Marsilio Editori, 1977.

84 See: Igor Golomstock, Totalitarian Art. New York: Overlook Press, 2011.

For art collector Norton Dodge, such art was closely tied to its stance against the dominant political regime, being marked by its autonomy and demonstrating the "inner freedom" of the artist overcoming the totalitarian regime.

> "Soviet nonconformist art expresses the power of the human spirit in the struggle to overcome the suffocating constraints of a totalitarian system[…].We can learn that well-crafted, powerful, compelling, and even beautiful art can emerge from the cruelty, fear and stultifying effects of political oppression and deprivation." [85]

Although Dodge's position represents the liberal-right discourse of the Cold War era, which used art and culture as a weapon in the political struggle, the term has been carried through to art-historical discourse in numerous catalogues and books.[86]

Several of the artists referred to in these texts – Ilya Kabakov, Ülo Sooster and Yuri Sobolev, among others – also worked within the official art institutions as illustrators, graphic designers or exhibition designers, and such work has often been dismissed as unauthentic or unimportant in comparison to art produced in the seclusion of homes and studios. For example, a recent account describes Kabakov's work: "Kabakov led a double life, employed officially as a

85 Norton T. Dodge, Notes on Collecting Nonconformist Soviet art. – Nonconformist Art: The Soviet Experience 1956–1986. Eds. Alla Rosenfeld, Norton Dodge. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, pp. 12, 35. A subject beyond the scope of this study is the relationship of this, often apolitical, withdrawal to the politically motivated idea of withdrawal as described in Western postwar avant-garde (for example by Clement Greenberg) and aesthetic theory (especially that of Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse).

86 Matthew Baigell sees a moral role in the withdrawal: the nonconformists maintained "mental health" within the "decadence and rot of the Soviet system." Matthew Baigell, The View from the United States, p. 339; For Janet Kennedy private spaces formed a sanctuary "away from the pressures of the material world." Janet Kennedy, Realism Surrealism, and Photorealism. The Reinvention of Reality in Soviet Art of the 1970s and 1980s. – Nonconformist Art The Soviet Experience 1956–1986. Eds. Alla Rosenfeld, Norton Dodge. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, p. 289; Aleksandr Yakimovich calls it "independent art" and "independent culture": Aleksander Yakimovich, Independent Culture: a Soviet phenomenon. – Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in a One Party State 1917–1992. Eds. Matthew Cullerne Bown, Brandon Taylor. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993, pp. 205–215; The dichotomy has been carried forward also by Boris Groys: "The Soviet unofficial artists had no access to any galleries, museums, art markets, or media. The art market and galleries did not exist in the Soviet Union, and museums and the media did not let them in," Boris Groys, History Becomes Form, p. 11; See also: Boris Groys, The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond. London: Verso, 2011.; Boris Groys, The Other Gaze. Russian Unofficial Art's View of the Soviet World. – Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition. Politicized Art under Late Socialism. Ed. Aleš Erjavec. Berkeley: Univeristy of California Press, 2003.

children's book illustrator but using the resources afforded by his position to create a host of self-reflexive, slyly subversive unofficial works."[87] Elsewhere, art theorist Victor Tupitsyn describes the "minimal form of participation in the Soviet artistic industry" as a way for alternative painters and sculptors to gain the opportunity of having a studio.[88]

These accounts, similar to the "sublimation" thesis described above in the Estonian context, not only sustain the artistic hierarchies characteristic of the art-establishment in the Soviet Union, but in their rigid separation of "double life" remove the possibility of considering crossovers or movement between the two spheres.[89] At the same time, both descriptions, while showing the rigid separation of the official and unofficial spheres, also demonstrate their interdependence – if not the existence of crossover from one sphere to the other –, as it was only on the basis of the position of the artist within the institutional system that he or she could gain access to the privacy of a studio space and use it for creating subversive works.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the notion of unofficial art also started to dominate art-history writing and curatorial practices in Russia, where the art world and emerging art market became oriented towards the West.[90] An important part in uncovering this other history was played by memoirs and retrospective accounts of the participants in the unofficial

87 Lara Weibgen, Moscow Conceptualism, or, The Visual Logic of Late Socialism. – Art Journal, vol. 70 (3), 2011, pp. 109–113. Characterising retrospectively the work of Ülo Sooster, Ilya Kabakov put it this way: "What occurred was the distraction of a great artist to all sorts of design activities, which in the end suppressed and traumatized him." See: The 1960s, Ülo Sooster/ Ilya Kabakov: Illustration as a way to survive. Exhibition catalogue, Kortrijk, Belgium, Kanal Art Foundation Oct–Dec 1992, p. 13 – quoted in: Amei Wallach, Ilya Kabakov: The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away. New York: Harry N Abrams, 1996, p. 49. For an alternative account on Kabakov, that relates his work to the cybernatization of its day, see: Matthew Jesse Jackson, Managing the Avant-Garde. – New Left Review, no. 32, March–April, 2005, pp. 105–116.

88 Victor Tupitsyn, "Nonidentity within identity" Moscow communal modernism, 1950s–1980s. – Nonconformist Art: The Soviet Experience 1956–1986. Eds. Alla Rosenfeld, Norton Dodge. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, p. 85.; See also: Victor Tupitsyn, The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)modernism in Russia. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2009.

89 In a recent book on nonconformist artists in Moscow and Leningrad, Ekaterina Andreeva divides their work into public (общественный), including commissions from the Art Fund, and private (частный), work done for closed demonstrations at home. This however becomes problematic for her in cases like the art group Dvizhenie, the work of which does not fit within this framework; in such case their work is labelled as "universal designerly production" that rejects "individual artistic gesture, expression of personality", which for her characterises nonconformist opposition. Ekaterina Andreeva, Ugol nesootvetstvija. Shkoly nonkonformizma. Moskva-Leningrad 1946–1991, Moskva: Iskusstvo-XXI Vek, 2012, p. 55–56.

90 A major exhibition and catalogue from 1992 presented it as "Other art". See: Leonid Talochkin, Irina Alpatova, eds, Drugoe Iskusstvo: Moskva 1956–76. K hronike hudozhestvennoj zhizni, vol. 1–2. Moskva: Hudozhestvennaja galereja Moskovskaja kollekcija, 1991.

scene. Ilya Kabakov, one of the leading proponents in the unofficial movement, described in his memoirs, written from mid-1980s onwards, the circle of unofficial artists that adopted that name only after the bulldozer show in 1974: "before that they were "underground", as if they were living under the ground."[91] Recounting the special climate of underground artistic life in the 1960s, Kabakov represents it in the spirit of a more traditional artistic opposition

> "[which] existed […] in all studios, workshops, basements, small rooms, where artistic bohemia resided. The existence was woven from the mad, intense association of "them" ("they" – that is bosses, employers and housing committee), that was perceived as an "other", hostile and dangerous species of people, living "upstairs", in an official, "this" world[…]"[92]

This widespread opposition of "us" versus "them" has been repeated in several other accounts from the period. A member of the Collective Actions group in the 1980s, Georgi Kizewalter, recently wrote that one knew intuitively "who was "ours" and who was not […] and those and others had a double psychology, a double manner of thinking and accordingly a double life."[93]

In a series of interviews with participants from the period, art-history journal *Iskusstvoznanie* uncovered a wide spectrum of opinions from artists. For art historian Andrei Erofeev, the main difference of the underground from the official "liberal permitted left wing of the MOSKH [Moscow Artists' Union], that […] relied on state commissions […] was in a historical character of self-reflection, in a constant meditation and description of oneself inside different historical contexts and processes."[94]

A major retrospective and catalogue, *Times of Change. Art in the Soviet Union 1960-85*, in the State Russian Museum in St Petersburg during summer 2006, which brought the official and unofficial together in one exhibition hall, explicated the split by showing official art in the traditional gallery space, on white walls, and the "unofficial art" in the reconstructed setting of a typical Soviet-era apartment, against brown and green wallpaper above outmoded divans and armchairs. If this spatial configuration underlined the duality of the "different worlds" that existed in parallel to each other, the juxtaposition

91 Il'ja Kabakov, 60–70-e[…] Zapiski o neoficial'noj zhizni v Moskve. Moskva: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008, p. 27.

92 Il'ja Kabakov, 60–70-e[…], p. 25–26.

93 Georgij Kizeval'ter, ed. Eti strannye semidesjatye, ili poterja nevinnosti. Esse, intev'ju, vospominanija. Moskva: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2010, p. 9.

94 Andrej Erofeev, Russkoe iskusstvo 1960–1970-h godov v vospominanijah hudozhnikov i svidetel'stvah ochevidcev. Serija interv'ju. – Voprosy iskusstvoznanija IX, no. 2, 1996, p. 569.

simultaneously problematized the border between the permitted reformist aesthetic and unofficial works, and preferred to underline the multiple positions artists could hold in society. Art critic Yevgeny Barabanov wrote:

> "When examining the broken whole in more detail, however, the meaning and form of the oppositions clearly repulse the binary logic of "pro" and "contra". In the interference-fit resistance of the artists known as "nonconformists," we do not find anything clear-cut – just as we do not find any strictly outlined positions and programmes, the testimonies of a common moral codex of common rules of behaviour."[95]

In the Baltic context, researchers have admitted the difficulty of differentiating the border between officialdom and unofficiality. Writing on the Latvian context, Mark Allen Svede points even more sharply to the paradoxes of differentiating the two camps:

> "some of the artistic outlaws were, in other areas of their professional lives, very much part of the restrictive establishment […] their unorthodox production was at times supported by less ideologically-fixated government agencies […] official art was not invariably sterile and unofficial art was not always interesting."[96]

The narrative of unofficial art in exhibitions and catalogues in the newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union as well as in the West was often framed according to ideas of the Soviet state as having been totalitarian throughout its history, thus reinforcing the clear-cut oppositions between repression and resistance.[97] This was, paradoxically, moving in the opposite direction to the ways in which professional historians had increasingly begun to criticise and contest the use of the notion.[98] Already in the 1970s, a school

95 Yevgeny Barabanov, Preconditions of change. Nonconformism and Nonconformists in the History of Art. – Times of Change. Art in the Soviet Union 1960–1985, St Petersburg: The State Russian Museum, Palace Editions, p. 51. For a discussion on different reception of unofficial art among the émigrés from the Soviet Union and contemporary authors writing inside Russia today see: Marek Bartelik, The Banner without a Slogan: Definitions and Sources of Moscow Conceptualism. – Moscow Conceptualism in Context. Ed. Alla Rosenfeld. Munich: Prestel, 2011, pp. 10–11.

96 Mark Allen Svede, Nonconformist Art in Latvia. – Nonconformist Art The Soviet Experience 1956–1986. Eds. Alla Rosenfeld, Norton Dodge. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, p. 189.

97 See: Skaidra Trilupaityte, Totalitarianism and the Problem of Soviet Art Evaluation: the Lithuanian Case. – Studies in East European Thought, vol. 59 (4), 2007, pp. 261–280.

98 Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Soviet Union in the Twenty-First Century. – Journal of European Studies, vol. 37 (1), 2007, p. 59; See also: Slavoj Žižek, Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? Five Interventions in the (Mis)use of a Notion. London: Verso, 2001.

of revisionist historians critiqued a model according to which the Communist Party practised total control over all spheres of life in Soviet society, bringing it close to a police state where any underground activities would have been impossible. Having started out from the social sciences, many of these revisionists represented a perspective on society "from below", as opposed to the traditional viewpoint of the political sciences, which was preoccupied with state terror and propaganda.[99]

In the 1990s, attention in Western Soviet studies was directed toward the resistance and practices of everyday life, including topics emphasising the informal "friendship circles" as an alternative to public discussion, studies on the tactics of the user in the state-owned homes and apartments, and of life in communal apartments. Studying the changes in discourses and subjectivity, these so-called post-revisionist historians made claims about the social support for the regime by the public, who were shown to have strongly identified with Soviet values.[100]

Some of the most innovative work in this field has been done by Susan E. Reid, whose interests span from reformist art institutions in the 1960s to the material culture and ethnography of homes in Russia. In her study on art institutions in Soviet Russia in the early Thaw period, Reid criticises the exclusive focus on the unofficial art world and the society as policed from above.[101] Combined with the aesthetic-modernist paradigm, this led the "fringes" alone being seen as places of artistic innovation and development, leaving institutional power structures and aesthetic discussions without adequate attention. Reid writes:

> "In order to understand the period, it is essential to examine not only the artistic underground but also the "permitted art" that was publicly exhibited, and the critical responses that could be articulated in print. It was here that public meanings were produced and the limits of permissible reformism were tested out and defined. Furthermore, the art establishment may be seen as one of the interfaces across which the absolute antithesis of state and society becomes untenable."[102]

99 Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Soviet Union in the Twenty-First Century, p. 58.
100 See: Stephen Kotkin, Magnetic Mountain. Stalinism as a Civilization. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.; Jochen Hellbeck, Revolution on My Mind. Writing a Diary under Stalin. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
101 Susan E. Reid, De-Stalinisation in the Moscow Art Profession. – Regime and Society in Twentieth-Century Russia. Ed. Ian D. Thatcher. London, Macmillan, 1999.
102 Susan E. Reid, De-Stalinisation in the Moscow Art Profession, p. 146.

Reid's critique centres on the argument that by adopting the notion of the unofficial, a large share of art produced in the period is left out and neglected. She has shown in a nuanced way that the democratisation process under Khruschev was never a linear progression, whereby the party-state was countered by artists backed up by popular social support; rather the art world itself was split between different groups, interests and relations to the ruling elite, with the support of the party elite towards various groups changing over time.[103] She has also studied closely the institutional system of patronage and support in the Soviet Union, thus uncovering a much more complex network of art markets (salons), public commissions and public purchases.[104] This critique is useful in that it redirects the attention from the unofficial to public structures of support and art discourses that "as part of the same coin" had an influence on the withdrawn sphere.

In a recent discussion on samizdat culture and its relationship to the official sphere, Ann Komaromi, a scholar of Soviet literary culture, has posed a critique of the binaries that structure discussions of Soviet society. She sees them as not "rigid or fixed", but as existing "parallel to, or even nested within, official culture and institutions."[105] To describe this unofficial sphere, Komaromi borrows from Pierre Bourdieu's theory, which posits a cultural field separate from and autonomous from society. Although acknowledging the problematic character of this move, Komaromi sees borders between the spheres and regards the exchanges between them as a site of production:

> "It may still be useful, however, to cordon off an autonomous space of unofficial culture with fluid boundaries and dynamic distinctions […] The purpose of outlining a separate field is, similarly, to focus on border crossings as the interstices where social significance may be created."[106]

Komaromi then creates distance between herself and Bourdieu, whose aim was to demonstrate the class hierarchies masked by the supposed autonomy, and argues that the main motivation behind unofficial Soviet culture was a

103 Susan E Reid, Destalinization and the Remodernization of Soviet Art: The Search for a Contemporary Realism, 1953–1963. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996.
104 Susan E. Reid, The Soviet Art World in the Early Thaw. – Third Text, vol. 20 (2), 2006, p. 163.
105 Ann Komaromi, The Unofficial Field of Late Soviet Culture. – Slavic Review, vol. 66 (4), 2007, p. 626; See also: Ann Komaromi, Samizdat and Soviet Dissident Publics. – Slavic Review, vol. 71 (1), 2012, pp. 70–90.
106 Ann Komaromi, The Unofficial Field of Late Soviet Culture, p. 606.

reconstitution of the distinction between the private and the public in order to reassert an autonomous social sphere in the late-Soviet era.[107]

Whereas Komaromi's emphasis on dynamic distinctions and border crossings as places for meaning-making is close to my investigations in the following work, my conclusions run in the opposite direction, away from reinforcing the concept of an autonomous social sphere in the Soviet context. Bracketing the critical conclusions implicit in Bourdieu's work, and retaining only the model as explanation, will also lose the emancipatory potential this kind of critical theory brings with it. The reassertion of private-public distinctions that Komaromi sees as the aim of unofficial culture, retain implicitly several of the hierarchies in these fields that were already criticised above, for example by Kivimaa. My aim from this point on is to turn to the relationship of this opposition to unofficial art and show how these divisions and hierarchies can be questioned with critical spatial theories, as well as showing how they began to collapse in the 1970s.

This work will critically address the issue of unofficial art in the Soviet context on two levels. Firstly, I will proceed by showing that the spheres of official and unofficial were intertwined: people worked in both spheres and drew from this experience on both sides; the border between the spheres was never so fixed as has been claimed in the dominant accounts of separate worlds. Alternative visions and ideas existed in a hybrid relationship with state-socialist society and were often endorsed by it financially and institutionally. The unofficial was itself also subject to change over time: as the borders were unclear, so were the people and subjectivities it engaged. This approach shows these fields to be closely connected, combining self-organisation (as in a dissident movement) with institutional structures.

Secondly, I will call into question the conventional understanding of association between space and art in unofficial art. Critical spatial theories help to see the relationship between spaces and their use in a dynamic way. Historically, the period in which unofficial art emerged in the Soviet Union was also

107 Ann Komaromi, The Unofficial Field of Late Soviet Culture, p. 627. In a different context Pierre Bourdieu has posed a schematic answer if the model worked out in Distinction could be applied to state socialist countries that supposedly were "classless" societies. The aim in this kind of transposition would not be to look at visible realities, but relations of domination between different groups in the society. One of the major differences in spaces structuring these societies would according to him be that economic capital as the private possession of the means of production could not be taken into consideration and cultural distinctions become more important. Besides this, there existed an uneven distribution of political capital, which "guarantees its holders a form of private appropriation of goods and public services (residences, cars, hospitals, schools and so on)." In state socialist societies this private possession of public goods was taken to an extreme. Political nomenclature could be countered in these societies only by the ones who had enough educational capital. Pierre Bourdieu, Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998, pp. 14–88.

a time of industrialization of housing production and radical transformations in spatial relationships vis-à-vis new informational structures and networks. Rather than seclusion, new networks emerged that made possible connections between spaces. As the artists turned their gaze to the surrounding everyday, they were in turn changed by it.

This analysis, which replaces the national narrative of resistance with an investigation of the movement of ideas related to emerging technologies and modernisation, has broader potential for understanding Soviet unofficial or alternative art of the period. Analyses of artists working in Moscow have so far emphasised the cases of withdrawal, focusing attention on the underground and the oppressed. However, there are several individuals and even groups of artists whose work would be better studied from the perspective of the interaction and dynamic co-productivity of the official and unofficial – the work of artist Yuri Sobolev, who was head designer for the publishing house *Znanie* and the work of the kinetic-art collective *Dvizhenie*, who decorated Leningrad for the fiftieth anniversary of the October revolution and whose practice straddled the fields of art and design, would be cases in point.

1.2. PRIVATE AND PUBLIC IN THE SOVIET UNION

1.2.1 Discussions of the separate spheres in the Soviet context

I will now turn to the opposition of the official and unofficial as part of a larger dialectic concerning the private and public in the Soviet Union. Following an overview of the use of these terms in the context of Soviet history, I will then look at recent spatial theories, and the notion of spatialization, in order to rethink the binary and show the border between the public and the private to be unstable and their relations to be dynamic rather than fixed. My interest here is in how privacy has been constructed vis-à-vis unofficial art; how it refers to the autonomy of the artist vis-à-vis the society.

Various different models are available to assist in understanding the notions of the public and private: from the liberal-economic perspective, as a distinction between the public state and private market; from the political theory perspective, where public matters of community and citizenship are contrasted with private domesticity and also kept separate from the state and the market; from the perspective of studies in anthropology and social history, where the public realm is analysed as that of sociability, as public life, often referring to the encounters and coexistence of strangers in urban space in contrast to the intimate (and closed) sphere of the family. In his treatment of the bourgeois public sphere, Jürgen Habermas has shown how the free interiority born from the privacy of the family during the seventeenth century was dependent on the demands of market and property, thus forming a double consciousness whereby the private person was simultaneously both an owner – a bourgeois – and a free individual and representative of universal humanity.[108] Following this, Romantic liberal views of privacy in the nineteenth century saw in it the potential for developing individuality, a space for experimentation and for searching for new forms of life; the autonomy of the private was thus opposed to the conformist and homogenising public.[109] Feminist historians, in turn, have highlighted the way in

108 The new emancipated individual inside the family was seen by Habermas as a counterpart of the economic autonomy of the commodity owners in the market: "To the autonomy of property owners in the market corresponded a self-presentation of human beings in the family. … [I]t was a private autonomy denying its economic origins … that provided the bourgeois family with its consciousness of itself." Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989, p. 46.

109 Judith Squires, Private lives, secluded places: privacy as political possibility. – Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 1994, vol. 12 (4), pp. 390–391.

which the private-public distinction has implied a hierarchical relationship between genders.[110]

The notions "public" and "private", and the distinction between them, have gathered much attention in accounts of late-Soviet history and culture. Already during the Cold War period, alternative narratives of the practices of everyday life in the Soviet Union, often told by dissidents or by Sovietologists in the West, assigned a significant role to the informal or the "shadow" realm of society, associating it with the private sphere. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, however, this subject has gathered attention from a growing number of researchers with diverse interests and backgrounds.[111] There have been studies emphasising the significance of informal "friendship circles" as an alternative mode of public discussion, studies on the tactics of the user in state-owned homes and apartments, and a growing number of books examining life in communal apartments. One can also find studies on allotment gardening, black markets, pet ownership and car ownership. These practices are often viewed as opening up a space of autonomy within the bureaucratic Soviet society and giving rise to a different kind of power. For some researchers, this informal sphere forms a "prerequisite of civil society"; the refusal of work by the Soviet proletariat on the other hand has been viewed as a resistance to the bureaucratic dictatorship.[112]

Designating a practice, a sphere or a space as private or public, in many cases also implies a political positioning and a way of understanding the Soviet Union and the state-socialist system. Description of the ubiquitous control of the state in Soviet society and its interference in the lives of the individual, including the tiniest details, is characteristic of the scholarship of the Cold War period, which saw the Soviet society as totalitarian and fundamentally "other" in relation to the liberal West.[113] This perspective tended not to distinguish between different periods of Soviet history and to identify changes in its political course, viewing the ideology of Stalinism as continuous through to the mid-1980s.[114]

110 See: Griselda Pollock, Vision and Difference. Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art. London: Routledge, 2003. For a criticism of Habermas's model see: Seyla Benhabib, Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas. – Habermas and the Public Sphere. Ed. Craig Calhoun. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1992, pp. 73–98.; Nancy Fraser, Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. – Habermas and the Public Sphere. Ed. Craig Calhoun. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1992, pp. 109–142.

111 See: Svetlana Boym, Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994.; Il'ja Utehin, Ocherki kommunal'nogo byta. Moskva: OGI, 2004.

112 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 278.

113 See: Slavoj Žižek, Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?

114 For an example of this approach see: Igor Golomstock, Totalitarian Art.

On the flip side are the descriptions of the untouched islands of private life that stood against this. As Susan Reid has noted, the hostile and "inhuman public sphere" has, especially in the Western and émigré accounts, been contrasted with the "warm, hospitable, unchanging and essentially feminine" private homes that offered a refuge and uncontrolled space for "authentic" human relations to develop.[115] This essentialist representation of privacy has dominated not only accounts of domestic life in the Soviet Union but, as seen above, also accounts of the unofficial art practices located in artists' homes.[116] The moral value implicit in research that privileges the private sphere and everyday life, was further emphasised in relation to those republics that were annexed during World War II by the Soviet Union, such as Estonia in 1940, where it often signified resistance to the dominant cultural blending of the Soviet with Russian features.[117] The private space thus acquired a "symbolic and normative" meaning that opposed (ethnic) national features to Soviet ones.[118]

Several authors have also criticised the suitability of applying concepts of the public and private as they have been used in analysis of Western modernity to analysis of the Soviet Union, since official Soviet ideology left no place for private property. For example, Marc Garcelon has questioned the suitability of applying concepts that reflect Western experience in a society where "the Party-state subjected all forms of autonomous, socially-visible expression to strict control, and politics remained in principle the exclusive domain of the Leninist "vanguard".[119] Thus, there was no framework for unregulated public disputes nor was there a market economy.[120]

Instead of the Western public-private division, Garcelon suggests a tripartite distinction in Soviet societies between the official realm with the ruling elite and *nomenklatura*, the social realm that developed in the intermediate institutional spaces as well as via informal friendship networks, cutting thus

115 Susan E. Reid, The Meaning of Home: "The Only Bit of the World You Can Have to Yourself". – Borders of Socialism. Private Spheres of Soviet Russia. Ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 149–150.

116 See: Alla Rosenfeld, Norton Dodge, eds. Nonconformist Art The Soviet Experience 1956–1986. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995; Boris Groys, History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010.

117 Anu Kannike, Kodukujundus kui kultuuriloomine. Etnoloogiline Tartu-uurimus. Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2002, p. 60.

118 Anu Kannike acknowledges the paradoxical position of the private: "The private sphere was a refuge from the System, yet inexorably also part of the System." Anu Kannike, Kodukujundus kui kultuuriloomine, p. 63.

119 Marc Garcelon, The Shadow of the Leviathan: Public and Private in Communist and Post-Communist Society. – Public and Private in Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy. Ed. Jeff Weintraub, Krishan Kumar. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 309.

120 Marc Garcelon, The Shadow of the Leviathan, p. 324.

across the "private" and "public" in the Western sense, and the domestic realm.[121]

> "Privacy on the personal level was … highly constricted and largely ephemeral under communism. The domestic realm may at times have served as a "refuge" from official authoritarianism and unregulated particularism, but it was often characterised by the lack of personal privacy in the sense that crowded living conditions and the radical shortage of housing alternatives imparted to domestic life many features of a traditionalistic social world."[122]

He characterises the domestic realm as containing a more traditional familial privatism, as opposed to the individualising privatism of liberal Western modernity. The latter was secured by law and "middle-class status", whereas under communism being socially dependent on the state did not allow for autonomy to be institutionally grounded.

Garcelon supports the validity of the totalitarian model to characterise Soviet society; for him communism produced a "hypertrophied public realm in the sense of state sovereignty and officialdom, but an atrophied public realm in the sense of republican citizenship and political society."[123]

Social scientists Elena Zdravomyslova and Viktor Voronkov have proposed a differentiation in Soviet society between the official public realm, comprising of controlled ideological norms and regulations, and the informal public realm "in which individual initiatives, collective actions, and state-independent communication could take place" without the control of the official public.[124] They date the emergence of the informal public with the change in social life toward the end of the 1950s following the death of Stalin in 1953; however, it only became widespread in later decades when the Brezhnev era provided places of socialisation that "escaped total control."[125]

Referring to similar classifications by previous researchers, Zdravomyslova and Voronkov conceive of the informal public as an umbrella term that includes various everyday social practices:

> "the shadow or second economy, clientele groupings and networks, limited labor market, retail marketing, family gardens,

121 Marc Garcelon, The Shadow of the Leviathan, p. 317.
122 Marc Garcelon, The Shadow of the Leviathan, p. 324.
123 Marc Garcelon, The Shadow of the Leviathan, p. 311.
124 Elena Zdravomyslova, Viktor Voronkov, The Informal Public in Soviet Society: Double Morality at Work. – Social Research, vol. 69 (1), 2002 p. 49.
125 Elena Zdravomyslova, Viktor Voronkov, The Informal Public in Soviet Society, p. 49.

> certain legal organizations used for illegal purposes, dissident groups, the bard movement, ecological movements, intellectual movements, ethnic societies, samizdat, magnitizdat (self-made recordings and tape recordings), and the counterculture."[126]

Significantly, in a quoted study on the emergence of ecological movements during the Khruschev period, the authors see these informal public initiatives as having been located in specific spatial settings: in universities and high schools, research institutes and academic campuses, professional organisations (the Writers' Union and Composers' Union) and mass media (journals of popular science).

A similar terrain is covered by editor Lewis Siegelbaum in a collection of essays on the "private spheres of Soviet Russia". Siegelbaum sets out to explore how the private/public distinction could be used in the study of societies where it did "not figure in political theory or legal practice."[127] He brings to the fore the variety of meanings of the public/private distinction, and presents various discussions around it, but still finds it useful for analysis. However, Siegelbaum also understands the border between the public and the private to be more flexible and porous: "[The private is] in a dynamic, interactive tension with the public, itself understood as a complex, multilayered category."[128]

Siegelbaum admits the "ambiguity and contradiction" and the dynamic tensions contained in the private/public distinction, refusing to give either all-encompassing definitions or stick only to particular cases. The essays in his book indicate the different levels of the private: articles sold on the art market and cars and allotments engaged in the private as property; discussions concerning homes, etc., which regard the private as the domestic; and essays on friendship circles that unpack the private as a social sphere. Siegelbaum concludes that in each case the public did not always coincide with the state, nor was it in simple opposition to the private.[129] In several cases the state even promoted the private, which could compliment what was available in the public sphere (this refers for example to private single-family housing or garden allotments for growing food).

Whereas, in the above examples, Marc Garcelon clearly represents the liberal-economic perspective in analysis of the Soviet state, Zdravomyslova and Voronkov see the informal sphere as a sphere of sociability that had an

126 Elena Zdravomyslova, Viktor Voronkov, The Informal Public in Soviet Society, p. 53.
127 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Introduction: Mapping Private Spheres in the Soviet Context. – Borders of Socialism. Private Spheres of Soviet Russia. Ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum. New York, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 1–2.
128 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Introduction, p. 3.
129 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Introduction, p. 15.

impact on the political realm and Siegelbaum's collection attempts to cover a multiplicity of accounts and point to a critique of any rigid separation between the different spheres.

Rethinking the distinction between the private and the public poses a question also as to the widespread distinction between two parallel discourses operating in these realms: "saying one thing in public and another in private."[130] If several authors see "doublespeak" as a characteristic feature of the Soviet society[131], the distinction itself can be traced back to changes in the modern era when private affairs became distinguished from public roles and people lived in a twofold position.[132] As Richard Sennett has argued, there was a change in the self-presentation of the middle classes in the nineteenth century, where emotions and character were withheld from public expression and presentation of oneself in public became different from the self that appeared in the family sphere.[133] In the context of representations of Soviet life, this doublespeak carried also moral connotations whereby public discourse was seen as inherently corrupt and the private as "true" and "free". Furthermore, as demonstrated by the infamous greengrocer in Vaclav Havel's "Power of the Powerless" who did not believe in socialism, but nonetheless decorated his shop window with official party slogans as necessary, it was the conformist attitude in public that enabled autonomy in the private sphere.[134]

I argue that these binary definitions become problematic in the light of both historical evidence (as presented above) and the application of recent theoretical tools. Firstly, as demonstrated above, privacy (as also the unofficial) is a relational concept, dependent on its border with the public (or official). Furthermore, the grounds for this distinction can be undermined by post-structuralist theories of subjectivity which see the self as always constructed

130 Timothy Garton Ash, We the People: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin & Prague. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990, p. 137.
131 Marc Garcelon, The Shadow of the Leviathan, p. 326.
132 Craig Calhoun, Nationalism and the Public Sphere. – Public and Private in Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy. Eds. Jeff Weintraub, Krishan Kumar. Chicago and London: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 80.
133 Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man. London: Penguin Books, 2002, p. 206.
134 Vaclav Havel, The Power of the Powerless. – Living in Truth: Twenty-Two Essays. London: Faber and Faber, 1987, pp. 41–43. For Slavoj Žižek, the apolitical position in the private sphere that needs participation in the ideological ritual publicly becomes utterly conformist: "it is not sufficient to ascertain that the ideological ritual is a mere appearance which nobody takes seriously – this appearance is essential;" by following it one already supports it. Slavoj Žižek, The Metastases of Enjoyment. Six Essays on Woman and Causality. London: Verso 1994, p. 64; See also: David Crowley, Warsaw Interiors: The Public Life of Private Spaces 1949–65. – Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc. Eds. David Crowley, Susan E. Reid. Oxford: Berg, 2002; Aili Aarelaid, Double mental standards in the Baltic countries – three generations. – The Baltic Countries Under Occupation: Soviet and Nazi rule 1939–1991. Ed. Anu Mai Kõll. Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2003.

by social, unconscious and linguistic structures and identity as formed by and through social experience. The islands of private life and autonomy seem illusory in this sense: "we cannot escape social pressures merely by shutting our front door", wrote Judith Squires.[135] In the same way, recent political theory has criticised the traditional model of how identity is supposed to predate the political public sphere. Explaining how experience is in part constituted through public discourse, Craig Calhoun writes that, "once we abandon the notion that identity is formed once and for all in advance of participation in the public sphere, however, we can recognize that in varying degrees all public discourses are occasions for identity formation."[136] Calhoun criticises Habermas's idea of identities and interests being formed prior to entry into the public sphere and claims that identities and experience are constituted by public discourse.[137]

The issue of separate discourses in separate spheres is critically investigated by anthropologist Alexei Yurchak in *Everything Was Forever Until it Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. He analyses dissidence in relation to activism and what was commonly understood as "normal people" or *svoi* ("us" or "ours" in Russian).[138] His account argues against the same widespread binaries that have shaped the understanding of Soviet life: public versus private, official versus unofficial, (living in) truth versus lies, or a homogeneous "us" versus oppressive power structures of "them". Against these, he proposes that we look at the common sociality of *svoi* and how it was constructed through everyday language. Rather than running opposed to the state, this sociality was produced of mutually-embedded notions of "us", "not us", "the state", "the state representatives" and "the people".[139] The sociality of *svoi* was equally as different from the discourse of activists agitating in favour of the party as it was from dissidents speaking against it:

> "These two types, despite having opposing attitudes to authoritative discourse, shared a general approach to it: they privileged the constitutive dimension of that discourse, reading it as a description of reality and evaluating that description for truth.

135 Judith Squires, Private lives, secluded places, p. 398.
136 Craig Calhoun, Nationalism and the Public Sphere, p. 86.
137 Craig Calhoun, Nationalism and the Public Sphere, p. 87.
138 Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005, pp. 102–121. Other versions on positioning the non-party intellectuals and the retreat to "internal emigration" include: Mark Sandle, A Triumph of Ideological Hairdressing? Intellectual Life in the Brezhnev Era Reconsidered. – Brezhnev Reconsidered. Eds. Edwin Bacon, Mark Sandle. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002, pp. 135–164.
139 Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, p. 103.

> For the activists, this description was 'true'; for the dissidents, it was 'false'."[140]

Instead, it was the sociality of *svoi* that offered the most productive relationship in terms of culture and knowledge in society. In Yurchak's words this was done through a performative shift in relation to authoritative discourse in the late socialist society: this language was followed and repeated as a ritualised act, without its meaning being taken as true or false; rather, it functioned as a dynamic means to bring forth new meanings and practices. As a result, the dominant discourse was shifted and the system itself deterritorialised in a peculiar way, with several of the values of socialism retained. Thus, even if the rhetoric was followed ironically, the ethics upheld by the socialist system were taken seriously.

> "Unlike the dissident strategies of opposing the system's dominant mode of signification, deterritorialisation reproduced this mode at the same time as it shifted, built upon, and added new meanings to it."[141]

This new deterritorialised mode of life with its specific vocabulary existed neither "inside" nor "outside" the system: reinterpreting and appropriating the means and knowledge available, these milieus of *svoi* were at the same time highly dependent on the system's financial and institutional support, as well as on the hierarchies and cultural ideals the system established.

1.2.2 Critical spatial theories

Recent critical spatial theories may offer a useful way to further consider Yurchak's differentiations in undoing the reductive dichotomy of the private and the public in the context of the Soviet Union and its conjunction with particular spatialities. This rethinking engages critically with the representation of place as bounded, its internal characteristics differentiating it from other places. Instead, the theory argues, the specificity of a place or locality emerges out of interconnections and interactions with its outside (as well as its disconnections from it), thus providing more dynamic models for associating spaces with activities and programs.

Drawing on the idea of space as a social product, as demonstrated by Henri Lefebvre, several authors have investigated the role of space as simultaneously both a precondition for and result of the production of society and

140 Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, pp. 103–104.
141 Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, p. 116.

culture.[142] Instead of a static concept, space is an intricate web of relationships that is continuously produced and reproduced. For these authors space is not fixed, but is always open to various manipulations and transgressions, uses and misuses.[143] The object of the analysis is thus not space as such (as could be imagined in traditional architectural history), but the active processes of production that take place in time.[144] Lefebvre also envisaged an idea of social space as bringing together various subjects, elements and segments through its form of "encounter, assembly, simultaneity […] everything there is in space, everything that is produced either by nature or by society, either through their cooperation or through their conflicts."[145]

In *For Space*, Doreen Massey takes this further by criticising the idea of space as static and fixed, something she calls spatialisation as representation. Instead, she sees places in terms of a continuous becoming, as meeting places for "multiple trajectories", a "simultaneity of stories so far."[146] Among other topics, she directs her critique toward widespread conceptualisations in modernity that see spaces as firmly bounded and deriving their characteristics from this separation and interior meaning. While this geographical imagination has organised space in the global arena, it is worth considering also the spatiality on a more local scale. In modernity this idea produced an isomorphism between space, place and society/culture:

> "Local communities had their localities, cultures had their regions and, of course, nations had their nation-states […]. Cultures, societies and nations were all imagined as having an integral relation to bounded spaces, internally coherent and differentiated from each other by separation."[147]

This kind of bounded place was a safe haven to retreat to, similar to representations of spaces in literature on unofficial art. Massey however argues against this, instead seeing the cultural specificity of a place to reside in not in its separation and secure boundedness – where its meaning would arise from internal processes – but in "interactions with the beyond."[148] For researchers this means abandoning the premise of discontinuity – i.e. imagining space as divided up – and rethinking difference through connection.

142 Christian Schmidt, Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: towards a three-dimensional dialectic. – Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre. Eds. Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipfer, et al. New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 28.
143 Elizabeth Grosz, Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001, p. 9.
144 Christian Schmidt, Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, p. 41.
145 Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, p. 101.
146 Doreen Massey, For Space. London: Sage Publications, 2005, p. 20.
147 Doreen Massey, For Space, p. 64.
148 Doreen Massey, For Space, p. 66.

> "The specificities of space are a product of interrelations – connections and disconnections – and their (combinatory) effects. Neither societies nor places are seen as having any timeless authenticity. They are, and always have been, interconnected and dynamic."[149]

This does not mean that boundaries and seclusion are nonexistent, but rather that the act of drawing a boundary is the result of a relation with other spaces outside as well as this same boundary being unstable and subject to change.

Massey's view is important in the context of the analysis of Cold War spatialities. Similar to the modern imagination of geographical differences, the private or unofficial sphere in the Soviet context saw these described spaces as having internal characteristics, and thus differences from other spaces were considered to be pre-existing rather than mutually dependent. What Massey calls the "billiard-ball view" of places was especially tempting in descriptions of Soviet society as closed off and totalitarian, but late Soviet socialism tells another story: of the border between the two worlds being porous rather than impenetrable. Massey's work privileges the study of flows and networks (physical as well as immaterial or abstract) rather than territorialisations and unchanging typologies.[150]

Authors in visual culture and art history have taken up the critical category of space, combining it with theories of subjectivity and vision as articulated in film theories and feminist theories.[151] In the West, in the 1960s and '70s, in parallel with the first works in human geography that saw society and space in a dialectical relationship, work in site-specific and institutionally critical art emerged that drew attention to the relation of an artwork to its outside, to the conditions of presentation, framing devices

149 Doreen Massey, For Space, p. 67.

150 Doreen Massey, For Space, pp. 62–71.

151 Griselda Pollock has argued how art making and viewing are dependent on spatial relations and how these relations are structured by representations – Griselda Pollock, Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity. – Vision and Difference. Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art. London: Routledge, 2003; Jane Rendell has investigated the gendering of public space in Regency London in a dynamic and complex way, depending also on movement and vision: Jane Rendell, The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London. London: The Athlone Press, 2002. For the relationship between art and its space of viewing see also: Brian O' Doherty, Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986; Brian O' Doherty, Studio and Cube. On the relationship between where art is made and where art is displayed. New York: A Buell Center/ Forum Project Publication, 2007; Martin Beck, Alternative: Space. – Alternative Art New York 1965–1985. Ed. Julie Ault. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, pp. 249–280.; Peter Osborne, Non-Places and the Spaces of Art. – The Journal of Architecture, vol. 6 (Summer), 2001, pp. 183–194.

and discourses that are engaged in the work's production.[152] Among the more recent authors, Irit Rogoff has added subjectivity and differentiation to the geography and typology of "named locations", with the intention of combining them with psychic categories, anxieties and desires.[153] This, which she calls "active spatialisation", undoes the meaning of a named space by bringing together its "designated activities and physical properties" with "structures of psychic subjectivities such as anxiety or desire or compulsion."[154] Her aim is to "repopulate space" that is otherwise seen as transparent and straightforwardly graspable to the beholder, with borders and structures that remain hidden and also with embodied cultural narratives of the viewer:

> "Clearly space is always populated with the unrecognized obstacles which never allow us actually to "see" what is out there beyond what we expect to find. To repopulate space with all of its constitutive obstacles as we learn to recognize them and name them is to understand how hard we have to strain to see, how complex the work of visual culture."[155]

Materialist analyses of space have gained currency in the histories of Soviet and post-Soviet transformations. The difference in ownership from the capitalist West, with ambitious programs instigating new spatial configurations through architecture and urban planning in the name of social equality and emancipation – the new communist man – have been the subject of several recent authors. From the perspective of the user and taking space as its subject, David Crowley and Susan Reid have edited a collection of essays entitled *Socialist Spaces* inspired by recent social theories of space. They portray the spaces in the Socialist bloc as contested by different forces rather than organised under a unitary ideological normative: "If we can use the term "socialist spaces" at

152 On different aspects of the relationship between art and Marxist geography see: Rosalyn Deutsche, Men in Space. – Evictions. Art and Spatial Politics. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996, pp. 195–202.; and Rosalyn Deutsche, Agoraphobia. – Evictions. Art and Spatial Politics. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996, pp. 269–328. For public art understood through critical spatial theory see: Malcolm Miles, Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. For a discussion in site-specific art see: Miwon Kwon, One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004.

153 Irit Rogoff, Terra Infirma. Geography's Visual Culture. London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 14–35.

154 Irit Rogoff, Terra Infirma, p. 23. On active spatialisation as opposed to static space see also: Edward W. Soja, Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory. London: Verso, 1989.

155 Irit Rogoff, Terra Infirma, p. 35.

all, it is only in relation to the shifting and multi-layered interaction between spatial organization, expression and use."[156]

Instead of attributing socialist qualities to some spaces and not to others – a simplified opposition one could make between party headquarters vs. homes, for example – they propose to study a wider field of "spatial relations, uses and discourses" that go beyond mere rhetoric of naming spaces. In this way a perspective of the different and changing uses and meanings that demonstrate the practices of everyday life, going beyond the narrow understanding of space as determined by ideology, opens up: production as well as consumption, Party houses as well as homes, factories as well as leisure spaces.[157]

A further question arises regarding the ways in which the suggested deterritorialised sociality can be brought together with the dynamic models of spatialisation described above. Crowley and Reid suggest that if socialist spaces did not produce a new kind of communist subjectivity, they still instigated, albeit unwittingly, a new kind of sociality, separate from the socialist account but still relying on the public. For them this new space was foremost characterised by an opposition: a sociality born in the queue to buy everyday products and thus forged against a common "them".[158]

In the first decade after the fall of the Soviet Union a lot of work went into refuting the effects of socialism and arguing instead that the material and cultural circumstances did not produce a socialist subject. In this respect, Yurchak's work is also useful in that he shows the influences and value systems to be existent in a more complex way. The new sociality (of *svoi*) was not oppositional but rather *vne* – suspended both "inside" and "outside" the Soviet system.[159] Yurchak suggests that this was instigated by the state and deterritorialised by the citizens.

Putting the model of this deterritorialised sociality into the Baltic context, an additional ethnic national dimension arises, where national integration

156 David Crowley, Susan E. Reid, Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc. – Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc. Eds. David Crowley, Susan E. Reid. Oxford: Berg, 2002, p. 4. See also: Susan E. Reid, David Crowley, eds, Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe. Oxford: Berg, 2000.
157 Research on Soviet housing has pointed to significant exceptions in the opposition between all powerful state and powerless inhabitants: private ownership in housing existed – as in Stalinist villas – as well as a loan system devised for private builders meant to help with the lack of apartments after World War II. In the 1960s cooperative housing became preferred to individual homes as a more rational use of urban space. See: Mart Kalm, Varastalinistlik villa Eestis. – Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi. Studies on Art and Architecture 8. Tallinn: Teaduste Akadeemia Kirjastus, 1995, pp. 224–243. Other authors have pointed to the special case of dacha ownership in Russia and in Eastern Europe, or to the role of the municipal housing board, that issued resident permits, monitored on sanitary norms, behaviour of residents. See: Stephen Lovell, Soviet Exurbia: Dachas in Postwar Russia. – Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc. Eds. David Crowley, Susan E. Reid. Oxford: Berg, 2002, pp. 105–122.; Lewis Siegelbaum, Borders of Socialism, p. 10.
158 David Crowley, Susan E. Reid, Socialist Spaces, pp. 15–16.

often functioned irrespective of the private or public distinction and permeated different spheres and practices.[160] This subaltern defensive nationalism ruled over artistic work and cultural production in the Soviet period and has become a dominant means for explaining art of the period. In the case of the interpretative focus of modernisation however, my aim is to join up the particular manifestations of national sentiment (mediated among other things by the memories, habits and ways of speaking of the older generation from the inter-war Estonian republic period) with trans-national perspectives of informatization and the demise of the disciplinary regime.

Following the dynamic model of spatialisation put forward by the aforementioned spatial theories we should see this deterritorialised sociality not as fixed in a specific place with specific qualities, but as traversing spaces: inside and outside, private and public, official and unofficial, its meaning defined in relation to particular practices. In the context of the artists and architects working in Tallinn, the terrains they explored brought marginal sites into focus through events and their representations, or redefined public (exhibition) sites in the symbolic centre.[161] During this process, the traditional boundaries, classifications, hierarchies and morphologies were put into question or redefined, and new boundaries or territorialisations then arose out of activities, uses or takeovers.

159 Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, pp. 126–157. The word *vne* (in English version of the book also transcribed as *vnye*) means in common translation "outside", Yurchak however refers to the term used by Mikhail Bakhtin, *vnenakhodimost'*, which he translates *inside/outsidedness*. See also: Alexei Yurchak, Politika vnenakhodimosti: ukhod ot binarnogo razdleneiia sovetskoi kul'tury na ofitsial'nuiu i neofitsial'nuiu. – Mify i teorii v iskusstve Rossii 1970–2012 godov. SPb: Art-tsentr "Pushkinskaia 10". Musei nonkonformistskogo iskusstva, 2013.

160 This national-ethnic dimension could also act as a basis for the overlap of the private and public. In their studies of Soviet period life stories Kirsti Jõesalu and Ene Kõresaar point out that biography writing of Estonians after the Soviet period is characterised by an ethnic dimension of the correspondence between "the personal and social spheres, as the social integration during the Soviet and post-Soviet period has a strong ethnic character." Kirsti Jõesalu, Ene Kõresaar, Privaatne ja avalik nõukogudeaja Eestis. – Methis, no. 7, 2011, p. 71.

161 In a review of an architecture exhibition held in Tallinn in 1978, in the foyer of the Academy of Sciences library, the writer Mihkel Mutt described the opening, relating it to a different way of perceiving the works: "in addition to an ordinary contact between the work and the viewer,[…] seeing art from a group[…]there exists a series of contacts between the viewers themselves". This collective experience allows him to conclude that "there is something different in the air". Mihkel Mutt, Arhitektuurinäitus. – Sirp ja Vasar, 9 June 1978, p. 8.

1.3. REDEFINING THE SUBJECT

1.3.1 Subjectivity and modernisation in the Soviet Union in the 1970s

The question I will trace in the last part of the chapter is: What kind of subjectivity was presupposed and crafted by the works of the artists in question, and what were the historical circumstances of its emergence? To answer this question, I will use the notion of the subject as discussed in the works of Michel Foucault – the subject as made through power relations of division, through objectification in discourses and through subordination, and, as sketched in his later works, subjectification through processes of self-examination and self-formation.

For Foucault, the modern subject, rather than being a pre-existing and self-contained individual, is a product of its historical circumstances and structures: institutional systems and technologies imbricated in discourses of power and knowledge.[162] In this process of the "objectification of the human being" Foucault saw a relationship between rationalisation and excessive use of political power in the modern era, including growing bureaucracy and the regulation of different fields of life, where discourses of knowledge became instruments in the organisation, management and domination of the population.[163] These subjectification mechanisms (including institutions) were often envisaged as empirical blocks of coordinated arrangements, where material systems and techniques were combined with immaterial ones. Foucault wrote:

> "Take for example an educational institution: the disposal of its space, the meticulous regulations which govern its internal life, the different activities which are organized there, the diverse persons who live there or meet one another, each with his own function, his well-defined character — all these things constitute a block of capacity-communication-power. The activity which ensures apprenticeship and the acquisition of aptitudes or types of behaviour is developed there by means of a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differentiation marks of the 'value' of each person and of the levels

162 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Vintage, 1995.; Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: The Will to Knowledge. London: Penguin Books, 1998.
163 Michel Foucault, The Subject and Power. – Critical Inquiry, vol. 8 (4), 1982, pp. 777–795.

> of knowledge) and by the means of a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy)."[164]

Through these complex sets or blocks, human beings became subjects of a "discipline," itself guided by ever-growing processes of rationalisation, management and control. Individuals were constituted in the disciplinary system as describable and analysable objects, subject to domination, but also made useful in the factory, knowledge production, or the "war machine".[165] What was called the "individual" was not something repressed in the social order, "it [was] rather that the individual [was] carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies."[166]

Foucault later turned his attention to the role of active processes of self-formation in subjectification: operations and techniques performed on one's own body and soul in order to initiate a change in the self. These operations included among other things the technique of confession and self-narration that has dominated Western culture since early Christianity, but could be seen to extend to the present through practices like psychoanalysis and autobiography, among others. In the formation of the subject, Foucault considered what he called the technology of the self to play an equally important role as the techniques of domination: in an analysis of the disciplinary societies "[one] has to take into account the interaction between those two types of techniques – techniques of domination and techniques of the self."[167] Performing these techniques happened always in the framework prescribed by existing discourses, in subject positions adopted through self-narration, but it entailed a margin of deviation and critical adaptation, allowing ways of experimentation that resisted the prescribed ways of being.

This connection between technologies of power, social systems and discourses giving rise to a particular historical subjectivity has been taken up by several researchers in visual studies and art history investigating the role of modernisation and informatization processes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Jonathan Crary has looked at the construction of a new kind of observer from the early modern era, focusing on instruments like camera obscura and its surrounding discourses, which give rise to a new kind of subjectivity. Implying an isolated viewer, withdrawn from the world, the device of the camera obscura is related to a "certain metaphsyics of interiority":

164 Michel Foucault, The Subject and Power, p. 787.
165 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, pp. 191–211.
166 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, p. 217.
167 Michel Foucault, About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth. – Political Theory, vol. 21, (2), 1993, p. 203.

> "it is a figure for both the observer who is nominally a free sovereign individual and a privatized subject confined in a quasi-domestic space, cut off from a public exterior world."[168]

More recently, in his discussion of post-World War II American architecture, Reinhold Martin proposes an emergence of a ""postindustrial" or even "posthuman" subject, a subject immersed in and constructed by data flows and patterns" corresponding to broad historical transformations involving equally the material and informational elements of what he calls the "organisational complex".[169] Branden Joseph, in another context, has called this transformation a shift from the "industrial subject to an informatic one, wherein new realms of cognitive, perceptual, and affective forces could be cathected to capital."[170] He refers to post-war processes of informatization that included the extension of the human nervous systems to the environment, but also to the emergence of immaterial labour, wherby the formerly private qualities of workers – their affects, emotions or gestures – became appropriated by new forms of production.[171]

These latter works are written with reference to texts that propose a transformation in the technological and cultural systems of the second half of the twentieth century, when the institutions of subject formation described by Foucault were restructured and their relationship to the outside world as well as other institutions redefined, giving rise to new kind of "technology of the self". What has been seen as the demise of the disciplinary regime has been accompanied by a critique of mass society, its bureaucratization and regulation of everyday life, and demands for democratization, flexibility of social structures, and individualization.[172] Written in the context of capitalist modernisation, these demands were answered and recouped in processes described as post-Fordism: restructuring work and daily life, accelerating informatization and adapting subjective changes to structures of profit making.

I want to propose that a comparable shift in the regime of subject formation, demands made against the mass society and parallel processes of informatization and restructuring of knowledge, took place in late Soviet society. There began a transformation in the "technologies of the self" – in the histor-

168 Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999, p. 38–39.
169 Reinhold Martin, The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media and Corporate Space. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005, p. 12.
170 Branden W. Joseph, Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage. (A "Minor" History). New York: Zone Books, 2008, p. 310.
171 Branden W. Joseph, Beyond the Dream Syndicate, p. 303.
172 On the demise of disciplinary power see: Gilles Deleuze, Postscript on the Societies of Control. – October, vol. 59, 1992, pp. 3–7.

ical constitution of the subject – whereby, side by side with disciplinary forces of the state, claims were laid by emerging forces of mass culture, urbanisation and informatization. While unofficial art sought refuge against the hegemonic structures in the traditional (if illusory) self-enclosed subject, radical artists of the 1970s turned their investigations towards the new "discourses of domination", such as cybernetics, information theory and technical aesthetics, and gained, among other things, knowledge of their role in casting the subject, critically adapting this in their work. Although these forces had emerged already in the previous decades, their wider implications had remained in many ways unrecognised by the bureaucratic structures and were resisted by the reformists of the 1960s. Now, in parallel with the breaking of boundaries between the private and the public, there was a restructuring of the inside and outside of the subject, conditioned among other things by new technologies and aesthetic circumstances.

To investigate this further, I will first turn to the changing historical circumstances in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s, including processes of informatization in economy and culture, and then return to the history of the subject in this new context.

Modernisation in the Soviet Union in the 1970s

During the period of *perestroika* and the years that followed immediately after it, it became popular to denote the preceding Brezhnev era (1964-1982) as that of stagnation. However, this notion was not used at the period itself, from the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, and it is difficult to apply it retrospectively to the whole of the long time span. Rather, the period up until 1973 was a phase of stable economic growth, of rising wages, increasing urbanisation (by 1972 urban dwellers outnumbered rural dwellers) and the emergence of the Soviet version of consumer society.[173] Some researchers prefer to divide the Brezhnev era into an early and late period, with 1973-4 as the dividing point after which Brezhnev's declining health began to affect his control over the country.[174]

The second half of the 1960s saw important attempts at restructuring economic management and planning in the Soviet Union with the hope that institutional innovation would increase plummeting growth rates and make production processes more efficient.[175] In the so-called "Kosygin reforms", named after the prime minister of the Brezhnev era, an attempt was made to decentralise decision-making over production by delegating it from planners

173 According to Mark Harrison, the Soviet Union was economically until 1973 on a growth course that one day would catch up with the US. Mark Harrison, Economic Growth and Slowdown. – Brezhnev Reconsidered. Eds. Edwin Bacon, Mark Sandle. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 45.
174 Mark Sandle, A Triumph of Ideological Hairdressing?, p. 145.
175 Mark Harrison, Economic Growth and Slowdown, p. 54.

to producers and factories, and to motivate their work with incentives from profits and sales rather than solely by output. The reform also proposed a stimulus system for innovation in order to encourage more efficient work processes and generating new products. The idea was to progress via a longer-term perspective from single enterprises to multi-plant corporations that would plan their production and distribution in a coordinated way.

In parallel, the emerging science of economic cybernetics introduced the idea of computerization of production and management processes.[176] One such vision foresaw an all-Soviet network of computer centres, which would plan, monitor and manage production and sales across the whole territory of the Soviet Union. In a truly utopian spirit, the proposal even included the elimination of money.[177] Indeed, as Ernest Mandel has argued, there was a widely held idea in the 1970s in the Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic that the planned economy was more suitable for the use of computers and coordinated management of the production and investment processes.[178] The "optimal planning" professed by cyberneticists was to be achieved by decentralisation in combination with self-regulation similar to the capitalist market. Re-translated as the feedback principle, computer modelling was to provide incentives for individual enterprises in socialist conditions where the market did not exist.[179] However, implementation of the ideas of economic cybernetics was met by resistance from industry managers and government officials who saw in computerisation a threat to existing power hierarchies and their own secure position within it; the liberal reformers, on the other hand, feared that all-powerful centralisation would undermine their autonomy. The state planning committee in turn saw in the network of independent computational centres an agency that would compete with their own.[180] A networked computer presupposed the free circulation of reliable information, which was, in the Soviet context, not only heavily controlled, but was also a means of manipulation and distortion.[181] As a result autonomous computer

176 Slava Gerovich, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002, pp. 268–9.
177 Slava Gerovich, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak, p. 271. This nationwide network of computer centres would have cost more that the space program and atomic project together.
178 Ernest Mandel, Beyond Perestroika. The Future of Gorbachev's USSR. London: Verso 1991, p. 11. See also: Francis Spufford, Red Plenty. London: Faber&Faber, 2010; Fredric Jameson, In Soviet Arcadia. – New Left Review, no. 75, May–June, 2012, pp. 119–127.
179 Slava Gerovich, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak, pp. 274–5.
180 Slava Gerovich, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak, p. 277.
181 For example, there was no information exchange between military industries and research and civilian industries: "We received more information about what was going on in the rest of the world than what was going on in "closed divisions" in our own country." Dzhermen Gvishiani, Mosty v budushhee. Rossijskaja Akademija Nauk, Institut Sistemnogo Analiza. Moskva: Editorial URSS, 2010, p. 47. Thus it was more efficient to rely on Western experience than to use local research institutes, its trial and error methods, stuck also in the difficulties of inter–organisation communication.

centres were put to work at separate ministries, thus reinforcing their power and further concentrating it in their hands.[182] Although, as some researchers have argued, Soviet computer science and research in the post-war years was comparable to the level of the West, by the mid-1980s only 32% of large enterprises (those with more than 500 employees) had a computer, as compared to 100% in the United States and Japan.[183]

While the Kosygin reforms included decentralisation and movement towards the principles of a capitalist market economy, they also comprised a parallel process of centralisation: the aim was to make planning and party leadership of the economy more efficient rather than to hand power over to the market. Although implementation of most of these reforms was shelved in the early 1970s, there was an adaption of some new management techniques, like system analysis and linear programming.[184] The reforms also initiated a more active international cooperation in the field of technology and commerce as well as opening up trade relations with the Western world, which doubled by the end of the 1960s.[185]

Brezhnev endorsed these opened trade relations in order to substitute for shortcomings in domestic production. This in turn was made possible by hard currency from oil and natural gas export, as the newly discovered Siberian oil fields gave the Soviet Union an autonomy in energy sources, becoming by 1980s the world's largest producer of oil and gas.[186] Increasingly the Soviet Union also started to borrow money from Western banks, making Soviet state-socialism, which had until then existed self-sufficiently, dependent on the capitalist West.[187] This marked a shift away from the emphasis on domestic production and striving for self-sufficiency in food products in the Khruschev era and a turn towards growing integration and dependency on capitalist economies.[188] Equally telling was the turn away from domestic invention and product development towards importing goods and production under foreign licences. In the Cold War race for scientific advancement and space exploration, Khruschev had given special status to academics and research, establishing institutes that were intended to inspire Socialist models in new technology and "overtake and surpass" the West in strategic areas, including cybernetics

182 Slava Gerovich, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak, p. 284.
183 Ernest Mandel, Beyond Perestroika, p. 10.
184 About the reform see: Vladimir Kontorovich, Lessons of the 1965 Soviet Economic Reform. – Soviet Studies, vol. 40 (2), 1988, pp. 308–316.
185 Dzhermen Gvishiani, Mosty v budushhee, p. 45.; Jeremi Suri, The Promise and Failure of "Developed Socialism": The Soviet "Thaw" and the Crucible of the Prague Spring, 1964–1972. – Contemporary European History, vol. 15 (2), 2006, p. 140.
186 Stephen Kotkin, Armageddon Averted. The Soviet Collapse 1970–2000. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 15–16.
187 Jeremi Suri, The Promise and Failure of "Developed Socialism", p. 143.
188 Jeremi Suri, The Promise and Failure of "Developed Socialism", p. 139.

and even product design (called "artistic engineering" at the time). Researchers were given unusual autonomy, special access to foreign books and journals, and privileges in terms of housing, consumption of food and services. Now however, instead of developing local innovation in motorcars, for example, it was preferable to build them under licence from Fiat or Renault.[189] Similarly, although scientists in the late '50s and early '60s had worked (in special closed cities) on their own models of computers that could stand comparison with those developed in the United States, by the mid-1960s domestic computer development had been abandoned and technology imports were starting to be copied in the Soviet Union without local innovation.[190] From 1967, original computer technology was no longer being developed in the Soviet Union.[191]

Thus, there emerged a contradiction: on the one hand, the Khruschev period had initiated a range of autonomous research institutes, but their work was no longer implemented and models for industry were preferably now copied from the West; on the other hand, the role and sovereignty of the institutions was seldom questioned. This contradictory situation gave rise to a new kind of space for experimentation and innovation, whereby the research of such institutions was not required to lead towards pragmatic output and implementation.

Urbanisation and consumer society

The 1960s and 1970s was also a period of rapid urbanisation in the Soviet Union, which brought with it changes in lifestyle. By 1959, the number of urban dwellers in Estonia had already exceeded the rural population; and by 1970, 65% of the Estonian population lived in cities.[192] It was a period of rapid increase in housing and in public infrastructure. The 1970s were also marked by a considerable growth in the number of motorcars: Across the whole of

189 Jurij Solovev, Moja zhizn v dizajne. Moskva: Sojuz Dizainerov Rossij, 2004, pp. 135–136. In 1966 an agreement was signed with Fiat for the production under licence of 600 000 cars per year. A Volga Automobile Plant (VAZ) was built for this to Togliatti where a modification of the Fiat 124 was turned out as VAZ 2101 (Zhiguli or Lada) and was produced in 1970. Similarly, Renault participated in reorganising the production of Moscow's Lenin Komsomol Automobile Factory, which produced 200 000 Moskvich cars per year. See: Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Cars, Cars, and More Cars: The Faustian Bargain of the Brezhnev Era. – Borders of Socialism. Private Spheres of Soviet Russia. Ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum. New York, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 88–89.

190 Jeremi Suri, The Promise and Failure of "Developed Socialism", p. 139.

191 Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, Internal transfer of cybernetics and informality in the Soviet Union. The case of Lithuania. – Reassessing Cold War Europe. Eds. Sari Autio-Sarasmo, Katalin Miklóssy. London: Routledge, 2011, p. 130.

192 Tiit Tammaru, Linnastumine ja linnade kasv Eestis nõukogude aastatel. Urbanisation and Urban Growth in Estonia During the Soviet Period. Dissertationes Geographicae Universitatis Tartuensis 13. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli kirjastus, 2001, p. 129.

the Soviet Union, there were 26 motorcars per 1000 people in the mid-1970s; and these numbers were considerably higher in Estonia, with 61 motorcars per 1000 people, rising to 96 during the next ten years.[193]

This growing urbanisation and change in the physical space of the cities brought along major qualitative changes in lifestyle and social structure of the population, giving now an increasing role to intellectual work. The number of so-called "employees" in the Soviet Union grew from 11 million in 1941 to 35 million in 1983. Part of this formed the intelligentsia, a highly professional workforce in technical, managerial-administrative, scientific, artistic, educational and political spheres standing at the vanguard of changes in society.[194] The intelligentsia stood apart from the bureaucratic elite, whose reforms often did not match the social changes and led to a wide dissatisfaction and lack of motivation among young professionals.[195] The new, well-educated, urban population put great emphasis on individual self-fulfilment, freedom of movement, choice of profession and opportunity to determine one's own future.[196] For many researchers, the urban environment, with its emerging social micro-environments, was a significant contributing factor in this dissatisfaction and rising expectations. The micro-environments, with their informal structures that often linked to official structures in a hybrid way, emerged as sites of mediation, shaping public opinion and standing against indoctrination.[197] This led to the specific late-Soviet urban micro-worlds, described by Yurchak among others, social worlds that comprised a wide range of interests: enthusiasts of rock music, poetry groups, hippies, devotees of Eastern religions and esoteric practices.[198]

Writing in 1977 on the "problems of the younger generation," two sociologists from Tallinn described the desire for freedom and self-determination registered during their fieldwork. The new generation was harder to pin down in terms of a common social experience: one common feature was the desire to feel as if one were the "agent of history and owner of society."[199] A major role in the development of this generation was played by their environment:

193 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Cars, Cars, and More Cars, p. 90. This still remained far behind the 426 cars per 1000 inhabitants in the USA.
194 Moshe Lewin, The Gorbachew Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991, p. 49.
195 Moshe Lewin, The Gorbachew Phenomenon, p. 56.
196 Moshe Lewin, The Gorbachew Phenomenon, p. 64.
197 Moshe Lewin, The Gorbachew Phenomenon, p. 73. See also: Juri Sychev, Mikrosreda i lichnost': filosofskie i sociologicheskie aspekty. Moskva: Mysl', 1974
198 Yurchak shows how these practices were in fact not opposed to the Soviet ethos of invention and self-exploration: Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, pp. 207–237.
199 Mikk Titma, Paul Kenkmann, Noore põlvkonna probleemid. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1977, p. 16.

the micro-environment of close friends, family and workplace.[200] Mass media was growing in status – journals, radio, television, cinema – and also exhibited the influence of the West: "Due to its form, means of mass communication have great potential for influencing a personality […] film series of Tarzan, Phantomas or Angelique produced a certain style of behaviour for some of our youth as well."[201]

By the late 1960s, the combination of growing foreign trade, increasing admiration of Western lifestyles and the desire to display Soviet socialism as able to provide happiness for its citizens, led to what may be described as a mass consumer society.[202] By the end of the 1970s, refrigerators, washing machines and TV sets had become common household items, and vacations spent at the seaside in holiday homes or sanatoria in the Crimea – occasionally even in another socialist bloc country – became common practice.[203] Equally widespread was the ownership of summer cottages or allotment gardens. A specific style of luxury associated with Soviet life emerged: "wearing fashionable clothes or perfume, dining out in restaurants under gilded chandeliers, and celebrating with champagne."[204]

Foreign magazines with their colourful advertisements and, in northern Estonia, Finnish TV commercials, reinforced the growing fascination with Western brands and products; in major Soviet cities these brands could be acquired from special hard currency shops or through the black market. A journalist described his impressions of a visit to Tallinn in the mid-1970s: "In their apartments, Estonians had Dutch beer, English [sic] whisky, Danish crackers, American cigarettes, and Swedish pornography."[205] Researchers have later related this fascination with Western brands and products in the Baltic republics to anti-Soviet (Russian) sentiment, where exotic products were positively embraced as signifying a free world.[206] In other Soviet republics, Western culture was also seen by watching British TV series, shown since the early '70s – e.g. The Forsyte Saga and David Copperfield. As Stephen Kotkin has pointed out, these shows were watched not only as entertainment, but

200 Mikk Titma, Paul Kenkmann, Noore põlvkonna probleemid, p. 23.
201 Mikk Titma, Paul Kenkmann, Noore põlvkonna probleemid, p. 28.
202 David Crowley, Susan E. Reid, Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism? – Pleasures in Socialism. Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc. Eds. David Crowley, Susan E. Reid. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2010, p. 11.
203 90 per cent of Soviet families had refrigerators, 60 % had washing machines, 93 % had a TV. See: Stephen Kotkin, Armageddon Averted, p. 40. On tourism see: Anne E. Gorsuch, All This is Your World. Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad After Stalin. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, esp. ch. 2: Estonia as the Soviet "Abroad", pp. 49–78.
204 David Crowley, Susan E. Reid, Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism?, p. 11.
205 John McPhee, The Ransom of Russian Art. New York: Noonday, 1994, pp. 64–65.
206 Romuald J. Misiunas, Rein Taagepera, The Baltic States. Years of Dependence 1940–1990. London: Hurst & Company, 1993.

also as evidence of the high standard of material life in the West.[207] Popular Soviet films of the period display this desire for a similar "normality" of new consumerist welfare. In the Oscar-winning *Moscow does not believe in tears* (1980), a single mother from the provinces, who has worked her way up in a Moscow factory, is shown as living in a two-bedroom apartment, in a modern prefabricated dwelling in a new suburb. In front of the house stands her new Zhiguli; indoors, the home is furnished with modern appliances, and her daughter spends her free time listening to a stereo audio system using headphones.

At the same time, in contrast with the overproduction of commodities in the West, in the Soviet economy there was both a shortage of certain consumer items and an overproduction of others, what researchers have described as the "underproduction of use-value."[208] A mechanism for compensating for this was the black market, or so-called "second economy", which was often directly related to the official, "first" economy. This relationship was tacitly accepted: public property and tools were used for private ends and economic gain, products and services were obtained through networks of friends and acquaintances, and there existed a system of mutual favours. Researchers have called this tolerance of illegal activities a "little deal" (named after the "big deal" in the Stalinist years, when material privileges were exchanged for loyalty); as long as it did not comprise anti-state activity, the authorities turned their gaze away or even participated in it themselves.[209] This private economic activity has been seen both as supplementing the Soviet economy and as the obverse side of setting aside the economic reforms for state enterprises that occurred in the 1960s.[210] Thus, flexibility and responsiveness to demand now moved into the petty private realm.

1.3.2 Informatization, culture, subjectivity

The late-Soviet period also gave rise to a fascination with cybernetic and information theories in the research in the humanities and the arts. As Slava Gerovich, among others, has pointed out, cybernetics, which was in the 1950s considered a bourgeois "pseudo-science", was rehabilitated at the end of the decade and obtained a significant position in scientific and later also cultural circles. Cybernetic ideas were both appealing to Soviet culture and threatening to the established disciplinary boundaries and political divisions.[211] In the

207 Stephen Kotkin, Armageddon Averted, p. 42.
208 Ernest Mandel, Beyond Perestroika, p. 31.
209 James R. Millar, The Little Deal: Brezhnev's Contribution to the Acquisitive Socialism. – Slavic Review, vol. 44 (4), 1985, pp. 694–706.
210 James R. Millar, The Little Deal, pp. 696–697.
211 Slava Gerovich, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak, p. 105.

1950s several researchers saw in cybernetic metalanguage a tool for de-Stalinization, whereby computer-based objectivity could be used as a substitute for the Party ideology that led science. Cyberspeak came to be promoted as a new universal approach, offering a language that was supposedly neither capitalist nor socialist, but was objectively scientific. The electronic cybernetic machine became the new metaphor for both economy and society.[212]

The Tartu-Moscow school of cultural semiotics, which was born in the period of de-Stalinization, carried similar hopes for translating the ideas of the physical sciences to the field of humanities. Boris Egorov, one of the fellow travellers of the school has written how, at the end of the 1950s, the term "cybernetics" was still relatively unknown: "what was behind this term, almost nobody knew"[213]

> "[…]our eyes were opened by Norbert Wiener's book *Cybernetics and Society*, published by the journal *Inostrannaya Literatura* [Foreign Literature] in 1958 […] all fuzzy doubts relating to "freedom as the consciousness of necessity" and to unidirectional top-down rigid determinism found a solution and vanished. I immediately gave a presentation in our methodological seminar and remember clearly […] the vivid flame of creative thought that was visible on Yuri Lotman's face: the dialectical understanding of feedback, freedom and choice demonstrated the philosophical as well as political and social absurdity of totalitarian regimes."[214]

This quest for a universal scientific language was clearly evident in Lotman's explanation of the project of semiology in the late 1960s. Writing for a popular audience, he saw communication as framed within the ethical task of understanding the other for peaceful coexistence – no matter if it concerned other people, animals or even aliens from outer space. Similarly, the comprehension of the arts was for him an issue of communication, whereby the artistic sign acted as a device for the accumulation of human experience throughout history.

> "artworks are an exceptionally economical, powerful, efficiently organised means for retaining and communicating informa-

212 Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, Constructing Soviet Cultural Policy: Cybernetics and Governance in Lithuania after World War II. Linköping Studies in Arts and Science, no. 437. Linköping: Linköping University, Department for Studies of Social Change and Culture, 2008, p. 20.
213 Boriss Jegorov, Tartu koolkonna lätteil. Mälestusi 1950. aastatest. – Vikerkaar, no. 1, 1995, p. 78.
214 Boriss Jegorov, Tartu koolkonna lätteil, p. 78.

> tion […] if we would know all the secrets of how an artistic text was constructed, we could use it in order to solve one of the most pressing problems of today's world – that of compressing information."[215]

Lotman proposed that, as with the case of bionics – a science, born in the 1960s, which studied the use of natural forms in human technology –, a similar science could study the constructive principles of art in order to solve technical challenges related to preserving information; a science that would be called "artonics".[216]

This fascination with new knowledge and vocabulary offered by cybernetics and semiology was equally demonstrated in the fine arts. Articles looking to make connections between abstract art, semiology and communication theory provoked discussions in the professional press as well as in the more widely-available youth magazines.[217] As I will argue in later chapters, this tendency and interest extended well into the 1970s, albeit with a changed emphasis.

Later commentators have interpreted the use of this vocabulary solely as a rhetorical mimicry utilised in order to conceal or explain abstract forms and unusual iconography. Art historian Igor Golomshtok calls cybernetics a "shield" behind which it was possible to carry out work without censorship.[218] Sirje Helme has recently written of artist Olav Maran's use of concepts such as "communication", "model", "information" and "system of signs" as a "way to plug oneself into the space of knowledge important for the society at that period, while in some way providing justification for liberating creation from the primitive rules that applied to art."[219] Thus, along the lines of the "sublimation" thesis, cybernetics and its corresponding vocabulary was interpreted as a cover up or a "parodic language" and game, that need not be taken seriously.[220]

My intention in this work is to show that the idea, often presented retrospectively, of cybernetics being used solely as a cover-up, is a misleading one, and that interest in "neutral" scientific language or the discourse of information theory reverberated with broader processes of change not only in

215 Juri Lotman, Inimesed ja märgid. – Vikerkaar, no. 1, 2000, pp. 90–91. I thank Virve Sarapik for drawing my attention to this text.
216 Juri Lotman, Inimesed ja märgid, p. 91. He names the new science also "artistics". See also Juri Lotman, Kunst modelleerivate süsteemide reas. – Juri Lotman, Kultuurisemiootika. Tallinn: Olion 2006, p. 27.
217 Olav Maran, Kujutamisest kujutavas kunstis. – Noorus, no. 11, 1966, pp. 66–68.
218 Igor Golomshtok, Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union. – Unofficial Art From the Soviet Union. Eds. Igor Golomshtok, Alexander Glezer. London: Secker & Warburg, 1977, p. 100.
219 Sirje Helme, Space. Conflict and Harmony. Henn Roode's abstract works. – Henn Roode. Modernist Despite Fate (Newspaper accompanying Henn Roode's exhibition), Tallinn: Kumu Art Museum, 2007, p. 1.
220 See also: Slava Gerovich, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak, pp. 294–295.

the economy or culture, but also regarding the human subject. Cybernetics and information theory were discourses that brought along a shift in the production of the subject; and, as I attempt to show, this shift was recognised by several artists of the period, who interpreted it as a means to contest the regulated bureaucratic society and to respond to the demands posed by the new generation and the changed circumstances of the era.

Dynamics of the subject

In their analysis of the movement beyond disciplinary modernisation during the past thirty years, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have pointed to the subjective transformation of labour power over the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. Employing the notion of the subject as used by Foucault, they allocate to it a considerably greater degree of freedom.[221] According to them, the disciplinary society with its forms of labour, family, political participation, was not sufficient for answering the needs of the new generation who turned toward exploration of more dynamic forms of collectivity and socialisation. This "mass refusal of the disciplinary regime" was for them also a moment of experimentation with new alternative forms of being: "The movements valued instead a more flexible dynamic of creativity and what might be considered more immaterial forms of production."[222]

Various countercultural and liberation movements in the Western world in the 1960s set forth a whole new complex of values, like mobility, flexi-

221 Hardt and Negri propose in *Commonwealth* that throughout *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality. Vol. 1*, Foucault theorizes "an other to power", proposing to call it "alternative production of subjectivity", something that resists power and seeks autonomy from it in alternative existence. Arguing that for Foucault "freedom and resistance are necessary preconditions for the exercise of power", they quote a place from "Subject and Power", saying: "Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free." (Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Commonwealth. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 59.) In the original French version of Foucault's text however "free subjects" and "free" have been put in quotation marks, making their meaning conditional rather than direct (Michel Foucault, Deux Essais sur Le Sujet et Le Pouvoir. – Michel Foucault, un parcours philosophique. Eds. Hubert Dreyfus, Paul Rabinow. Paris: Gallimard, 1984, p. 314). Foucault explains freedom to be a necessary effect of power relations, rather than being antagonistic to it: in a power relation the individual encounters several possibilities or subject positions, "a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized. […] [T]here is no face-to-face confrontation of power and freedom, which are mutually exclusive (freedom disappears everywhere power is exercised), but a much more complicated interplay. In this game freedom may well appear as the condition for the exercise of power (at the same time its precondition, since freedom must exist for power to be exerted, and also its permanent support, since without the possibility of recalcitrance, power would be equivalent to a physical determination)." Michel Foucault, The Subject and Power, p. 790.

222 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire, p. 274.

bility, knowledge, communication, which would affect the reorganisation of everyday life, politics and economy in subsequent years. Through these movements and struggles a new regime of subjectivity production was forged that replaced the previous one: this new subjectivity, rather than being born solely through disciplinary subsumption in the factory was now being formed also outside the workplace, through cultural engagement and socialisation.[223] In the capitalist West this new subjectivity predicted a shift from a Fordist to post-Fordist economy, to postmodernisation and informatization and the rise of the immaterial economy in the coming years.[224]

One characteristic trait of the movement away from the disciplinary regime was the breakup of the distinction between the inside and outside of discrete enclosed places. According to Foucault, disciplinary power, although infiltrating the whole society, was from its principle of operation a "cellular" power.[225] Its subjects were produced in institutions disconnected from one another, with each institution operating by its own set of rules and classifications. This went now through a change:

> "today the enclosures that used to define the limited space of the institutions have broken down so that the logic that once functioned primarily within the institutional walls now spreads across the entire social terrain. Inside and outside are becoming indistinguishable."[226]

Furthermore, this unfixed character of the site of production was related to the "indeterminacy of the form of the subjectivities produced."[227]

According to Hardt and Negri, the rise of this new subjectivity could be followed also inside the Soviet Union, a system they call "state management of capitalist production": "the development of real socialism has constructed a political and productive subjectivity that […] registers the crisis of the system at the same level as that in the West […]".[228]

According to their analysis, the Soviet state was incapable of moving beyond the industrial paradigm and adapting its economy to the growing needs of postindustrial production and informatization (although, one might argue

223 Paolo Virno, The Ambivalence of Disenchantment. – Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics. Eds. Paolo Virno, Michael Hardt. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnseota Press, 1996, p. 18.
224 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire, p. 275.
225 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, p. 149.
226 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire, p. 196.
227 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire, p. 197.
228 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Labor of Dionysos: A Critique of the State-Form. Theory out of Bounds, vol. 4. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p. 266.

that the Kosygin reforms pointed to a partial recognition of this need). Under the conditions of the Cold War, this resulted in an economic and political standstill, and led ultimately to the decline of the country.

> "It could not compete […] precisely where the real power conflicts were being played out, and it could not face the challenges of the comparative productivity of the economic systems, because advanced technologies of communication and cybernetics are efficient only when they are rooted in subjectivity, or better, when they are animated by productive subjectivities."[229]

What numerous studies of late-Soviet society showed however, was the range of new emerging subjectivities – desiring new freedom and flexibilities for movement, for spending time in the public spaces, for manifestations of new cultural forms – which remained unrecognised by the dominant power structures. Thus there emerged a paradox: while the state in many cases provided the means for these subjectivities to surface,[230] it at the same time failed to adapt (to) their potential, leading to their engagement in various alternative means and socialities.

It is this dynamic of the subject that we can see operating in several late-Soviet artistic endeavours and which stands in the background of my investigations on art and architecture in Tallinn in the 1970s. The practices of the artists and architects in question were aimed at a new kind of subjectivity in terms of sites of production and construction – emerging through networks and systems related to the whole environment, rather than secluded places – and in terms of its cultural context – the mass consumer society and information society, with its changed values and demands. (In this respect, one may think of the 1975 proposal by Sirje Runge for modular structures in the public places in the city, where users could engage in listening to music or receiving information, and of DIY instructions in the home decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu*, showing readers how to synchronise sound and

229 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire, p. 277.

230 In chapter 6 of Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More, Alexei Yurchak speaks of an active Komsomol (Soviet young communists' organisation) member who has a keen interest in Marxist-Leninist philosophy and desires to be a good communist while at the same time being passionate about Western rock music. Instead of seeing these two things as incompatible, he actually argued for a direct relation between the best examples of Western rock with communist aspirations. Yurchak demonstrates a paradox which became important for the alternative practices in the 1970s and 1980s, that although on the one hand the Communist Party desired control and regulated it through its tedious bureaucracy and repetitive rhetoric, the communist ethics professed widely throughout society encouraged people to be inquisitive, open-minded, open to debate and to experiment. Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, pp. 207–237.

colour in their homes so that listening to music would become a synaesthetic event encompassing the whole space of the home. These examples are further examined in chapters 2 and 3.) This provided an alternative and solution to the status quo precisely to the extent that the official-bureaucratic structures, relying heavily on disciplinary models of power, did not adequately identify or address the emergence of a new viewer subjectivity and the appearance of a new postindustrial environment. But this dynamic also points to a different periodization, referred to in the first part of the introductory chapter, as it was only after the end of the Soviet Union that this emerging subjectivity acquired a retroactive meaning, when new communication technologies joined the new productive subjectivities in an increasingly efficient way.

Writing about the poetry of Juhan Viiding in the 1970s (which was written under the pseudonym Jüri Üdi), Estonian literary critic Hasso Krull has proposed that Üdi's work indexes a tendency of the Estonian society in that period that he calls "tuning-in to the West", exemplified by the influx of rock music, the spread of Finnish TV, and changes in morality and mentality.[231] This could have been the reason for his extraordinary popularity, reaching an audience that was much wider than the usual reader's groups. However, Krull goes further than this simple correspondence between language and society, and proposes the emergence of a new subjectivity made manifest in Üdi's works: against the work of a previous generation that aimed to "dive deep to the bottom of their personality", Üdi's work indicates the emergence of a subjectivity "generated foremost by the very means of Üdi's poetry-making. In short it could be described as de-centred affirmation."[232] For Krull, this upsetting of perceived ideas on subjectivity becomes evident in an article from 1974 by a leading poet from among the 1960s reformists, Jaan Kaplinski, who, being surprised by Üdi's use of poetry as a mask – "Üdi's rules are so wide, that it accommodates all sorts of persons with masks, including that mask which we consider to be more authentic and call the real-self" – states that if Üdi were not a special kind of person, one could see in him "features and sensibility of a new generation."[233] Krull argues however that this new subjectivity also scared the writer himself, for it displayed the sensibility not of a new or the next generation, but of the one after the next one, and thus he gave up his pseudonym and returned to a more traditional subjectivity.

It would be possible to follow a similar movement in the works of the artists discussed here (they also had connections with Viiding / Üdi and his work, and reciprocally Viiding followed their own work). In contrast to the

231 Hasso Krull, Jüri Üdi, Juhan Viiding ja eesti luule. – Jüri Üdi ja Juhan Viiding: kogutud luuletused. Ed. Hasso Krull. Tallinn: Tuum, 1998, pp. 597–599.
232 Hasso Krull, Jüri Üdi, Juhan Viiding ja eesti luule, p. 597.
233 Hasso Krull, Jüri Üdi, Juhan Viiding ja eesti luule, p. 508.

investigation of "deep subjectivity" in the 1960s, they were eager to experiment with effects derived from new means of representation in Pop and new communication media. Their work in the early 1970s involved not only a redefinition of art, its disciplinary boundaries and means, but also the constitution of the viewer. However, by the beginning of the 1980s most of the artists and architects discussed had moved away from many of these investigations, turning instead towards ideas of the autonomy of art and artists or drawing a more secure border between artistic and architectural practice.

As indicated above, in the Baltic context a self-enclosed autonomous subject was also a national one, asserting a local ethnic identity against Russian dominance in the Soviet Union. In the 1970s, artworks that tackled the issue of this subjectivity, or merely referred to its dissolution, thus posed a threat that went beyond the spheres of art or architecture and suggested that the basis for a common identity was unclear. From the perspective of national and ethnic identity, Western mass culture and everyday Soviet culture were considered equally invasive. In an analogue to discussions in postmodern feminist theories, the question became: What is one's radical politics to be based on once an identity has dissolved and the (autonomous) subject that voiced the critique has been removed? – questioning autonomy meant also questioning the premises on which historical change was based.[234] Recognition of this conflict, whether explicit or implied, may be among the reasons that had, by the end of the decade, led to radical artists and architects in Tallinn moving away from their investigations and turning in some cases to explicit national symbolism and traditional forms of subjectivity. However, from today's perspective – or, as Krull put it, speaking of Viiding, the perspective of "the one [generation] after the next one" – the works and practices that problematized the engagement of the subject and its environment in a new way have gained renewed relevance as the prehistory of forces which have become hegemonic today.

234 See: Linda Nicholson, ed., Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange. New York, London: Routledge, 1995.

CONCLUSION AND OVERVIEW OF ARTICLES: A DIFFERENT KIND OF BORDERLINE

In the early 1990s, following the end of the Soviet regime, broader changes in world geographies and the opening up of the country to Western systems, the redefinition of borders and boundaries became a recurrent theme in Estonian cultural and historical discourses. This redefinition was often seen as one of the principal features among a larger set of processes that went on throughout the decade: the end of state-socialist stratifications coincided with a rapid influx of neoliberal influences; the long-awaited freedom of speech coincided with a radically-transforming public sphere; and the end of the single-party state led to an increasingly spectacularised democracy. In her analysis of Emil Tode's novel *Border State*, literary scholar Marie Jaanus listed some of those processes:

> "de-sovietization, re-nationalization, re-Europeanization, globalization, postmodernisation, increasingly also the commodification and homogenization that are characteristic of the world of late multinational capitalism, and finally, as everywhere, the displacement of reality by a simulated hyper-reality, […] given the rapid advancement of instant, telematized communication and the culture of the Internet."[235]

She went on:

> "All of this calls upon the individual to unmake and to remake his identity. It means to undo or at least to rethink the complex of symbolic nominations—starting with one's name, age, gender, nationality, profession, religion, and other such marks […]. It means also to handle the pressure of unconscious identifications, those sharp, instantaneous, and uncontrollable plus and minus flashes of love and hate, want and disgust, acceptance and rejection that register themselves in one's body, moods, and emotions, and that are the real constituents and determinants of one's qualitative experience of life, the very measure of the degree of pleasure or pain one is able to harvest each day of living."[236]

Similarly, the relationship between the redefined borders of public and private, processes of modernisation and the emergence of a different kind of

235 Maire Jaanus, Estonia's Time and Monumental Time. – Baltic Postcolonialism. Ed. Violeta Kelertas. Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2006, p. 203.
236 Maire Jaanus, Estonia's Time and Monumental Time, p. 204

subjectivity has been a focal point for my research. I have shown that several of the transformations that have gained their full force in the present have a prehistory in the discussions and practices that emerged from the late 1960s onwards and resonated in the work of artists in Tallinn during the 1970s.[237] Before the political borders changed in the 1990s, borders pertaining to "the pressures of unconscious identifications […]. constitutents and determinants of one's qualitative experience of life" – as Jaanus put it – were already showing signs of transformation and had become the focus of artists.

This work has followed the practices of a group of artists and architects in Tallinn, calling into question their association with the notion "unofficial art" and proposing an alternative account of their work regarding the changes in their spatial circumstances and changing techniques of subjectification. More broadly, this analysis has attempted to provide a different framework from traditional art history, drawing together art and its spatial environment and shifting the perspective away from exclusive national historiography and towards transnational connections.

The themes of problematizing unofficial art, architecture, space and subjectivity are brought together in the following articles, published between 2009-2012, each considering a different case of artists and architects working in Tallinn in the 1970s. Each article also represents an episode in the complex dynamics between spatial relations and the subject. The succession of articles gathered here follows a parallel movement from homes to urban spaces (and their representations) and public spaces, and from art to architecture.

Revisiting the notion of unofficial art and its association with the private sphere in the Soviet period, my work has argued for an alternative model for understanding the practices of the artists and architects in the 1970s. I have questioned the relationship between the separate spheres in the context of modernizing Soviet society and proposed the border between the private and the public to be porous and unstable. Equally, it is difficult to draw a clear border around the domain of unofficial art, a notion itself going back to the confrontational logic of the Cold War era. This problematic correspondence between unofficial art and domestic space is investigated in the first article *Empty White Space: Home as a Total Work of Art during the Late-Soviet Period*, which discusses the home of artists Mare and Tõnis Vint in a prefabricated 1960s housing estate in Tallinn. The artists redesigned their generic apartment to reflect their interest in the principles of Art Nouveau and as a total work

237 In recent critical and curatorial practices several works have also brought up this period as a crisis of boundaries, focusing however solely on Western cultural practices. See: Anselm Franke, Earthrise and the Disappearance of the Outside. – The Whole Earth. California and the Disappearance of the Outside. Eds. Diedrich Diedrichsen, Anselm Franke. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013.

of art, thus embodying the idea of the integration of art and life. From the late 1960s, the Vints' home became a well-known gathering-place for Tallinn's artists and intellectuals, an alternative site for the exchange of information and the discussion of artworks. In contrast to interpretations that see the Vints' home as an autonomous space withdrawn from everyday concerns, a state within a state, I view it in the context of transformations in culture and technology in the 1970s. I examine the ways in which the allegedly autonomous artistic sphere was permeated by public interests and values, as well as how interiors were tied to a wider environment, including communication systems and channels of mass media.

I investigate this further in the second article, *Fractured Boundaries: The Representation of Homes in the Critical and Artistic Practices of the 1970s*, which discusses how the popular home-decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* became a ground for communicating a changed relationship to the home, showing alternative accounts of everyday life and presenting new ideas for home improvement drawn from a transformed practice of art. Several of the authors involved with the magazine, including its editor Andres Tolts, were connected to the emerging design profession and claimed a new notion of the environment in their work. In the redefinition of art of the 1970s in Tallinn, this idea of a new kind of environment emerges as an important thread running throughout my analysis. I relate it to the ideas of cybernetics and information theory, popular throughout the decade, which saw systems, including human beings, tied to their environments through informational feedback loops.

The following two articles further investigate the artists' relationship to the environment: *Feedback Environment: Rethinking Art and Design Practices in Tallinn During the Early 1970s*, focuses on how information theories from the 1960s, which contributed to the transformation of Soviet design discourse, were further appropriated by alternative art practices and how they found their way into works related to the postindustrial environment. *Noise Environment: Jüri Okas's Reconstructions and Its Public Reception*, interprets works by architect and artist Jüri Okas, which dealt with discarded urban infrastructure and neglected fringe territories, via a paradigm shift in information theory in which ambiguity and indeterminacy became understood as characteristic of a maximal state of information. In his works the entropic other, shut out from the system's borders, became visible and privileged, and was included in a redefined notion of the urban environment. This ran against the grain of ideas conveyed in unofficial art and the politics of national resistance of the period, which saw the task of art and architecture in the urban context to be to reduce "noise" and increase opportunities for withdrawal.

Instead of the idea of withdrawal as an oppositional tactic of alternative art in Soviet society, I have proposed to analyse these practices in a dynamic way,

not fixing them to specific sites but traversing the public and the private, official and unofficial. In the final article, *Architects of the Tallinn School and the Critique of Soviet Modernism in Estonia*, I examine the exhibition of 14 architects and artists in the Academy of Sciences Library in Tallinn in 1978, which criticised the recently-erected prefabricated housing estates – perceived as anonymous and alienating – and the reduction of the architect to a mere appendage of the building industry. These architects borrowed ideas from art of the period to redefine their profession, and voiced a comprehensive and incisive critique that gained a wider resonance in the society. They produced an alternative discourse by partly appropriating the dominant terms and formats, but also extended their use and meanings. Utilising the support of the broader public and the means provided by official structures they challenged the established power relations, changed them and took their position in the Architects' Union. This group of architects and artists, by positioning themselves in the field of architecture as a practice closely associated with social production and political power – first setting out from the territory of art, generating events within their small circle of friends in the early 1970s, and then appropriating these tactics directly in architecture – garnered wider attention and caused significant changes in the architectural institution itself.

The findings of this analysis could be seen to be close to the notion of a deterritorialised sociality as professed by anthropologist Alexei Yurchak and described in the introduction above: there emerged a milieu which worked against the binary structure of private and public, "us" – "not us", inside and outside. Yet, whereas in Yurchak's analysis these deterritorialised milieus were characterised by their generally apolitical stance, avoiding intervening directly in political issues,[238] my work has referred to a possible movement beyond this, demonstrating the relevance of the deterritorialised sociality for broader political questions.

This work has also argued for a different periodization regarding the practices of artists and architects in Tallinn in the 1970s. In several accounts of Soviet cultural history, the 1970s has been portrayed as a decade reacting to the optimistic 1960s: the events of the Prague Spring in 1968 had crushed hopes for a reformed socialist society, and the energy driving social change became redirected toward the private realm. In my articles I have painted a more complex picture of the 1970s, especially of the first half of the decade which was a period of intense exploration and transformation in the art and the architecture professions. During this period, changes in technology and communication systems began to have a wider influence on the work of art-

238 Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More, p. 147.

ists and designers and put into question the prevailing models of interaction between art and society.

I have further related these changes to the end of the so-called "disciplinary society", as described by Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, among others. Changes in industrial society during the late 1960s and early 70s (which restructured the principles of production and consumption), changes in everyday life and values (the demise of the "factory society" and of traditional family values) and the new rhetoric of mobility, flexibility, knowledge and communication, were echoed in the Soviet Union primarily at the cultural and everyday level. From that perspective, withdrawal to the private sphere was a sign – albeit a negative one – of the emergence of a new subjectivity with new kinds of expectations. Simultaneously – manifested in the works of Lapin, Runge and Keskküla, among others – there developed new ideas for an environment and a society that could be organized differently, even from within a bureaucratic-disciplinary socialist country. This transformative moment required another rethink at the end of the decade, with the rise in identity politics and interest in the use of postmodern semantic structures in art and architecture. Nonetheless, we can see in this moment of the 1970s several interests that have become actualized in the present: the postindustrial city, the relationship between media technologies and human beings, and the redefinition of borders between the inside and outside of the subject.

Finally, the chosen focus on modernisation, and on its respective changes in space and subjectivity, has been intended to create distance from the analyses of previous works that read the art production of the period solely through the notion of national resistance. Such histories have presented material that was repressed during the Soviet era in terms of resistance, thus helping to define the country as distinct from the Soviet hegemony of the past. However, there are a number of artworks produced during the 1970s that do not sit comfortably with that narrative of national resistance. By placing these practices at the centre of my enquiry, I have aimed toward a different reading of history, uncovering alternatives that disturb the mainstream narrative of Estonian art in the Soviet period. Furthermore, this perspective on modernisation and its respective changes has the potential to enable re-readings of alternative and unofficial art production also in other parts of the former Soviet Union, where, in several cases, the framework of withdrawal has not been adequate to describe the work of artists operating simultaneously in the official and unofficial spheres.

2. Empty White Space: Home as a Total Work of Art during the Late-Soviet Period

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Empty White Space: Home as a Total Work of Art during the Late-Soviet Period

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ABSTRACT *This article discusses the home interior of two Estonian artists, that of Mare and Tõnis Vint, viewing it on the background of discourses that associate Soviet unofficial art with the allegedly autonomous private sphere. The Vints' home, located in a 1960s prefabricated housing area in Tallinn, became from the late 1960s a well-known gathering place for Tallinn's artists and intellectuals, an alternative site for the exchange of information and discussion of artworks. The apartment's interior decoration reflected the Vints' interest in Aestheticism and Art Nouveau and was supposed to embody an idea of art and life belonging together, forming a total work of art. The article discusses the fascination with Art Nouveau and interest in nineteenth-century* Gesamtkunstwerk *as a projection of issues relating to Soviet Estonia during the second half of the twentieth century. It further examines the ways the autonomous artistic sphere*

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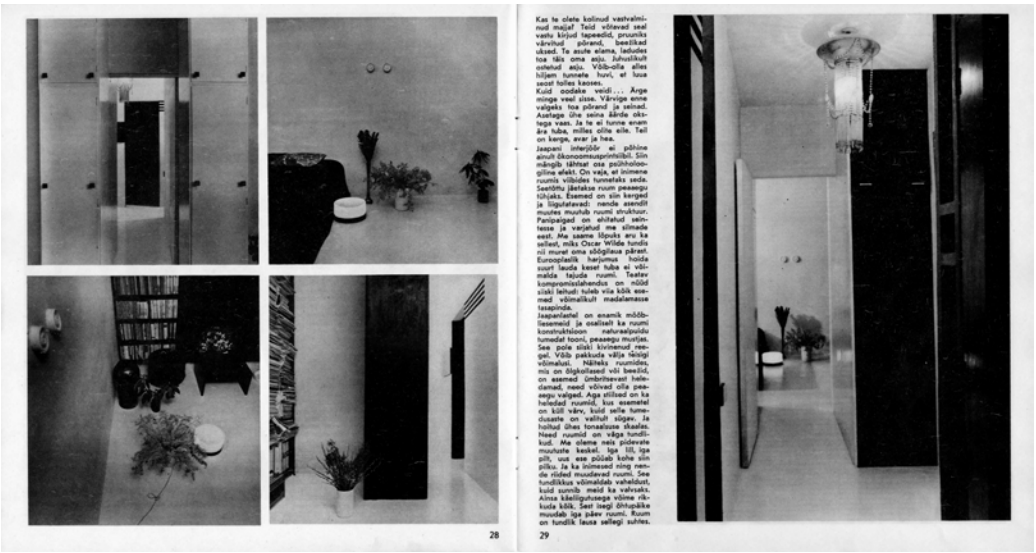
was permeated by public interests and values as well as how interiors were tied to a wider environment, including now also communication systems and channels of mass media.

KEYWORDS: Soviet unofficial art, domestic interior, Estonian art, Tõnis Vint, Art Nouveau, critique of modernism

In the article "Empty Space," published in the second issue of the Estonian home-decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* (Art and Home) in 1974, artist Tõnis Vint described James McNeill Whistler's White House in London, which was designed by William Godwin in 1877, the changes in lifestyle that it had instigated, the fascination with Japanese "simplicity, whiteness, clarity," and the break with overstuffed nineteenth-century interiors. Vint continued: "Now, in the 1970s, we can look back. But our homes are still piled up with thousands of things. Useless things. And we feel how these things take the air. Take the light. And all the space that we need for ourselves" (Vint 1974: 27; Figures 1 and 2).

The article was illustrated with photographs of Tõnis and his wife Mare Vint's (also an artist) apartment in a system-built concrete house in a recently constructed residential area of Tallinn to which they had moved in 1968 and that they had refurbished in the early 1970s. In the images, the apartment's floors and walls are white,

Figure 1
Tõnis Vint, "Empty Space," an article and illustrations from the magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* [Art and Home] (Vint 1974).



Kas te olete kolinud vastvalminud majja? Teid võtavad seal vastu kirjud tapeedid, pruunika värvitud põrand, beetlikad uksed. Te asute elama, ladudes toa täis oma asju. Juhuslikult ostetud asju. Võib-olla alles hiljem tunnete huvi, et luua seost tolles kaosses.

Kuid oodake veidi... Arge minge veel sisse. Värvige enne valgeks toa põrand ja seinad. Asetage ühe seina ääre okstega vaas. Ja te ei tunne enam ära tuba, milles olite elle. Teil on kerge, avar ja hea.

Jaapani interjöör ei pühine ainult ökonoomsusprintsiibil. Siin mängib tähtsat osa psühholoogiline efekt. On vaja, et inimene ruumis viibides tunneteks seda. Seetõttu jäetakse ruum peaaegu tühjaks. Esemed on siin kerged ja liigutatavad: nende asendit muutes muutub ruumi struktuur. Panipaigad on ehitatud seinteose ja värjatud me silmade eest. Me saame lõpuks aru ka sellest, miks Oscar Wilde tundis nii muret oma söögitoa pärast. Europlastik harjumus hoida suurt lauda keset tuba ei võimalda tajuda ruumi. Teatav kompromisslahendus on nüüd siski leitud: tuleb viia kõik esemed võimalikult madalamasse tasapinda.

Jaapanlastel on enamik mööbliesemeid ja osalisell ka ruumi konstruktsioon naturaalpuidu tumedat tooni, peaaegu mustjas. See pole siski kivinenud reegel. Võib pakkuda välja tänigi võimalusi. Näiteks ruumides, mis on õigkollased või beežid, on asemed ümbritsevast heledamad, need võivad olla peaaegu valged. Aga otsitaxe on ka heledaid ruumid, kus esemetel on küll värv, kuid selle tumedusete on valitud sügav. Ja hoitud ühes tonaalsuses skaalas. Need ruumid on väga hunditkud. Me oleme neis pidevate muutuste keskel. Iga lill, iga pilt, uus ese püüab kohe siin pilku. Ja ka inimesed ning nende riided muudavad ruumi. See tundlikkus võimaldab vaheldust, kuid sunnib meid ka valvsaks. Ainsa käeliigutusega võime rikkuda kõik. Seet isegi õhtupäike muudab iga päev ruumi. Ruum on tundlik tausa sellegi suhtes.

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Figure 2
Tõnis Vint, "Empty Space," an article and illustrations from the magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* [Art and Home] (Vint 1974).

seating is close to the floor, detailing is minimalist, almost ascetic, and the black and white furniture is purpose-built (Figures 3–7). Vint's article proceeds with direct advice about how to furnish an apartment in a newly built house by painting the floor and walls white and placing a vase with branches against one of the walls, and it concludes: "You feel light, spacious and well … These spaces are very sensitive. In them, we are in the middle of constant transformations … And also people and their clothes change space … A single sleight of hand can spoil everything" (Vint 1974: 29).

If Vint's 1974 article from *Kunst ja Kodu* could be viewed against the background of the numerous instructional writings and magazines that, from the late 1950s onwards, had launched a campaign against bourgeois "knick-knacks" and instructed Soviet readers in the principles of rational planning and matters of good taste (see Reid 2006b), then by the 1970s, the magazine had joined in the critique of the uniform features of the industrially produced surroundings and the anonymous characteristic of the ongoing modernization. The construction of Mustamäe residential area, where the Vints' home was located, was initiated in the late 1950s during the Khrushchev thaw and continued throughout the 1960s following modernist free planning principles. Buildings were designed with standardized ground plans and were to provide each family with a separate apartment with the minimum necessary space (Vint's home was 33 square meters; Figure 8). As a replacement for the Soviet communal flats of the Stalin era the industrialization of housing production

Figure 3
Tõnis and Mare Vint's apartment in Mustamäe, Tallinn, Estonia, 1973.
Photograph by Jaan Klõšeiko.

Figure 4
Tõnis and Mare Vint's apartment in Mustamäe, Tallinn, Estonia, 1973.
Photograph by Jaan Klõšeiko.

Figure 5
Tõnis and Mare Vint's apartment in Mustamäe, Tallinn, Estonia, 1973.
Photograph by Jaan Klõšeiko.

Figure 6
Tõnis and Mare Vint's apartment in Mustamäe, Tallinn, Estonia, 1973.
Photograph by Jaan Klõšeiko.

Figure 7
Tõnis and Mare Vint's apartment in Mustamäe, Tallinn, Estonia, 1973.
Photograph by Jaan Klõšeiko.

was initially welcomed as a progressive course of events promising better living standards and a brighter future. However, by the 1970s it had begun to signify the negative consequences of mass housing, with its repetition of form and ignorance of context giving rise to a discourse of alienation associated with the new machine-made environment.[1] By allowing inhabitants to adapt the standardized apartment to their own taste and lifestyle, home decoration and the appropriation of standardized fittings worked to overcome the anonymity of the surroundings and to "privatise" the space. In this respect, Vint's article does more than merely offer practical advice on matters of decoration. It presents an artists' home that has itself been set up as an artwork. In so doing, it evokes a certain totality of the interior as a correspondence between the space, the things contained within it, and the user, and also one's heightened sensitivity to space, not merely as a place for "piling up useless things" but as an active participant in the inhabitant's experience. In this way the interior as total artwork is contrasted radically to the exterior of the building, to the bulky nine-story apartment house constructed from prefabricated concrete panels, with its brutally functional detailing whereby the seams between each adjoining panel remain clearly visible on the facade.

Figure 8
Apartment building in Mustamäe, Tallinn, Estonia, 1960s. Photograph by author, 2007.

Tõnis Vint became an influential and charismatic figure in Estonian art in the 1960s and 1970s. Officially trained as a printmaker, already during his studies in 1964 Vint organized a group of artists, known as ANK, which pioneered abstractionism and organized experimental theater, music performances, discussions, and seminars on modern art (Liivak and Saarep 1995). Tõnis Vint was also known for the lectures he gave on Surrealism, Abstractionism, Pop and Op Art, Art Nouveau, and on Japanese and Chinese art, at the Students' Scientific Society of the State Art Institute, lectures that compensated for the absence of these topics in the institute's official curriculum. Vint's own artworks, mostly black-and-white ink drawings representing simple geometrical compositions and systems, were inspired by Chinese and Japanese symbolism and ritual signs (Sepp 1992: 11). Taoism and Buddhism have also provided ideas for some of his designs – he showed a design for a Mandala house at an architectural exhibition in 1978 (see Kurg 2009). From the early 1970s onwards, Vint was engaged in comparative research on ornamentation from different cultures, religions, and periods, attracting a new group of students and disciples.

From the late 1960s, the Vints' home became a well-known gathering place for Tallinn's artists and intellectuals, an alternative site for the exchange of information, discussion of artworks, and for sharing newly acquired foreign publications. The cultural climate in the Baltic countries during the late 1960s and early 1970s was considered more liberal than the rest of the Soviet Union, introducing the public to the radical music of the period and providing a basis for Western-influenced countercultural movements (see Svede 2000: 189). Thus, long hair, jeans, and rock music became part of the youth lifestyle, manifesting their otherness in relation to the dominant ideology. Although the Vints' circle was influenced by the popular countercultural tendencies of the period and their home was often open to people of diverse backgrounds, the majority were still associated with the ideas of high art, music, and literature.[2] As such, this scene fits well with accounts of so-called unofficial art in the Soviet Union, which opposed the official canon and found refuge in the apartments and studios of artists; such art was exhibited among closed circles of artists and friends. Indeed, the Vints had close connections with the alternative art circles in Moscow (including Ilya Kabakov and Yuri Sobolev) and their home became famous for attracting visitors from other parts of the Soviet Union (Helme 2000: 263).

In the following sections, I will first discuss the Vints' home as representing the lifestyle of "unofficial" artists, before turning to the specific features of its interior where the space and its inhabitants formed a unity or total work of art. I will consider this unity in the light of the artists' interest in nineteenth-century *Gesamtkunstwerk* and their fascination with Art Nouveau, seeing it further as a projection of issues relating to Soviet Estonia during the second half of the twentieth century, regarding the relationship between art and technology and the total synthesis of arts.

Unofficial Art and the Domestic Sphere

A recurring topic in the research of East European and Soviet society, the unofficial realm is often associated with retreat away from the grim reality of state-regulated public life and into the autonomous private sphere. Already during the Cold War period alternative narratives of the practices of everyday life in the Soviet Union, often told by dissidents or Western sovietologists, assigned a significant role to the informal or "shadow" realm of Soviet society and associated it with the private sphere. Relying in many cases on the so-called totalitarian model for describing the ubiquitous party control over everyday life, the domestic was portrayed as its other, as constituted of untouched islands of private life. As Susan Reid has noted, the hostile "inhuman public sphere" has, especially in Western and émigré accounts, been contrasted with the "warm, hospitable, unchanging and essentially feminine" private homes that offered refuge and uncontrolled space for the development of "authentic" human relations (Reid 2006a: 146). This essentialist representation

of privacy dominated not only accounts of domestic life in the Soviet Union but also representations of unofficial artistic practices located in artists' homes. In many cases the relationship between the private sphere and unofficial art was thus represented as a fixed one, ruling out alternative spacializations or identities.

For example, Russian art critic Yevgeni Barabanov, describing artists' homes in Soviet Russia in 1960s as "islands of private utopias," writes that

> The streets and plazas, newspapers and books, and museums and exhibitions were ruled by the correct, leaving the erroneous and the unacceptable to find what shelter they could in homes, in attics and basements, and on hand-typed samizdat pages. (Barabanov 1999: 20)

This withdrawal to the allegedly autonomous private sphere allowed the construction of an equally autonomous art that, in contrast to the model of Socialist Realism, would be untainted by official ideologies. Such withdrawal was represented often according to a nineteenth-century Romantic-liberal model whereby the private sphere, as opposed to the conformist and homogenizing public, guaranteed individuality and provided space for experimentation, invention, and originality while fostering an idea of the "inner freedom" of the artist.[3]

The moral value that was carried by privileging the private sphere and everyday life for the researchers was further emphasized in republics that were annexed to the Soviet Union before the Second World War, as in the case of Estonia, where it often signified a resistance to the dominant cultural blending of the Soviet with Russian features (see Kannike 2002). Although in the Baltic context most researchers agreed on the difficulty in demarcating an exact border between the official and unofficial – most of the artists working in these countries were members of professional unions, received through these regular purchases, and were exhibited in their annual exhibitions – the term has still been used to denote the "non-correspondence to the expectations of Soviet art ideology" (Helme 2000: 255) or in a modified form, as "semi-nonconformism," to refer to artists who were non-conformist in style but conformist in subject matter or vice versa (Andriuškevicius 1995: 26–7).

Writing about unofficial art as a withdrawal from public life – the "many meanings of being silent" – art historian Sirje Helme, referring primarily to Tõnis Vint, his home, and circle of young artists, described the non-participatory attitude as an "ethical and aesthetic event":

> Tõnis Vint's stubborn endeavour to create an intellectual atmosphere and physical space that would have nothing in common with the society where he himself lived and that nightmarishly surrounded him, was completely different

> compared to the atmosphere of the unofficial circles in Moscow, but represented in full scale the model of lifestyle of the unofficial art. (Helme 2000: 262)

Helme's use of the word "nightmarish" to describe the surrounding society corresponds well to the moral inversion that was at work in the descriptions of the official public and unofficial private spheres: it was the nightmarish daily public life from which one wakes up in the private spaces. Significant here is Helme's attempt to associate the intellectual atmosphere with the physical space of the artists' apartment, and her emphasis on unofficial art as a lifestyle. Indeed, in the context of Soviet uniformity and mass labor unofficial artists were often seen as representing an individualist bohemian lifestyle (see Groys 2003); this is very much evident in visitors' and participants' descriptions of practices in the Vints' home.

According to Mare Vint, visitors to the house usually arrived at around eight or nine o'clock in the evening and stayed until one or two in the morning, after which Tõnis began to work. Daytime was for sleeping (Mare Vint, personal communication March 5, 2007). In one photograph from 1969 (from photographer Jaan Klõšeiko's personal archive, not shown), showing a gathering in the Vints' apartment, guests sit on dark cushions or mats in a circle on the floor, with coffee cups and plates placed directly on the white floor in the middle. Artist Marje Taska, who first visited the Vints' home when she was seventeen, has described the atmosphere of seriousness that was an important part of the meetings: "One should not have talked too much, not to mention babble. The one that babbled was frowned upon. Laughter was despised, one would have to be mad to laugh" (Marje Taska, personal communication, March 9, 2010). The exception to talking was of course Tõnis himself (Mare Vint: "Tõnis had this thing that he just wanted to talk. Some people need to talk and what they foremost need is a listener. And preferably an intelligent one"). He gave lectures and guidance on Eastern religions and different art styles, and he demonstrated his own preferences in world art history (Taska: "Giotto's spirituality was to be preferred to Michelangelo's"). Sometimes there were also guest speakers, including researchers in Orientalism and in music theory. Occasionally, visitors showed their own recently produced artworks, followed later by discussion. Although the guests could be from a wide variety of backgrounds and there were sometimes very many, during the mid-1970s there was a core group of nine or ten artists who might be considered regular visitors.[4] Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa, who visited the Vints' home in the early 1970s during one of his many trips to Tallinn, has recalled an invisible barrier between the "insiders" and "outsiders" of the group: "Some people were close friends and others apparently were not, though all shared a common political enemy as well as their artistic interests" (Kurg 2008: 121). The group also differentiated themselves from the normal through their clothing.

The artists preferred to appear in extravagant and sometimes luxurious costumes, counter-positioning themselves to the "grey" mass of society (Marje Taska, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

This intertwining of design and lifestyle within the apartment positioned the couple in asymmetrical positions regarding their control of space. Mare, who preferred to work during the daytime, found the constant presence of guests at night unsuitable. She recently recalled how the continuous flowing layout of the apartment allowed no space for her to retreat:

> I could not detach myself from others. Tõnis's interior design excluded doors and we did not have a silent corner. Sometimes guests were sitting until morning, as they knew that Tõnis only goes to sleep during daytime. Sometimes he worked, of course, but the guests were still sitting until morning. (Mare Vint, personal communication March 5, 2007)

Thus this domestic private sphere became semi-public through social interaction, and while still controlled by the figure of the male artist it prevented the female artist from finding privacy and taking control of her own space. Moreover, this detail also points to the significant issue of gender relations in unofficial art circles during the Soviet period, an issue that has remained at the margins of histories written during the post-Soviet period (Kivimaa 2009a: 115).

In 1974 the Vints' home also featured in an issue of the popular Finnish home-decoration magazine *Kodin Kuvalehti* (*Home Picturemagazine*), in which a journalist who had visited the home with Pallasmaa reviewed it in detail. In *Kunst ja Kodu* images of the Vints' apartment were presented as illustrations of Tõnis Vint's ideas without referring directly to the home, whereas the article in the Finnish magazine presented the apartment and its refurbishment from a more practical everyday perspective. The "empty space" here reads more as a rationally planned small apartment in which every possible corner has been fitted with a cupboard or given some function:

> The artists made small-scale models of the shelves and cupboards first, after which the structures were built ... the working table is, at least in the moment the photographs were taken, so full of all possible kinds of things from paper to colours, radio to mugs, books to flowers, that I am not surprised by the life taking place on the floor level. (Salokorpi 1974: 51)

Contrary to Vint's own presentation of the apartment as standing against clutter and an abundance of things, the Finnish journalist hints at things having taken over the small room. In the article, the artists also describe the home as having been decorated while

keeping in mind both Japanese architecture and the work of Joseph Hoffmann. After describing the couple's artistic practices – "Tõnis draws white constructivist images" whereas "Mare's drawings look like her: delicate, beautiful, warm" – the journalist concludes that the two artists have a theory in which art and the environment belong together in the same system, and that their home acts as a testing ground for this theory (ibid.).

The idea that art and life were intertwined in the Vints' case has indeed been among the most widespread in Estonian art historical literature. Artist Leonhard Lapin, who was among the "insiders" at the Vints' home during the 1970s, points to a connection between Tõnis Vint's pictures and the redesign of his apartment, and regards both his art and his domestic interiors as forms of resistance to mass culture:

> In addition to white spaces, the artist began at that time a series of black interiors, representations of spaces with female figures, composed as ornaments. These works are associated with the redesign of Tõnis and Mare Vint's home, in which they gave up all of the petit-bourgeois knick-knacks so typical of Estonian interiors. (Lapin 2002: 7)

That the interior in Vint's pictures was indeed his own apartment is evident from the above-mentioned article in *Kunst ja Kodu*. Along with images of the white apartment there was one of his prints ("Room," 1973) showing a female nude against a black background with individual objects placed discretely around her and a chandelier hanging from the ceiling (see Figure 1). In the photographs a similar light fixture can be seen hanging in the hallway of the apartment (Mare Vint: "It was our wedding present, it was brought from Riga. Tõnis hated it because it tinkled when children were running about in the apartment upstairs. It is a very beautiful chandelier actually, we have it here in our apartment now"; Mare Vint, personal communication March 5, 2007).[5] Female nudes in such settings were, alongside his abstract geometric figures, one of the prevailing subjects of Tõnis's black-and-white prints during the early 1970s. Referring to the images of nude females in Soviet unofficial art (she makes reference also to Tõnis Vint), Katrin Kivimaa has pointed out that due to their having been historically repressed, the meaning that was attached to nudes in the history of late-Soviet art was one of dissidence and expression of artistic autonomy: "[the] erotic female figure is interpreted in the framework of modernist and avant-gardist ideology where male sexuality is associated with creativity and freedom" (Kivimaa 2009b: 141). In addition to non-conformity, the identification of the Vints' apartment as the setting for Tõnis's graphic art demonstrates the traditional heteronormative ways in which such a space has been gendered, where women were regarded as muses and sources of inspiration to the masculine artist.

In many of the accounts dealing with Tõnis Vint, he is regarded as having adopted the Romantic model of an extraordinary artistic personality who "follows the inevitable force of his nature" (Luuk 1988: 77) and whose ideas about art are difficult to distinguish from his ideas about life. The Vints' apartment is also seen by art historian Tamara Luuk as a "state within a state, full of pictures and books, and people enjoying well thought out design and refined thought" (ibid.). She ends her piece by mentioning Vint's article on empty space which, for her, "refers simultaneously to timelessness and, considering the flatness of the picture surface, to the psychic dimension (of space)" (ibid.).

Two years earlier, art historian Sirje Helme had written an article as an homage to Tõnis Vint, called "Empty White Space." She describes that eponymous space as a "beautiful archetypal model" left behind by the avant-garde (Helme 1986), comprehending the "white" in the white space primarily in the context of postwar Western modernist discourse. However, the examples of "art and environment belonging together" that Vint proclaimed, followed not so much the modernist discourse, but the principles of Aestheticism and the total work of art of Art Nouveau that he had rediscovered at that time and introduced in these articles.

Art Nouveau *Gesamtkunstwerk*

Tõnis Vint was employed as a graphic designer at the state publishing house Kunst where he was responsible for the design of the art magazine *Kunst* (*Art*). The publisher's other significant magazine, the home-decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* (*Art and Home*), which also had a Russian language edition and achieved a total pan-Soviet circulation of over 40,000 copies, was, from 1973 to 1981, edited and designed by Andres Tolts who was appointed to that position based on Vint's recommendation (Andres Tolts, personal communication, March 14, 2003). From the beginning of the 1970s, these two magazines regularly introduced the art movements of the second half of the nineteenth century to a wider public – Aestheticism, Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts, and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement. The 1971 cover of *Kunst* featured an Arts and Crafts ornament, and the January 1978 issue was entirely devoted to Art Nouveau. In *Kunst ja Kodu*, Art Nouveau interiors frequently illustrated articles devoted to contemporary issues of home decoration. Though Art Nouveau had already been subject to a wider rediscovery as part of a retro-fashion throughout the 1960s (see Guffey 2006), it seems that for the young practitioners of the 1970s the relevance of these movements lay primarily in their use of ideas of *Gesamtkunstwerk* and in the relationship between art and environment. The other two artistic movements introduced in *Kunst ja Kodu* were Futurism and De Stijl, which, while rethinking the relationship between art and technology, both called for the totality of the artistic project and the unity of artwork and environment.

The process of modernization in the Soviet Union that had begun in the 1950s saw the relationship of art and design to its environment from the perspective of technological progress or, as it was officially known, "scientific-technological revolution." In this encounter with industrialization, the role of art was to "protect human nature against the increased pressure on the psyche" (Sarap 1975: 15) and to humanize technology. It also facilitated an explanation for the changing role of art – emotional culture had to change in order to neutralize the negative results of rationalization and technicality. The Brezhnev years of the 1970s have been portrayed as a reaction to the optimistic decade of the thaw, crushing hopes for a reformed socialist society; but for the Soviet design profession the period of intense exploration and transformation continued at least until the mid-1970s. Supported by trade agreements with the West and an unusual inflow of foreign capital, the modernization begun during the thaw continued in part into the Brezhnev years of "developed socialism" (Suri 2006: 138–42). Thus it was a period when developments in technology and communication systems began to have a broader influence on the work of designers and raised questions concerning the prevailing models of interaction between design and society. At the same time, the aftermath of the thaw, and especially the crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968, brought in its wake a wave of disappointment in public life accompanied by a turn toward "solitary dreams," the rise of various nationalisms and interest in various distant religious practices, intense interest in home decoration and allotment gardening, and a clandestine dissident movement barred from contact with the public. The turn to Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau by the younger generation of artists and designers during the late 1960s and early 1970s was an attempt to forge a new relationship between art and the changed industrial reality, but it also denoted a quest for the more exotic alternatives that they had previously been denied.

Writing of William Morris in that same 1974 issue of *Kunst ja Kodu,* art historian Jaak Kangilaski traced the development of Art Nouveau, its "aims and contradictions," and turned to mid-nineteenth-century Britain, "which was by that time the only country where the Industrial Revolution had taken place" (Kangilaski 1974: 18). While in the rest of Europe at that time most consumer products were still being handmade, in Britain factory production had taken the lead. However, what resulted was the use of old forms of decoration on objects that were now being produced by machines: "... in the case of the first factory products, the technique and the pursuit of beauty were in contradiction and this inner conflict makes the objects grotesque, comic or even ugly" (ibid.). William Morris lamented this machine-made ugliness – Kangilaski quotes him as having said that "90% of things that have been piled up nowadays in rich people's houses should be burned without pity" (ibid.) – and he called for a return to the handicrafts system to overcome the alienation of factory labor.

In the context of a home-decoration magazine with a clear artistic mission, it was significant that Morris's emphasis was on erasing the border between handicrafts and art. Kangilaski writes, quoting Morris, that "the modern era has taken away from workers the joy of creation and there exists a narrow clique of artists that has turned their production into a speciality and for whom "artisan" is one of the rudest words" (ibid.: 19). He goes on to describe the Arts and Crafts endeavor to wipe out painting as a separate art field, merging it "with architecture and consumer products, to produce a synthesis of spatial arts, as in the Middle Ages" (ibid.). When transferred to the context of the 1970s Soviet Union, this idea stands against not only the postwar modernist dictum of medium-specific art (mentioned by Helme in association with Vint's "empty white space"), but also the hierarchical organization of art genres in Socialist Realism.

It is apparent from the article's conclusion that Kangilaski did not consider Morris's principles to be merely art-historical issues having no practical value in the present. Noting that, for Morris, beauty in medieval art originated in the true correspondence of form to function, he says that just as functions have changed over time, so the forms are also different from the medieval ones. "To attain beauty, one need not imitate old forms, but only the functionality of old art" (ibid.: 22). This helped to change attitudes towards a form of industry that does not copy the work of the artisans, but instead produces new forms for contemporary needs.

One of the aims of *Kunst ja Kodu* was to contribute to ongoing discussions concerning the place of design in the Soviet art system. Thus Morris's message also worked in the context of 1970s Soviet industrial production and defended the need for formal experimentation in design. Editor Andres Tolts and his friend and colleague Ando Keskküla, also a frequent contributor to the magazine, were among the first graduates from the State Art Institute Department of Industrial Art. However, although their writings rely partly on the Soviet discourse of design or technical aesthetics (e.g. in regarding one of the main functions of design in contemporary society as the communication of the cultural ideals of the era), they also broadened the discussion with examples from early avant-garde artistic practices. Inspired by Futurist and De Stijl projects, Keskküla wrote of an approach to design that does not concentrate on discrete objects but instead designs the connections between them, grasping the whole man-made environment: "This is the design of the future, which is characterized by the total nature of the project; this should also be the design of societies with planned economies" (Keskküla 1974: 42).

Analyzing the communicative role of design, Keskküla criticized Soviet consumer products that differentiated between the symbolic and functional roles of the object and thus created a "false humanization" of mass-produced things through kitsch; such as a watering can in the shape of a frog, a pipe in the shape of a devil, and a

thermometer in the shape of a ship. These kinds of objects were humanized through myth:

> ... an unprepared person associates the object with the sum of undifferentiated experiences, where the aesthetic experience has not been differentiated from other experiences and is tied up with several emotional arguments ... Thus one designs a phantasmagorical environment, a fantasy room [literally a "gnome room"] of a kind, where none of the objects is what it seems, where all uses and functions are mythologized. (ibid.: 43)

Keskküla's piece is radical and unusual in its use of Marx's critique of commodity fetishism against Soviet consumer products. This is in marked contrast to both the consciously apolitical articles, which remain on the level of formal analysis, and to those that use Marx merely as a compulsory quotation.

The description of the commodity as a fetish or phantasmagoria, wherein things appear to be what they are not, had been expanded in the interwar years by Walter Benjamin, who famously associated it with the bourgeois interior (Benjamin 1996). Benjamin described the nineteenth century as a dream scene, where modern innovations take on mythical form. For Benjamin, this dream scenario is applicable not only to the public architecture of the period, but also to interiors where the commodity's removal from exchange led it to take on an animate or exotic form.

It was in Jugendstil, or Art Nouveau, that Benjamin located the attempt to wake from the dream world, rejecting kitsch and breaking out to "free air" (Buck-Morss 1989: 272). According to him, the real meaning of Jugendstil was, that:

> [i]t represents the last attempted sortie of an art besieged in its ivory tower by technology. This attempt mobilises all the reserves of inwardness. They find their expression in the mediumistic language of the line, in the flower as the symbol of a naked vegetal nature confronted by the technologically armed world. The new elements of iron construction – girder forms – preoccupy Jugendstil. In ornament, it endeavours to win back these forms for art. (Benjamin 1996: 38)

Thus Art Nouveau took on a dual role: responding to those overstuffed bourgeois interiors and also to the changed relationship between art and technology – an attempt to connect technological innovation with art. This lead it to emphasize the subject's interiority and uniqueness, to a total hold of the artist over the environment whereby every detail is there to manifest the owner's identity.

This encounter between the beautiful and the industrial explains the reputation of Art Nouveau among artists working in the late

Soviet system who, coming from the disciplines of graphic design, product design, and architecture, attempted to come to terms with technological change – the scientific-technological revolution and its aftermath – and to "win back" the forms through beauty while simultaneously reacting to the loss of artistic personality amid the homogeneity of Soviet mass production and collectivism. Although in his article Keskküla speaks in favor of a modernist aesthetic system, he likewise sees the artist-designer as a total artist. This tendency is more evident in the writings of Leonhard Lapin. Here, Lapin refers to the function of the architect:

> ... every client's wishes should be a source of inspiration for the architect in producing original architecture. The architect is the master of style and form and every client should trust him up to the last screw. (Lapin 1973: 37)

And on the other hand:

> Metal and concrete architecture allow the artist to emphasise contemporary technical devices – antennae, ventilation, pipes – as architectural elements. What was once hidden in architecture can now be applied to its service. (ibid.)

The principle of Art Nouveau may now be seen as a code for uncovering the art of the period. The independent personality of the artist here confronts the standardized industrial environment, attempting to gain control over it via his inner world. Almost all of the historical retrospectives in the magazine discuss artists who have created their own hermetic "total" environment or developed an all-encompassing artistic system.

If the magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* could be seen as fostering a different model for the appropriation or privatization of spaces (meanwhile making them public on the pages of the magazine), it also regarded the artistic total environment as an example for overcoming the compartmentalization of life altogether.

In the same 1974 issue of *Kunst ja Kodu*, Leonhard Lapin published a longer article on the meaning of interior decoration in contemporary society (Lapin 1974: 13). For Lapin, well-designed interiors (with flowing space, subtle detailing, and the meaningful emptiness introduced by Vint) counterbalance the rationality of mass housing. He locates the origin of this kind of interior in Art Nouveau, since it strove for a unified space that needed no additional decor. Although stressing the social role of interiors in enabling the fun of leisure and love in contrast with the rationality of the productive sphere, Lapin ultimately proposes homes in which "living and creative work have been united" – the apartment-studios of artists, musicians, writers, architects, and actors.

> In these interiors, one finds a constant atmosphere of creative work that causes a somewhat chaotic arrangement of things and attributes needed for creativity ... These so-called chaotic interiors reflect the work of a creative person, and they are alive and experimental in their extreme design, allowing the artist to find here the means to work out ordered interior systems. (ibid.)

In the apartment-studios of creative people Lapin found a source of future styles and home furnishings. In a way, an artist's home was for him a model for all other homes, it was the most natural home.

Similar to William Morris's idea of art as a form of non-alienated labor, or of "the pleasure in labour," the separation of different spheres of life was here overcome via the personality of the artist. If the profession of artist was comprehended in a non-hierarchical way, encompassing all of the arts, then the artist's work was seen to suggest the Romantic idea of *oeuvre* as something organic, not produced, and tied to the notion of extraordinary artistic personality or genius (and this was something diverging from Morris). Moreover, if we consider the homes in the pages of *Kunst ja Kodu* to have been promoting a different way and practice of life, then, in discussing homes in which the separation of living and working has been overcome, such articles indicated the surrounding reality where separation continued to exist and thus, implicitly, functioned as its critique.

Permeability of Borders

In her article on homes in the Khrushchev era, Susan E. Reid has discussed different ways in which the single-family apartment was permeated by public interests and values: the apartments were designed in large state-owned architecture offices, built by centrally supplied construction companies, and the work and materials themselves were regulated by numerous standards and norms (Reid 2006a). The apartments were not privately owned, but they were allocated through the workplace for long-term use and could not normally be passed on to an occupant's children (cooperative housing was an exception to this).[6] In addition, since the early 1960s onwards, the new forces of modernization crossed the threshold of homes through various means of communication, mass media, television and radio, music systems, etc. On the other hand, where a built structure had been fixed by the state and would have been difficult to rebuild,[7] appropriation of the space by arranging interior decor and customizing the space with traces of the occupant's individuality worked to overcome the home's anonymity and return control of the territory to the occupant.

With the Vints' case in the background of our discussion of these social structures and processes, questions arise: how autonomous was the private unofficial artistic sphere in its relation to

society? If Art Nouveau worked to unite technology with beauty at the turn of the century, then how did its role differ during the 1970s, in the face of rather different kinds of technological structure whose immaterial effects often proved more significant than their material appearance? Indeed, we can trace a similar process of the domestic interior space becoming accessible to signals from the outside, not only to the noise of children running in the apartment above, but to communication networks whose effects could be both liberating and scary. As mentioned earlier, the 1960s has been described as the period when the scientific-technological revolution influenced the prevailing discourse in society and when all kinds of machinery began to invade people's homes, "becoming next to dogs and cats, alongside domestic plants, new members of the family" (Lapin 1985: 17). Several visitors to the Vints have noted that a particular object occupied a special position in their home – the television set. In the article in Finnish magazine *Kodin Kuvalehti* the television set is described as located in the studio space underneath the worktable in a corner next to the bookshelf, at a "suitable viewing distance from the seating on the floor." American art collector Norton Dodge, who visited the Vints' home during his trip to Tallinn in the 1970s, gives a more vivid account of the role of television in this apartment:

> They arrived at Vint's apartment with much of the Estonian avant-garde ... As the group arrived, excited, everybody ran to the living room and sat on Vint's black-and-white furniture among his black-and-white paintings on the walls, turned on the black-and-white television and watched Kojak in Finnish. (McPhee 1994: 145)

Due to the close proximity of Tallinn to Finland, Finnish television broadcasts could be received in northern Estonia, and from the 1960s they became a significant alternative source of information and a channel for discovering Western popular culture. This fact, of course, does not sit comfortably with the concept of a self-contained artists' home "that would have nothing in common" with wider society and where "timelessness" or silence prevail over the aggressively "timely" channels of information. With new technology there also came new fears. According to Mare Vint and other close associates in the Vints' circle, in around 1975 – after both Mare and Tõnis had been called up to the militia with the odd request that they produce drawings for them – they discovered that a hole had been drilled through their living room wall and Tõnis became convinced that their apartment was bugged (Mare Vint, personal communication, March 5, 2007). Subsequently, on several occasions following this incident, he asked visitors to speak in a whisper, nervous that the conversation might be being followed (Marje Taska, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

It could thus be argued that instead of considering the autonomy of the Vints' home in relation to the separate spheres, it would be more useful to consider it in relation to communication and information theory, popular at the time – regarding the collection, exchange, and communication of preferred information to friends and colleagues, the blocking of anything that might distort this (as noise), and the disguise and coding of information to prevent access from unwanted listeners (in Vint's case, whispering). Even if the degree to which the system was autonomous remains open to dispute in that case as well,[8] there is certainly indication that the interior system is tied to the wider environment through the sending and receiving of messages (sometimes unintentionally, or merely by its being present) and that the border between inside and outside is porous rather than impermeable. If the escape to the private sphere in the Eastern Europe of the late-Socialist period has been described as compulsive in its character, showing how ideology remained present in the form of absence,[9] in Vint's case there was something similarly compulsive, if not desperate, in his yearning for information, as well as in his fear that information could pass into the wrong hands.

However, given the voluntary publication of the Vints' home via a mass media channel with a wide circulation, concepts such as isolation and retreat may be seen in this case to have been repositioned in order to influence readers to follow certain principles of total design. Leonhard Lapin claims that minimalist white interior design was unique not only in Estonia, but throughout the whole of the Soviet Union, and that after it was introduced in *Kunst ja Kodu*, "I can affirm that it started a boom of white interiors not only in Estonia, but in the Soviet Union as well" (Lapin 2002: 7). This claim is hard to verify. However, it does point toward the features that characterized this example of the unofficial artistic sphere: while interpreted as a retreat that aimed to avoid intrusion from the surrounding reality, it was at the same time presented publicly as an aesthetic system that aimed to have an impact on that reality (which, according to the example of Art Nouveau, are two sides of the same coin; Wigley 1998). The appearance of the Vints' apartment in a home-decoration magazine – its white, flowing space standing against clutter and consumption – might be seen as presenting an argument for a kind of rational planning, and yet Tõnis Vint's own teachings and quest for authenticity were immersed in the irrational and the transcendent.

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Notes

1. During the 1970s, the particular area in Tallinn where the Vints' house was located was often used among the Estonian

cultural media as a metaphor to signify the negative results of mass-produced housing. Protagonists of the emerging discipline of environmental psychology argued using it as an example of the influence of the new towns on the human mind. They complained about the growing anonymity, lack of identity, and passiveness that these areas lead to, as well as the inhabitants' careless attitudes towards such surroundings. Instead, architecture ought to offer space for detachment, in order to "secure a certain kind of personal autonomy, to protect the integrity of the individual" (Heidmets 1978: 633; see also Kurg 2009: 96).

2. In a later text, artist Leonhard Lapin contrasts the pristine white spaces of the Vints' apartment with the "colourful anarchy of pop-art" that also gained popularity in artists' circles at that time (Lapin 2002: 7).
3. This is how an American critic describes the phenomenon: "[Nonconformism] is the story of several generations of artists who learned their skills in the rigorous state-supported system of training but who insisted on the kind of interior freedom that was anathema to the authorities ... their desire to create from a sense of inner necessity and honesty prompted their refusal to accept the authority of the state in the matters of art" (Baigell 1995: 338).
4. According to Marje Taska these included: Leonhard and Sirje Lapin (Runge), Malle Leis, Marje Taska, Lily Maas, Jaan Klõšeiko, and Andres Tolts (Marje Taska, personal communication, March 9, 2010).
5. Mare Vint is referring to her present home. She was married to Tõnis Vint from 1967 to 1976.
6. Cooperative apartments were built in parallel with state housing and were funded by the inhabitants themselves, with the aid of state loans. In the 1960s, cooperative housing became preferred to individual homes as a more rational use of urban space. According to a 1962 decree the state provided cooperatives with land (for use over an indefinite period), the members had to provide 40 percent of the cost of the apartment beforehand (for the average 30-square-meter apartment in the 1960s this was around 1,400 rubles) and take a loan for up to 60 percent at 1 percent interest. The apartments belonged officially to the cooperative, and every member received a share for permanent use. The apartments could not be sold or transferred to other persons. However, the use of the apartment could be passed to parents, spouse or children. The apartment could also be inherited or used by people who had lived there previously with the owner (see Papp 1963: 3–7).
7. A recurrent topic among architects working in standardized housing during the 1950s was the search for alternative solutions to the dominant model 1-317, where load-bearing walls were placed along the perimeter of the house. This structural solution did not allow changes to the way rooms were planned.

Alternatives would have needed load-bearing walls perpendicular to the main volume, which would have allowed for greater user flexibility. However, due to costs these experimental model houses never went into mass production (Kalm 2001: 332).

8. The Tartu-Moscow school in semiotics, influential in Estonia from the late 1950s onwards, used an analogy of feedback circuits in cybernetics in an analysis of culture, and argued that a system that corrected its own behavior according to feedback from its environment was still an autonomous one: "In this way a development means foremost a realisation of the intra-systemic potential and only secondarily adaptation to the exterior conditions" (Lotman 1996: 1797). Freedom was comprehended as a self-realization of "interior powers" not acknowledging exterior pressures. Katherine Hayles however, analyzing Norbert Wiener's writings, has argued the clearly defined border between the system and its environment to be problematic (see Hayles 1999: 85).
9. In his discussion on Milan Kundera's representation of the private sphere, Slavoj Žižek has pointed to the dependence of the apolitical withdrawal to the domestic realm on public participation in ideological ritual, becoming thus utterly conformist: "it is not sufficient to ascertain that the ideological ritual is mere appearance which nobody takes seriously – this appearance is essential," by following it one already supports it. What, in Žižek's view, Kundera wants to show is not the possibility of the untouched life sphere but the "compulsive" character of the depoliticized private life; how ideology is present there in the form of absence. That is why "there is always something damp, claustrophobic, inauthentic, even desperate, in the characters' striving for sexual and other pleasures" (Žižek 1994: 65).

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3. Fractured boundaries: The Representation of Homes in the Critical and Artistic Practices of the 1970s

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FRACTURED BOUNDARIES

The Representation of Homes in the Critical and Artistic Practices of the 1970s

ANDRES KURG IS AN ART HISTORIAN AND RESEARCHER AT THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS IN TALLINN. HIS RESEARCH LOOKS AT THE CHANGES IN THE SOVIET UNION IN THE LATE 1960s AND 1970s, INCLUDING TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS THAT RESTRUCTURED DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE PROFESSIONS, BUT ALSO CHANGES IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND VALUES.

ABSTRACT This article discusses the Soviet-Estonian home decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* (*Art and Home*). It focuses on the transformation of the magazine's content in the 1970s, under the direction of a newly appointed editor with a background in art and design professions who used the magazine as a platform for communicating alternative accounts of the environment and for presenting new ideas for a changed practice of art. The home during the late Soviet period has often been characterized retrospectively as having been a self-enclosed, private sanctuary from repressive state institutions. However, in the context of Soviet domestic life, what

emerged from the pages of *Kunst ja Kodu* was the home as a ground for critical dialogue with the outside—a space where the border between private and public was permeated by, among other things, consumer items, popular culture, and information networks. I argue that the processes that transformed the home and enabled the permeation of its borders in the 1960s also continued in the 1970s, albeit in another form. Following the period of the Thaw, in which rational values and positivist argument represented a prevailing culture of expertise, there was a shift towards individuality in the home and criticism of the prevailing hierarchical relationship between high art and mass culture.

KEYWORDS: Soviet-era domestic life, private/public borders, *Kunst ja Kodu*

INTRODUCTION

Accounts of domestic life in the late-Soviet period have demonstrated the diverse interests and multiple agents involved in defining everyday life at home. Whether it was an apartment converted for communal use or a system-built unit intended for a single family, each home was subject to a regime of rationalization and modernization. At the same time, the home also represented a site of resistance to prescribed norms and regulations and could be a place of individual identity construction and meaning-making. Considerable attention has been given to the reorientation that took place in the planning of housing following Nikita Khrushchev's Thaw, from communal apartments to separate family units. However, as an embodiment of socialist progress toward improved living standards and modern forms, the new homes were designed according to state building directives based primarily on economic efficiency and rational use of space—principles that were typically justified using scientific vocabulary.[1] Similarly important for the administration of the new homes was a growing volume of literature on modernization, which was intended to instruct citizens in the functional management of their apartment and in matters of taste regarding home decoration. Thus, Victor Buchli has argued that rather than being a process of social liberalization, the Thaw was a period when especially everyday life and the domestic realm were brought to the center of attention of the Communist Party and the state and were used as a means of disciplining its subjects (Buchli 1999: 138). Susan Reid has also highlighted the two-way process of so-called privatization during the

Khrushchev era of Soviet modernity. Single families were moved into separate apartments allowing for greater privacy away from the gaze of others, but the apartments were standardized down to the smallest detail. Moreover, the processes of modernization in general—the spread of mass media and modern appliances—tied the home more tightly to the structures that lay outside it: "Thus the same historical processes that engendered the segregated private spheres, at the same time, produced forces that compromised its sovereignty and transgressed its threshold" (Reid 2006b: 157). Reid and Buchli represent a recent shift toward research that recognizes the permeability of borders between the private and the public, where the imaginary autonomy of a mythical Soviet private sphere is replaced by a more complex understanding of the interconnection between the inside and outside of the home (see Siegelbaum 2006).

This article is a case study of the Estonian home decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu*, which was first published in the Thaw period during the late 1950s. The magazine provided new homeowners with instruction on matters of taste and on new developments in everyday domestic living standards; this article focuses on a section that offered practical advice. The magazine went through major changes in the early 1970s when artist Andres Tolts became editor. Tolts was a recent graduate of the Industrial Design Department of the State Art Institute and he reoriented the magazine to include models and ideas that had previously been excluded from the established domain of home design and home decoration. While continuing to advise on matters of taste, the magazine now represented the aspirations of a new generation that was responding to the shift in social values and desires instituted from the late 1960s onwards. I will argue that the processes that transformed the home and enabled the permeation of its borders in the 1960s also continued in the 1970s, albeit in another form. During the Thaw universal rational values and positivist argument representing an establishment culture of expertise had prevailed over organization of the home in the advice sections of the magazine, but in the 1970s there was shift towards individuality in the home and a critical appraisal of taste that often turned against Soviet mass-produced objects. Whereas during the 1960s the magazine had instructed its readers to build their own chairs and lamps, in the 1970s it often fed information on popular home decoration practices to the public in an ironic form.

The long period of Leonid Brezhnev's leadership from 1964 to 1982 has often been viewed in contrast to Khrushchev's reforms and liberalization, as a period of stagnation and societal disillusionment that turned the public toward individualist fulfillment in private life and as consumers. As recent commentators have pointed out, the early years of the Brezhnev period supported growing consumer demand through expansion of foreign trade, and in exchange for local raw materials there was a considerable flow of Western capital into the

Soviet Union (Suri 2006: 138–42). Other commentators have argued that a compromise was accepted at this time enabling suppression of demands for societal freedom and public self-expression in exchange for turning a blind eye to semi- and illegal private economic activities—"petty marketeering and petty private enterprise" (Millar 1985: 697). Thus, not only did small-scale economic transactions move into the private sphere (constituting a second or parallel economy), but political discussion and artistic experiments were banned from the pages of public magazines and moved underground to become "dissident." In the Baltic States this withdrawal also took on a nationalist character through revived interest in local histories of interwar independence and in opposition to Russian dominance of the Soviet Union (see Misiunas and Taagepera 1993: 211–14).

Alexei Yurchak has recently proposed a complex theoretical model to account for these informal practices, which he describes as living within the sphere of *vnye* (*vnye* meaning "outside") (Yurchak 2005: 126–57). Yurchak argues that during the 1970s "not being part of the Soviet world" became the widespread model of urban living for young people. *Vnye* was simultaneously both inside and outside of the ideological system—occupying border zones between here and elsewhere—and in many cases it was dependent upon the system. The *vnye* milieu included various scientific societies, cafés, and the world of rock music. Rather than being an exception to the usual life in late-Socialist society, Yurchak claims that it was in fact its central and pervading principle (Yurchak 2005: 128).

Nonetheless, following recent attempts at rethinking the Brezhnev period it is evident that the course of Soviet modernization and its effects on social life continued at least until the mid-1970s (see Bacon and Sandle 2002; Cocks 1980). The 1970s were an intense period of urbanization (Lewin 1991), increasing ownership of motor cars (Siegelbaum 2006) and institutional restructuring in the sciences (Cocks 1980). In relation to the design profession, the first half of the 1970s saw new developments in technology and communication systems, and new ways of thinking initiated by semiotic and information theories began to influence the work of designers, putting into question prevailing models of interaction between design and society (see Solovev 2004).

The dynamic changes that occurred at *Kunst ja Kodu* exemplify those developments: the new editor Andres Tolts and several of the authors had studied industrial design professionally and saw the implementation and dissemination of new ideas in public as a part of their role. This involved a shift in focus from individual objects to whole environments and an interest in new means of communication and representation in design. Since the authors were simultaneously active in the artistic life of the period, their design practice was also influenced by developments in Western art during the 1960s—especially pop art, the critique of traditional media, and of hierarchies

between high and low—and it embraced the everyday. Their generation had been strongly influenced by the protests and liberation movements of the late 1960s, including the Prague Spring and its aftermath. However, rather than seeing these authors' practices as polarized between the task of continuing the instructional literature of the 1960s and dissident withdrawal from the public sphere, I will consider the magazine as operating in a space that was part of the state-controlled domain and simultaneously a platform for presenting alternative ideas that went beyond specialist concerns of taste and home decoration. The critical response to the withdrawal into private pleasures and petty-bourgeois consumerism was not intended to reinforce the rational organization of Socialist society, but to construct an alternative to it. Similar to Yurchak's description of late-Soviet society as having been constituted of subjects that were simultaneously inside and outside the system, the magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* embodies several of the paradoxes and complexities that riddled the society of the period, thus evading the straightforward binary characterization that is common among retrospective accounts of the period.

After an overview of the magazine and its changed focus, I will consider three cases from the practical advice section of the magazine—essentially, designer do-it-yourself (DIY) advice—and the ways in which that section was appropriated by the artists and designers who worked on the magazine during the 1970s. I will describe each case together with an example of the artist's work from the same period, showing how each deals with similar problems and thereby demonstrating the continuity between the artist's public role and the work produced outside the domain of the magazine—i.e. in "private." Art-historical literature about artists operating as editors or illustrators has tended either to interpret those artists' engagement in such roles as essentially a form of adaptation to restrictive conditions or to regard the "unofficial" production of such artists as distinct from their everyday work.[2] In contrast, I will argue that the sphere of everyday life and its transformation—including the home—held a central position in the work of the artists involved in *Kunst ja Kodu*. The magazine's authors intervened critically in the mass-produced Soviet home; they also reacted to the changed domestic sphere and to people's everyday practices, taking them as a starting point for their artistic practice. Rather than being dissident or drawing a sharp distinction between discourses that operated in separate spheres—"saying one thing in public and another in private" (Garton Ash 1990: 137)—there was a mutually dependent relationship between artists' practice in the published media and their professional work outside it.

Thus, the fracturing of the boundaries indicated in the title here works on two levels. First, it is demonstrated by homes in the 1970s becoming open to a large array of systems that carried forward the modernization of the Thaw period, while simultaneously the disciplinary systems of the previous decade (regulations, surveys by housing

committees, instructions by experts in taste) were combined with thriving informal networks, black market exchange, and the distribution of information without state supervision. Second, it refers to the dissolution of the boundaries between genres of art, which was instigated by changes in Western art during the 1960s but also co-opted by artists according to local conditions. If these fractures carry with them a broader political meaning, it lies in the loosening hold of the state over its subjects and also in the dissolution of the efficient disciplinary mechanisms of the previous decade, now interrupted by diffuse oppositional forces.

It should be noted that the Baltic States, including Estonia, stood in an exceptional position compared to the rest of the Soviet Union (Weiner 2006). As a Soviet-Western border area close to Finland, uncensored information was more easily accessible in this region, particularly through television and radio broadcasts, and direct contact with Finnish colleagues in architecture and design were not insignificant (Kurg 2008).

Also, although I do not address this here directly, the complex relationship between advice literature and actual interiors should be noted. There may have been various motives for readers to follow the instructions and articles published in the magazine, and they may not necessarily have coincided with the intentions of the authors. Equally, this kind of DIY will have required some inventiveness on the part of the user, given the reliance on available materials and techniques. Already existing interiors always necessitated some element of making do, adapting to circumstances—the fuzzy remainder: "[the] play of micropowers … contentious and scrappy engagements that constitute social life from the minutiae of daily life to shifts in state policy" (Buchli 1999: 185). Thus, such magazines should not be taken as having held up a flawless mirror to actual interiors and the practices of everyday life. Nonetheless, what is significant about this particular moment and this magazine is that the fuzzy remainder of everyday life (contrasting with the idealist purism of modernism) was given acknowledgment and became a subject of interest for a number of authors and researchers. Writing in 1974 in the Russian applied art magazine *Dekorativnoe Iskusstvo* (republished in the Estonian magazine *Kunst* two years later), an article by the semiotician Yuri Lotman, "The artistic ensemble as everyday space," pointed to the interior not simply as an arrangement of furniture and objects in physical space but also as "an unmediated relationship between several everyday objects and artworks in cultural space" (Lotman 2006: 266)—a complex coexistence and co-functioning of different art fields and practices in historically specific collectives that needs to be studied as such.

KUNST JA KODU

The first issue of *Kunst ja Kodu* (*Art and Home*) was published in 1958 by the publishing house of the Estonian Artists' Union, Kunst (Art), and

it aimed to cover domestic interior design and applied art (Figure 1). At around this time, the same publishing house also began publication of two other magazines in parallel with *Kunst ja Kodu*—one devoted to fine art and the other to handicrafts. *Kunst ja Kodu* was published three times a year, with a print run of 22,000 copies by the end of 1950s, falling to 10,000 in the 1960s. From 1962 the magazine also had a parallel edition in Russian, with a print run of 30,000 copies. Thus, having gained wide popularity in Russia despite representing a small satellite republic, in volume *Kunst ja Kodu* equaled the all-Soviet applied art magazine *Dekorativnoje iskusstvo SSSR* (Kurg and Karu 2010: 52–66). The influence of *Kunst ja Kodu* was even greater in Estonia. There, the popularity of its advice section coincided with a local boom in home decoration from the second half of 1960s onwards and the culture of home and interior design was strongly related to construction of national identity (Kannike 2002: 60–2). The topics covered in *Kunst ja Kodu* ranged from architecture and furniture

Figure 1
Kunst ja Kodu 1958, no. 1.

design to woodcarving, sewing, and gardening, and its supposed reader was an inhabitant of the newly-built single-family apartment houses that were erected in Tallinn from the late 1950s onwards. In the early 1960s several articles titled "Decorating small apartments in standard houses" offered a variety of schemes intended specifically for system-built dwelling series no. 1-317, a local adaptation of the project that won the 1957 all-Soviet competition for small-scale apartments (Kalm 2001: 329–31). An invasion of technological appliances into homes was accompanied by articles such as "Where to Place the Television and Radio?" (1959, no. 2), which offered instruction on the ideal height and distance for television viewing (Figure 2). Other articles included advice on how best to fit a piano (upright or grand) into a small flat ("Where to Put the Piano"; 1960, no. 2) or suggested ways of grouping pictures on walls. The explanations involved in describing these design solutions often made use of scientific parameters and examples, propagating simplicity, rationality, and "natural design, using the natural characteristics of the materials, calm and natural colours" (Mirov 1966: 4). This emphasis on natural materials partly reflected the lifestyle characteristics of this era of technological development and equal rights between citizens (see Mirov 1966: 1).

An important part of the magazine contributed to the Soviet "repair culture" (Reid 2006a: 262–3), giving advice on how to customize or correct newly-built apartments that were often unfinished or poorly constructed with prefabricated details of low quality. (An article from 1961 advises readers on how to conceal central-heating radiators behind protective latticework, as these were often ugly and of poor construction quality; Mirov and Murdmaa 1961: 7.) Alongside photographs, drawings, and articles on model homes, the magazine presented detailed instructions on how to make your own furniture, lamps, or customize smaller interior details. Together with these articles, each issue of the magazine contained a supplement of two to four blueprint drawings at 1:1 scale, similar to tracing-patterns, enabling readers to make parts themselves or have them made by a workshop. Such drawings were published throughout the decade, indicating their popularity and that self-made furniture and objects were a common feature of homes. (Garden furniture seems to have been particularly popular, perhaps requiring less skill where detailing is not so significant.) This popularity also suggests the general inefficiencies of the state system: large design institutions were now focused on developing solutions for a new way of living, but these solutions were seldom implemented by industry or production of modern items was too low to cope with popular demand (see Reid 2006a: 261). Whereas its sister magazine *Käsitöö* focused on handicrafts and was primarily intended for women, *Kunst ja Kodu* presented its objects as "handicrafts for men" (*Kunst ja Kodu* 1968, no. 1: cover). In many cases the presentation of these objects emphasized their being "craft" objects and utilized the motifs of folk art (Tamm 1961: 4).

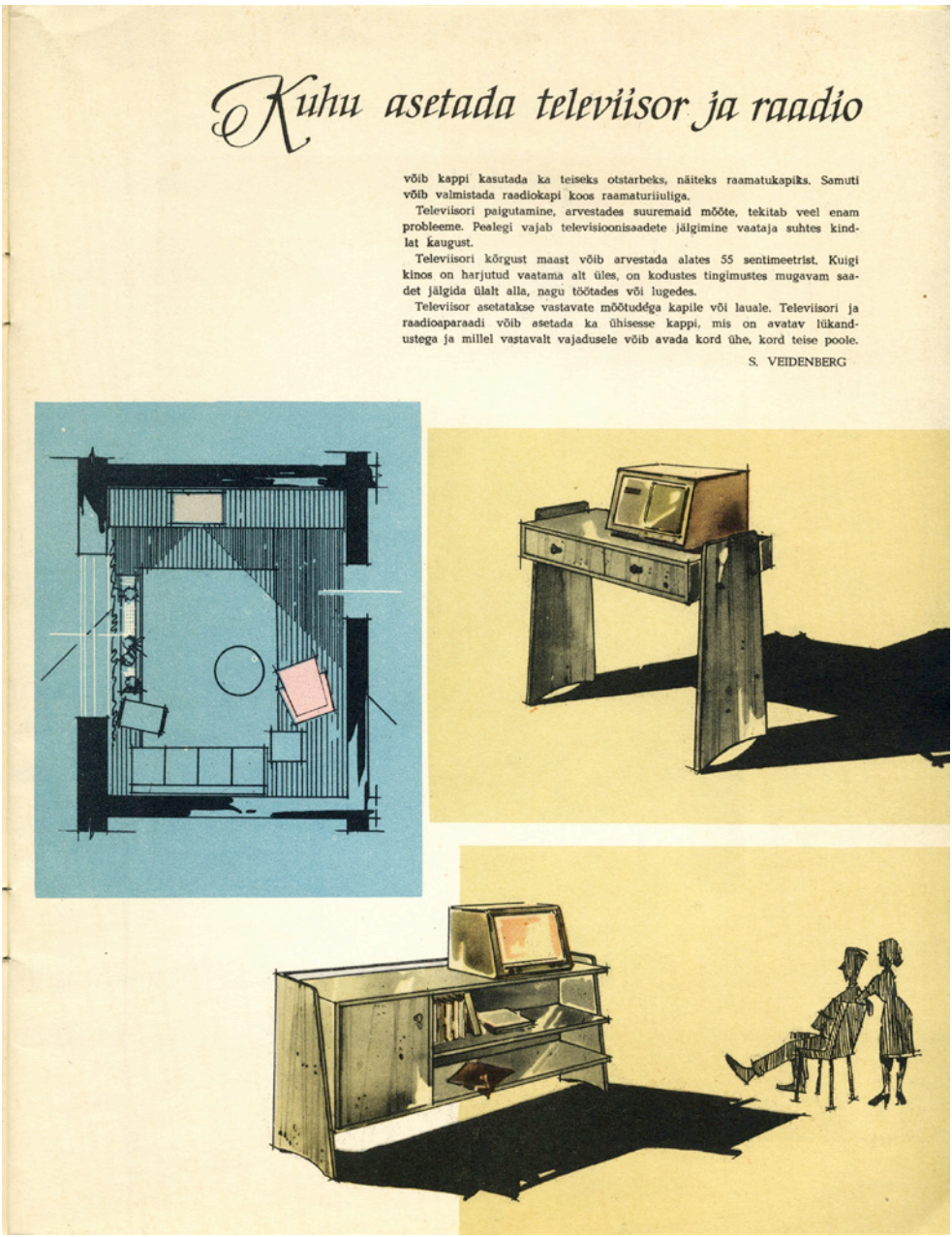

Figure 2
"Where to Place the Television and Radio?" (*Kunst ja Kodu* 1959, no. 2).

During the second half of the 1960s the choice of objects and range of apartments introduced in the pages of the magazine changed. Emphasis was now placed on issues of style rather than rationality, and the new consumer items signified changes in consumer demands, referring to a more luxurious domestic life and new practices that had found their place in the home. Articles about listening to a stereo music system (1968, no. 3), choosing drinks from a "bar" built inside a coffee table (1968, no. 3) and serving food and drinks from a specially designed adjustable mobile table (1967, no. 2) indicate the turn away from the primarily functional concern with the organization of an apartment to its representation as an environment for leisure and individuality. A section on "architects' homes" introduced the homes of designers, which had often been altered by their inhabitants and fitted with custom-built furniture. The focus shifted from system-built mass housing to cooperative apartment buildings with original design features (see *Kunst ja Kodu* 1968, no. 1). Cooperative housing differed not only in architectural form and building quality, but also in the need for inhabitants to contribute significant funds. In this respect, its status was close to that of private property. It was affordable to only a small part of the population and was thus a means for social differentiation.

In 1973 there was a major shift in the magazine's focus (Figure 3). The twenty-four-year-old artist and designer Andres Tolts became the editor and designer of the magazine.[3] Tolts changed the magazine's orientation from his very first issue (1973, no. 2), publishing articles on improving the aesthetics of urban spaces, the Japanese art of gardens, and Piet Mondrian. Only one article, "Romanticism and Rationalism," was dedicated to the "single-family house," but its subject was primarily architectural design and none of the illustrations showed an interior. Tolts's own article on artificial landscapes addressed the man-made environment in its totality as a subject for design (Figure 4). Among other things, it spoke of art as a means toward re-cultivating territories destroyed by human activity. The accompanying illustrations included fields and industrial-agricultural sites presented alongside baroque gardens (Sanssouci in Potsdam) and historical military bastions alongside land art (Dennis Oppenheim's "Directed Seeding," 1969, titled "Harvest" in *Kunst ja Kodu*; and Robert Smithon's "Broken Circle," 1971, titled simply "Landscape Architectural Composition"), thus introducing a way of presenting images as part of a visual narrative parallel to the text—an element that subsequently became characteristic of all issues of *Kunst ja Kodu* designed by Tolts.

Tolts's second issue (1974, no. 1) was also the subject of his diploma work at the Industrial Art Department of the Estonian State Art Institute and presented various arrangements such as a turn-of-the-century interior next to a fifteenth-century Italian painting. In the third issue, illustrations to architect Leonhard Lapin's article on homes

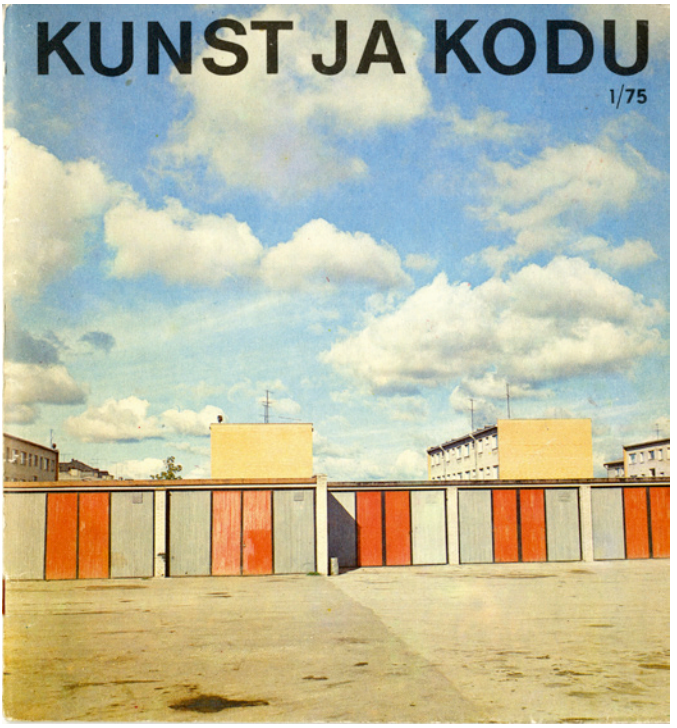

Figure 3
Cover photograph of *Kunst ja Kodu* 1975, no. 1, showing colorful garage doors, demonstrating the shift in the magazine's focus in the 1970s, from domestic interiors to everyday environments as a whole.

included an Art Nouveau dining room by Eugene Vallin alongside a view of Dan Flavin's 1964 exhibition at Green Gallery, New York.[4] A new group of authors began to write for the magazine, mostly Tolts's friends and colleagues, addressing diverse topics including private art collections, modernist art and urbanism, "anti-functionalists" in Austrian architecture of the 1960s, Art Nouveau, and wooden architecture in Tallinn. Instructions on how to fit furniture into tiny prefabricated apartments are barely evident, nor do we find diagrams describing the most efficient pattern of movement about a kitchen. Instead of furniture prototypes and model interiors installed in exhibition spaces there are views of real interiors, photographs taken in artists' homes and motifs ("prints in space" or "mirrors in space") that were often staged in Tolts's own home or studio space.

It would be difficult to find a common denominator to the variety of issues and topics covered by the magazine, but most had been excluded from the dominant discourse represented in Soviet cultural publications. The discourse against which the new editor positioned the magazine was not only Soviet in origin but also modernist—a rhetoric inherited from the Thaw period about social progress achieved through the implementation of science to everyday life and an

TEHISMAASTIKUD

probleeme, kuidas taastada bioloogilist keskkonda seal, kus ta on hävitatud industriaaltegevuses. Eestis vajaks disainerite ja maakorraldajate koostööd terve suur maa-ala Kohtla-Järve ja Maardu piirkonnas. Need on rajoonid, kus ainult lihtsa metsastamisega enam midagi ära ei tee. Kui tahame seal taastada ökoloogiliselt, seega ka esteetiliselt vastuvõetavat piirkonda, eeldab see suuremahulisi maastikulisi ümberkorraldusi, isegi restaureerimist.

Nii võikski välja tuua kaks printsiipi, mida tuleb arvestada maastikulistel ümberkorraldustel, tehismaastiku loomisel.

1. Püüda maksimaalselt säilitada ja võimalikult mitte muuta senist looduslikku struktuuri. Taastada tööstuse poolt hävitatud bioloogiline keskkond.

2. Tehismaastiku edasise struktuuri täiustamine funktsionaalsest ja esteetilisest aspektist — mis on otstarbekohane ja ka ilus. (Juhul muidugi, kui otstarbekohasust ei aeta segi mugavuse, näilise ökonoomia ja väiklusega.) Pole mõtet karta ka n. n. asfaltkultuuri. See on paratamatu praeguse tsivilisatsiooni arengu puhul. Tuleb teda ainult eeskujulikult proportsioneerida elava loodusega ja tema enda kvaliteeti maksimaalselt tõsta. Põhimine on ikkagi see, et me ei rikuks kergekäeliselt olemasolevat keskkonda, ei teeks seda elukõlbmatuks, et kõiki meie toiminguid looduse ja maastiku kallal saadaks teadlikkus ja oskuslikkus. Siin artiklis pole püütudki anda tehismaastikega seoses olevate probleemide lahendusi. Pigem on tegemist kaleidoskoopilise ülevaatega tehismaastike niitmekesistest vormidest, et edaspidi juba neisse ükshaaval süveneda.

16

1. Agraarmaastik autoteega.
2. Dennis Oppenheim. Kompositsioon «Niitmine».
3. Memoriaalansambel end. Treblinka koonduslaagris.
4. Bastion Hirvepargis Tallinnas.
5. Rahumäe kalmistu Tallinnas.
6. Vana kalmistu Hiinas.
7. Mägiterrassid Hiinas.
8. Nisupõld Haapsalu rajooni «Edasi» kolhoosis.
9. Silotornid Kehtna sovhoosis.
10. Sanssouci peaterrass, Saksa DV.
11. Kunstlik vihmutamine Audrus.

Figure 4
Andres Tolts, "Artificial Landscapes" (*Kunst ja Kodu* 1973, no. 2). Lower image shows "Directed Seeding" (1969) by land artist Dennis Oppenheim.

aesthetic system grounded in rationalism. Several articles in *Kunst ja Kodu* presented alternatives to that kind of Western rationalism and reverberated instead with emerging ideas of cultural postmodernity—rejecting unilinear notions of progress, questioning the hierarchies between high art and mass culture, conveying an interest in non-Western cultures, and returning to historical styles. Tolts explained

that he was endeavoring to address the environment in its totality rather than the small, enclosed territory of apartments. As he wrote in his diploma work:

> The meaning of home should not be taken literally, to include only an apartment, a house or a garden. It could be enlarged to the environment as such: the street, the city, institutions and places of work. We spend most of our time outside homes and the general design of the environment is even more important and of greater influence than the design of apartments, and it also determines the evolution of homes. (Tolts 1973: 2–3)

Tolts's ideas about engagement with the environment in its totality related to his education at the Department of Industrial Art, which, following its opening in 1966, had attracted students to its liberal intellectual atmosphere and investigation of new technologies and their role in everyday life. Simultaneously with their design studies, Tolts and his colleagues Ando Keskküla and Leonhard Lapin had, from 1969 to 1972, organized a series of happenings in public spaces and exhibitions associated with pop art. (The first of these exhibitions, at Café Pegasus in Tallinn, was called "Soup '69" after Andy Warhol's poster of a Campbell's soup can.) These events directed their critical attitude towards Soviet mass culture, media, and corresponding transformations in everyday life: the yearning for prestigious consumer goods, the ownership of motor cars and summer cottages as symbols of differentiation, and the divergence of these practices from the official rhetoric of "developed socialism." In their own words, Tolts's and his colleagues' art depended not so much on aesthetics as on the principles of pop, using the multiple, banal, and everyday as art objects (Lapin 1997: 22). In addition to happenings, they experimented with assemblages and collages; pop imagery found its way into animated films and book design, but it also redefined their practice in the traditional media of painting and graphic art. They came to view the everyday environment as the territory of art; therefore, engagement with the home decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* was entirely consistent with their artistic aims. This may also provide an explanation for the magazine's being overlooked by the censors: according to the dominant Marxist-Leninist ideology the aesthetics of the everyday were clearly of secondary importance in the cultural hierarchy, in contrast to the editor and his co-contributors, whose understanding of art and design was derived from the paradigm of pop.

In several issues of *Kunst ja Kodu* in the 1970s this changed relation to the everyday domestic environment found its way into the practical advice pages that had gained popularity among readers throughout the previous decade. In accordance with Tolts's initial ideas, DIY was relocated to the center pages and printed on a different kind of paper forming a distinct pull-out section. In a recent

interview, Tolts recalled that among the very few remarks the editorial board made about his work (most of his suggestions were accepted and there were never any sustained complaints) was criticism that in comparison to earlier issues, which had paid greater attention to DIY, the magazine had become too distant from everyday life: "to meet this requirement we also had a section called 'Practice', which differed from the rest of the magazine in its layout. I tried to include as little practical stuff as possible" (Kurg and Karu 2010).

Commenting in an earlier interview on the strikingly impractical "Practice" section of *Kunst ja Kodu*, Tolts described it as a "kind of invented practice" that had to be done in order for the magazine to remain associated with home decoration (Epner 2009). It is these invented practices (referencing the everyday milieu they cannot be entirely "invented") that enable us to shed light on the intersection of alternative artistic practices and the domestic sphere, and to investigate the transformation of the culture of the home in the Soviet Union during the 1970s.

WALL DECORATIONS

Corresponding with his article on textile and patterns in *Kunst ja Kodu* no. 1 in 1974, Tolts devoted the practice section of the same issue to decorative textile arrangements. Explaining that the wall assemblages would be suitable elements for contemporary interiors, his text adopted the rationalistic tone of advice literature familiar from earlier issues of the magazine and gave detailed instructions on the kind of textiles to be used and how to attach the fabric to the wooden board. Tolts then left the choice of patterns and colors up to the individual taste of the reader: "One can choose textiles of a similar colour but different patterns, or vice versa—in a different colour. The composition may be made stylish by choosing a single dominant [motif] that repeats itself in different patterns either as a similar figure (square, circle, flower, etc.) or on a similar scale (different patterns of different flowers of similar size)" (*Kunst ja Kodu* 1974: VI).

Tolts's interest in textiles in this context was itself unusual. The type of textile he discussed was produced in large quantities and was one of the few consumer items available in a period of economic shortage. The compositional schemas on the opposite page were related to Tolts's own assemblages, combining textiles and ready-made objects that he had produced in 1969 and 1970 and used as illustrations for his article "Pattern—Textile—Space" a few pages later (Figure 5)—a similar abstract composition also appeared on the magazine's cover. In the article, Tolts encouraged readers to use textiles for home decoration, as they were a widely available material, and to combine similar patterns to cover both the walls and the furniture. These decorative textile arrangements may be viewed as compositional exercises in combining different intense patterns in space, but Tolts also suggested that they may be a means to augment the "emotionality

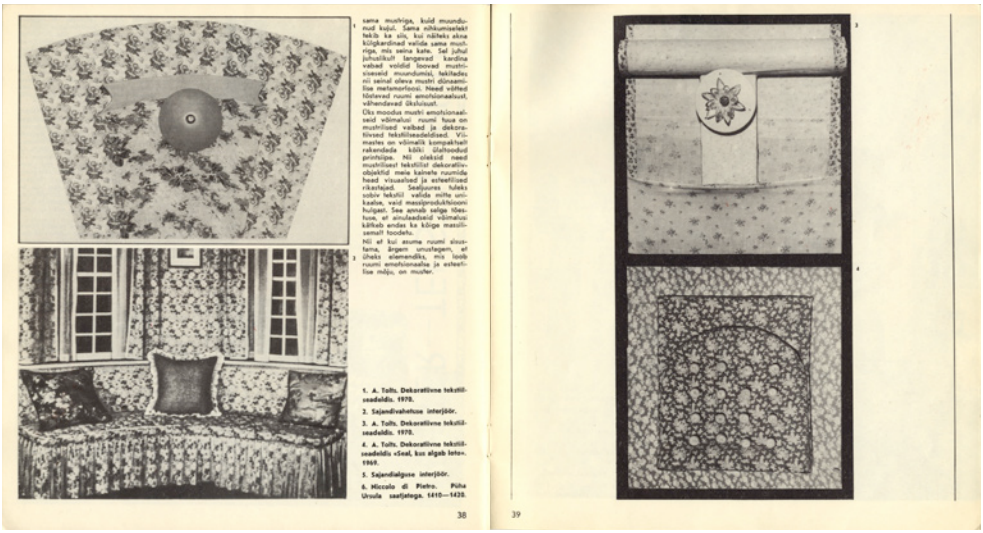

Figure 5
Andres Tolts, "Pattern—Textile—Space" (*Kunst ja Kodu* 1974, no. 1). Upper image on the left and images on the right show Tolts's own textile assemblages.

of space [and] reduce monotony": "These decorative objects of patterned textiles would enhance our sober interiors visually and aesthetically. Thus the suitable textile should not be picked from among unique designs but from the mass-produced ones. This provides clear proof that even the one produced in the greatest quantity may conceal in itself unique possibilities" (Tolts 1974a: 38).

This interest in mass production recurred in Tolts's article on "Prints in space" in the next issue of the magazine. There, he encouraged the use of posters and maps on walls in series that would produce "compositions based on repetitive motifs covering the whole wall." He went on to comment on the popular habit of collecting labels and advertisements—something that from the perspective of modernist taste experts would have been considered vulgar—finding that "if this can be taken to an extreme, covering a whole wall of some service room with these labels, then we get a colourful surface on which no single label is pointed out as a serious object of fascination" (Tolts 1974b: 33).

Tolts's textile objects have been seen as a way of redefining the function of industrial production, teasing out the poetic, unusual, and hidden qualities of industrial production or the banal regime of the everyday; this applies equally to his advice on decorating rooms with textiles of generic prints. The art historian Mari Laanemets writes that his textile arrangements "make us doubt the real function of these objects. They are alienated, absurd, surreal and even erotic" (Laanemets

2010: 25–6). Indeed, these assemblages use banal materials and things for new means (like the popular lottery game in "Where the Lottery Begins," 1969, which also appears in a photograph in *Kunst ja Kodu*), transforming the object into a useless one; but in so doing they also present a critique of the consumer system within which such objects usually circulate. In a recent interview, asked about his way of dressing in the early 1970s—he wore "velour hats and rubber coats"—Tolts stated that his clothing was a counterpoint to the widespread fashion of nylon jackets: "I was also instinctively repulsed by sandals, sports shoes, trainers, sweatpants and other similar things" (Epner 2009). Although Tolts took the nonconformist stance of an autonomous artist, positioning himself here in opposition to popular taste and mass consumer items, he then redeployed from this critical position those same items in his assemblages. For example, in "The Resting Place" he used a cheap, printed cotton fabric with a flowery pattern similar to that used on bed sheets and women's gowns; in the collage "Ermine," from 1967, a photograph of a woman in a gown and apron with a flowery pattern holds a central position, combining different patterns like his later assemblages and advice on decorating space with patterned textiles. Equally recognizable is the pink collar of a man's shirt in "The Resting Place" and the aforementioned pieces from a lottery game. Using such materials in a way that revealed an aspect previously hidden behind the functional or rational use, Tolts inserted the surreal and uncanny into the domain of the home. The materials Tolts used were not only mass-produced, they were for him also banal things, tasteless and outmoded, for which there was no longer any consumer demand, or, more precisely, which did not evoke the desire to consume.[5]

According to Walter Benjamin's well-known critical interpretation of the commodity under capitalism, the Surrealists' interest in objects which had become outmoded—"when the vogue has begun to ebb from them"—revealed in those objects the artificial character of the system of consumption, the commodity's unfulfilled promise of a better future, repeating only the promise itself with each new commodity and fashion (Benjamin 1979: 229). In Tolts's case, however, the outmoded and absence of desire point to the inversion performed in the Soviet consumer system. In the planned economy the main concern was not to foster demand through rapidly changing fashions; instead the system became dominated by imbalances resulting from a shortage of some consumer goods and the overproduction of others (Kornai 1992; Verdery 1996). During the Thaw period, from the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, Soviet researchers attempted to introduce "rational norms of consumption" to contain unlimited consumer desire: each Soviet citizen was to have a conscious understanding of his or her needs and wants (Reid 2006a: 247–8). For this planned system to function, the supply and demand of products had to be in balance, without excess or shortage of production. However,

due to errors in material supply, in consumer feedback and in the "padding of budgets" intended to compensate for such errors (ordering greater quantities of raw materials and other investments than were needed in reality; Verdery 1996: 20–1), stores were stacked with unwanted or outdated goods and there was simultaneously a constant shortage of various everyday items. In the West, designer goods had an additional surplus value (what Jean Baudrillard later called sign value; Baudrillard 1981) that was used to increase the marketability of products in the context of economic competition, and Tolts was aware of this role of design from his background as a design student. In Soviet society design was intended to support the rational system of circulation of products and to present use value in a non-alienated form. However, in a planned economy constantly disturbed by imbalances this was hardly ever the case. Tolts's assemblages thus imply ways in which readers may reinsert surplus value, and thus desire, into products that had become outmoded or superfluous.

WALL POCKETS

In the practice section of the next issue of *Kunst ja Kodu* (1974, no. 2) the designer and artist Ando Keskküla presented his ideas for textile storage systems, or so-called wall pockets, and textile cupboards (Figure 6). The design itself consisted of a modest sketch of a wall-mounted storage system with differently sized pockets, but the short text accompanying the drawings gave a vivid impression of his playful approach to DIY instructions:

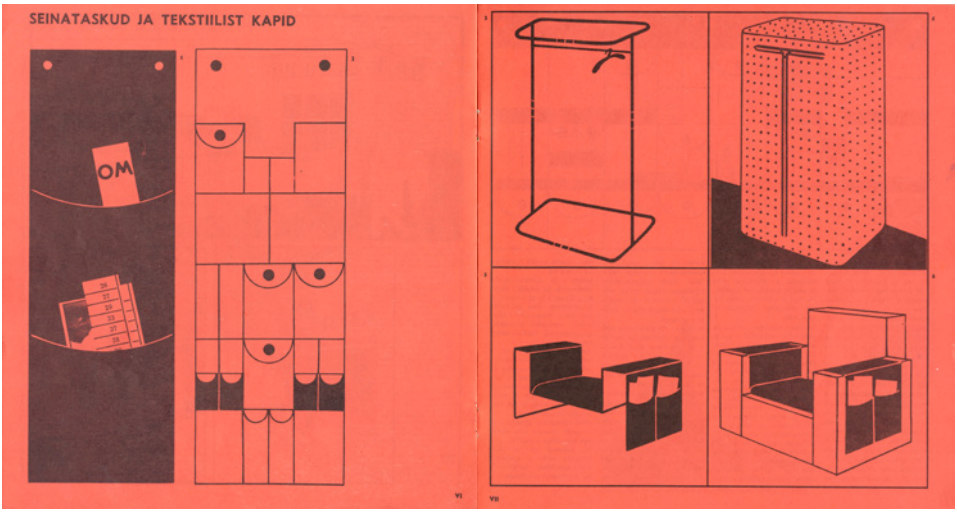

Figure 6
Ando Keskküla, "Wall Pockets and Textile Wardrobes" (*Kunst ja Kodu* 1974, no. 2).

> Those who want, may take the wall pockets, equipped with numerous small storages, very seriously, viewing them as a solution to establishing order in the disarray of small items constantly going missing [...] Some, on the other hand, may be amused by such a practicality, giving them a reason to be ironic about order being the succession of items, finding it specious and in reality very far from the truly functional organisation of things. Nevertheless, they should get themselves wall pockets, if only because these at least allow for the pretence of being exemplarily organised. (Keskküla 1974: viii)

Keskküla's article is obviously ironic, mimicking in its introduction and conclusion the stereotypical ways in which the reader is addressed in practical advice literature. In the conclusion, Keskküla indicates that the objects have more to do with "lifestyle" than style in the aesthetic sense. But what is the meaning of this irony? What exactly is meant by a "specious order ... far from the truly functional organization of things"?

Like Tolts, Keskküla had graduated from the Art Institute's Department of Industrial Art in 1973, with a diploma project that included a design and scenario for an animated film, *Bluff*. The film provided critical commentary on consumption and the excess of things that—along the lines of Marx's notion of commodity fetishism—began to lead a life of their own. The main part of the commentary concerned the changed relationship with design in the new, technologically dominated environment. In Soviet design theory (opposed to the dominance of sign value) surplus value was recoded as a form of "cultural information," which design was intended to mediate: "In a socialist country the engine that drives consumption is also the additional exchange value of the utilitarian object, the question is, what form does it take?" (Keskküla 1973).

Referring to Marshall McLuhan, Keskküla argued that technology is an extension of man and that a change in technology produces also a change in the subject. He thus saw the role of design as involving the translation of rapid changes in culture and technology and communicating them to the users, redesigning psychological stereotypes, and adapting people to the use of new technological means. The designer is to engage not so much with separate objects as with the whole network of "functional connections produced by these objects as communication devices" (Keskküla 1973). Thus the new territory of design practice was to become the all-encompassing design of the living environment, making the "truly functional organization of things" more complex than the mere "succession of items" represented by the wall pockets. Implicit in this is a desire to relativize the prescribed order, whether it concerns modernist home decoration or scientifically derived principles, and to demonstrate dependence on particular circumstances—each particular

configuration growing out from the interaction between objects and their "functional networks."

Elsewhere in the text of his diploma work, Keskküla compared design with the transformed art practices of the 1960s, seeing the changed role of the designer as creating a "new popular art." Explaining that the borders between avant-garde art and design in the West had become blurred and that the avant-garde had been choosing its means from the area of non-art, he described art as becoming a new kind of instrument for molding consciousness by organizing new ways of perception by new means: "These means are picked from the sphere of non-art: photographs, sand, socks, toothbrushes, making futile the oppositions between art/non-art, frivolous/serious, high/low, elitist/mass. The aim is a total sensual experience" (Keskküla 1973).

While Tolts's assemblages drew from discarded everyday materials, putting them to new use in the instructional pages of the home decoration magazine, Keskküla's work declared openly that the designer was to become the initiator of a new kind of popular art. According to Keskküla, what determines our categorization of objects into either elite art or mass culture is merely our attitude towards them, which depends on whether we perceive them aesthetically or functionally. For him, design is to fulfill a communicative function in reaction to technological and social changes, connecting functional needs with means such as color, form, sound, light, and material.

One may immediately interpret Keskküla's wall pockets as reintroducing a popular practice in a "designed" form with added expert instructions. But in the light of Keskküla's interest in reinterpreting design practice, the ironic distance he introduces into his text enables the object to be viewed in a way similar to Tolts's banal objects—i.e. having its function deconstructed in order to become the ground for new experiments in everyday life, in this case providing a basis for reordering objects according to a different system.

COLOR MUSIC

The practical advice pages of *Kunst ja Kodu* no. 1 in 1979 featured an article, "Colour Music at Home," introducing the synchronization of sound and color (Figure 7). According to the authors Silver Vahtre and Urmas Mägi, who also had a background in design, the aim was to produce a more intense emotional and synesthetic effect, with both sight and sound being incorporated into a single process of listening to music (or watching): "The home, which seems to be diminishing in absolute spatial volume due to urbanisation, is more open to complex domestic communication and entertainment machines; which, in spite of their short history, have become or are becoming indispensable components of contemporary homes." (Vahtre and Mägi 1979: I).

The authors go on to explain how electronic means of playing music—radios, record players, magnetic tape recorders—have become an important means of relaxation at home. Synchronization, in

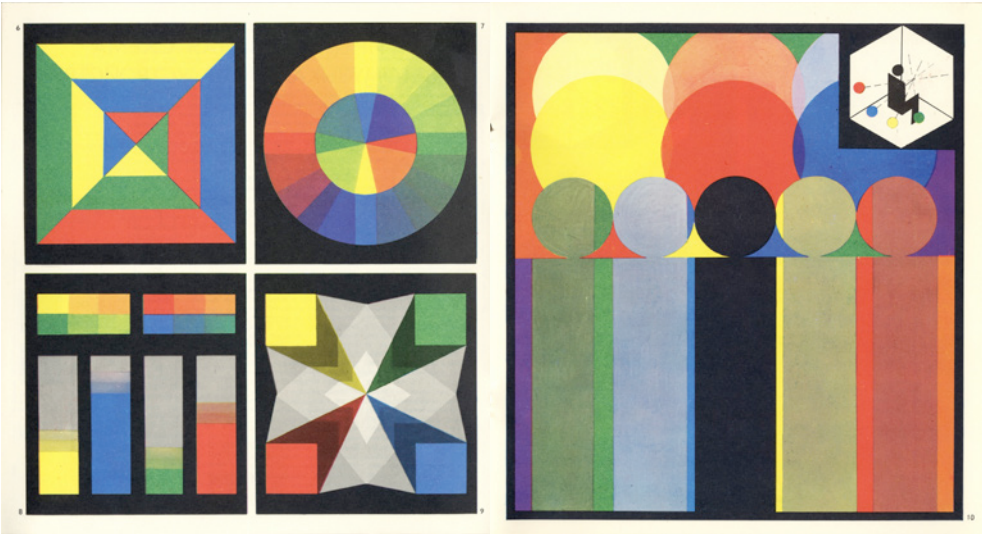

Figure 7
Silver Vahtre, Urmas Mägi, "Colour Music at Home" (illustrations by Sirje Runge) (*Kunst ja Kodu* 1979, no. 1).

their opinion, can contribute to this. The text goes on to explain how to synchronize the signal from the audio output source to sources of colored light, with sounds of higher frequency corresponding to color of shorter wavelength (the blue end of the spectrum) and sounds of low frequency corresponding to the longer wavelength or the red part of the spectrum—the intensity of color depending on the intensity of the sound. In addition to more typical sources of audio output, such as the radio and gramophone, the authors also suggest synchronizing colored light with the telephone or even a microphone, thus enhancing conversation with a play of colors: "It is possible that the apparatus of light-music could be used in learning a language or speech" (Vahtre and Mägi 1979: ii).

The article also proposes different arrangements of lights in space, either back-lighting an individual colored object with lights arranged in different geometric configurations (reminiscent of kinetic and op art) or in an interactive system encompassing the entire room. With the colored objects, the varying intensity of music would illuminate various patterns, and for spatial effects the authors suggested adding spotlights in primary colors behind the listener and projected onto a screen in front: "... coloured silhouettes pulsating to the rhythm of the music. It is easy to imagine what kind of effect would be achieved when one dances in front of the screen" (Vahtre and Mägi 1979: ii). A further suggestion is to design the permanent color scheme of the entire room to correspond with the activity of listening to music—by

coloring the space, including all objects within it, in primary colors and placing colored spotlights in each of the four corners, the whole environment would appear to pulsate with the music (Figure 8).

This proposal is obviously suggestive of the contemporary boom in disco music. It extends beyond the range of the two previous examples by encompassing the home in its totality, rather than proposing separate objects and decorations. Instead of being a site for the unfolding of ordinary life, the apartment would become an object for interactive engagement with music. Although this process would invade the entire space, it was intended to decode the traditional meaning of home and reorient it toward a wider network of music production and reproduction.

Sirje Runge provided the illustrations of the various patterns and spatial arrangements. An artist and designer, Runge had graduated from the State Art Institute in 1975, and some of the proposed configurations were derived from abstract geometric paintings she had produced during the mid-1970s. Since the early 1970s she had been interested in synesthesia and the way colors could be complemented in design with other atmospheric means, producing "new images, means and knowledge" (Lapin and Lapin 1997: 290). Discussing the

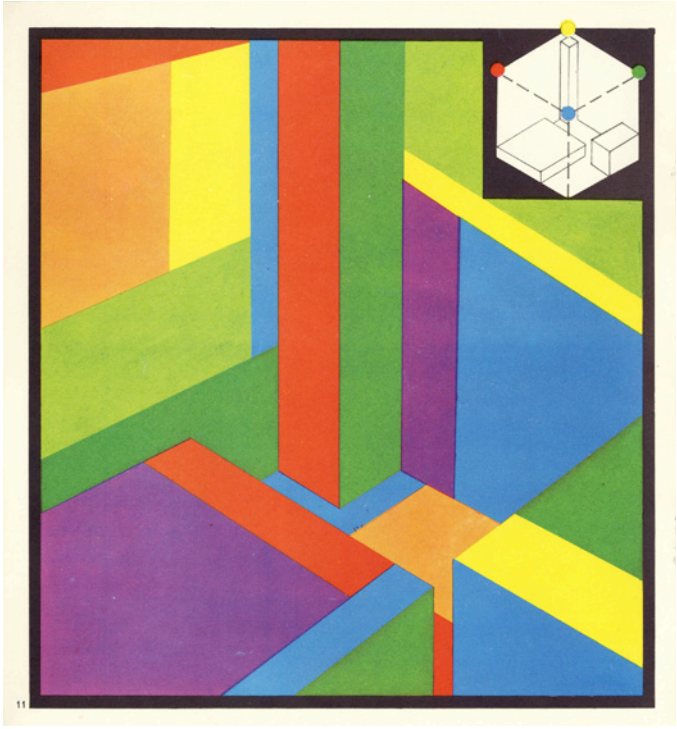

Figure 8
Silver Vahtre, Urmas Mägi, "Colour Music at Home" (illustrations by Sirje Runge) (*Kunst ja Kodu* 1979, no 1).

need for a new kind of architecture, she claimed that "[t]he new era employs sensorial, motoric, kinetic, sonic and verbal means as information, to embrace all human senses and the central nervous system" (Lapin and Lapin 1997: 290). Interest in the atmospheric potential of technology and color also held a central place in her diploma work in which she studied urban decoration in relationship to new technological means and cultural demands. Among other interventions, she proposed modular, compositional structures to be installed in the empty spaces of the city—cubes and spheres that would function as information centers with screens and advertisements, and which could also provide space for small shops and for the "intercommunication" of city-dwellers. Equipped with light and sound effects, these decorative structures would include a huge spherical personalized music center with a headphone system and lighting to produce audiovisual effects (Runge 1975: 11).

Runge also proposed repainting neglected courtyards in the central areas of Tallinn, thus bringing them back into active public use (Figure 9). Interestingly, the color schema and composition of these proposals reappeared in her instructional drawings for a home interior in *Kunst ja Kodu*: the interior and exterior of the home emerge thus as one continuous synesthetic environment encompassing the subject as a whole (Figure 8).

Little is known of how widely the suggestions presented in the advice sections of *Kunst ja Kodu* were carried out by the magazine's readers. Keskküla's wall pockets, a popular element in homes of the period, are reproduced in a 1979 issue of the magazine in a photograph of a home designed by Andres Tolts for writer Mati Unt. Tolts recalls that at least one of his textile arrangements was constructed, by the father of a fellow architect. Variations of synchronized sound and light system were installed in public places, including the canteen of the Tallinn Polytechnical Institute (Kurg and Karu 2010).

CONCLUSION

In this article I have followed the Soviet-Estonian home decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* through its transformation in the 1960s and 1970s, reflecting on the way it participated in broader changes in society. During the 1960s, *Kunst ja Kodu* fulfilled an instructional role, educating its readers on issues of rational planning and good taste. In the context of the shortage of everyday consumer items and low-quality construction of new single-family apartment buildings, the magazine encouraged its readers to make new furniture or repair details that lacked proper finishing. The tone of these instructions changed in the middle of the decade when rising standards prompted a shift in focus toward more luxurious objects and leisure time in the apartment. Central to this article is the major shift in the magazine's approach to home interiors from the early 1970s onwards, following the appointment of a new editor who introduced a whole new set of

Figure 9
Sirje Runge (Lapin), proposal for the design of areas in central Tallinn, panel 2. Diploma work at the Estonian State Art Institute, Department of Industrial Art, 1975. Gouache on cardboard, 100 × 100 cm. Museum of Estonian Architecture.

topics. Instead of regarding the home as an enclosed territory, the magazine now embraced the whole of its surrounding environment. I have discussed the relationship of mutual dependence between the emerging design profession and alternative art practices that took interest in the everyday environment. Beginning in the 1960s, the design profession recognized the role of systems rather than separate objects in the environment and was influenced by pop art in its

attention to the everyday as a source for artistic practice, resulting in a transformation in hierarchies of art. Rather than seeing the late 1960s and early 1970s in the Soviet Union as having simply been a decade of withdrawal from the public sphere into private apartments and clandestine practices distinct from the surrounding context, this relationship shows the continuity and mutual influence that existed between the work of a state-sponsored publication and the personal, artistic interests of its editor and his colleagues.

To explain this relationship, I have examined three examples from the practical advice section of the magazine during the 1970s: decorative textile arrangements by Andres Tolts, wall-pockets by Ando Keskküla, and instructions for synchronizing color and music in the domestic context, with schematic design proposals, by Sirje Runge. By comparing work produced for the magazine with the authors' other works I have demonstrated that ideas that were being worked out in the authors' individual design or art practices were employed and reworked to be put into wider circulation in the magazine. This was not merely a cunning scheme to enable works to be presented in public: home decoration was an important source for the work of both artists and designers, and the magazine provided a platform from which to develop it. Through their interventions in the home, informed by alternative art practices, this enabled them to redefine the practice of the designer. Tolts's decorative textile arrangements, which he had exhibited in an independent art exhibition in 1969, were later presented in the pages of the magazine. I have interpreted the arrangements as a way for Tolts to redefine the notion of value in everyday items (e.g. mass-produced textiles) and the role of the designer as someone who reinserts individuality into objects. The example of color music in Sirje Runge's work is evidence of the importance of mass culture for artistic practices and an attempt to deploy this in decorating the environment. A two-way process was underway: art descended to the streets in the form of modular structures and brightly-colored environments, and the environment imploded into the apartment, invading the traditional closed domain of the home with synchronized music, color, and interior decoration. Thus, an aspect of the design profession that has received only limited attention in research also emerges from this article.

More broadly, these examples serve not only as projections of artistic ideas into the sphere of design, appropriating the home decoration magazine as a platform for their work, but also as attempts at rethinking the domestic sphere in the light of a new technological and ideological reality and new social circumstances. The metaphor of fractured boundaries refers to the insecure border between the inside and outside of the home during the 1970s, to the undoing of earlier utilitarian and disciplinary enclosures, and to the emergence of multiple diffuse forces of opposition.

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NOTES

1. For example, several of these regulations were prescribed in the rules of the all-Soviet competition for single-family apartments in 1957: the smallest apartment could be no less than 18 m^2, the largest could not exceed 60 m^2 and the kitchen was to be 4.5 m^2. Similarly, a minimal amount of furniture was prescribed to fit into the apartment: five to nine chairs (including at least one stool in the corridor), a sofa, a sideboard, a writing table, a television or radio table, a bookcase, a refrigerator, and a washing machine. Building standard (SniP—*stroitelnye normy i pravila*) prescribed that the entrance to the bathroom must be from the corridor (see Ojari 2004: 48–9).
2. For example, a recent book review about Ilya Kabakov drew this sharp distinction, describing his practice thus: "Kabakov led a double life, employed officially as a children's book illustrator but using the resources afforded by his position to create a host of self-reflexive, slyly subversive unofficial works." The result was "an art of concession … informed by the bureaucracy that constrained him" (Weibgen 2011: 112).
3. Tolts was recommended for this position by graphic artist Tõnis Vint, who was employed in the Kunst publishing house and knew Tolts through the young artists' circles, and also by Bruno Tomberg, who was on the editorial board of the magazine and head of the Department of Industrial Design at the Estonian State Art Institute where Tolts studied from 1968 to 1973 (personal communication, Tolts in conversation with the author, March 14, 2003).
4. A caption explains that the image illustrates how one can achieve unexpected effects by using light of various colors and configurations. The author is indicated as "designer D. Flafin." This misspelling may have originated from an original source in Russian, where names from the Latin alphabet are transliterated based on pronunciation.
5. Susan Reid has described this kind of overproduction and failure to meet the consumer demand in the 1960s as "shoppers' strikes" (Reid 2006a: 245).

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4. Feedback Environment: Rethinking Art and Design Practices in Tallinn During the Early 1970s

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Feedback Environment: Rethinking Art and Design Practices in Tallinn During the Early 1970s*

ANDRES KURG

This article studies artistic practices that emerged in Tallinn during the early 1970s from discourses and institutions associated with the course of Soviet modernisation and industrialisation: technological aesthetics and design, cybernetics and information theory. The article examines the role of graduates from the newly-opened department of industrial art in Tallinn who were also active participants in the artistic life of the period: Ando Keskküla, Sirje Runge and – closely associated with them – the architects Leonhard Lapin and Vilen Künnapu. The article considers how information theories from the 1960s contributed to the transformation of Soviet design discourse and how this was further appropriated by alternative art practices. It also discusses how this exchange with new theories and disciplines led to a redefinition of both the art object and human subjectivity. Finally, the article argues that this perspective enables the practices of these designers and artists to be viewed in the context of global processes associated with the demise of the disciplinary regime.

In the 1990s, one of the dominant interests for the first wave of post-Soviet art historians in the Baltics (and also in Western Europe) was to emphasise the unofficial realm, including alternative narratives, that had existed alongside official accounts. This body of work, which had already been initiated by Western and émigré art collectors in the late 1960s, focused on (and constructed) a 'nonconformist' art world regarded as independent from and untainted by official ideology. Although, in the Baltic context, most researchers agreed on the difficulty of demarcating an exact border between the official and unofficial, the narrative of dissent was well suited to the discourse of national liberation and identity politics, which aimed at distancing those countries from their Soviet and Russian-dominated past.[1]

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1 See S. Helme, Mitteametlik kunst. Vastupanuvormid eesti kunstis. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 10. Tallinn: Teaduste Akadeemia Kirjastus, 2000, pp. 253–272.

Several recent accounts of art history have contested the validity of the official–unofficial model of the late Soviet period, drawing attention to the significance of 'intra-systemic dissension' and processes of public meaning making.[2] This body of work sets out to study art that was publicly exhibited and that received a critical response in print, arguing against the popular conception of two parallel discourses operating in separate spheres whereby people would have been 'saying one thing in public and another in private'.[3]

Susan E. Reid's study from the mid-1990s, of art institutions in Soviet Russia during the early 'Thaw' period, pointed out that the notion of the totalitarian society, combined with the modernist aesthetic paradigm, has resulted in seeing artistic innovation and development as occurring exclusively on the 'fringes' and among 'non-conformists', meanwhile leaving the 'official' institutional power structures and aesthetic discussions understudied. To understand the period, her project also studied the 'permitted art' that was exhibited in public and received a critical response in print:

> It was here that public meanings were produced and the limits of permissible reformism were tested out and defined. Furthermore, the art establishment may be seen as one of the interfaces across which the absolute antithesis of state and society becomes untenable.[4]

Reid argued that there was coexistence, rather than a division of art into separate spheres that were not in communication with each other, and there was overlapping of reformers and conservatives.[5]

The model of two autonomous discourses can also be disputed theoretically. Recent political theory has criticised the traditional model, whereby identity is supposed to pre-exist the political public sphere, and has argued that to varying degrees all public discourses are occasions for identity formation.[6] More broadly perhaps, the grounds for the distinction between the official and unofficial can be undermined by poststructuralist theories of subjectivity that see the self as always constructed by social, unconscious and linguistic structures such that identity is formed by and through social experience. Autonomous islands of private life become illusory from this perspective.

Combining theoretical rigor with historical evidence, anthropologist Alexei Yurchak has recently argued forcefully against the division into two separate discourses of late Soviet everyday life, and against the pervading dualisms that dominate accounts of the period: oppression and resistance, repression and freedom, the state and the people, official culture and counterculture, public self and private self. For

2 S. E. Reid, Destalinization and the Remodernization of Soviet Art: The Search for a Contemporary Realism. Doctoral dissertation, University of Northumbria. Newcastle, 1995, p. 8.
3 T. G. Ash, We the People: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin & Prague. London: Penguin, 1990, p. 137.
4 S. E. Reid, De-Stalinisation in the Moscow Art Profession. – Regime and Society in Twentieth-Century Russia: Selected Papers from the Fifth World Congress of Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, 1995. Ed. I. D. Thatcher. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, p. 146.
5 S. E. Reid, De-Stalinisation in the Moscow Art Profession, p. 147.
6 C. Calhoun, Nationalism and the Public Sphere. – Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy. Eds. J. Weintraub, K. Kumar. Chicago: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 86.

Yurchak, these dualisms are widespread in retrospective analyses of socialism in Soviet Union and go back to the dissident ideology of the 1970s, according to which the truth could be published only in *samizdat* journals and the official media was full of lies. Relying on discourse analysis and theories of performativity, Yurchak refutes the conception that there were two distinct selves and that public conformism secured private freedom: this binary presupposes both the literal interpretation of ideology and that language was encoded as two forms – true language and false language. Knowledge would thus have pre-existed and be reflected in discourse rather than being produced by it. Instead, Yurchak proposes that the discourses and forms of knowledge that circulated in Soviet society were not in separate spheres, nor encoded, but constituted processes that were never known in advance and that were actively being produced and reinterpreted.[7]

In what follows, I will focus on those art practices in Tallinn during the early 1970s that had emerged from discourses and institutions associated with the course of modernisation and industrialisation followed by the Soviet Union since the late 1950s: technical aesthetics or design, cybernetics and information theory. In particular, I will concentrate on the example of graduates from what was then the newly-opened department of industrial art at the State Art Institute in Tallinn, who were active participants in the artistic life of the period: Ando Keskküla and Sirje Runge (Lapin), and, closely associated with them, Leonhard Lapin and Vilen Künnapu who had both trained as architects.

In Estonian art historical literature the work of these artists in the early 1970s has been explained through models drawn from the practices of the Western neo-avant-garde: the use of happenings and assemblage, film and photography, the turn to the everyday and the banal in the content of their work.[8] More attentive to local particularities, Mari Laanemets has pointed to interdisciplinarity as a defining feature of these artists and designers operating simultaneously in different domains.[9] My focus from here will be twofold: to examine how information theories from the 1960s transformed Soviet design discourse and how it was further appropriated by alternative art practices, and to follow how this exchange with new theories and disciplines led not only to the redefinition of the art object but also to the redefinition of subjectivity. This perspective attempts to avoid appropriating an either/or logic of the official/unofficial, and instead to show how discourses and practices that contested dominant forms of power grew out from interactions with official institutions and public discourses.

Slava Gerovitch has in a recent study on the Soviet discourse of cybernetics pointed out that what started in the 1950s as a radical movement for reforming science and society, something opposed to the bureaucratic establishment, became by the 1970s a dominant discourse, 'one of the sciences crucial to the construction of communism',

7 A. Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 18.

8 S. Helme, J. Kangilaski, Lühike Eesti kunsti ajalugu. Tallinn: Kunst, 1999, pp. 164–168. For an early version of discussion of Sirje Runge's geometric paintings from the perspective of information theory and semiotics see J. Klimov, "Geomeetriast" "Maastikuni". – Kunst 1984, no. 2, pp. 36–39.

9 M. Laanemets, On the Reconstruction of the Art History of Soviet Estonia: The Art History of Interdisciplinary Art. – Paper presented at the conference *The Geographies of Art History in the Baltic Region*, Estonian Academy of Arts, 27–28 November 2009.

that early cyberenticians disdained.[10] For example, for the emerging Tartu school of semiotics in the end of 1950s, the transposition of cybernetic problems enabled discussion of the notion of freedom and demonstrated the need for autonomy – 'dialectical understanding of feedback and freedom and choice demonstrated the philosophical as well as social and political absurdity of totalitarian regimes'[11] –, but by the time of Brezhnev's 'mature socialism' the rhetoric of cybernetics and information theory had become another means for maintaining the existing hierarchies and power structures.[12]

I want to investigate, among other issues, how the rhetoric of cybernetics and information theory drawn primarily from Norbert Wiener, but also from Marshall McLuhan, was put to use by artists working in Tallinn, how this diverged from the reformists of the 1960s, and what were the wider connotations of artists' use of these theories. Finally, I claim that this perspective enables us to view the practices of designers and artists in the context of global processes associated with the demise of the disciplinary regime.[13]

Design discourse in Estonia

In 1966, the State Art Institute of the Estonian SSR in Tallinn introduced the special study of industrial art in the Faculty of Architecture, with the aim of training designers as a distinct profession.[14] The head of the department and initiator of the program was Bruno Tomberg, a furniture designer by training, whose stated ideal was to offer a 'universal education' rather than preparation exclusively in the field of product design, since the small size of Estonia required that specialists have a relatively wide profile rather than a very narrow specialisation.[15] Thus, in addition to traditional composition, drawing and sculpture classes, and starting from their first year, students received lectures in information theory (by Mark Sinisoo), bionics (Arne Lauringson) and were later taught sociological research (Marju Lauristin).[16] In actuality, this orientation towards universality in design practice also represented Tomberg's theoretical convictions and the larger shift in how design was theorised in the Soviet Union.

From the 1960s, the role of design or technical aesthetics was determined by the context of economic and societal modernisation, and by the progression in living standards that it supposedly brought along. To achieve such modernisation, industrial production was restructured to support increased automation, the 'emergence of

10 S. Gerovitch, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002, p. 289.
11 B. Jegorov, Tartu koolkonna lätteil. Mälestusi 1950. aastatest. – Vikerkaar 1995, no. 1, pp. 66–79.
12 S. Gerovitch, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak, p. 9.
13 On informatisation and breakdown of the disciplinary regime, also in the Soviet context, see M. Hardt, A. Negri, Empire. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. 260–279.
14 Till 1968 industrial arts was located as part of the interior design department, from 1968 onwards it was a separate department. On average, it had 4–6 students per year in the full-time program. Estonian State Archives (ERA), f R-1696, n 1, s 621, l 60.
15 B. Tomberg, Jooni disaini arengust. Manuscript in Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design. Tallinn, 1979, p. 17.
16 ERA, f R-1696, n 1, s 716, l 5, 54.

science as a productive force' and the growth of an artificial, man-made environment.[17] These new forces were also subjected to analysis by other new scientific methods and disciplines such as cybernetics, ergonomics and linguistics. Thus investigation into new technologies and their role in everyday life formed part of the studies at the industrial art department.

One of the important changes that occurred during the 1960s was a shift from designing separate objects to systems related to environment: 'It became clear that an object does not exist separately in reality and that design is a phenomenon of the synthesis of material culture – the social, ideological, cultural and other influences have always been integrated into art.'[18] Rather than emphasising form-making as the traditional field of design, the new definition saw it in conjunction with economic control, optimisation of choice, control of quality and consumption, etc.[19]

According to Tomberg, design would find its role between other art disciplines and it would produce a new territory – the environment itself:

> The architect designs buildings, the garden architect designs parks, the advertising artist is responsible for advertisements, but who looks after the streets, traffic signs, children's playgrounds and dustbins? [---] All of this should be the work of designers, they should be interested in the city in its totality. [---] The main problem for the industrial arts is the design and planning of a suitable and decent living environment for humans.[20]

This reconceptualised design practice concerned not only the domain of design, but also how designers were meant to approach it; neither updating a pre-existing model nor carrying out commissions prescribed by the producers, but acting more like inventors, seeing the needs of the society from a more holistic or synthetic perspective. In a popular magazine for adolescents, *Pioneer*, Tomberg explained that a designer is different from an industrial artist who merely provides a form, and that instead the designer should be understood as a universal problem-solver with an ability to see the given problem from a broader perspective: '...if the task of the industrial artist is to produce a new model for an iron, then a designer sees his task as avoiding the tiresome activity of ironing altogether. A solution to this problem has been the production of un-crushable fabric.'[21] This kind of all-encompassing design of the living environment 'for the realisation of most progressive social needs'[22] was also seen as differentiating Soviet design from capitalist design, the latter being understood as fragmented between private corporations and their contradictory interests. If the latter was seen as reifying society, these texts prescribe for Soviet designers the task of humanising society. Given the context of new technologies, and the new growth of synthetic arts and

17 R. Sarap, Teaduse ja tehnika revolutsioon ja esteetika. Tallinn: Kunst, 1975, p. 12.
18 B. Tomberg, Jooni disaini arengust, pp. 5–6.
19 B. Tomberg, Sissejuhatus disaini. Manuscript in Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design. Tallinn, 1978, p. 2.
20 J. Olep, Pilguga tulevikku. Vastab ERKI disainikateedri juhataja dotsent Bruno Tomberg. – Sirp ja Vasar 4 August 1972.
21 B. Tomberg, Mis on disain? – Pioneer 1973, no. 11, p. 37.
22 L. Gens, Inimene ja tema keskkond. Näituselt "Ruum ja Vorm" Tallinna kunstihoones. – Sirp ja Vasar 7 April 1972.

'aesthetics' of the milieu, the described role acted, among other things, to counter popular concerns about the replacement of humans with computers and was intended to mediate the consequences of technological civilisation. According to a popular book on the scientific-technological revolution, the mission would be 'the protection of human nature, preservation of human characteristics and the development of emotional culture'.[23]

Soviet design also differentiated itself from Western design with regard to the latter's orientation toward increasing consumer demand and the production of surplus value. If, according to critical theorists, the work of Western designers during the 1960s could be described as that of adding value to consumer items in the form of symbols and prestige,[24] then, in contrast, in a socialist society oriented towards eradicating the differences between social classes design should not function as a mark of status. Theorists writing on technical aesthetics thus turned to the role of aesthetic value, but also, relying on theoretical discussions as exemplified by Tomás Maldonado and Gui Bonsiepe, among others, to the informational value that was to predominate over use value.[25] In the abovementioned article Bruno Tomberg describes how the work of the designer begins with the problem of the excess of information, encountered primarily in an urban environment, and its organisation ('that it would be presented in a rational way regarding each person's needs').[26] The aim of design was to translate rapid changes in culture and technology to the users and adapt these to everyday life, encompassing not only the aesthetic sphere, but also the social sphere. Thus surplus value was recoded as 'cultural information' that design was intended mediate. Similarly distinct from use-value, it defined the superstructural face of an era and communicated it to the users via formal means.

Ando Keskküla's *Bluff*

In his 1973 diploma project for the industrial art department, Ando Keskküla took up the issue of design's changed role in the contemporary information-dominated environment. The project consisted of a scenario for an animated film called *Bluff* (fig. 1), accompanied by an extended theoretical introduction.[27] *Bluff* provided a critical comment on consumption and the excess of things in the contemporary world, which – along the lines of Marx's commodity fetishism – had begun to have a life of their own. With this work, Keskküla attempted to redefine in cybernetic terms the place of design

23 R. Sarap, Teaduse ja tehnika revolutsioon ja esteetika, p. 15.
24 The commentators included Roland Barthes, Henri Lefebvre and Jean Baudrillard, among others.
25 It should be added that this sharp differentiation from the Western notion of design was in many cases rhetorical, and in their definition of design Soviet authors often relied on critical Western theorists. The Soviet Union was a member of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) and in 1975 the ICSID biennial congress was held in Moscow. Bruno Tomberg often refers to the definition of design according to ICSID, especially after that congress. In a lecture from 1978, he points to design being used to address social problems, referring to Tomás Maldonado and his critique of consumer society and Gui Bonsiepe and his experiment in Chile.
See B. Tomberg, Sissejuhatus disaini, p. 5.
26 B. Tomberg, Mis on disain?, p. 37.
27 A. Keskküla, Joonismultifilm. Stsenaarium, lavastus, kujundamine. Diploma work at the State Art Institute of the Estonian SSR, Department of Industrial Art. Tallinn, 1973.

in society and the technologically-transformed environment. This approach saw the man-made environment as an ecosystem that demonstrates communicational structures and needs to maintain internal stability and homeostasis in order to survive. The film's unusual title may be interpreted in a way similar to Norbert Wiener's use of the word in *The Human Use of Human Beings* (translated into Estonian in 1969), which described a technique in a communication circuit that uses noise to combat the disturbance of information:

> ...both the team of communicants and the jamming forces are at liberty to use the technique of bluffing to confound one another, and in general this technique will be used to prevent the other side from being able to act on a firm knowledge of the technique of one side.[28]

Keskküla opens his theoretical discussion by stating that environment, which includes both natural and man-made environment, is characterised by the dysfunctions and poisonings of its metabolism; and since people live in symbiosis with their environment, it becomes an active force ordering their lives, tying their subjectivities to its visible and invisible circuitry. He describes the interaction between the individual and the active environment:

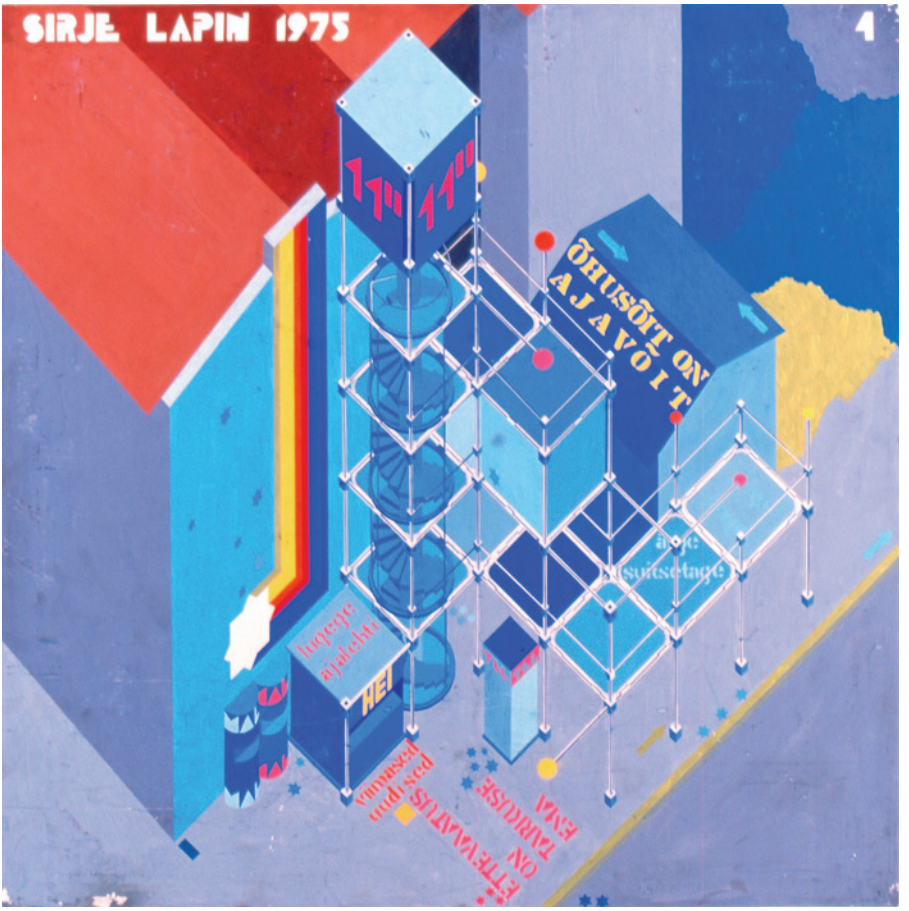
> Psychophysiological influence obtained through the senses mixes with cultural-informational data, the connection takes place not on the level of isolated psychic phenomena but on the level of the full individual, where various outer influences are filtered and transformed, depending on the situation, the individual's previous experiences and activities.[29]

The film itself, to be produced visually as a 'bluff' commercial, was intended to demonstrate how everyday items, when consumed excessively for prestige or symbolic value and without differentiation, begin to produce digressions in the circuit of exchange and dominate the subject's life. If this message is interpreted in relation to the then pervading thesis of 'rational' consumption,[30] then Keskküla's main interest was the conflict evoked by the confrontation of 'old' objects with new technologies and their respective subjectivities: in replacing the old, the new things demand a new kind of relationship with the user and promote different psychological stereotypes that are incompatible with previous patterns of use.

This interest in analysing the impact of new technologies on human psychology was directly influenced by Marshall McLuhan's theories, including his redefinition

28 N. Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society. New York: Avon Books, 1969, p. 256.
29 A. Keskküla, Joonismultifilm.
30 The growing amount of consumer items during the Thaw period generated fears that uncontrollable consumer desires would be awoken, and that these would soon get out of hand. Instead, a Soviet person was to have a conscious idea of her needs and to place their desires under rational control. Thus 'rational norms of consumption' were propagated by institutions dealing with consumption, taste and living standards. Journals relied on scientific evidence and analysis that defined adequate living standards for the average citizen or family (S. E. Reid, Khrushchev Modern: Agency and Modernization in the Soviet Home. – Cahiers du Monde russe 2006, vol. 47 (1/2), pp. 247–248).

1. Ando Keskküla. Illustratsioon joonisfilmile „Bluff" (1973).
Repro. Eesti Tarbekunsti- ja Disainimuuseum.
Ando Keskküla. Illustration for animated film *Bluff* (1973).
Reproduction. Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design.

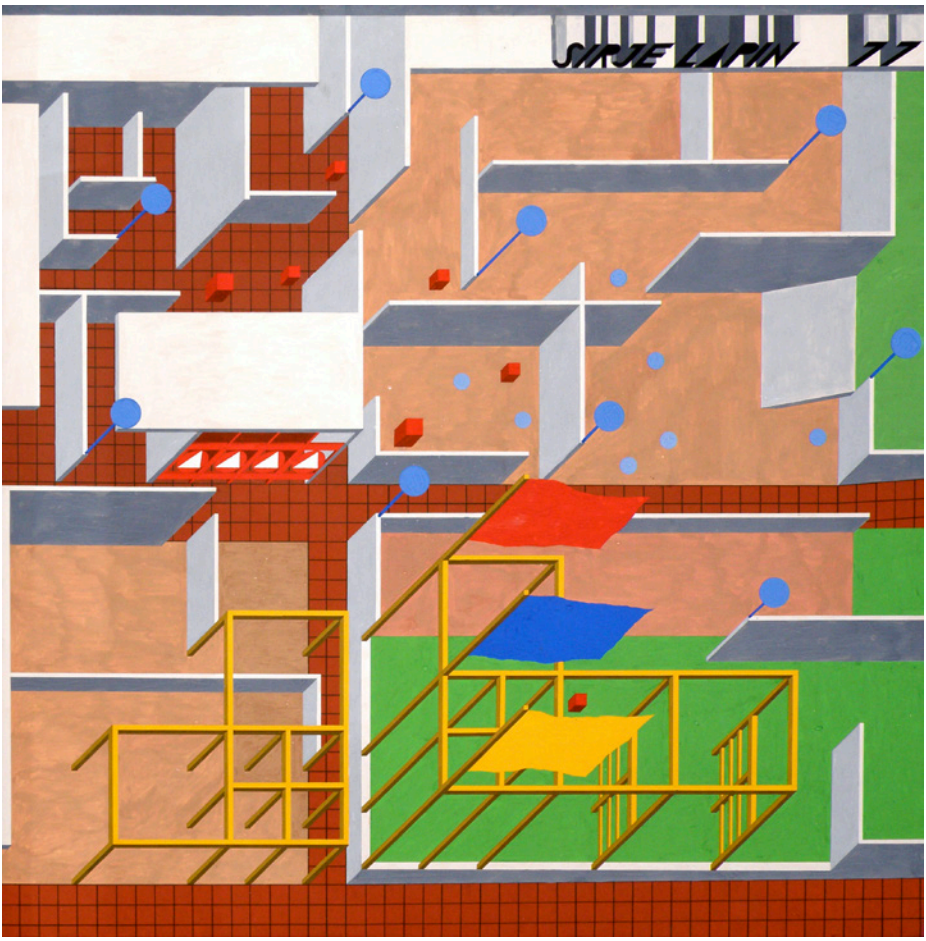


2.

Sirje Runge (Lapin). Tallinna kesklinna miljöö kujundamise võimalusi. Planšett 4 (1975). Guašš, papp. Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum.
Sirje Runge (Lapin). Proposal for the Design of Areas in Central Tallinn. Display board 4 (1975). Gouache on cardboard. The Museum of Estonian Architecture.

3.

Sirje Runge (Lapin). Tallinna kesklinna miljöö kujundamise võimalusi. Planšett 5 (1975). Guašš, papp. Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum.
Sirje Runge (Lapin). Proposal for the Design of Areas in Central Tallinn. Display board 5 (1975). Gouache on cardboard. The Museum of Estonian Architecture.



4. Sirje Runge (Lapin). Pärnu KEK-i lasteaia mänguväljaku vaade (1977).
Guašš, papp. Erakogu.
Sirje Runge (Lapin). View of Pärnu KEK construction company kindergarten playgrounds (1977).
Gouache on cardboard. Private collection.

of media as extensions of man that affect the 'whole psychic and social complex'.[31] Keskküla writes:

> A wheel is an extension of a leg, clothing of the skin, electric circuitry is an extension of the central nervous system. When relationships between humans and these extensions change, humans also change. Everything that extends human capabilities becomes a means of communication. Thus a wheel, a cart, a road, a car or a book are those means and they determine people's interrelations and their relationship with their environment.[32]

Moreover, we can make sense of the environment only through those communicational means via which it is mediated for us, and the environment presents itself not as a sum total of objects but as 'a network of functional connections produced by these objects as communicational means'.[33]

For Keskküla, this changed notion of the environment as mediated by invisible structures redefines the function of design. Elaborating on the ways in which the surplus value of design is informational, he sees the task of design as involving the translation of rapid changes in culture and technology to the users, redesigning psychological stereotypes and adapting people to the changes that accompany the use of new technologies. Design had a role to play in maintaining the homeostatic balance of the man-made milieu. However, to explain this changed role, he turned to recent Western avant-garde art practices and asserted an erasure of the border between design and art: artists document the environment in their works or intervene directly in the environment. Rather than following an 'idea', he regards the 'aesthetic credo' of contemporary art as being 'an analysis of the senses' and art as becoming a new kind of instrument for moulding consciousness by organising new ways of perception utilising new means. 'The aim is a total sensual experience',[34] writes Keskküla. He picked many of the means for organising consciousness from the sphere of non-art (he lists photographs, sand, socks, toothbrushes), and so the distinction between high and low art became futile – an object's belonging to either art, design or mass culture is decided by the user's attitude to it. Thus a designer would become an initiator of a 'new kind of popular art' that reacts to social and technological changes and connects 'functional needs with means such as colour, form, sound, light and material'. This 'popular' function was positioned in contrast to what he saw as the false humanisation of everyday objects through kitsch and myth (which he interpreted, somewhat contradictorily, as mass culture) in the contemporary Soviet consumer market. Those objects, instead of providing cultural information and adapting people to the reality of the new technical era, offered only an escape into a phantasmagorical fake environment.

31 Marshall McLuhan, originally a professor of English literature, turned in the 1950s to the analysis of emerging new technologies and their social role, after being strongly influenced by Norbert Wiener's *Cybernetics* (1948) and *The Human Use of Human Beings* (1950), among others. See R. Barbrook, Imaginary Futures. From Thinking Machines to the Global Village. London: Pluto Press, 2007, pp. 68–89, and R. Martin, The Organizational Complex. Architecture, Media and Corporate Space. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003, pp. 19–28.

32 A. Keskküla, Joonismultifilm.

33 A. Keskküla, Joonismultifilm.

34 A. Keskküla, Joonismultifilm.

Sirje Runge's *Proposal for the Design of Areas in Central Tallinn*

This emphasis on the sensuous qualities of artworks and interest in the psychology of the viewer recur in Sirje Runge's 1975 diploma work *Proposal for the Design of Areas in Central Tallinn* for the industrial art department of the State Art Institute. In an extended theoretical statement, Runge explained that her aim was to overcome the monotonous modernisation of the city by taking into account the various systems of communication that make up the urban environment and utilise them in the design process, thereby making it appropriable by the masses: 'One should once again raise the aim of bringing art to the streets, by giving it volume and content proper to urban design.'[35] Although Runge's approach to urban space was primarily an aesthetic one, her understanding was not limited to the discipline's traditional domain and she saw the urban environment as a place where information is 'concentrated, reproduced and disseminated'. Thus, 'its development can be viewed alongside art and aesthetics'.[36]

Including information within the domain of aesthetics implied not only the redefinition of art, but also of how information was to be understood. If cybernetics tied systems to their environment via informational feedback loops, it also radically redefined what counted as information. In 1972, commenting on the need for an essentially different architecture for contemporary theatre practice, Sirje Runge and Leonhard Lapin wrote (referring to Marshall McLuhan) that the new cybernetic era had brought along not only new machines and materials but also 'new images, means and knowledge',[37] and had replaced the era of linear information with that of cybernetic information. As an example of these new means of information they listed the telephone, television, film, space technology, photography and light bulbs. In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan famously described electric light – among other new means of information changing human relations and practices as extensions of man – as pure information, a medium without a message. Yet this medium communicates just by its presence:

> The message of the electric light is like the message of electric power in industry, totally radical, pervasive and decentralized. For electric light and power are separate from their uses, yet they eliminate time and space factors in human association exactly as do radio, telegraph, telephone, and TV, creating involvement in depth.[38]

McLuhan was interested in how various new media enable new activities to take place but also thereby change human relations and practices in 'scale or pace or pattern'.[39] He differentiated between written media, which produced detachment and the ability to isolate single objects, and media like TV that involved the person 'in depth', as a whole being, likening this to a sense of touch. This changed mode of perception –

35 S. Lapin, Tallinna kesklinna miljöö kujundamise võimalusi. Diploma work at the State Art Institute of the Estonian SSR, Department of Industrial Art. Tallinn, 1975, p. 19.
36 S. Lapin, Tallinna kesklinna miljöö kujundamise võimalusi, p. 5.
37 S. Lapin, L. Lapin, On sügis, lehed langevad. – Thespis. Meie teatriuuendused 1972/73. Ed. V. Vahing, Tartu: Ilmamaa, 1997, p. 289.
38 M. McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. London, New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 9.
39 M. McLuhan, Understanding Media, p. 8.

'total, synesthetic, involving all the senses'[40] – was common to a generation who had grown up with television images and had abandoned traditional visual involvement as irrelevant.

The potential of the formal means of new media, which could have informational value in itself and could thereby produce an environment with a new kind of involvement, was a central feature in Runge's diploma work. In the abovementioned article, Runge and Lapin called upon artists to explore the variety of imaginative atmospheric and synaesthetic potential embedded in new technology, in addition to vibrant colours and means of formal composition:

> The new era employs sensorial, motoric, kinetic, sonic and verbal means as information, to embrace all human senses and the central nervous system. The invasion of new means of information to everyday and cultural life is illustrated by the triumph of television; ... kineticism in visual arts, happenings in theatre and concert.[41]

In her diploma work Runge proposed three different types of intervention as urban decoration – repainting neglected courtyards, adding modular compositional structures to empty spaces in the city, and 'urban design fantasies' – that each explore the atmospheric qualities of the environment and aspire to 'embrace all human senses'.[42] The modular structures are the closest match to the described comprehensive informational environment – cubes and spheres that function as information centres, with screens and advertisements, and which could also provide space for small shops and for the 'intercommunication' of city dwellers (fig. 2, 3). In Runge's description, the structures conceal their playful potential: they have light and sound effects and there is potential for climbing in and around the structures or spending time inside a personalised music centre:

> A huge spherical ball 2600mm in diameter is used for listening to music, and is equipped with a headphone system and a selection automaton. There is also a lighting system and television for creating audiovisual effects. The ball is for three persons maximum.[43]

This playful attitude is carried into the third part of the work, the 'urban fantasies', in which Runge proposed to add 'symbolic chimneys' to a power-station by the sea, and to deliver harmless, colourful and pleasant-smelling fumes. Between the chimneys there was to be a labyrinthine park. These fantasies also reveal another aspect of Runge's understanding of the urban environment, something she called non-rational

40 M. McLuhan, Understanding Media, p. 365.
41 S. Lapin, L. Lapin, On sügis, lehed langevad, p. 290.
42 Runge's diploma work consisted of the design work project on eleven 1x1 metre boards and of eighty slides which represented the sites in their original conditions and also abstract fragments from the coloured boards of the design project. According to the author, her aim was to produce on every display board an 'independent aesthetic whole' that would develop beyond the usual technical drawings of designers and explore the new means of expression for designers.
43 S. Lapin, Tallinna kesklinna miljöö kujundamise võimalusi, p. 11.

and chaotic, and which is present in the multilayered and 'subjective' nature of the city's various structures despite its functional organisation. Thus her work demonstrates an ambiguity in terms of its attitude to the environment: on the one hand she proposes a universal modular system that in different combinations could be applied to all empty locations in the city and whereby the user is immersed into the formal play of different atmospheric media, cutting him/her off from the specificity of the site;[44] on the other hand she emphasises the difference between individual urban locations and uses her work to explore the 'irrational and subjective' qualities of particular places. Similarly, Runge's work has an ambivalent character with respect to the role of art. By proposing the provision of space for advertising and for communication as play, by calling for the exploration of the modular structures and displaying different information through artistic practices, the work envisions an involvement by the enlarged means of art, perhaps even a seduction of the viewer similar to the effects of televisual media. But at the same time her work was driven by the particular qualities of different places in the city, by rediscovering the neglected and marginal locations, courtyards, industrial areas, recognising their otherness in terms of the dominant urbanism and opening them up for potential (subversive) public use. Abstract compositional patterns and vibrant colour (as information in itself) were then used to negotiate between the two functions, uncovering the neglected environment for a new kind involvement and a new kind of user.

A 'seemingly reckless campaign of colour'

Runge's work, with its interest in redesigning the neglected pieces of the urban environment, can be understood in conjunction with a series of events that explored the irrational and disruptive qualities that surfaced in everyday urban situations, and which proposed to articulate these places with extravagant use of colour.[45] These events included a happening in a turn-of-the-century suburb of Pelgulinn in 1971, where a large group of art and architecture students painted over a run-down children's playground that had a wooden elephant-shaped slide standing at its centre.[46] This could also be seen as part of the same fascination with applying colours to urban spaces that resurfaced a year later when, in the weekly cultural newspaper *Sirp ja Vasar*, Vilen Künnapu and poet Juhan Viiding called for the rediscovery of neglected parts of Tallinn – of its

44 This does not however mean disregarding the difference between the users themselves. Runge intended her work to take account of the different needs of individual users precisely through the use of means that allow for different programming and spatial flexibility.

45 About these events see also M. Laanemets, Before the Spaces are Constructed: Concerning the Relationship Between Architecture and Art in the Practice of the Tallinn School Architects. – Environment, Projects, Concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972–1985. Eds. A. Kurg, M. Laanemets. Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 2008, pp. 86–100.

46 The playground stood on the corner of Heina and Telliskivi streets. The documentation of the happening by Jüri Okas, known as *Colouring the Elephant*, shows enthusiastic young men and women, some of them wearing Estonian State Art Institute caps, climbing on the wooden toys and spontaneously painting them in bright yellow, red and green. Initiated by artist and designer Andres Tolts who had his studio in the neighborhood, the event was sanctioned by the local municipal housing committee (who also provided the colours) as a 'renewal' campaign by young artists.

anonymous courtyards and wooden dwellings – to 'modestly supplement them [---] with beautiful vibrant colours' and to use the blank walls of industrial structures 'as exhibition spaces – [filling] them with huge posters and images'.[47]

The initiators and participants in these events – Andres Tolts, Ando Keskküla, and also Künnapu and Lapin – had from the late 1960s been involved in a series of happenings that combined their interest in pop-art and search for new artistic means with a rebellious youth culture. Events undertaken by the group SOUP 69 included several acts of destruction of symbolic objects (wrecking and dismembering a mannequin, demolition of a piano), mischievous interventions (reading vulgar poetry and throwing around paper at a dance party of a youth organisation seminar) and an infamous happening in autumn 1969, at the seaside in Tallinn, which involved tearing up (news)papers and throwing them into air and ended in the arrest of most of the participants. If, in these events, the political critique of society was an indirect one, it manifested a more general desire to position oneself in contrast with society.[48] Mari Laanemets has indicated in her research that the happenings of the SOUP 69 group, by discarding the repressive compartmentalisation of everyday life and the technocratic system, were intended to undercut the dominant world-view of the time; the happenings sought an alternative contact with and knowledge of the surrounding reality.[49] Ando Keskküla has remarked retrospectively that the happenings remained the insider games of a small group of friends and did not really enter the public sphere: '[the] games were played among an intimate group, where the spirit was similar in any case and its repetitious demonstration rather useless'.[50] However, writing in 1977, Leonhard Lapin regarded the practice of happenings as carried out in order to bring art into closer contact with its public. According to Lapin, 'picture-making' was, for the public of the 1970s, an incomprehensible bohemianism and there was a 'latent social need' for happenings: 'people need a new kind of relationship to art'.[51] A few years earlier, in a piece on the machine age and art, Lapin had pointed to the technological influence on the viewer such that 'a child who is born in the 1970s grows up inside a speeding car and before a background of pulsating television screens'.[52]

From this perspective we may see the changed relationship with the public to be further studied in Runge's project, taking into consideration the means of synaesthesia

47 V. Künnapu, J. Viiding, Ettepanek. – Sirp ja Vasar 1 September 1972, p. 9. For English translation of the text see Environment, Projects, Concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972–1985, p. 131.

48 E. Epner, Ära pane, isa! – Teatrielu 2003. Eds. A. Saro, S. Karja. Tallinn: Eesti Teatriliit, 2004, p. 261.

49 M. Laanemets, *Happening*'id ja disain – visioon kunsti ja elu terviklikkusest. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 2010, vol. 19 (1/2), p. 13.

50 Keskküla 2004, quoted in E. Epner, Ära pane, isa!, p. 264.

51 L. Lapin, Häppening Eestimaal. – L. Lapin, Valimik artikleid ja ettekandeid kunstist 1967–1977. Manuscript in Leonhard Lapin's archive. Tallinn: 1977, p. 14.

52 L. Lapin, Masinaajastu ja kunst. – Kultuur ja Elu 1973, no. 9, p. 56. Hasso Krull, in an analysis of Juhan Viiding's poems of the 1970s, has pointed to his attempt to produce in written form an analogy with televisual effects that would 'be mosaic and create in-depth involvement' and would thus neutralise dominant ideological messages. Krull refers to Marshall McLuhan's understanding of the TV image that demands participation of the whole being similarly to the sense of touch. McLuhan saw a break in the perceptual mode among a generation that had for a decade experienced TV, after which the traditional ways of visual engagement seemed 'not only unreal but irrelevant, and not only irrelevant but anemic'. Krull refers to the arrival of television in Estonia in 1955 and to a cultural break 'that ideological force and political closure restrained only very weakly. One could even say that the influence moved in the opposite direction: all 'distant visual goals' of the dominant ideology started to seem unreal and unimportant, even anemic.' See H. Krull, Lapsena televisioonis. – Vikerkaar 2008, no. 10/11, p. 127.

and the potential provided by the formal means of the new media for producing an environment with a new kind of involvement. Furthermore, the idea of bringing art to the streets by redefining the surroundings with the aid of polychomy implies an aspiration to respond to the popular youth culture of the period. The names 'Bowie' and 'Zappa' displayed on the sides of the modular structures leave no doubt what kind of music was intended to be played inside the personalised centres (fig. 3). Likewise, in their call for a 'seemingly reckless campaign of colour' in *Sirp ja Vasar*, Künnapu and Viiding refer to a 'giant portrait of a favourite musician' that could be painted on to the factory walls, thus implying an association with rock music culture.[53] In rethinking the production of these artists-architects-designers of the early 1970s in relation to the ways in which they sought to address a new kind of viewer and the city as an informational environment, we should also consider, among others, Lapin's 'architectons' (1975) in front of the *Kuldne Kodu* housing cooperative in Pärnu, Sirje Runge's playgrounds for the Pärnu KEK kindergarten (1977; fig. 4), in the vicinity of that same housing complex, and Lapin's monument to Tallinn (1976), where the constructivist form was combined with new technological means and 'unrepeatable spatial situations were regulated by a computer'.[54]

What kind of viewer was imagined by these artists, and how was he/she positioned vis a vis the Soviet system? Did this offer an alternative to the dominant position and, if so, then how? In responding to these issues, I will turn first to a popular discussion in the social theory of the period that was driven by the transposition of cybernetic theories to the social field and launched against the dominant position of bureaucracy in society, and then to the parallels and evidence for the described position in art historical literature.

53 It is interesting that while Keskküla contrasted design as popular art with the 'bad taste' of kitsch objects, Künnapu and Viiding saw the public colour campaign as an alternative to the medium-specific applied art practices that were oriented to producing individual consumer objects: 'In the time it takes to produce a couple of leather bookmarks or little boxes we could paint half of the "Kommunaar" shoe factory in stripes. If stripes become boring, well then, with the energy of just ten bookmarks we could paint over them with a giant portrait of a favourite musician.' – V. Künnapu, J. Viiding, Ettepanek, p. 9.

54 See Environment, Projects, Concepts: Architects of the Tallinn School 1972–1985, p. 173.

Gustav Naan – 'Power and Mind'

In the December 1969 issue of influential literary journal *Looming*, astrophysicist and academician Gustav Naan published his article 'Power and Mind: Bureaucracy and Intelligentsia in Contemporary Bourgeois Society'. In the article, Naan argued in favour of freedom of speech for the intellectual elite and that independent critique was necessary as a force for driving society forward.[55] Building upon an analogy between cybernetic systems and social systems, he stated that:

> From the cybernetic point of view a society is like a self-regulating system – with negative feedback, or a 'teleological' system – like a football team, biological species or air-defence missile.[56]

In order for society to achieve its goals, it was necessary for there to exist simultaneously a conservative, an operative and a stabilising function. According to that scheme, bureaucracy represented the conservative function. The intelligentsia was to figure out the direction to be taken; its function was 'to precalculate the disposition of a system and target in the future'.[57]

In the same year, Naan had written a foreword to the Estonian translation of Norbert Wiener's *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*.[58] The book was published in a series associated with the journal *Looming*, and gained a wide readership and popularity. Although cybernetics had already been legitimised in the Soviet Union during the late 1950s, its novelty, radically different vocabulary and recent reputation during the Stalin era as a 'bourgeois pseudo-science'[59] lent it an overall social-oppositional character and engendered interest especially among the younger generation of scientists and social theorists. Thus Naan's article also prompted widespread discussion in Estonian society.

In his book, Wiener describes the science of cybernetics as involving the study of the communication mechanisms of different systems, seeing them as constituted by and managed through informational patterns and flows. A potentially radical idea derived from this view of cybernetic management saw no difference between a command given to a human and a command given to a machine – both were conceived as informational systems. Wiener's theory of cybernetics had developed from work with anti-aircraft guns and air-defence systems during World War II, during which time he had studied programs that could predict not only the trajectory and movement of a fighter plane, but could also analyse the behaviour of the pilot. This probability model was conceived by examining how a certain goal-oriented behaviour is achieved. A specific feature of all these so-called teleological systems, was their reliance on negative

55 G. Naan, Võim ja vaim. Bürokraatia ja intelligents tänapäeva kodanlikus ühiskonnas. – Looming 1969, no. 12, pp. 1856–1872, 1875–1878.
56 G. Naan, Võim ja vaim, p. 1860.
57 G. Naan, Võim ja vaim, p. 1861.
58 N. Wiener, Inimolendite inimlik kasutamine. Küberneetika ja ühiskond. Loomingu Raamatukogu 45–47. Tallinn: Perioodika, 1969. Wiener's *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (1948) had earlier been translated as: N. Wiener, Küberneetika ehk juhtimine ja side loomas ning masinas. Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, 1961.
59 See S. Gerovitch, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak, pp. 114–125.

feedback: the pilot corrected his behaviour in response to errors until finally succeeding. This reliance on feedback helped to redefine the notion of information, which was seen as a pattern of organisation that maintains the order or homeostasis of the system, a negative entropy:

> Just as entropy is a measure of disorganization, the information carried by a set of messages is a measure of organization. In fact, it is possible to interpret the information carried by a message as essentially the negative of its entropy, and the negative logarithm of its probability. That is, the more probable the message, the less information it gives. Clichés, for example, are less illuminating than great poems.[60]

It is not difficult to recognise in these 'clichés' an analogy with the Soviet bureaucratic rhetoric whereby the informational content receded in the face of the power of the ritual. Such mindless repetitions became, according to the cybernetic gloss, noise rather than information.[61] As Naan put it, bureaucracy was a circle where information died out.[62] The bureaucratic model of information represented a top-down system, and the psychologic defence mechanisms of bureaucrats tended to beautify the reality. In order to govern the system efficiently one also needed information that came from without. This was to be the role of the intelligentsia, who were required to figure out the future direction of society ('...one has to precalculate the disposition of system and target in the future'[63]). The intelligentsia's function was to tell the society what it did not want to hear,[64] as Naan said, and that is why it was not to be subordinated to bureaucracy and needed its independence. However, according to this ideal model of society 'as a self-regulating system' it was to be the constant balanced conflict between these two 'strata' that kept the society on the right track.[65]

In a recent commentary on Naan's essay, political scientist Rein Ruutsoo argued that Naan had in fact misread Wiener, and that the aim of adopting the principles of cybernetic management and negative feedback for social organisation served to make the party bureaucracy stronger and even more centralised.[66] For Ruutsoo, the fact that on the cover of Wiener's translation the title was changed from *Human Use of Human Beings* to *Cybernetics and Society*, demonstrated that the humanistic dimension and ethical content of the book was pushed to the background and the main aim of cybernetics

60 N. Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings, p. 31.
61 See N. K. Hayles, How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, p. 104.
62 G. Naan, Võim ja vaim, p. 1875.
63 G. Naan, Võim ja vaim, p. 1861.
64 G. Naan, Võim ja vaim, p. 1861.
65 G. Naan, Võim ja vaim, p. 1872.
66 R. Ruutsoo, Võimu vaimust ja vaimu võimust. – Riigikogu Toimetised 2002, no. 5, http://www.riigikogu.ee/rito/index.php?id=11880 (accessed 20 January 2011).

was to maintain the system's efficiency: 'The book was placed in the framework of scientistic thinking characteristic of the Soviet system',[67] argued Ruutsoo.[68]

This interpretation is not so far-fetched considering that Wiener's aim with cybernetics was to control probability[69] and thus, if adopted in the Soviet Union, cybernetic control could have lead to even stronger centralised power.[70] On the other hand, cybernetic systems themselves (including society) were envisioned as flexible and self-regulating, thus conveying a powerful anti-authoritarian message. According to Ruutsoo:

> The cybernetic approach offered the possibility of seeing science from a meta-perspective and the only correct conclusion from that viewpoint was that in the world-view built upon self-regulation there was no place for the soviet-type fundamentalist social sciences.[71]

This is the two-way interpretation of Naan: as a call for freedom of speech and autonomy of the subject or as a recipe for more efficient state control, however diffuse (Ruutsoo's interpretation).

But this duality of freedom of speech versus state control hides a more fundamental tension inherent already in Wiener's theories. As pointed out earlier, one of the most radical aspects of cybernetics was that, from the viewpoint of communication, there was no difference between a message sent to a human or to a machine. As N. Katherine Hayles has pointed out, Wiener's writings reveal an uneasiness that its own conclusions about the boundary disruptions of the human being could get out of hand[72] – it comes close to what today we might call the 'deconstruction' of the liberal-humanist individual subject. On the one hand he imagined ways of equating machines with humans, while on the other hand he attempted in his book to present cybernetics as something that would reinforce the human as coherent rational self. This is the reading corresponding to the views of Thaw period reformists who saw cybernetics, rather than dissolving subjectivity, as a way of reinforcing its autonomy – directed towards

67 R. Ruutsoo, Võimu vaimust ja vaimu võimust.
68 The changed title appeared already in the Russian translation of Wiener's book. See: Н. Винер, Кибернетика и общество. Москва: Издательство иностранной литературы, 1958. In Estonian version the changed title appeared only on the cover, whereas on the title page it was the same as in English.
69 N. K. Hayles, How We Became Posthuman, p. 88.
70 A leading populariser of new technologies in that period, Ustus Agur writes in a popular magazine about computers becoming everyday domestic items: 'An all-state computer network will be created, that everyone can join into and keep in its computers his budget, make calculations and transactions ... The all-state network of centres for computing has in the Soviet Union one other, a more broad and general assignment. It is not only that everyone who wants could join this network; we have to build a common informational network that would encompass all organisations and institutions – initially under one ministry, later on the scale of the whole national economy. This kind of network would then become an incredibly powerful tool of control (management).' – U. Agur, Raal igasse kodusse!? – Horisont 1971, no. 6, p. 14. But this kind of network would have also centralised power and become an enormously efficient mechanism of domination.
71 R. Ruutsoo, Võimu vaimust ja vaimu võimust.
72 N. K. Hayles, How We Became Posthuman, p. 85.

the realisation of its 'interior power' and standing against the oppressive outside.[73] Of course, on this interpretation, a lot was at stake; there was not only the fear of a repressive public intervening in the private, but also of the threat posed by the adoption of cybernetic theories by the bureaucratic establishment – the networked computer thereby becoming a powerful means of control. This autonomous subject, positioning its 'inner freedom' in contrast to the oppressive outside, also forms the basis of narrations of unofficial art and artists in the Soviet period.[74] On the other hand, the redefinition of the information process as something that connected human sense organs (as receivers) and the nervous system (as processor) to the environment, combined with the interpretation of new technologies as extensions of the human into their surroundings, enabled the designers and artists of the early 1970s to view subjectivity as susceptible to forces from the outside – emerging now through networks and systems rather than secluded places. For designers engaged in modelling the city in its totality, Wiener's emphasis on the influence of contemporary information processes in different fields of life and McLuhan's statements about the effect of technologies on human behaviour became a stimulus to expand their practices into the redefined informational environment including subjectivity itself. Runge's structures, calling for engagement in games or listening to the music in public, and Keskküla's theories on viewers being integrated with circuits of information, may be better understood bearing in mind the context of this new subjectivity. In this way, the dialectic of autonomous interior versus oppressive exterior was redefined, thereby imagining different models of liberation and different ways to resist the dominant lifestyle. These works also countered the dominant tradition of painting – 'artist-centred, lyrical, using traditional techniques and warm soft hues';[75] and by imagining a human augmented by technology and the flow of information, they also extended beyond the usual field of design discourse which aimed to humanise society.

'Art for all'

The source that Runge referenced most frequently in the text accompanying her diploma work was Pierre Restany's *White Book*, published in Milan in 1969 as *Livre blanc – objet blanc*, a text that combined technological changes with a call to environmentally

73 Furthermore, for the emerging Tartu school of semiotics that took up the analogy of cybernetics in the late 1950s – early 1960s, the notion of feedback circuit between the system and its environment overruled the dominant notion of 'freedom as the recognition of necessity'. A system that corrected its behavior from the feedback was not subjected to the environment but viewed as an autonomous one: 'In this way a development means foremost a realisation of the intra-systemic potential and only secondarily adaptation to the exterior conditions…', wrote Mikhail Lotman. Freedom was comprehended as a self-realisation of 'interior powers' and not acknowledging of exterior pressures. See M. Lotman, Struktuur ja vabadus. Märkmeid Tartu semiootikakoolkonna filosoofilistest alustest. – Akadeemia 1996, no. 9, p. 1799.

74 For an example of this kind of take on the interior standing against the outside see e.g. Nonconformist Art: The Soviet Experience 1956–1986. Eds. A. Rosenfeld, N. T. Dodge. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995. For the notion of 'inner freedom' see B. Bernstein, Kunstniku vabadusest. – Kunst 1993, no. 2, pp. 29–34.

75 S. Helme, Elevandiluutornist postindustriaalsesse kultuuri. – Tallinn–Moskva 1956–1985. Eds. A. Liivak, L. Lapin. Tallinn: Tallinna Kunstihoone, 1996, p. 166.

encompassing art work.[76] After the events of May 1968, Restany, who from the 1960s onwards had been a promoter of *Nouveau Réalisme*, moved to endorse the interaction of art and technology 'as a way out of the crisis'[77] caused by the rapid succession of social changes and artistic events. His manifesto-like *White Book* was intended primarily to provide guidance for artists to overcome the separation between traditional art forms and embrace new technology, but following the spirit of the student protests he also saw the art of the future as 'total art' and 'art for all'.[78]

For Restany, changes in technology and means of communication had fundamentally changed the concept of art, the way it interacted with the public and the understanding of the artist's role. With growing automatisation and increasing leisure time art was becoming more like collective entertainment in public spaces, rather than comprising singular objects for individual consumption. The function of this kind of experimentation was to activate the viewer, to develop her perceptual skills and to teach how to play. The artist thus 'helps us to live better, feel better, communicate our dreams better'.[79] This art was to overcome the distinctions between different fields of art, combining 'painters and sculptors, urbanists and architects, composers and choreographers, designers and aestheticians, film-makers and poets'.[80] It also encompassed a variety of techniques, including collage and assemblage, spatial urbanism, programmed art, concrete music and phonetic poetry, happenings and audiovisual synthesis – comic strips, cinéma-vérité, total theatre and modern dance – producing a total environment of colour, sound, light and movement.[81] Runge's and Lapin's interest in the new ways of perception and the use of new technology in works of art comes especially close to Restany's position when he writes that 'art-play relies on the new psycho-sensuous dimensions of the perception, sensual experiences adapting to the environment, that we have not previously been accustomed to'.[82]

Restany's goals seemed to lie beyond simply 'humanising technology'. Demonstrating how technology itself changed the nature of art and its interaction with the public, he called for an aesthetic that could be a tool for collective liberation, that would align the forces of production and creation toward the same goal and thus reach a 'dynamic synthesis'. Through such a renewal, the human being would rediscover its real modern face, would become natural again following the end of the era of

76 P. Restany, Livre blanc – objet blanc. Milano: Apollinaire, 1969. It was most probably available to Runge through its Finnish translation: P. Restany, Valkoinen kirja. Porvoo: WSOY, 1970.
77 M. Bortolotti, Restany: Critic of Modernity. – Pierre Restany. The critic that was an artist. Il Critico Come Artista. Ed. S. Casciani, Milano: Editoriale Domus, 2004.
78 Significantly for the Soviet context, Restany tied the revolts of 1968 in Paris as well as in Prague – based politically on different grounds – together by the age of the protesters, implying that it was the same generation throughout the world who had been responsible for raising the issues of social critique, i.e. people between eighteen and twenty-five. Runge, born in 1950, and Lapin, born in 1947, as well as their fellow artists, all belonged to the same generation, making it easy for them to relate to the worldwide protests and see themselves as subject to Restany's call. But there were other points in Restany's book that reverberate with the issues raised by Lapin and Runge in their texts, including the negation of art as beautiful consumer items, considering art's function to be communication and regarding collaboration with science and technology as fundamental for the redefinition of the art of the future.
79 P. Restany, Valkoinen kirja, p. 57.
80 P. Restany, Valkoinen kirja, p. 33.
81 P. Restany, Valkoinen kirja, p. 33.
82 P. Restany, Valkoinen kirja, pp. 33–34.

alienation.[83] At the end of his book, Restany gives a vivid description of art as a form of public entertainment that encompasses the total environment:

> Art descends to the streets. Museums become centres of information and production. Academies become laboratories. Monuments and fetish-ruins that are meant to be eternal will overcome multiple formal changes. Interplanetary space is the place for the festivities. If we reject this enormous hope that is within our reach today and if we predict that the excessive mechanisation will lead to the destruction of our culture, we will empty out the freedom of action, creation, thinking and seeing and deny by that the human.[84]

Leonhard Lapin, speaking in December 1975 at a joint symposium of artists and scientists in the institute of microbiology at Harku, ended his text on 'Objective art' by quoting that same passage of Restany's book.[85] Lapin's manifesto-like speech commented on what he considered to be the progressive art of the period, bringing together under this label a range of practitioners, from Futurists to conceptualists, describing the art of the future as becoming part of the industrially-manufactured environment and employing multimedia and electronics as its specific means of expression.[86] The speech was to function as the theoretical context for the non-institutional exhibition *Event Harku '75. Objects, Concepts*, that had opened a week earlier and included, among other things, a geometric-abstractionist *Altar* by Sirje Runge, kinetic and audiovisual objects by artist Kaarel Kurismaa and a series of drawings *Woman-Machine* and *Machine-Medium* by Lapin himself. As Mari Laanemets points out, both Lapin's speech and the exhibition itself demonstrated an attempt to redefine art and merge it with the new technological reality of the era, understanding art's role more as organising the environment in its totality rather than adding singular objects to it.[87]

Restany's neutral stance towards the new consumer society was criticised by his left-leaning contemporaries in Western Europe, seeing his views of 'technological integration' as a way to make the subject compatible with the institutional establishment and more broadly, with its historical circumstances.[88] If similar critique could be transposed to the Soviet context – that the rhetoric of adapting the user to the reality

83 P. Restany, Valkoinen kirja, p. 71.
84 P. Restany, Valkoinen kirja, p. 72.
85 See L. Lapin, Objektiivne kunst. – L. Lapin, Kaks kunsti. Valimik ettekandeid ja artikleid kunstist ning ehituskunstist 1971–1995. Tallinn: Kunst, 1997, p. 58. Interestingly, Lapin does not reference this quote (although he references many others) and Restany is never mentioned in his text.
86 See M. Laanemets, Kunst kunsti vastu. Kunstniku rolli ja positsiooni ümbermõtestamise katsest eesti kunstis 1970. aastatel. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture 2011, vol. 20 (1/2), pp. 59–91.
87 M. Laanemets, Kunst kunsti vastu. Kunstniku rolli ja positsiooni ümbermõtestamise katsest eesti kunstis 1970. aastatel, pp. 66–67.
88 For several prominent Western critics Restany's utterances in *Livre blanc* have symbolised the complicity of neo-avant-garde art with the market and the dominant institutions. See M. Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia. Design and Capitalist Development. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976, p. 139. (He is referring to Restany's article 'Le Livre blanc de l'art total; pour une esthetique prospective' – Domus 1968, no. 262.) Benjamin Buchloh's verdict is equally dismissive, seeing Restany's theory as 'mindless acceptance … in which the neo-avant-garde is enthusiastically assigned the role of a cultural claque in the celebration of the new techno-scientific society of consumption, spectacle and control' (L. Busbea, Topologies: The Urban Utopia in France, 1960–1970. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007, pp. 103–104). In his analysis from 1981, on the art of the 1970s, Estonian art critic Jaak Kangilaski relied on Restany's *White Book*, denouncing his technological fetishism but finding the program of 'total art' to contain several interesting and promising ideas. See J. Kangilaski, 70. aastate lääne kunst. – Kunst 1981, no. 1, pp. 46–51.

of the new technological era involved preparing for the 'New Communist Man'[89] – then I would argue for a different relation between the subjection and resistance, the inside and outside, of society: for the artists and designers under scrutiny here, the emphasis on communication, networks and mobility worked to contest the regulated and rigid compartmentalisation of bureaucratic society. We may then see that Restany's text reverberates with the desires of the young generation, with the critique of the centralised state, its institutions and the traditions they upheld, and with the criticism of what has been called the 'disciplinary' regime.[90]

In North-America and Western Europe, changes in industrial society and the growth of welfare during the 1960s and 1970s restructured the principles of production and consumption, changing everyday life and values and bringing along a new rhetoric of mobility, flexibility, knowledge and communication. In the Soviet Union, modernisation and Thaw reformism had similarly changed the forms of everyday life, re-orchestrated work and leisure and, most importantly, generated a new space for discussion that was then used to demand greater freedom. Although Thaw reforms concerning civil society were largely withdrawn during the Brezhnev period, the anti-hierarchical struggles and 'resistance to the bureaucratic dictatorship' did not disappear and became gradually more difficult for the ruling regime to contain. In their analysis of the late Soviet system, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri put it this way:

> The heavy bureaucracy of the Soviet state, inherited from a long period of intense modernization, placed Soviet power in an impossible position when it had to react to the new demands and desires that globally emerging subjectivities expressed, first within the process of modernization and then at its outer limits.[91]

Despite growing dissatisfaction, especially among the younger generation, efforts to merely 'correct' the course of the bureaucracy – as in Naan's address in the late 1960s – were already neglected by the mid-1970s. From this perspective, what has otherwise been seen as a retreat during that period toward the private sphere and toward interest in various esoteric practices, national roots and living *вне*,[92] may now be interpreted as a sign – albeit a negative one – of the resistance of this changed subjectivity to being closed out from social discussions and confined to 'the structures of … a socialist management of capital that no longer made any sense'.[93] In Hardt and Negri's opinion, it was in the realm of the subject that the Cold War power conflicts between East and West were most intensely enacted, as the Soviet inability to recognise the subject's transformation led to rapidly decreasing labour productivity and economic

89 S. Gerovitch, The Cybernetics Scare and the Origins of the Internet. – Baltic Worlds 2009, no. 1, p. 35.
90 See G. Deleuze, Postscript on the Societies of Control. – October 1992, vol. 59, pp. 3–7; M. Hardt, A. Negri, Empire, pp. 272–300.
91 M. Hardt, A. Negri, Empire, p. 277.
92 Alexei Yurchak refers with the term *vnye* – *вне* (outside) to the lack of concern and obliviousness to the Soviet reality. The person who was *vnye* was participating in the society but at the same time ignorant towards it, imagining herself to be elsewhere. The *vnye* milieus included different scientific societies, cafes, the culture of rock music. See A. Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, pp. 126–157.
93 M. Hardt, A. Negri, Empire, p. 279.

stagnation; whereas in the West this new kind of subject was included in its entirety in the reorganised production process in which it played a key role – a process leading to immaterial production and informatisation of production.

From this perspective, regarding the practices of the artists discussed here, with their background in the design and architecture profession, the first half of the 1970s becomes important in two respects. In regarding the environment as an informational realm and studying its possibilities for re-engaging the viewer, it became, in contrast to the withdrawal into the private sphere, a positive moment in addressing the needs of the emerging subjectivity and its demands – for freedom of communication and information, for making popular culture visible in public space and for non-hierarchical social organisation. But it was also a response to the reorganisation of industry, technology and communication systems (chimneys adapted to produce colourful and aromatic fumes in Runge's work demonstrate the way in which the outdated technologies of industrial production could be redeployed for new uses), that prompted questions about the prevailing social and spatial models, about the role of the artist, and led to imagining new alternatives to the bureaucratic-disciplinary socialist country.

5. Noise Environment: Jüri Okas's Reconstructions and Its Public Reception

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Noise Environment: Jüri Okas's *Reconstructions* and Its Public Reception*

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This article looks at Jüri Okas's works on the environment, particularly his series *Reconstructions* (1974–1978) and the exhibition of that series in Tallinn Art Hall in 1976. Okas's position is considered first by comparison with Leonhard Lapin's work on the urban environment. Next, I consider discussions concerning the signification of the city and show that instead of a fixed relationship between places and their meanings, Okas presents the viewer with unstable relationships, deconstructing the urban signifieds. I argue that the reception of Okas's images during the 1980s was influenced by their having been read formally, and find that the references of the images were incompatible with the prevailing forms and symbols which were at that time involved in efforts to construct a coherent national identity. I then interpret Okas's perception of the environment via notions of entropy and noise – concepts applied in information theory, popular throughout the decade. In contrast to the idea of escape, which is often thought to characterise the works of so-called 'unofficial' or 'non-conformist' artists, Okas's interest in the entropic or noisy environment presents a paradigmatic shift in which ambiguity and indeterminacy become understood as characteristic of a maximal state of information.

Introduction

In artist and architect Leonhard Lapin's archive there is a roll of black-and-white negative film, exposed in 1972, which documents Tallinn's surviving architectural heritage from the 1920s and 1930s. It contains images of Kadriorg district and central areas of the city: elegant inner-city villas, facades of middle-class apartment buildings, detailing on the wooden doors and window frames, and geometric art deco railings and ornamentation. These photographs were taken during Lapin's walks around districts of Tallinn which date back to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Lapin's intention during those walks was to record the current state of the architecture

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and to rediscover the architectural value of the buildings. In this he was assisted by his friend Jüri Okas, an architecture student at the time, whose task was to photograph the houses and details according to Lapin's instructions (or, as Okas put it later: 'Lapin needed a follower'[1]). In some of the images we see Lapin himself pointing to a valuable detail or decaying architectural feature. Occasionally, the camera has recorded relatively banal courtyard views – sheds, an obscure concrete structure (a bunker perhaps?), a run-down garage. It is easy to attribute the interest in the latter type of structure to Okas, since similar photographs by Okas had by that time already been published (e.g. in the popular youth magazine *Noorus*).[2] Okas's images made evident his fascination with industrial and everyday motifs, utilising a technique of repetition that demonstrated the ways in which 'film, photography, television, radio, become independent, as if a separate structure' so that we may begin to 'see the world through these structures'[3] – the discourse of technological progress and its impact on everyday life and the arts already having become widely acknowledged. Lapin, on the other hand, had published several articles in the cultural weekly *Sirp ja Vasar* in the early 1970s on the topic of architectural preservation, drawing attention to sites that had so far been left out of the dominant architectural canon (including an orangery and a castle by a self-taught architect from the early 20th century, and examples of art nouveau, early modernism and art deco).[4] Thus, while one may say that both Okas and Lapin were interested in how modernity had unfolded in the urban environment – in early examples of modernist architecture,[5] in the utilitarian infrastructure that accompanied modernity, and in transformed structures of viewing –, there were significant differences between the ways in which these artists engaged with this topic. Put simply, for Lapin it was important to establish a meaningful relationship between the historical urban environment and the canon of architectural history. Okas's works, on the other hand, seem to have been intended to sidestep the canon and were engaged more with the ways in which viewers (including the artist) produced meanings from the urban environment. I will first look briefly at Lapin's interest in the architectural heritage of the 1920s and 1930s and its association with the period of Estonian national independence. For the purposes of this study, Lapin's work is employed as a background to Okas's works – thus, the complexity of other fields of Lapin's practice during this period has been left out from the current article. Given Lapin's activity as a writer, his critical views were well represented in the media of the time and have come retrospectively to represent also those of his companions. Therefore, by differentiating Okas's position from that of Lapin's one may develop a more nuanced understanding of the art of this period.

1 Jüri Okas's communication with the author 4 August 2005.
2 Jüri Okas. 3 fotot. – Noorus 1972, no. 4, pp. 48–51.
3 Jüri Okas. 3 fotot, p. 48. The accompanying text is anonymous, most probably written by one of the magazine's editors.
4 In an article from 1972, written together with Tõnis Vint, Lapin calls for Glehn park in Nõmme, Tallinn to be saved, especially its orangery from the turn of the 19th/20th century. The authors point out the unusual typology of the park, which they see as relating to contemporary interests in architecture (T. Vint, L. Lapin, Erakordne kultuurimälestis hävib! – Sirp ja Vasar 2 June 1972, pp. 8–9).
5 Lapin uses the term *functionalism* to signify the architecture of this period and modernism for 'a cultural phenomenon with a wider influence' of which functionalism is an architectural representation. See L. Lapin, Avangard. Tartu Ülikooli filosoofiateaduskonna vabade kunstide professori Leonhard Lapini loengud 2001. aastal. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2003, p. 105.

Lapin's interest in early 20th century architecture, especially functionalism, had a political motive: it emphasised a connection to the culture of the inter-war period of Estonian independence. In this way, it stood not only against the hegemony of the Soviet state but also against growing consumerism and the associated displacement of memories and values of the period by so-called 'kitsch' and mass-culture. Later, I will turn to consider Okas's series of serigraphs, *Reconstructions*, focusing on the ways in which the environment was represented and rethought in these works. This series was exhibited in an extended form in Okas's first solo show in Tallinn Art Hall gallery in 1976, for which part of the exhibition space was designed as a kind of installation intended to manipulate the viewer's experience of the space and exhibits.[6] I intend to bring the series *Reconstructions* and these manipulations to bear on another way of viewing the environment – the environment as related to architectural monuments and national identity – and to show the difference between Okas's works and the latter discourse. Finally, I will turn to consider the discussions about the notion of entropy, and Okas's interpretation of that notion, in order to offer an alternative reading of the 'irrationalism' of Okas's images. Estonian art-critical discourse has tended to place Okas's idiosyncratic works in the context of the 1970s avant-garde and critical art, framing his work in terms of non-conformity and escape. Moreover, his work has often been described as elitist, inaccessible and non-communicative. However, rather than characterising it as escapist I intend to demonstrate that Okas's engagement with the environment and his manipulation of it in the printed image not only contained potential for dialogue with the viewers of its time but also offered an alternative to the rhetoric of escape.

Leonhard Lapin and Tallinn's visual milieu

After graduating from the architecture department of the State Art Institute of the Estonian SSR in 1971, Leonhard Lapin was until 1974 employed in the State Directorate for Restoration in Tallinn, which dealt with architectural monuments and their preservation. One of Lapin's major works at the Directorate involved an analysis of the built environment of central Tallinn: 'An Overview of the Visual Milieu of Tallinn and Its Importance in the Reconstruction of the Central City' (1974).[7] The project involved the production of photographic documentation – similar to a cataloguing project Lapin had worked on with Jüri Okas in Kadriorg two years earlier – and description of the architecture and built environment of districts surrounding the Old Town with the aim of extrapolating the different areas in relation to their various stylistic details and character. The work was also intended to provide a basis for determining the landmark value of the different areas, which was to be taken into account in future planning and architectural interventions. Thus Lapin identified which of the districts and ensembles would be worth saving for the future and which offered little or no architectural

6 *Reconstructions* was first shown in 1974 at the Estonian State Art Institute in the independent student's exhibition and also in an independent exhibition in Harku in December 1975.
7 Estonian State Archives (ERA), f. T-76, n. 1, s. 1994.

value. Compared to the Directorate's typical work in the Tallinn Old Town this was a new and different kind of research. In its focus on non-traditional landmarks, peripheral areas, industrial zones and working-class suburbs with wooden tenement houses from the turn of the century, it represents a characteristic turn in the architectural profession of the period towards the 19th and early 20th century heritage of modernity. Furthermore, the beginning of the 20th century was found to have contained a potential that had been perverted in the post-war era through the 'soulless' industrialisation of building production and commercial interests.[8]

In the text accompanying the project Lapin revealed a desire for architects to take control and manage the environment. He lamented the verdure that had outgrown its intended space due to neglect, the courtyard structures that evolved independently without the participation of the architect and the chaotic planning of the harbour area: 'It lacks the systemic regulation of functions needed for an efficiently functioning harbour, nor is there an architecturally legible transfer from the sea to the city'.[9] Although this call to abolish the holes, disjunctions, irregularities and spontaneous additions appears similar to attempts to unify the city under a master plan – a general approach to urban planning typical of the dominant modernism of the period – Lapin's standpoint nonetheless differed from the Socialist-modernist subjection of the environment to a single regulating idea or principle. Lapin had demonstrated that the architectural face of the city consisted of many layers, periods and qualities, and he clearly celebrated the architectural plurality that had been neglected by official histories, seeing his work as a way of bringing this complex environment back into official representations and the public consciousness; a plurality which, however, is to be surveyed from the hierarchical professional perspective of an architect tasked with overseeing the changes and processes in the city.

On the basis of research done in the Directorate, Lapin published in autumn 1974 a series of articles on the 'architectural image' of Tallinn in Estonia's leading cultural newspaper *Sirp ja Vasar*. His classifications followed a traditional history of styles, labelling early 20th century buildings as historicist, neo-gothic, art nouveau etc. Underlying this apparently neutral de-politicising art-historical categorisation there occasionally stood arguments for the priority of local materials and detailing instead of the anonymous neoclassical architectural types imposed on Tallinn during the Russian empire period by St Petersburg and Moscow: 'One should emphasise the good building quality of the historicist architecture of Tallinn, its rich detailing and the relationship of the structures to the surrounding nature or verdure, compared to which the 19th century military neoclassicism looks dry and boring.'[10] Clearly the value of the built environment was to be determined in correlation with its locality and regional character rather than according to a preconceived typology. Such polarisation refers to the similar situation in Estonia during the period in which Lapin was writing, when the built environment was dominated by standardised system-built housing subject to centrally prescribed norms and regulations. The critique of mass housing,

8 See also L. Lapin, Avangard, p. 113.
9 ERA, f. T-76, n. 1, s. 1994, l. 6–8.
10 L. Lapin, Tallinna ehituskunstilisest ilmest. – Sirp ja Vasar 1 November 1974, p. 9.

its anonymity and homogeneity, which had been growing from late 1960s onwards, often went hand in hand with the emerging interest in national identity, leading to a turn toward the independence period of the 1920s and 1930s and especially to the interpretation of early modernist buildings as being representative of national character.[11] Retrospectively, Lapin has written on the role of functionalism as having been the first national movement in Estonian architecture to have developed a specific language and 'a unique connection to local building tradition' and conveying 'a heroic idea of independence, of being a new member of Europe – when one looked not to the East but to the West.'[12] Thus an argument which might be presented in terms of the history of style in a newspaper of the time has later been translated into an argument concerning political history and interpreting modernist architecture as symbolic of independence and freedom.[13]

A more tangible reason for the interest in national heritage was its gradual erasure from the urban environment: the early 1970s was a period when wooden dwellings in inner-city areas were demolished and replaced by industrialised housing. The popular home decoration magazine *Kunst ja Kodu* (*Art and Home*) consciously positioned itself against this practice, published during the mid-1970s a series of articles and photographic essays on the architecture of Tallinn, written by Lapin and with photographs by Okas.[14]

In later writings Lapin has related the emergence of interest in national identity as a countermovement to its disappearance from the material cultural environment. In an interview given in 1993 to the Estonian art magazine *Kunst*, Lapin considered the period from the late 1960s onwards to have been a time when the heritage of the Estonian Republic – or what had survived of it – was being destroyed: information arriving from the West, the scarce but still present consumer items and technical innovations, all contributed to shifting attention away from the fact of Soviet occupation and, moreover, to naturalising its strange hybridity.

> Independence-era furniture was thrown out in a massive scale, modernist furniture appeared in rooms. [---] All society rushed to the future with full speed – this was the period of Finnish saunas and Caucasian shashlyk, everyone bought

11 From today's viewpoint it is hard to understand the extraordinariness of Lapin's articles in the context of the discussions of the built environment in the 1970s, yet a discussion at the newspaper *Sirp ja Vasar*'s editorial board at the end of 1974 reveals the uneasyness that his writings produced. Considered for the newspaper's annual award for the same series of writing, his work was strongly objected by the then head of the Artists's Union Ilmar Torn and Architects's Union Mart Port. The latter argues that his thoughts are copied from foreign magazines and artificially applied to local conditions, 'not taking into account the standpoints of Soviet architectural theory.' In his opinion the piece does not give an objective account of the architecture of Tallinn (*Sirp and Vasar* Editorial Board meeting 20. December 1974. – ERA, f. R-1695, n. 2, s. 1780a).

12 L. Lapin, Avangard, p. 107.

13 L. Lapin, Avangard, p. 107. In another chapter in the book he writes that architects of the Tallinn School 'turned to functionalism as a style of building that symbolised independence, taking their examples from the white houses of the 1930s. Functionalist architecture was for us a symbol of the golden Estonian independence period and this desire was initially of emotional value, later joined by purely professional aspirations, like getting to know the architectural history of the whole world.' – L. Lapin, Avangard, p. 132.

14 In 'Meie tänav, alev, linn' ('Our street, village, city') Lapin celebrates the hybrid and the multiple in cities, 'historical layering and strange, often illogical or nonorganic relationships give cities their face and character'. L. Lapin, Meie tänav, alev, linn. Romantism ja ratsionalism II. – Kunst ja Kodu 1974, no. 1, p. 9.

> new light-coloured furniture, new comfortable cars, refrigerators, washing-machines, TV-sets, radios, tape-recorders, jeans.[15]

For Lapin political history is thus clearly related to the everyday environment in the domestic sphere and his work was motivated by fear of surviving signs of the independence period being replaced by a Soviet version of consumer society – a society in which the signs of the Estonian era still existed but only in the form of simulacra – as kitsch – so that authenticity has been swallowed up by homogenising mass-production.

Lapin's own career as an artist later during the 1970s presented a radical response to those processes in society: he privileged art that actively intervened in everyday life and granted the artist an agency in designing the environment.[16] As Epp Lankots has recently pointed out, Lapin's interest in the history of the pre-war avant-garde and his particular way of history writing – what she calls 'living history' – projected contemporary issues onto the past and also served to sustain his practices as a contemporary artist.[17]

Jüri Okas: from montages to *Reconstructions*

Jüri Okas graduated from the architecture department at the State Art Institute in 1974, and was employed in the Collective Farm Construction Office until 1989, working in the department of industrial constructions designing boiler houses, gas stations, car repair workshops for collective farms. At the same time he was active as an artist, working in the photography and printmaking, and participating in happenings with his friends. From 1974 to 1978 Okas worked on a series of prints he called *Reconstructions*. The series was based on photographs taken in the urban environment of Tallinn and its environs, which he had been documenting since the beginning of his studies at the architecture department in the early 1970s. He photographed everyday urban scenes and utilitarian (architectural) objects that otherwise tended to escape attention – urban wastelands and peripheries, neglected courtyards and unusual facades of houses. Often engaged in the same territories as Lapin's aforementioned work, he was, however, fascinated by

15 Pilgud kuldsete kuuekümnendate fassaadi taha. Leonhard Lapiniga vestleb Heie Treier. – Kunst 1993, no. 1, p. 36.

16 See M. Laanemets, Kunst kunsti vastu. Kunstniku rolli ja positsiooni ümbermõtestamise katsest eesti kunstis 1970. aastatel. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 2011, vol. 20 (1/2), pp. 59–91. It is significant that Lapin also proposed in his work on the Tallinn milieu several interventions to improve the environment. One strategy included 'artistic colouring of the wooden dwellings' – an idea proposed by Vilen Künnapu and Juhan Viiding already in 1972. He also suggested that by combining architecture, art and synthetic design, the visual milieu should include up-to-date means of information. 'As the urban environment is in contemporary society a place for the concentration, multiplication and dissemination of information, its development should be seen in relation to art and aesthetics.' Finally, Lapin proposed to add so-called transformative structures to empty spots in the city, which would combine 'communicative functions', including 'information booths, commerce, service and cultural institutions.' (ERA, f. T-76, n. 1, s. 1994, l. 23–24). These latter ideas recur in Lapin's partner Sirje Runge's diploma project a year later. See A. Kurg, Feedback Environment: Rethinking Art and Design Practices in Tallinn During the Early 1970s. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 2011, vol. 20 (1/2), pp. 38–40.

17 E. Lankots, History Appropriating Contemporary Concerns: Leonhard Lapin's Architectural History and Mythical Thinking. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 2010, vol. 19 (3/4), pp. 122–125. This led him also to embrace other examples, primarily the Russian avant-garde of the 1920s, as his references for critical practice. See also H. Liivrand, Leonhard Lapin Kadriorus. – Kunst 1989, no. 1, p. 10.

the kind of things that Lapin would have considered superfluous, disturbing or excessive to the architectural order of the milieu and architectural-historical character of the neighbourhood.

In *Reconstructions*, Okas's black-and-white photographs were overlaid with structures of geometric lines, rectangles, and sometimes letters and signs that, depending on the underlying contrasting image, were either black or white, either seemingly modifying the photographic situation or overlapping with it. Often the lines converged at a certain point in the picture to form a single-point perspectival grid on the photo. Some works in the series combined montage images of various architectural objects (Stalinist buildings next to industrialised housing) with regularly-placed heaps of soil or gravel in front of them (*Reconstruction L1*, *Reconstruction KS*), the additional geometric figures adding to the overall complexity of the image. The geometric additions were first drawn onto the photograph with ink or pasted on using other materials (e.g. Letraset) as montage and then taken to print. In this way the author emphasised his distance from the dominant craft tradition in printmaking and, due their technical similarities, preferred to call them 'newspaper photographs'.[18] The final result thus merged the original image and the added signs into one continuous surface of montage marks, whereas the print technique left both with a strong raster, visible on closer inspection. In a text from 1984 Okas himself described *Reconstructions* as 'complicated designs of space, photomontages of spatial fragments, materials, details, placements, where the aim has been to produce a new, multi-layered, irrational (destructive) imaginary space.'[19] A few years later he made almost identical claims: 'I took photographs of the urban space, dispersed these documents into pieces and started to compose the elements. My aim was to create a new, multi-layered and irrational space.'[20]

Similarly, the illusory and irrational aspect of his works was often emphasised by art criticism and commentaries. In one of the first articles on *Reconstructions*, fellow architect Vilen Künnapu described Okas's procedures as 'cutting up the space, moving its elements around, thus producing new illusory spaces, intertwining the space in every which way, and creating new perspectives and symbols using graphic elements.'[21] Writing in 1980, Lapin described *Reconstructions* as projects for irrational space.[22] Unlike much of the later art critical discourse from the 1980s that readily describes the series in terms of merely formal manipulations, earlier writers, especially Künnapu, also drew attention to the actual sites represented in *Reconstructions* (Künnapu mentions Pelgulinna hospital, Stroomi beach, dwelling houses by the first Estonian architect Karl Burman)[23] and to their significance: they do not belong with the often-reproduced images of the Old Town, but represent the city's 'nearest past and its

18 M.-T. Kivirinta, Jüri Okas on aristokraatti ja minimalisti. – Helsinkin Sanomat 16 June 1987.
19 J. Lintinen, Jüri Okas – rakenteita, tapahtumia, visioita. – Taide 1984, no. 4, p. 49.
20 M.-T. Kivirinta, Jüri Okas on aristokraatti ja minimalisti.
21 V. Künnapu, Jüri Okase keskkonnakunst. – Sirp ja Vasar 26 March 1976, p. 9.
22 L. Lapin, Kunstisalongis. – Sirp ja Vasar 11 July 1980, p. 13.
23 The hospital and the beach are both located in the peripheral areas of Tallinn, they both also carry meaning in the personal geography of Okas who grew up and lived at the time of producing the works in the vicinity in Pelgulinn, a neighbourhood with turn of the century wooden working-class housing. Karl Burman's works, representing art nouveau and national romantic architecture from the first decades of the 20th century, were actively rediscovered in the 1970s and well-known in the architectural circles.

industrial (more precisely small-industrial) milieu.'[24] Later commentaries have tended to abstract the sites from their original meaning and concentrated on the relationship between the photographic image and the added structures or grids.[25] Although Sirje Helme in her texts mentions Vääna beach and Pelgulinn as meaningful sites for Okas, and describes him as being strongly connected to his context;[26] she also emphasises that there is nothing 'narrative' about his works and prefers to reflect on the dualism between 'real and pictorial' space, where neither side is privileged and there appears a tension that remains unsolved.[27] Similarly, in 1988, Tamara Luuk points to 'a constant and equal presence of mutually contradictory assemblages (*kooslus*) in Jüri Okas's art.'[28] This devotion to the formal tension in Okas's works leads the critics further to assume a complex and non-communicative relation to the public. Admitting that the graphic lines drawn on the surface of photographic images are not symbolic or utopian, Eha Komissarov sees the works as research into social reality with

> a position taken against the credibility of that reality, in spite of the fact that the irrationality of the real makes its credibility nearly impossible to … question. The contact with the viewer becomes … possible based on the same social experience, and therefore a conceptual artwork virtually fails.[29]

In these texts the illusory and irrational character of the represented spaces becomes closely associated with a refusal or distancing from reality, a feature that later was emphasised in the discourse of non-conformist and unofficial art that preferred to see the alternative art of the late-Soviet period as that of 'stepping aside' and living in a space of one's own.[30] This also presupposed a distancing from the viewer, thus ruling out any possibility of a 'common social experience', as Komissarov put it.

Regarding the case of Okas's major exhibition at the State Art Museum of the Estonian SSR in Kadriorg palace in 1987, which included also works from the previous decade, all three of the abovementioned texts written in the late-1980s attempted to cope with the changes occurring in the art of the period – the postmodernist return to referentiality, its populist pastiche and the reinstatement of traditional art genres and techniques. Thus all three authors underlined Okas's disconnection from those tendencies, preferring instead to position him as the last of the avant-garde[31]

24 V. Künnapu, Jüri Okase keskkonnakunst, p. 9.
25 An exception is a Finnish critic Marketta Seppälä, who takes Okas's works as a metaphor for the 'localised Tallin reality in which the artist has worked as an architect and artist since the mid-1970s.' She is also the only one to note the 'ironic playfulness' that characterises Okas's working process. See M. Seppälä, Reconstructed Space. – Okas: installaatio 9. Pori: Pori Art Museum, 1991, p. 10.
26 S. Helme, Sanomia niille jotka tietävät. Tallinnalaisen Jüri Okasin taide lähikuvassa. – Taide 1988, no. 6, p. 13.
27 S. Helme, Jüri Okas. [Catalogue.] Tallinn: ENSV Riiklik Kunstimuuseum, 1987, p. 6. Vääna beach near Tallinn, where Okas's closest friend at the time, architect Jaan Ollik, had a family summer-house, was a site for many of Okas's later land-art works from the end of 1970s, done with sand at the edge of the water. The works have been documented in photographs and were often constructed with a photographic image in mind.
28 T. Luuk, Kadriorg. Sügis 1987. – Vikerkaar 1988, no. 7, p. 46.
29 E. Komissarov, Apoloogiline Jüri Okas. – Kunst 1988, no. 2 (72), p. 22.
30 See: S. Helme, Space. Conflict and Harmony. Henn Roode's abstract works. – Henn Roode. Modernist Despite Fate. Newspaper accompanying Henn Roode's exhibition, Tallinn: Kumu Art Museum, 2007, p. 1.
31 As Luuk puts it: 'There are no other personalities in current Estonian art who in such an uncompromising way, so unidirectionally, would hold on to the modernist avant-garde.' – T. Luuk, Kadriorg. Sügis 1987, p. 44.

(an assumption based on stylistic rather than ideological features) and seeing him as being in opposition to populism and thus 'elitist' – a category widely used non-pejoratively at that time. This also suggested that Okas was hostile towards the public and its expectations, and that his artistic approach was deliberately made incomprehensible to a wider audience: Eha Komissarov has declared of the period that 'art was done … in the name of art itself'[32]; Sirje Helme called her article on Okas's works 'Messages for those who know'[33]; and finally Luuk designated him, because of his impenetrability to the public, as a martyr who saw the hopelessness of his undertaking in the new postmodern context, yet still continued.[34]

However, I propose that *Reconstructions* should not only be viewed through a formal interpretation, as a straightforward projection of the artist's hermetic world, but they could also be read referentially, as containing several potential points of dialogue with the audience. Among these points of dialogue are the represented sites, as mentioned by Künnapu, which may be interpreted as dealing with recent history and the traces of industrialisation, and also the humour and irony relating to some of the signs and gestures in *Reconstructions*. The subject matter of each of the works in the series was indicated in the titles by the initials appended to the word 'reconstruction'. Thus *SR* refers to Stroomi beach (in Estonian: 'Stroomi rand'), *R* to railway ('raudtee') and *B* to bus ('buss'). There are exceptions: for what appear to be the first four works in the series Okas made a self-referential gesture using the letters of his own family name. Listing these works in an exhibition proposal in 1976 for Tallinn Art Hall gallery, he placed those four titles to the top of the list, one above the other, so that vertically the initials would spell 'OKAS'.[35] The represented sites often comprised the personal urban geography of the artist and his friends, a geography discovered in their group walks and recovered in artworks and writings as a counterpoint to the dominant portrayal of Tallinn.[36]

The name 'reconstruction' itself was rather unusual in the context of art of the period[37] and has prompted speculation about its meaning – e.g. that it refers to projects of potential installations in urban space, or to the reconstruction of the emotional qualities of spaces.[38] Like 'montage', the word strongly connotes processes of building or architectural construction and from that perspective it is significant that Okas's 1974

32 E. Komissarov, Apoloogiline Jüri Okas, p. 22.
33 S. Helme, Sanomia niille jotka tietävät, pp. 12–16.
34 T. Luuk, Kadriorg. Sügis 1987, p. 47.
35 ERA, f. R-1954, n. 2, s 339, l. 22–24.
36 See: M. Laanemets, Pilk sotsialistliku linna tühermaadele ja tagahoovidesse: *happening*'id, mängud ja jalutuskäigud Tallinnas 1970. aastatel. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 2005, vol. 14 (4), pp. 164–165.
37 The word was widespread in the official context however, featuring in slogans calling to 'reconstruct the production' or 'reconstruct agriculture'. In this context it referred to upgrading industry or taking it to a more advanced level. Being similar to terms like 'mechanisation' and 'industrialisation' it was associated with progress, goal-oriented movement, and industrial expansion. See: Nõukogude Eesti. Entsüklopeediline teatmeteos. Ed. G. Naan. Tallinn: Valgus, 1975, pp. 104–108.
38 V. Künnapu, Jüri Okase keskkonnakunst, p. 9.

diploma work at the State Art Institute was indeed an architectural reconstruction, a conversion of a cellulose factory in Tallinn into a cultural centre.[39]

In *Reconstruction O* (1974), which is often reproduced and is presumably one of the first of the series to have been made, a generic Soviet truck (a ZiL carrying a land drill) is shown driving past the Stalinist neoclassical building of Tallinn Technical School of Building and Mechanics (1949). The scene has been overlaid with geometric additions: signs similar to that of a target have been added to the truck's wheels; a number 724 is pasted on the truck's door; the back end of the drilling mechanism features a black Letraset comma or apostrophe; on top of the classical portico of the symmetric school building a complex scaffolding-like structure has been drawn. On closer inspection one sees a real photographic image of scaffolding underneath the added image of scaffolding, thus we are dealing with a scene of a reconstruction of the building's facade. In several places the added scaffolding follows the configuration of the building; but at the building's right it becomes more independent, forming a separate structure above it (perhaps counterbalancing the neon advertisement – 'Keep money in the savings bank' – at the top-left corner of the building itself). At the lower-right corner of the image are two traffic signs: the lower, white one is covered with a black square, whereas the upper one is clearly visible and shows a 'No exit' sign. A 'T' shape similar to that on the signpost has been repeated independently in several places and at a larger scale: in inverted form it slides down from the corner post of the portico while it also lies upside down behind the car. Above the traffic signs a larger 'T' shape has been put together by combining two larger Letraset commas and an inverted L-shape.

Okas's manipulation of the urban situation may also be considered close to the work of Finnish-Swedish conceptual artist Jan-Olof Mallander, whose *Papersculptures in a File* (1972–1974) placed separate letters on selected sites on postcards of Helsinki.[40] In some cases the letters reference or react to their underlying site (a huge N and O in front of the Parliament building); however, in most cases the letters are abstracted or inverted and turned into absurd sculptures similar to surrealist tactics of appropriation and sign manipulation. A similar process seems to be taking place in Okas's works, in which the additions could function formally, as independent material pieces (with Letraset one used ready-made letters as physical objects[41]), signifiers detached from their meaning but they also function referentially, producing alliances and asso-

39 The project itself is lost and is known only partially from reproductions. See A. Kurg, M. Laanemets, Keskkonnad, projektid, kontseptsioonid. Tallinna kooli arhitektid 1972–1985. Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 2008, p. 201. Echoing the rhetoric that often justified post-industrial urban processes Vilen Künnapu wrote in the abovementioned review that 'the project represents a humane idea – take badly smelling cellulose industry out from the city, change the existing communications (pipes, heating, sewage), use the noble limestone walls of the factory … and add to them delightful glass and steel structures.' (V. Künnapu, Jüri Okase keskkonnakunst, p. 9.)

40 Okas claims not to have known Mallander's work, neither has their similarity been pointed out by critics. In 'Apoloogiline Jüri Okas' Eha Komissarov quotes Mallander on conceptual art, but does not draw parallels to the similarity of their pictorial language. See E. Komissarov, Apoloogiline Jüri Okas, p. 22.

41 The company and technique Letraset was devised by British designer John Charles Clifford Davies in 1961 and became a popular product among graphic designers in the second half of 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Graphic designer Ivar Sakk describes the technique like this: 'to a transparent plastic was printed in serigraphy letters with a layer of glue on top of them, so that by rubbing the plastic from the other side the letter stuck to paper or some other surface.' In the early 1970s the company Letraset held several international competitions for new typefaces, the winners of which were subsequently put into production (I. Sakk, Aa kuni Zz. Tüpograafia ülevaatlik ajalugu. Tallinn: Sakk & Sakk, 2011, pp. 375–376).

ciations with the photographic image – altering and alienating them from their initial meaning. Although Okas withholds from presenting direct messages and puns, the effects of his additions can still be read as humorous. They must have appeared surprising to the contemporary viewer – disrupting the meaning of the places and motifs seen on the photographs and prints. In this way, one of the subjects encountered in Okas's *Reconstructions* is the relationship of urban sites to signification, a discourse which accompanied several fundamental changes in Western society from the 1960s onwards.

In a well-known text from 1967, 'Semiology and the Urban' (published in Russian in a widely-read architectural journal *Современная архитектура* in 1970), Roland Barthes examined the ways in which one may go beyond the metaphorical notion of the language of the city to look at how symbols operate in the city from a semiological point of view. For Barthes semiology was not about finding correspondences or devising a catalogue of relations between signifiers and signifieds (as in traditional art history), rather 'we are faced with infinite chains of metaphors whose signified is always retreating or becomes itself a signifier.'[42] Thus on the urban level signifiers and signifieds (places and their meanings) would be impossible to fix, they would be in a state of continual movement. It is the reader/user that becomes the constructor of meanings and producer of multiple personal interpretations. This play of signifieds – an 'infinitely metaphorical nature of the urban discourse' – opened up for Barthes a dimension of the city which he called 'erotic':

> The eroticism of the city is the lesson we can draw from the infinitely metaphorical nature of urban discourse. I use the word eroticism in its widest meaning ... It is a functional concept and not a semantic concept; I use eroticism or *sociality* interchangeably. The city, essentially and semantically, is the place of our meeting with the *other*....[43]

Barthes associated this erotic or *other* dimension of the city with play, subversion and rupture, as opposed to 'everything which is not otherness: family, residence, identity.'[44] Abstaining from definite methodological recipes and calling for multiple readings of the city, he prioritises the volatility of the sign: 'we must never seek to fix and rigidify the signified of the units discovered, because, historically, these signifieds are always extremely vague, dubious and unmanageable.'[45]

It is possible to read *Reconstructions* in a similar way, as undoing the fixity of urban signifieds and demonstrating this through the arbitrariness of the sign (by making it literal, similar to several neo-avant-garde artists).[46] Likewise, *Reconstructions* also engages with the otherness of the urban, the anti-hierarchical and subversive, and refuses to rely on recognisable symbols (like the Old Town). At the same time, the places

42 R. Barthes, Semiology and the Urban. – Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory. Ed. N. Leach. London: Routledge, 1997, p. 170.
43 R. Barthes, Semiology and the Urban, pp. 170–171.
44 R. Barthes, Semiology and the Urban, p. 171.
45 R. Barthes, Semiology and the Urban, pp. 171–172.
46 H. Foster, The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century. (An October Book.) Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996, p. 77.

must remain sufficiently recognisable for this process of undoing or rupture to be successful, and for this otherness and the occasional irony to be effective.

Okas's conceptual album of photographs from 1972, 'The Age of Sex', is of particular interest here. Barthes warned against taking the category of '*l'erotique*' too literally, but in this work the 'semantic and functional' come very close to a complete overlapping. The album was compiled from photographs of a generic toilet structure near Stroomi beach in Tallinn. Anonymous users had drawn pornographic graffiti on the outer walls and rectangular columns in front of the entrance – giant phalluses, nude women, and vulgarities written in cyrillic. In one of the few commentaries on the work, Leonhard Lapin, to whom the album was given as gift, later wrote that the album documented the 'popular' erotic drawings that covered the walls of a neoclassical beach toilet.[47] By writing 'popular' in quotation marks, Lapin seems to suggest his own unease regarding the supposed Russian origin of the scribblings, thus denoting a disturbance in the project of constructing a nationally-coherent city through his walks and architectural historical work, and highlighting the need to differentiate one's individual and national otherness from the 'disorderly' Soviet culture.[48] In the early 1970s, this graffiti also reverberated with the new generation's engagement in sexual liberation (as suggested by the title 'The Age of Sex'), especially since the subject remained a taboo in the Soviet public sphere.[49] Although the message emerged here in public in a perverted form – as smutty graffiti on a public lavatory – the phenomenon of urban graffiti was nonetheless taken seriously by artists during the 1970s, for whom it had positive implications.[50]

Urban graffiti had been a beloved topic among surrealists, who saw in it an eruption of the collective unconscious, explored during their flâneur-wanderings in places undocumented or left out from the monumental history of the cityscape.[51] As with the interest in graffiti characteristic of photographers such as Brassaï, there is something unpleasantly dark about the excessive eroticism of the graffiti in Okas's album – the scene demonstrates to us a return of the repressed, of unruly disorder existing just

47 L. Lapin, Avangard, p. 209.

48 For a recent critical account about the continuing discourse of the contamination of the people and land by Soviet occupation see: L. Kaljundi, „Puhastus" ja rahvusliku ajalookirjutuse comeback. – Vikerkaar 2010, no. 12, p. 48.

49 Pornography occupied an important place in Lapin's production: he mentions a collection of poetry from 1973, 'Aesthetics of Cock', that he had put together on the basis of 'Russian language acquired in the Soviet army in 1971–1972 and the 'Soviet' state of mind'. He however had to destroy it in the second half of 1970s, allegedly under a threat of KGB raid. Equally he had to destroy first images from the series of *Red Porno*, combining soviet signs with pornographic scenes (L. Lapin, 20 aastat hiljem. – L. Lapin, Kaks kunsti. Valimik ettekandeid ja artikleid kunstist ning ehituskunstist 1971–1995. Tallinn: Kunst, 1997, p. 50).

50 In a proposal for urban decoration, written in 1972 for the cultural newspaper *Sirp ja Vasar*, Vilen Künnapu and poet Juhan Viiding drew attention to graffiti as an organic feature of the city: 'There is no point in forbidding your kids from writing on the pavement and the walls of the houses. The network of lines by a child's hand is a property of the street and the house.' (These two sentences were however censored from the printed version.) See V. Künnapu, J. Viiding, Ettepanek. – V. Künnapu, Üle punase jõe. Valitud tekste 1972–2001. Tallinn: Tallinna Tehnikakõrgkool, 2001, p.12.

51 I. Walker, City Gorged With Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary Photography in Interwar Paris. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002, p. 157. Mari Laanemets has written about the young generation of artists in Tallinn in the 1970s, including Okas, to be carrying out a flânerie in the urbanised environment to find meaning in the changing cultural and social conditions and register the ruins of modernity. She sees the flânerie of the bohemians as carried by nostalgia, in search of lost times. See M. Laanemets, Pilk sotsialistliku linna tühermaadele ja tagahoovidesse: *happening*'id, mängud ja jalutuskäigud Tallinnas 1970. aastatel. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 2005, vol. 14 (4), pp. 164–165.

a stone's throw away from the well-groomed streets of the city (and sometimes even within that city, as demonstrated in the 1972 montage, *Egg*, one of Okas's most open references to surrealist imagery – a giant white egg placed before the monumental Estonia theatre in the centre of Tallinn).

For Okas the solution to the problem of dealing with this uncanny urban situation was to distance the subject through representation: on the cover of the small album a single detail image of the toilet entrance is repeated several times without any suggestion of obscene content; in a way reminiscent of Okas's other neutral urban photographs. On the inside of the album, the image takes up just a small area of the page and provides only a partial view of the graffiti, thus restricting the viewer rather than offering revelation.

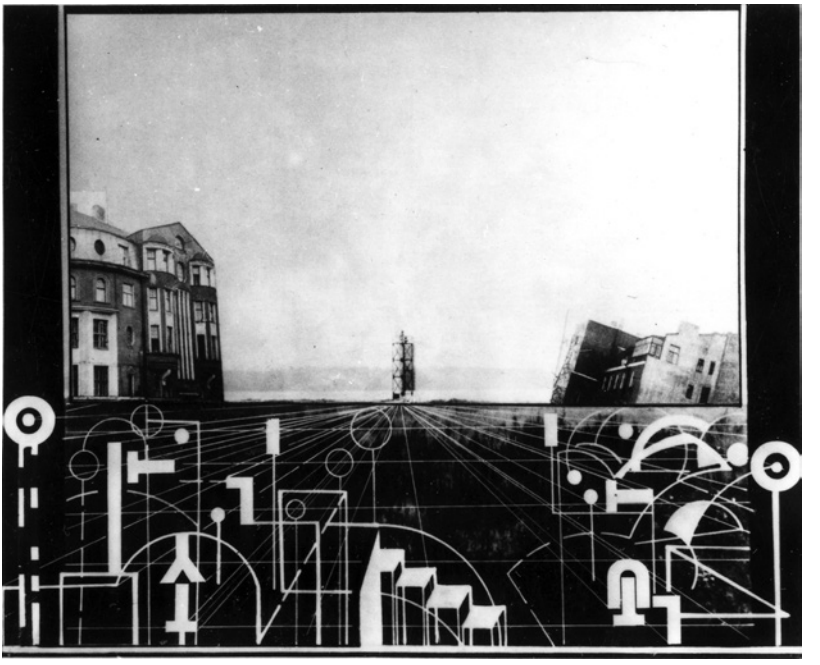
Those same images of the walls of a public toilet reappear in 1973 in a montage by Okas. On this occasion black quadrangles obscure some of the images as if censoring obscenities (as was also done with the traffic sign in *Reconstruction O*). That same toilet building appears yet again a year later in a series of images titled *Performance* in which, in a three-part inverted narrative, the artist is seen standing before a building and then appears perhaps to draw something on it before approaching the entrance. As Mari Laanemets has pointed out, this series demonstrates a certain ambivalence since it is unclear whether the artist is making the images or recording them. Laanemets also points to the unusual distance of the camera from the scene of the performance which 'allows one to think through a distant surveying gaze, rather than as a participant in the action.'[52] As with *Reconstruction*, the photographs in *Performance* are overlaid with a geometric structure, which in this case highlights the artist's actions: in the two upper images the figure of the artist is placed inside a circle; in the final image the artist approaching the building is placed between perspective lines converging at the threshold of the toilet's entrance. Instead of being drawn onto the surface of the image, the structure has been scratched directly onto the negative with a pin and then further developed as an image. The resulting photographic enlargement has lines of uneven sharpness and edges that index the scarring of the negative while also giving it a stronger presence in the final image. Thus, in these works we see a movement from documentary photography to montage and an early version of *Reconstructions*, with each position contributing a different relationship with the viewer. Whereas in the photographs the framing worked to draw attention away from the content, in *Reconstructions* the original (obscene graffiti) becomes increasingly abstracted and removed from the viewer until we are left with just a scene of the artist intervening (restoring, drawing or erasing) in the images. The latter is indeed a reconstruction, but without showing what is being reconstructed.

American art-historian Hal Foster has proposed that the difference between the obscene and the pornographic depends on the distance of the viewer. In the case of the obscene, 'the object, without a scene, comes too close to the viewer', whereas in the pornographic, 'the object is staged for the viewer who is thus distanced enough to be its voyeur.'[53] Foster's comments occur in a different context from Okas's works –

52 M. Laanemets, Pilk sotsialistliku linna tühermaadele ja tagahoovidesse, p. 142.
53 H. Foster, The Return of the Real, p. 153.

1. Jüri Okas. Fotod Tallinna arhitektuuri dokumenteerimise seeriast (1972).
Leonhard Lapini kogu.
Jüri Okas. Photographs from the series documenting the architectural heritage of Tallinn (1972).
Courtesy of Leonhard Lapin.

2. Jüri Okas. Foto Tallinna arhitektuuri dokumenteerimise seeriast (1972).
Leonhard Lapini kogu.
Jüri Okas. Photograph from the series documenting the architectural heritage of Tallinn (1972).
Courtesy of Leonhard Lapin.



3. Jüri Okas. Rekonstruktsioon SR (1975). Sügavtrükk.
Jüri Okas. Reconstruction SR (1975). Intaglio.

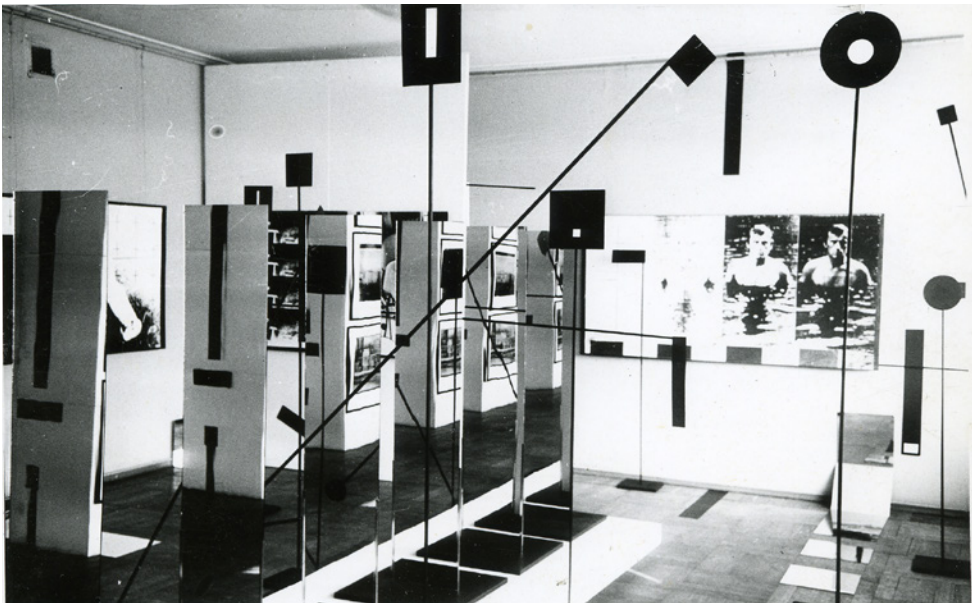
4. Jüri Okas. Rekonstruktsioon O (1975). Sügavtrükk.
Jüri Okas. Reconstruction O (1975). Intaglio.

5. Jüri Okas. The Age of Sex (1972). Fotoalbumi kaas.
Leonhard Lapini kogu.
Jüri Okas. The Age of Sex (1972). Cover of photographic album.
Courtesy of Leonhard Lapin.

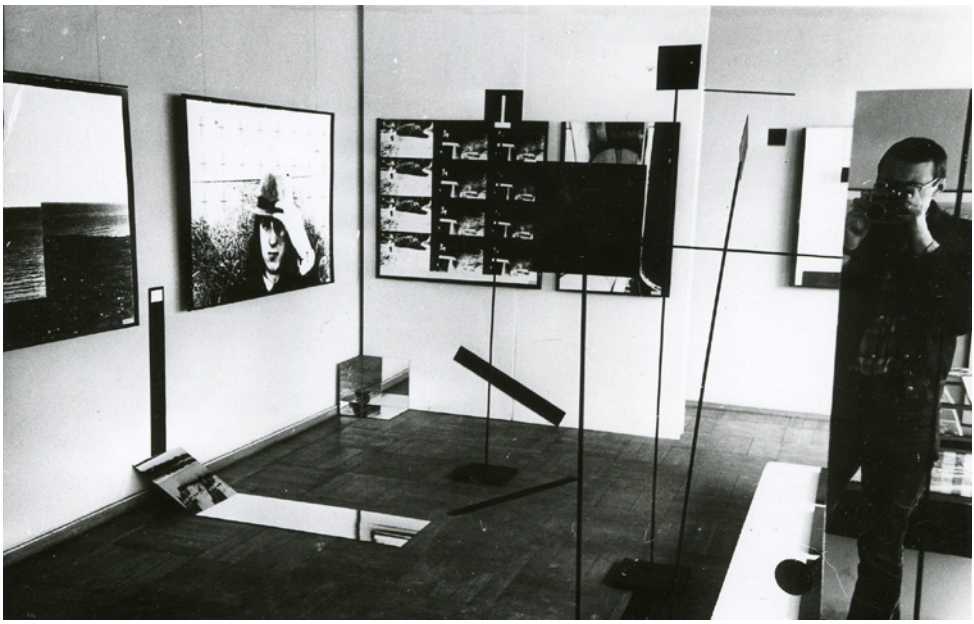
6. Jüri Okas. The Age of Sex (1972). Foto albumist.
Leonhard Lapini kogu.
Jüri Okas. The Age of Sex (1972). Photograph from album.
Courtesy of Leonhard Lapin.

7. Jüri Okas. The Age of Sex (1972). Foto albumist.
Leonhard Lapini kogu.
Jüri Okas. The Age of Sex (1972). Photograph from album.
Courtesy of Leonhard Lapin.

8. Jüri Okas. Montaaž (1973).
Jüri Okas. Montage (1973).



9. Jüri Okas. Rekonstruktsioon. Idee. Projekt. Objekt. Näitus Tallinna Kunstihoone III korruse galeriis (1976).
Jüri Okas. Reconstruction. Idea. Project. Object. Exhibition at Tallinn Art Hall Gallery (III floor, 1976).



10. Jüri Okas. Rekonstruktsioon. Idee. Projekt. Objekt. Näitus Tallinna Kunstihoone III korruse galeriis (1976).
Jüri Okas. Reconstruction. Idea. Project. Object. Exhibition at Tallinn Art Hall Gallery (III floor, 1976).

he is writing about abject art in 1980s North America and in a different interpretative framework.[54] However, what I find useful here is the idea of distancing and of the viewer relationship being dependent on proximity or detachment from the scene. If in 'The Age of Sex' distancing worked to bring obscene graffiti to fit photographic conventions and presentations (through framing and the format of an album), thus setting a scene for it, and if in montage the censoring worked further to denote this material as pornographic, then in *Reconstructions* we have different kind of distancing, something we could then, after Barthes, call the *erotic* dimension in its abstract, non-semantic sense, where appearance and disappearance, showing and hiding, are put into a dialectical play.[55] In the montage with the toilet graffiti, as well as in *Hommage to D. Judd* (1974) from the *Reconstruction* series or the above mentioned *Reconstruction O*, the black rectangles may be read as concealing certain scenes or signs from the viewer. In other cases, with lines, letters and scaffoldings, the additions work to draw the viewer's attention to particular sites and spatial relationships, as well as posing questions about the photographic illusion involved in viewing the image.[56] By overlaying specific details (traffic signs, graffiti) of the image and concealing the initial impulse that drove the artist to choose one or another site (e.g. the anonymous beach toilet), the scene is also opened up to ambiguity and uncertainty, which is in turn presented as a feature of the urban milieu itself, a terrain of possibilities and meeting with the 'other', of the unexpected (as in the concrete bunker one came across in the walks), as well as the potentially subversive and unruly (that has been disclosed from the environment as waste). Instead of 'messages for those who know', we find a multiplicity of potential readings emerging from these scenes, but at the cost of abstracting the specificity of the scene and de-politicising its potential (as in graffiti).[57]

The technique of montage has been hailed in the art-historical tradition as enabling the demystification and exposure of ideology and power through bringing together elements or surfaces that appear unrelated or incomparable. The technique emphasises the perceived differences between the combined elements, thus communicating the fragmentary and disconnected nature of modern urban society. On the other hand, critical theorists have pointed to the revival and appropriation of the montage technique by hegemonic practices of mass culture.[58] In contrast, Okas's *Reconstructions*

54 Foster employs Jacques Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis, investigating the (im)possibility of representing the real directly, 'without a scene', as representations are always culturally coded and appear in a particular framework. For Lacan the psychic register of the real is manifested through trauma, what he calls a missed encounter with the real, which one can repeat but not reproduce. This repetition acts as a defensive mechanism between the subject and the real, but it also points to the real (manifested in the obscene among other things). The medium for staging the obscene is an 'image-screen', or a 'cultural reserve' of images according to Foster, that '*mediates* the object-gaze *for* the subject, but it also *protects* the subject *from* this object-gaze. [---] [F]or to see without this screen would be to be blinded by the gaze or touched by the real.' (H. Foster, The Return of the Real, p. 140.)

55 In a different context Barthes writes that 'in perversion, there are no erogenous zones … It is intermittance which is erotic… the staging of appearance as disappearance.' – R. Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text. New York: Hill & Wang, 1975, p. 10.

56 See A. Kurg, Jüri Okase „spetsiifilised objektid". – 197ondate kultuuriruumi idealism: lisandusi eesti kunstiloole. Ed. S. Helme. Tallinn: Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2002, pp. 24–28.

57 It remains up to dispute how much this was directly conditioned by the societal circumstances where this art emerged from (Soviet censorship as well as self-censorship) and how much it was mediated by the concept of art dominant among the group.

58 B. H. D. Buchloh, From Faktura to Factography. – October 1984, vol. 30 (Autumn), pp. 82–119. Although in a different ideological framework, montage was appropriated also in the dominant Soviet post-war mass culture.

present a synthesis of photographic and added (ready-made) elements, a technique that integrates (and even cuts into, in early works) the montage marks, in many cases obliging us to see the montage as part of the illusory image space. If montage already exists as part of the underlying urban scene, then its juxtapostions do not so much present a shock as a unified (well composed) landscape. Still, it may be that the demystificatory aspect is present in the selection of the scenes: discarded buses, airfields, empty beaches, fragments of (often obsolete) infrastructure. However, it is not explicitly clear what kind of politics is being suggest by these scenes or what is being demystified. These sites may not lie not only outside of the official geography of the Soviet city, but also outside the geography of the pre-war Estonian city rediscovered in Lapin's work and in *Kunst ja Kodu*. Where one finds humour and irony in these images it appears only implicit or concealed, as manifested in images such as *Reconstruction SR*, in which a turn-of-the-century building is sinking into the water, or *Hommage to D. Judd* (1974), in which garbage containers have been lined up in a single row reminiscent of Donald Judd's minimal sculptures. Before analysing the urban environment in Okas's works, I will first examine the encounter between his works and the viewer in the art gallery.

Reconstructions **and the viewer**

> *An experience is a personal thing, but I think my endeavour is to influence exactly this.*
> – Jüri Okas[59]

The series *Reconstructions* was exhibited together with photographs and an installation in Okas's first solo show *Reconstruction. Idea. Project. Object* from 18–29 March 1976, in the third-floor gallery of Tallinn Art Hall. The installation was a construction of mirrors, black cardboard quadrangles glued onto the wall and floors, (reminiscent of suprematist compositions) and black cardboard circles, squares and rectangles (like those in the *Reconstructions* images) supported on wooden rods.[60] Vilen Künnapu, in the only contemporary review of the show, described these enlarged 'spatial elements'[61] as being reminiscent of 'a railway world': 'We move inside an enigmatic world of turnpikes, semaphors, crooks and mirrors'. Later, the installation is generally interpreted as an attempt at realising the 'reconstructions' in three dimensions, as an execution of ideas previously worked out on paper.[62] If several of the spatial additions are reminiscent of

59 K. Laine, Jüri Okas etsii kauneutta rumuudesta. – Satakunnan Kansa 20 July 1991.
60 The exhibition included 21 serigraph prints, five enlarged photographs, an installation of wood, cardboard and mirror, titled 'Object', and 26 photographs (30x40 cm) placed on a lower table in the centre of the room, showing 'ideas, projects' from 1972–1975 (ERA, f. R-1954, n. 2, s. 339, l. 24).
61 Künnapu presents a somewhat surrealist reading of the installation when he adds in brackets that the enlarged graphic elements from Okas's works, which have now become spatial, are like 'heroes of pictures that at night descend from there into a child's dreams'. See V. Künnapu, Jüri Okase keskkonnakunst, p. 9.
62 This unidirectional movement from prints to spaces (or project to constructed work) is more complex if we consider the Letraset marks and letters as inserted collage. The installation becomes then a kind of pop gesture, enlarging the readymade graphic device to an absurd dimension in an alien context. Also, Okas's use of the installation materials (cardboard, wood) is non-literal as opposed to Robert Smithson (for example); at the same time there is some similarity in their interest in mirrors and their spatial effects.

scenes from Russian avant-garde exhibition designs, then the row of mirrors in the centre of the room, at the corners and on the floor, are suggestive of the post-minimalist fascination with illusion and distraction. At the same time, the installation did not encompass the whole gallery space, but only the side where the photographs were displayed (on the left when entering the space) and the *Reconstructions* on the opposite side were displayed traditionally, framed and hanging on the walls with no distracting additions. It was as if the photographs were intended to be integrated into an overall system by the addition of forms that repeated those that appeared in *Reconstructions*.

While *Reconstructions* itself received much critical attention, less attention has been paid to the transformation of the traditional viewing situation of the gallery and to the way the viewer's experience was structured in the redefined circumstances of the space.[63] The dissolution of the art object and its expansion into space that occurred from the 1960s onwards has, in the context of Western art, been described as expanding the notion of viewing – a process that came to involve the audience 'spatially and kinaesthetically and intellectually, as well as visually.'[64] Several authors have highlighted the new kind of viewer engagement that arises with installation art, regarding it as active viewing rather than passive contemplation of an autonomous art object. Okas's installation with mirrors distracts from the traditional mode of viewing rather than enabling it: we can imagine people moving about the space, occasionally catching sight of fragments of themselves in the mirrors, provoking feelings of uneasiness, confusion and perhaps also a playful and spontaneous reaction to the appearance of the fragmented self among the artworks.[65] As with the album 'The Age of Sex' and its subsequent modifications, the physical structures inserted in the gallery distance the viewer from direct interaction with the works on the walls and emphasise the (bodily) experience of the exhibition itself. The viewer may approach the object but never quite arrives since there is always something to distract from the direct encounter, undermining any contemplative relationship with an image so that it cannot adequately be grasped.

That the artist may have desired to provide such an experience is evident from his black-and-white film *Environment*, which was shot during the period of the exhibition and combines views of the installation with scenes from urban areas of Tallinn, primarily Pelgulinn where Okas himself had lived. The film includes a rapid montage of jump-cuts, in which views from the gallery space alternate with views from outdoors, producing an overall impression of speed and anxiety and confusing the border between internal and external space. The soundtrack of the film, which Okas played while

63 See however: M. Laanemets, Zwischen westlicher Moderne und sowjetischer Avantgarde: Inoffizielle Kunst in Estland 1969–1978. (Humboldt-Schriften zur Kunst- und Bildgeschichte 14.) Berlin: Mann, 2011, pp. 210–211; also for a comparison with El Lissitzky's Proun room.

64 A. Potts, The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000, p. 3.

65 In several photographs of the installation there are seen reflected on the mirrors members of the audience, the artist himself or his friends, who have taken their photographs there, perhaps considering it suitable for a new kind of representation. See Andres Tolts's portrait taken in the exhibition in: kunst.ee 2009, no. 3/4 (pages not numbered). And several of the photographs on the show itself represent the circle of Okas's friends, including Tolts and Künnapu.

demonstrating the film to his closer circle of friends, was taken from a live recording of American R&B band *Tower of Power* and gave the film a distinctive ambience.[66]

The English word *environment* became a keyword for Okas's exhibition in later art-critical and art-historical texts, thus relating it indirectly to Alan Kaprow's term for his immersive installations in which the viewer became an active participant in the completion of the artwork. At the time Kaprow was known in Estonian artistic circles through his book *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*[67] and the concept of the environment was most probably used with reference to it. However, Okas has denied any close association with Kaprow, nor does his work bear any close relation to Kaprow's, which was directly related to happenings and audience participation. What are similar, however, are their respective attitudes towards the gallery space. For Kaprow, the gallery was associated with commercial methods of presentation that underscore the distance between the viewer and the artwork, and which he wished to subvert through viewer participation.[68] For Okas, the context was the official exhibitions organised in genres and hierarchies, exhibitions which gave equal emphasis to the autonomy of the artwork and the contemplative attitude of the viewer. Against this, new models of participation were at the same time being sought from pop culture and especially rock music and live rock-concerts: the independent exhibition in Harku a year earlier had been described as an 'event' and opened with a performance of rock group *Mess*. Similarly, Okas made music a significant element in his films.[69] Significantly, it was popular music that the young audience of the time found most easy to relate to and which was the most popular cultural phenomenon in contemporary society.[70]

In art-historical literature the viewer's engagement in installations, her activation as opposed to contemplation, has also been associated with attempts to decentre the unified rational subject dominant in modern Western culture.[71] Whereas in 19th century and modernist art the work in the public gallery space functioned autonomously and was meant to reflect an equally autonomous and coherent subjectivity, with the shift towards an environment with which the viewer now had to associate herself this centrality was undone. Thus art critic Claire Bishop draws a parallel between the rise of

66 The music was from *Tower of Power* 1976 live album 'Live and in Living Colour'. Personal communication with the artist, 4.08.2005.

67 The book was brought to photographer Jaan Klõšeiko from Canada by Estonian émigré art historian Eda Sepp. In a photograph from 1975, Ando Keskküla, Eda Sepp, Andres Tolts and Jaak Kangilaski are sitting round a table, with Tolts looking at Kaprow's book. See the reproduction of the photograph in: J. Kross, Kallid kaasteelised. II. Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2008, p. 546.

68 C. Bishop, Installation Art: A Critical History. London: Tate Publishing, 2005, p. 23.

69 Finnish critic Marketta Seppälä notes that 'Music was the most important medium of internationalism for Jüri Okas, the symbol of the age. For him it is the most communicative artform, because it is able, partly because of its nature, and partly using the machinery built around it, to express in the most simple manner 'what the weather is like today'. It has, in principle, the same rules of composition as the visual arts: the interaction of rhythm, sound and silence.' See M. Seppälä, Reconstructed Space, p. 11.

70 In 1972 sociologist Virve-Ines Laidmäe conducted in Estonia a first in-depth sociological survey of viewers of art exhibitions. Among other things, she posed a question about the popularity of visual arts in relation to other art genres. As one of the characteristic features of Estonian public was its youth (60% of gallery goers were under 30) their first choices among the arts were music (38%) and cinema (42%). Laidmäe concludes that the entertainment character of these genres should be put to work in the interest of figurative art and be used for artistic propaganda. See В.-И. Лайдмяэ, Изобразительное искусство и его зритель: опыт социологического исследования. Академия наук Эстонской ССР, Институт истории. Таллинн: Ээсти раамат, 1976.

71 Benjamin Buchloh relates the undoing of the contemplative position of the viewer already to El Lissitzky's exhibition design from the 1920s. See B. H. D. Buchloh, From Faktura to Factography, p. 92.

installation art and the emergence of theories of the subject as dislocated and divided: 'installation art's multiple perspectives are seen to subvert the Renaissance perspective model because they deny the viewer any one ideal place from which to survey the work.'[72]

Art historian Alex Potts has approached this dispersal of the artwork 'into an array of objects' from the point of sculptural history, and has related this to changes in the mode of viewing. Similarly, Potts has pointed to the emergence of a subjectivity not associated with a single motif or shape.[73] Moreover, he has attempted to go beyond an understanding of this new subjectivity as simply decentred:

> At issue in this development is not so much some intangible decentring of subjectivity as such, but rather the tendency to a perpetual unfixing of images representing any ideal or collectively shared subjectivity within modern culture. [---] If a work gives rise to a vivid subjective awareness, this awareness cannot seem to be encapsulated in some potentially inert and fixed objective thing. It has to emerge from within the contingencies of the viewer's encounter with a work. Where three-dimensional art of the past few decades differs most noticeably from modernist sculpture is the way the staging focuses the viewer's attention on this contingency and unfixing.[74]

For Potts, the trajectory of modern sculpture is related to the history of the undoing of values in capitalist urban culture, aligning him with critics who emphasise the transformation of subjectivity through reification written into the structure of capital (Frederic Jameson's theory of postmodernism is the best known example). As mentioned earlier, in the Soviet Estonian context a loss of values was perceived in the early 1970s, resulting from shifts in modernisation and consumption habits, the influence of mass culture, industrialisation of housing supply and the subsequent transformation of the urban environment. And, as Lapin emphasised, this loss was often projected as a dissolution of the national subject seen in relation to the gradual disappearance of the environment that connoted it.

It is in relation to these transformations and the reactions to them that Okas's works of the period should be understood. Compared with Lapin's emphasis of recognisable symbols from the turn of the century and the independence period, Okas's photographs and *Reconstructions* presented the viewer with situations which, instead of offering a ground for the production of a coherent (national) subject, were ambiguous and confusing. Images of Karl Burman's building on a beach, alongside other turn-of-the-century apartment houses, slowly sinking, and of Stalinist buildings piled on top of each other, or of a generic Soviet truck travelling towards a drilling site, may perhaps have been recognised as ironic or allegorical, but they were far too vague to allow a common political 'we' to be constructed on their basis. Pointing to the undoing of the environment, the everyday and the banal, as well as to changes in perception,

72 C. Bishop, Installation Art: A Critical History, p. 13.
73 A. Potts, The Sculptural Imagination, p. 18.
74 A. Potts, The Sculptural Imagination, p. 18.

and from a nationalist and simplistic-polarised viewpoint these images would have been difficult to put to work in the name of any unified identity – their meaning would be too ambiguous and slippery.

This ambiguity is taken further by extending the works into three dimensions in space to form an installation. Underlining multiple perspectives for the work's reception – the contingency and unfixing mentioned by Potts – the subject-position thus evoked by the work problematises the unity supposed in identity politics. Deriving its origin from the inter-war period of independence, the identity of nationalist ideology, although in a subordinate position, was already fixed and did not need to be challenged – it already knew well what it was. From the standpoint of nationalist rhetoric, the processes initiated in the art of the late-1960s, aligned with psychoanalytic and structuralist reconceptualisation of the individual, took the dissolution of subjectivity too far. Thus, even while the locations and images would have enabled a common and collective recognition to emerge at the level of the content, it was in any case disintegrated via form.

This also explains the uneasiness reflected in criticism during the late-1980s, a period when nationalist identity politics was moving towards its peak and public expectations had already become very different from that of the 1970s. Thus, attempts at fitting Okas under the label of the avant-garde, emphasising his elitism and illegibility, should not be read only in the strict context of emerging postmodern discussions, but also in this political context. Replacing the referential reading – the ties to specific places and environment – with a formal one, becomes then a way of inserting these works into the discourse of withdrawal and resistance.

It is not that the artist was unwilling to address the public or that the public was unable to communicate with these images, it was rather that the public and critics of the 1980s considered these images irrelevant and unnerving. The potential audience for Okas's works had primarily been composed of the youth of the 1970s who, critical of social hierarchies, had been fascinated with rock music and adopted the values of the counterculture of the period.[75] But by the late-1980s the same generation (including soon Okas himself) had distanced themselves from radicalism and returned to more traditional forms of representation and subjectivity.[76]

75 Officially the exhibition in 1976 had 2182 visitors (ERA, f. R-1954, n. 2, s 339, l. 22–24).
76 See H. Krull, Jüri Üdi, Juhan Viiding ja eesti luule. – Jüri Üdi ja Juhan Viiding: kogutud luuletused. Ed. H. Krull. Tallinn: Tuum, 1998, pp. 597–599.

Noise environment

> As a result of its independent lines of development of thermodynamics and information theory, there are in science today two 'entropies'.
>
> Jeffrey S. Wicken[77]

Finally I turn to interpret Okas's works of the 1970s via consideration of Norbert Wiener's book *Cybernetics and Society*, published in Estonian in 1969. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, Wiener based his theories on a fundamental shift in physics and the sciences in general, taking into account the contingency and probability of the world as it appeared under the scrutiny of these sciences. Wiener related this paradigmatic shift toward acceptance of the imperfection of measured conditions to Freud's views concerning the constitutive irrationality of the human subject. Wiener compared the founder of statistical thermodynamics, Josiah Williard Gibbs, with Freud on the grounds that 'in their recognition of a fundamental element of chance in the texture of the universe itself, these men are close to one another.'[78] From there on, rather than staying in the field of poetry and art, irrationality and contingency were thus written into the sciences, allowing discussions to gain more commensurate grounds while also dissolving the border between science and arts. This also meant that irrationality, rather than belonging to Romantic inexplicability, could now be theorised from the standpoint of the so-called 'hard' sciences. Secondly, and more importantly, Wiener theorised the notion of entropy (as a measure of probability), linking it to notions of chaos and order, terms which hold a central place in Okas's theorising of the environment.[79]

In one of the few texts written by Okas, printed first in 1982 in the architectural magazine *Ehituskunst* and reprinted later in the catalogue of his solo exhibition in 1987 as well as in the introduction to his photo series *Concise Dictionary of Modern Architecture*, he presented his ideas on perception and the environment as a series of binaries: looking and seeing, recognising and grasping, knowing and acknowledging. Among other things he stated that 'it is possible ... to be aware of the laws of order and disorder'.[80] Indeed, this binary has been one of the most widespread metaphors in the critical reception of Okas's work, characterising not only *Reconstructions* but also his land-art works and documentary photography series. Okas's short text accompanied a series of photographs of everyday and common structures that comprised an architectural vocabulary using compositional and stylistic features similar to those of so-called 'high' architecture, yet on a different scale or in divergent form. In this way Okas not only inverted the 'perceived notions of order and disorder' by showing the banal to

77 J. S. Wicken, Evolution, Thermodynamics and Information: Extending the Darwinian Program. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 23; quoted in: N. K. Hayles, Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1990, p. 52.

78 N. Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society. New York: Avon Books, 1969, p. 11.

79 Thirdly, interpretations of the notion of entropy reverberate also with the abovementioned discussion on national identity and its reconstruction. As Reinhold Martin, commenting on Robert Smithson noted, time in entropy is irreversible, there is no place for nostalgia nor going back in time in entropy. This means that a discourse of any kind of 'return' (to independence period, for example) becomes in this framework simply impossible. See R. Martin, The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003, p. 221.

80 J. Okas, The Concise Dictionary of Modern Architecture: Photographs 1974–1986. Tallinn: Jüri Okas, 1995.

be constructed by similar principles to the monumental, but also questioned the architectural hierarchies of the profession. Writing on this series in 1994, photographer and critic Peeter Linnap regards Okas's interest as being about 'giving meaning to the complex relationship of the fundamental tension between nature and culture. In fact, Okas seems to be reflecting on an even more universal level – that of 'civilization and entropy'.'[81] Indeed, the emphasis in Okas's prints and photographs on the discarded, excessive and obsolete may easily be interpreted as entropic, drawing attention to the residues of industrial production and modernity that, when reaching a point of saturation, begin to dominate and lead the civilization away from order.

Norbert Wiener understood entropy in terms of the second law of thermodynamics, which postulated that in a closed system the tendency is always towards deterioration and what he interpreted as chaotic unwinding. He also associated entropy with the measure of probability: the more complex a system is, the greater its potential entropy. As entropy increases, so the system dissolves and begins to lose its specificity, moving from the less probable to the highly probable, from organisation and differentiation to chaos and similarity.[82] According to this schema, entropy is in counterpoint with information, the latter being used to generate negative feedback from outside the system and to challenge the tendency towards deterioration. Information is thus associated with order, organisation, and what Wiener called negetropy:

> it is highly probable that the whole universe around us will die the heat death, in which the world shall be reduced to one vast temperature equilibrium in which nothing really new ever happens

and

> ...there are stages which, though they occupy an insignificant fraction of eternity, are of great significance for our purposes, for in them entropy does not increase and organization and its correlative, information, are being built up.[83]

Thus for Wiener, entropy, associated with a movement towards disorder, should be fought using information. Furthermore, as American literary theorist N. Katherine Hayles has pointed out, Wiener attributed this opposition a moral value whereby entropy is associated with oppression and rigidity.[84] A system that does not adjust itself to the incoming data must eventually fail as it is destined to mindless repetition of the same and thus allows noise to prevail.

According to the information theory pioneered by Claude Shannon and which gained prominence parallel to Wiener's cybernetics, entropy was introduced in an opposite meaning from that of thermodynamics: characterising a system's potential quantity of information there is an equivalence between entropy and information. For

81 P. Linnap, Entroopia, ruum, pilt. Jüri Okase arheoloogiline rekonstruktsioon. – Kunst 1994, no. 2, p. 25.
82 N. Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings, p. 20.
83 N. Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings, p. 45.
84 N. K. Hayles, How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, p. 103.

Shannon, information is not about the meaning of the message, but about the probability of its elements: the more improbable a message element is, or the more unexpected it is, the higher its informational content.[85] An increase in entropy also implied an increase in information and thus a noisy message gave more information than the one that is predictable. Whereas for Wiener noise meant de-differentiation and the increasing prevalence of uniformity, for Shannon noise was associated with difference and novelty.[86] This in turn led to seeing disorder and chaos, rather than order, as a source of newness.

However, the difference between these theories is not so much in the processes they describe, but between their different attitudes to the same forms, a plus or a minus sign that has been attached to it.[87] This is something that is crucial in the interpretation of Okas's case. From the perspective of Wiener's theories, his interest in the discarded and ruinous could be interpreted as a bleak pessimism regarding the excess and waste of modernist urban planning (and thus an implicit fight for unchanging order) and a prophecy of an entropic heat-death in the future. From the perspective of Shannon's use of the notion of entropy however, Okas is seen as giving priority to the 'noisy' environment as a source of potential information ('It is possible to look and not see', says the Okas's aforementioned manifesto-like short text.)

Shannon's theory imagined a medium or communication channel through which a message is sent and then deformed by the noise already present in the channel. To distinguish the contribution of noise to the initial message (noise was measured in the same units as information), Shannon coined the term 'equivocation'.[88] Warren Weaver, a commentator on Shannon's work, became the first to give this kind of equivocation a positive sign, seeing in it a desirable addition rather than an unwanted distraction. However, the problem arises that if a more improbable message has higher informational content than a more probable one, then, drawing its logical conclusion, a message that is totally unpredictable, a pure nonsense, would provide the greatest quantity of information. The solution to this problem is to be found in differentiating between desirable and useless information, inserting the recipient's knowledge into the schema of data transmission. Accordingingly, the maximum point of information is reached when there is a combination of predictability and novelty, 'when the message is partly anticipated and partly surprising.'[89]

In a bold move, N. Katherine Hayles pairs equivocation with poststructuralist ambiguity or the 'reader's text' explicated by Barthes: the unintended surplus, the addi-

85 N. K. Hayles, Chaos Bound, pp. 52–53. Hayles explains this with a computer programmer's viewpoint; that efficient coding gives the most probable elements the shortest codes and most improbable elements the longest codes (taking up most space in the information channel).
86 N. K. Hayles, Chaos Bound, p. 51.
87 In both cases it is probability that is measured through entropy, but whereas in thermodynamics it is derived from the lack of specific information (like the position of heat molecules in a room) and needs to rely on statistical average, then in Shannon's case probability describes a choice rather than ignorance: how probable it is that one will choose an element over the other, e.g. in an alphabet (N. K. Hayles, Chaos Bound, pp. 53–54).
88 N. K. Hayles, Chaos Bound, p. 56. Equivocation was actually proposed as a term for 'conditional entropy', which need not necessarily mean an addition but includes any kind of change the message undergoes in the channel. I thank Virve Sarapik for this clarification.
89 N. K. Hayles, Chaos Bound, p. 53.

tion, is what is pleasurable and what the reader consumes.[90] Furthermore, this pleasure carries with itself ideological connotations, standing against fixation, hierarchies and centralising power structures.[91] Several of Okas's works engaged directly with the medium or 'channel of information': in *Perspective Corrections* (1979) he used the distortion of the photographic medium against itself (a trapezoid laid down on the snow appears in the camera viewfinder as a square, as if neutralising the photographic distortion), in *Snow* (1979) a heap of snow with a square black sign on top is repeated in negative as a black heap (named 'soil') with a white square on top, thus playing with the photographic medium's processes of reversal and problematising the original. However, these particular works appear to be concerned with the artist's exerting strict control over the material rather than with ambiguity – they present riddles to the viewer, but suggest a single definitive solution. It is in those works in which the artist reveals his own indecidability that Okas comes closer to the notion of equivocation and noise as used by Hayles. In an interview to a Finnish newspaper in 1991, discussing the environment as a subject of his work, Okas commented that 'in Estonia one comes across many structures about which it is impossible to tell whether they are being built or demolished'.[92] A couple of years later Okas restated this claim ('If you build a house … there exists a certain moment when it is not possible to define whether the house is being demolished or built') and asserted that this condition of the ambiguity of the environment is a central concern of his work: 'The composition of all my pictures and installations convey that feeling of oscillating on the razor's edge.'[93] It is indeed this indecidability and instability which characterises his works from the 1970s: the viewer sees some kind of transformation, but cannot determine in which direction that movement is going. And this condition is then presented as being an urban condition. Paradoxically, from the perspective of information theory, this condition appears to be a point of maximum information.

Information was a buzzword during the 1970s and was often used to characterise the changing urban environment, suggesting a moment when sensuous information was retreating before sign-information. As poet and writer Jaan Kaplinski put it in *Kunst ja Kodu* in 1979, the artificial landscape was taking over from the natural, although '[a]rtificial environment can never be as complex-diverse as natural environment.'[94] This discourse regarded urbanisation and the corresponding withdrawal from nature as a loss for which urban planning, art and architecture should attempt to compensate. The task of these disciplines should be to help human beings to neutralise the noise, or cope with the noise, including the excesses of mass culture, unwanted sounds and signals and urban multiplicity. The proposed solution often involved increasing the

90 N. K. Hayles, Chaos Bound, p. 188.
91 N. K. Hayles, Chaos Bound, p. 187. In another context Hayles politicises the role of pleasure even further, linking bodily and disciplinary transgressions: 'Like cybernetics, eroticism is intensely concerned with the problematics of body boundaries. It is not for nothing that sexual orgasm is called 'the little death' or that writers from Marquis de Sade to J. G. Ballard have obsessively associated eroticism with penetrating and opening the body. At stake in the erotically charged discourse in which Wiener considers the pleasures and dangers of coupling between parts that are not supposed to touch is how extensively the body of the subject may be penetrated or even dissolved by cybernetics as a body of knowledge.' (N. K. Hayles, How We Became Posthuman, pp. 107–108.)
92 A. Uimonen, Järjestyksen ja epäjärjestyksen rajalla. – Helsingin Sanomat 19 December 1991.
93 K. Hellerma, Jüri Okast ei huvita inimene, vaid keskkond. – Hommikuleht 29 May 1993, p. 11.
94 J. Kaplinski, Inimene märgivoolus. – Kunst ja Kodu 1979, no. 1, p. 6.

opportunities for withdrawal and escape: trees and bushes should be planted in ways that could protect the human being from the excessive flux of sign-information, tall fences would separate courtyards from the public space of the street, windows would be placed in ways that would reduce the communication between inside and outside.[95]

This position has an affinity with the view that changes in everyday life and the architectural environment were a threat to the national identity of the subject; indeed, these two discourses were often collapsed into one. While for Kaplinski the threat to individual autonomy was posed by the over-modernisation of the environment, the large-scale introduction of new technological means and the overflow of information, for many intellectuals in Estonia that threat was related to the cultural dominance of the Soviet-Russian other. In the context of late-Soviet society, cultural dissidence has usually been represented in terms of withdrawal into the supposedly autonomous sphere of the home, juxtaposing what was widely perceived as 'cultured space' with 'unsettling chaos'.[96] The integrity of the national subject, its homeostasis, was constructed through bounded territories and seclusion from the entropic other that was shut outside. In the following decade, interest among architects of the Tallinn School in restoring the perimetered structure of the urban space – the traditional spatial and architectural hierarchy of inside and outside – bears witness both to the postmodern turn and to local interest in expressing national difference through the built environment.[97]

Recent studies have attempted to show the interdisciplinary practices of the artists and architects working in Tallinn in the 1970s as having diverged from these later developments, thus demonstrating a plurality of voices in the postmodern turn.[98] This article has attempted to show that there existed an alternative to the idea of withdrawal. Okas's position among these artists and architects was an exemplary one. By privileging the discarded and unworthy, that threatens the closed system from outside, he provided an explicit challenge to the uniform meaning of the space of withdrawal. He also attempted to find a balance between signal and noise, understood as a moment of maximum information. However, he did not simply posit noise in order to oppose and disrupt order (Socialist or modernist) as was the case with the anti-establishment use of rock music; rather, his privileging of noise entailed a pardigm shift *vis-á-vis* the environment. Thus, noise figured not simply as interference, as it was understood by Kaplinski, but instead prompted recognition of a different kind of complexity that now included what had previously been cast out and excluded. This encompassed an interest in graffiti, in anonymous and seemingly self-emerging structures, and in the discarded and useless as part of the everyday (post-industrial) environment. The more radical effects of this shift were to be seen in the practice of architecture, which pushed against the borders between high and low by educating the viewer to see the

95 J. Kaplinski, Inimene märgivoolus, p. 7.
96 A. Kannike, Kodukujundus kui kultuuriloomine: etnoloogiline Tartu-uurimus. Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2002, p. 60.
97 See A. Kurg, Architects of the Tallinn School and the Critique of Soviet Modernism in Estonia. – The Journal of Architecture 2009, vol. 14 (1), pp. 85–108.
98 See M. Laanemets, Kunst kunsti vastu. Kunstniku rolli ja positsiooni ümbermõtestamise katsest eesti kunstis 1970. aastatel; A. Kurg, M. Laanemets, Keskkonnad, projektid, kontseptsioonid. Tallinna kooli arhitektid 1972–1985.

non-monumental and the banal as part of the architectural discipline (e.g. *Concise Dictionary of Modern Architecture*; or *Monument to L. Lapin in Räpina*, 1978, a huge rusty container placed in the countryside near Lapin's birth place) and problematised the relation between order and disorder by posing questions about the architect's work as something contributing to an environment's complexity.[99] In contrast to Lapin, who celebrated multiplicity through a form of 'high' architecture where the architect maintains control, Okas appears to have recognised the self-generating capacity of environments to evade the control of the architect. His installation exhibited alongside the series *Reconstructions* functioned as a noisy environment in which the stability of the relationship between viewer and object was undone by the lack of any single and correct point of contemplation and by encouraging constant movement in space, allowing no fixity of the subject.

Conclusion

Shannon's rethinking of entropy and information signalled a broader shift away from the classical theory of thermodynamics and towards complexity theory and non-equilibrium thermodynamics. Rather than leading to heat death, entropy came to be seen as leading to self-organisation: 'chaos went from being associated with dissipation in the Victorian sense of dissolute living and reckless waste to being associated with dissipation in a newly positive sense of increasing complexity and new life.'[100] If thermodynamic principles could be seen as central to the organisation of industrial capitalism, 'to its technological machines and its organization of the social body',[101] then a shift in these principles could be seen as having wider societal repercussions, paralleling significant ruptures in the post-war societies. The industrial production and disciplinary order that had emerged during the modern era had been based on the principle that surplus energy should be excluded from the system as waste, which then posed a threat from the outside. The crisis of this order during the second half of the 20th century was, among other things, also a 'crisis of enclosure', not only of the dissolution of borders in science and prioritising self-organisation, but also a breakdown of the system of institutions (family, factory, prison, school) leading to the emergence of a post-disciplinary society of flows.[102] This was a society that also redefined the borders between the self and the other and instigated a displacement of the fixed notions of order and disorder.

99 One could argue that Okas attempted to redefine the practice of architecture from this viewpoint. In 1980 he described his own 1977 project for a roadside gas station in a laconic way as 'just one more object' added to the roadside piles of gravel, telephone posts, transformers etc, i.e. as an object increasing the entropy of the environment. However, at the same time the building attempts to mix different layers and elements, deriving from Robert Venturi's theory of complexity and contradiction, among other things to resemble a ruin or blend into this environment. The architectural features are then something deriving from 'disorder' rather than imposing its own pre-conceived order. See J. Okas, Bensiinijaam Mäol. – Ehituskunst 1981, no. 1, p. 34.

100 N. K. Hayles, How We Became Posthuman, p. 103.

101 T. Terranova, L. Parisi, Heat Death. Emergence and Control in Genetic Engineering and Artificial Life. – CTheory, a084, 5.10.2000, www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=127 (accessed 10 February 2012).

102 T. Terranova, L. Parisi, Heat Death. Emergence and Control in Genetic Engineering and Artificial Life.

If we understand Soviet society to have operated similarly on the basis of disciplinary enclosures and institutions, albeit in a bureaucratic-socialist form, then the repercussions that accompany the rethinking of the notion of entropy and the positing of noise as complexity rather than interference offer a way of rethinking the tactics and place of oppositional art. Okas's reinterpretation of the environment from the standpoint of this transformed notion of entropy could prompt unease and confusion from two very different perspectives: both from the official Soviet perspective of the monumental cityscape and the dominant industrialised building production, and from oppositional positions promoting a return to the inter-war architecture of the Estonian independence period or a more traditional form of urbanism. Okas's reinterpretation threatened the autonomy and unity of each, and made visible the unsettling other which, being useless or disorderly, was shut out from their system's borders.[103] In the following decades Okas himself moved away from many of these investigations, drawing a clearer line between his art projects and architectural work and applying neo-traditional postmodern principles in urban planning projects. However, from today's perspective these early projects, which guide the public to 'look and see' the environment in a new way, occurred at the moment of inception of a redefined idea of the environment that incorporated previously excluded spaces into new productive territories of the city. By the end of the 20th century, urban otherness and former wastelands had become major vehicles in the regeneration of North-American and European cities, including those in the former Soviet and Socialist countries, recognising their potential for the post-industrial urban economy. Okas's noisy environment shows the prehistory of these transformations in Tallinn, and contains an alternative to the prevailing trajectory.

103 Okas was not the only architect in the Tallinn group interested in the effects of entropy on the environment. Tiit Kaljundi's project from 1976, *View of a New Visual Environment I* proposed, among other things, redeveloping slag heaps in mining areas as mountain-skiing centres. The surplus waste of mining oil-shale is fed back there into the system as recreational landscape and the threat (also through its prominent visual presence in the landscapes) is thus neutralised. Leonhard Lapin's *City of the Living, City of the Dead*, 1978, could equally be seen as an attempt to integrate death as a repressed other to everyday urban life and turn the threat into laughter and play. About the latter see: A. Kurg, Architects of the Tallinn School and the Critique of Soviet Modernism in Estonia.

6. Architects of the Tallinn School and the critique of Soviet modernism in Estonia

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Architects of the Tallinn School and the critique of Soviet modernism in Estonia

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Introduction

In May, 1978, the laconically entitled 'Architectural Exhibition 78', displaying the work of 14 architects/artists/designers, opened in the foyer of the Academy of Sciences library in Tallinn. Although officially the space for the exhibition was organised by the Youth Section of the Union of Estonian Architects,[1] it was different from their usual type of exhibition, by presenting works by a group of architects that shared a similar educational background as well as a criticism of existing architectural practice. The participants – retrospectively named the Tallinn School[2] – used the show as a platform for presenting their criticism of inflexible building regulations, Soviet mass construction, standardisation and modernist urban planning, and to launch an architectural dialogue with the cultural sphere rather than that of civil engineering. Leonhard Lapin,[3] one of the initiators of the exhibition, has retrospectively written: 'In 1978 we presented "pure ideas", as our aim was to show architecture as an independent form of art, a manifestation of the spiritual, but also as an independent and influential feature that played a part in social processes.'[4]

Throughout the 1970s, members of the group had published polemical articles in cultural media on urban issues and the built environment, discussing not only different topics related to architecture, but also writing in a different style from the previous, more pragmatic way which characterised architectural journalism before then. Manifesto-like articles in the cultural weekly *Sirp ja Vasar* (*Hammer and Sickle*) called for a rediscovery of the urban environment from the beginning of the twentieth century and for artists' interventions in order to decorate the city. There were articles devoted to modernism of the 1920s, Russian constructivism, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, De Stijl and other movements of the twentieth- century avant-garde. Lapin, Jüri Okas, Ülevi Eljand and the artist Sirje Runge, who was closely associated with architectural circles at that time, organised walks and happenings in the 'forgotten' urban terrains, as well as using urban iconography in their prints and paintings. It is possible to argue that the critical energy of the group, oriented towards change, became most relevant when applied to the field of architecture and that the architectural exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library in 1978 was one of the most important manifestations of this shift.

By openly criticising architecture and urban planning, the group moved from their previous marginal (art) territory and from events that stayed within a small circle of friends, to the centre of a practice closely associated with social production and political power, thus acquiring greater attention and bringing about significant changes in the institution of architecture itself. This was, in many ways, made possible through a dialogue and cooperation with other cultural fields and wider public expectations. The dissolution of architecture in mass construction was easy to understand through the discourse of alienation of the prefabricated suburbs, and, equating modernist industrial society with Soviet Socialism, it was seen as inimitably negative.

Figure 1. View of 'Architectural Exhibition 1978' at the Estonian Academy of Sciences library in Tallinn, 22nd May–7th June, 1978: exhibition design, Tiit Kaljundi, Jüri Okas. (Photograph: Jüri Okas.)

The exhibition at the Academy of Sciences was divided in two, with some of the projects and photographs of the architects' works hanging near the entrance, on a white wall, and others placed on high stands, lined up along the glazed foyer (Fig. 1). The stands were placed not along the window, as was usual, but were shifted towards the centre of the foyer so that the viewers could walk on both sides of the exhibits. The works were placed on the stands so that they faced each other. The line started with Leonhard Lapin's manifesto's 'Concept of Invisible Architecture' and 'Concept of Spontaneous Architecture' and ended with Albert Trapeež's (Leonhard Lapin's) work 'Architectural Styles in 20th Century Estonia', where the wedding photographs of the participants were labelled with the titles of different forms of modern architecture – Art Deco, Functionalism, Bourgeois Style and Art Nouveau (Fig. 2). Since the initial idea of having two works per participant did not work,[5] the stands were not grouped by authors, and instead the works faced each other randomly, with occasionally being in a dialogue: Lapin's 'The City of the Living – The City of the Dead' (Fig. 3), a burial ground for the leading members of the Architects' Union, was opposite Jüri Okas's 'A Monument to Leonhard Lapin in Räpina' (Fig. 4) – a photograph of a disused steel

Figure 2. Albert Trapeež (Leonhard Lapin), 'Architectural Styles in 20th Century Estonia, 1978'; display board at the architectural exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library in Tallinn, 1978. (Courtesy: Museum of Estonian Architecture.)

container on the fringes of a small Estonian town where Lapin grew up; Ülevi Eljand's 'Border Signs', on the other hand, faced Tiit Kaljundi's 'House for Dr Benjamin Spock', an entry for the 1975 *Japan Architect* magazine competition for a House for a Superstar.

The works were mounted on square, one metre cardboard panels, which was the standard format at that time for exhibiting architectural designs in State architectural offices as well as to the broader public. This generic format (and the generic title) could explain the uneasy reception

Figure 3. Leonhard Lapin, 'The City of the Living – The City of the Dead, 1978'; display board at the architectural exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library in Tallinn, 1978. (Courtesy: Museum of Estonian Architecture.)

of the exhibition, since the critical content, the different way of representing architecture and the presence of explicit irony rather than practical solutions did not correspond to what was expected from the usual architectural exhibition. Thus several reviewers commented on the surprising nature of the show: 'when passers-by come, then there must be something unusual on display. This time it is an architecture (or even art) show, and the book of inscriptions and opinions is often used.'[6] They were also surprised that the projects on display 'were not meant to be implemented'.[7] Reviewers from the profession often put it down to the exhibitors being 'the young and the angry

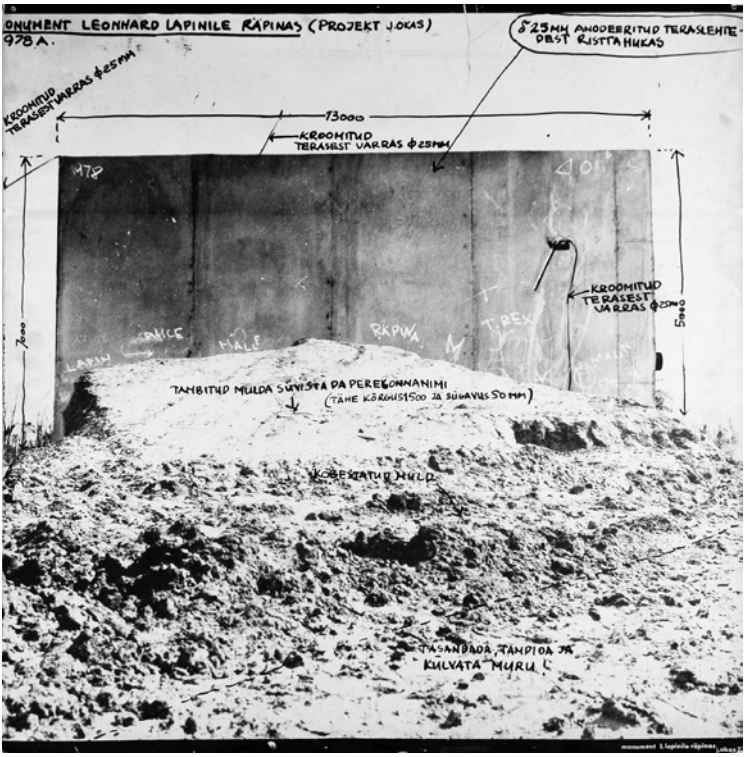


Figure 4. Jüri Okas, 'A Monument to Leonhard Lapin in Räpina, 1978'; display board at the architectural exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library in Tallinn, 1978. (Courtesy: Jüri Okas.)

ones', who would soon settle down and integrate with the system.[8]

That the exhibition had upset the people at the centre of the institution was clear when, even a year after its showing, the head of the Architects' Union, Mart Port, referred to 'the young and angry' in his opening speech for the Union's congress with a nervous remark:

> According to psychologists, frustration with work appears among people with average capabilities

> who have suggested to themselves that they are very talented but are kept down on purpose . . . That is most probably the cause of single cases of physical and mental self-exposure among young architects.[9]

The same architectural congress was however a turning point for Port himself who, after having presided over the Architects' Union for twenty-four years, was not re-elected. Although the new head of the Union came from the equally established and bureaucratic Building Committee, its new vice-head was Toomas Rein who belonged to the Tallinn School group, and the board now included his fellow members Tiit Kaljundi (who became the head of the Youth Section) and Ain Padrik. Thus, inadvertently or not[10], these 'young and angry' architects now became part of the institution they had so criticised.

At the end of the 1970s a shift also took place in architectural practice. Many practitioners turned from late-modernist experiments to historical forms and openly historicist attitudes; it seemed that 'now everything has been done, everything is allowed and possible'.[11] The discourse shifted from the machine age, design of the environment and Russian Constructivism to metaphysics, myths and contextuality. Kahn, Stirling and Archigram, who in architectural debates had featured as paradigms for practice throughout the decade were now replaced by Rossi, Krier and Graves.[12] With an exhibition in the Tallinn Art Salon in 1982, the group of architects was now established as 'the Tallinn Ten' (a newcomer to the group was Ignar Fjuk; whilst Eljand, Vint, Ringo and Šein – the latter had in 1979 emigrated to Israel – stayed away). Instead of 'fast' pop imagery, as seen in the 1978 exhibition, using collage, gouache and photographs, the emphasis was now put on multiple means of architectural representation with more time-consuming pencil drawings, watercolours and prints. Vilen Künnapu stated in the small catalogue of the exhibition,

> Perhaps one common feature in the work of the participants is the love of art and a striving for a certain classical order and clarity. Things, events and objects are arranged in certain hierarchical frames, which are seen as a way out of architectural confusion and unprincipledness that is the result of techno-utopian ways of thinking.[13]

This was an altogether different tone from the one that dominated articles in the beginning of the 1970s, when, for example, Künnapu had called for hollow partition walls to be painted over with portraits of favourite musicians or for children's scribbling on the walls to be considered as art.[14] Postmodernism had brought about new hierarchies and a new order.[15] As an exit from techno-utopia Künnapu now saw 'the rediscovery of classical heritage'.

The notion of architecture-as-art was central to the Tallinn architects, yet there was a shift from the art of the early 1970s, that tested the borders of the institution and intervened in life, to the referential art of the 1980s, that was interested in architectural conventions, representation and symbolism. In retrospect, it is the latter interpretation of architecture-as-art that has been used to characterise the practice of the Tallinn School architects.[16] Even more, the process of the second national awakening that started at the end of the 1980s, together with

the so-called rectifying revolution that instigated in the former Socialist Bloc a return to old national symbols, gave preference to this symbolic side and 'own' architecture that participated in the construction of local identity.[17] Looking in detail at the 'Architectural Exhibition 78' and the discussions surrounding architects' practices in the 1970s, I wish to give an alternative reading of the postmodern turn in Estonia at the end of the decade, to explore the multiple influences active in this change and different paths opened up by the critique of modernism.

Neofunctionalism

The late-modernist reaction in 1970s' Estonian architecture has been defined mainly through the concept of 'Neofunctionalism'. Leonhard Lapin's article in the Estonian art review 'Kunst'[18] of 1979, 'On Functionalism in Contemporary Estonian Architecture', that in a shortened form was also published in the Finnish architectural review 'Arkkitehti' and where the label Tallinn School was used for the first time,[19] defines Neofunctionalism as a return to the examples of 1920s' and 1930s' modernism, characterised by 'formal retreat ... well-calculated shape and finishing that was characteristic of the 1930s building art.' These buildings with white plastered walls and abstract geometric compositions, that often included semicircular and stepped rectangular volumes, emerged in the late 1960s as a reaction to the official Soviet 'architecture of straight lines',[20] as well as to the fascination with Finnish postwar modernism among Estonian architects.[21] Furthermore, modernist architecture had in the 1920s been one of the means by which the newly independent country represented its difference from previous regimes, and this link with the period of the first Estonian republic was not insignificant for Lapin. The Neofunctionalist course was associated with the designs emerging from the Collective Farm Design Office 'EKE projekt', that, because of the independent resources available from kolkozes (collective farms), had a considerable autonomy in the use of construction methods and materials but also freedom from formal regulations, compared to major State design offices. The architectural production of the members of the Tallinn School, especially that of Toomas Rein in the first half of the 1970s, was strongly marked by this aesthetic shift. Lapin associates Neofunctionalism with his Pärnu KEK Construction Company office and residential development, including the 700-metre long 'Golden Home' housing (Figs 5, 6), that 'is reminiscent of Russian Constructivist commune houses' and 'the dreams of De Stijl about the new architectural language of the machine age'.[22] He stresses the unified urban environment that the complex produces, but also its difference from prewar functionalism: the use of new materials, new information and a different understanding of space.

If, in the case of single-family dwellings, Lapin finds the formal reference to prewar Functionalism to be most important, then with public buildings he emphasises their role in the environment or the micro-environments that the buildings help to organise, calling it 'the organisation of interaction between people with architecture'.[23] Neofunctionalism is for Lapin then a term that includes not only a symbolic relationship with prewar Functionalism, but

Figure 5. Toomas Rein, Pärnu KEK Construction Company housing complex 'Kuldne Kodu' ('Golden Home'), 1970–1978. (Photograph: Museum of Estonian Architecture.)

also a late-modernist 'architectural complexity'[24] that attempts to move on from the previous functional separation in urbanism, without turning to historical forms.

In a longer review article on the architecture of the 1970s, written a year later, Lapin illustrates the architectural development of the twentieth century with a lens-shaped diagram of dominant styles.[25] On the one side there is an 'artful' architecture that relies on symbolic representation, that by the 1970s develops into Pop and retro architecture. On the other is the course of modernism, rationalism and of the 'technical era', which grows into New Brutalism, Structuralism, but also Neofunctionalism. That the latter do not feature with the retro styles could be viewed as a reluctance to admit that the return of Functionalism as 'neo' turns it into a symbol of the technical era. It is more likely, however, that Lapin understands the concept in a more open way and not limited to the retrospective dimension.

The concept of Neofunctionalism was later expanded in the catalogue of the touring exhibition of Estonian Functionalism 'Otherwise', in 1993.[26] The show presented a continuum between the modernism of the first independence period in the 1920s and 30s, the return of functionalism in the 1970s and the new wave of 'white houses'

Figure 6. Toomas Rein, Sirje Runge (design of the playgrounds), Kindergarten and Playgrounds for the Pärnu KEK Construction Company, 1975–1978. (Photograph: Andres Ringo.)

in the period of regained independence, the early 1990s. In the catalogue Krista Kodres discusses Neofunctionalist architecture, often using the same examples as Lapin, but, in her account, its meaning lies solely in its reference to the Functionalism of the Estonian independence period, and to its role as a signifier of national identity during the Soviet occupation. This dialectic, however, does not leave any place for the differences within the concept or the plurality of architectural practices which characterised the concept.

For several examples of architectural designs from the 1970s the main difference from previous modernism lay in their specific programmatic solutions, a move away from free planning towards an urban micro-environment where different functions would be intertwined. Commenting on the winning entry in the competition for the Olympic Yachting Centre in Tallinn, in 1973, Avo-Himm Looveer writes that one of his starting points was the street, 'a space of social communication – or just a point of interaction of all the possibilities

offered by the city' and that the result 'was reminiscent more of a small town with its street network, alleyways and quarters'.[27]

A similar description can be found in Vilen Künnapu's article from 1975 where he sees the street primarily as a regulating and controlling feature, but does not yet refer to the need for a return to the street of the past:

> The contemporary experience in architecture, separating fast transportation from the rest of the traffic with bridges or trenches, gives us an opportunity to produce new types of streets that would add to traditional ones. Bridges, escalators, glass galleries can make the street multi-functional, more compact.[28]

If modernist planning principles divided the city into functional and rationally interconnected units, then the micro-environments attempted to overcome this with an intertwined urban structure where living, working, leisure and transport would be synchronic. The multi-layered city and the street that Looveer and Künnapu discussed in their articles were produced, however, not in a retrospective form but in a late-modernist technicist form.

In Kodres's later account of Neofunctionalism, these differences were abandoned due to the chosen perspective: from the postmodern viewpoint this architecture engages foremost with meaning and signification. Neofunctionalism is, in her account, related to similar phenomena in art and literature of the 1970s where, Estonia's 'own history was taken back. … The actualisation of Functionalism … matured from this ground.'[29] If Lapin's article on the architecture of the 1970s introduced a binary relationship between rational, programme-driven architecture and symbolic architecture (that, as he predicted, would combine in the 1980s into retro and Postmodern architecture), then in Kodres's account, this relationship was recast as a division between an 'own' architecture that reinforces national identity and an 'other' architecture. The 'other' mainly encompasses mass construction (now viewed as being more Soviet than modernist) and the 'own' could only stand for Neofunctionalism, carrying on local tradition. Thus there was no place in this scheme for Constructivism or for Structuralism or other important late-modern architectural movements. This return of Estonia's 'own' Functionalism also gave meaning to Postmodernism, in order to sustain a connection with the new wave of Neofunctionalism in the 1990s. The latter would not then be just any of the postmodern neo's (that would not rely on any era or symbol significant for the community), but the only one possible:

> As already during the manifestation of Neofunctionalism, many Postmodernist problems had been raised and phrased, the transition to the new architecture at the end of 1970s … was not so painful nor so directly contrary to Neofunctionalism. This also explains why, even during the bloom of playful Post-modernism in the beginning of the 1980s, Neofunctionalism did not disappear.[30]

From static order to dynamic organisation

The notion of autonomous architecture-as-art that was put forward in later interpretations, did not yet dominate at the time of the Academy of

Sciences exhibition in 1978. This is seen in an article by Harry Šein, 'Of Emptiness, What Else',[31] published in the newspaper *Sirp ja Vasar* during the course of discussions following the exhibition. Although he emphasises 'singular problems' that are characteristic only of architecture, when discussing the spatial organisation of society he sees architecture as 'the only discipline that guarantees a human quality to the environment'. His proposal to 'humanise' and to make the environment subject to 'socio-spatial laws', the 'equivalence of the social and spatial model of the society', is closer to the critique of postwar rational modernism by 'Team Ten' and its later interpretations by the Structuralists and Metabolists.

This critique looked for different ways to organise cities and architecture that, unlike the inflexible and hierarchical modernist attempt, would integrate change. Replacing the 'Functionalism of machine-logic' with 'human-faced populism', Šein characterises this shift as a striving for 'a certain objective and dynamic regulation of the environment instead of the previous thinking that endeavoured for a final and static order.'

From here, he proceeds to describe an epistemological shift in architectural practice that would include seeing the environment as a 'field of object-spaces':

> The aim of design is not to produce things (buildings), but the ways they are connected to each other, the ways these connections change. The structural element of a four-dimensional field (time-space) is the event, an object changing in time. A transformed human being produces a new environment of object-spaces, which in turn affects the human. In this way, architecture develops from the design of events to the design of human interactions.[32]

The ideas of 'dynamic regulation' and 'design of interactions' give an altogether different account of the relationship between architecture and society than was dominant in Soviet Modernism, or in the later representations of the Tallinn School as a 'backward-looking' group of architects. Šein imagines society in terms of individualism, democracy and multiplicity of choice, and, as such, shares the rhetoric associated with the megastructure movement of the 1960s. An important notion there is self-regulation: instead of a clearly defined spatial division where the user can operate, she is now able to change her own micro-surroundings and to decide upon her patterns of behaviour.[33] This kind of self-regulation stood in opposition to the centrally controlled building regulations and standardised designs of the time and gave the inhabitant a free space of her own. This, however, also meant a change for the architect. Recounting the alienation of the inhabitants of the new towns, Šein writes:

> The dwellers feel every day their inability to participate in the design of the living environment nor to manipulate it during use. The more complete the habitation is when we move into it, the more we uphold the initial prohibitions and taboos, the less it will be a home for us. … We can survive without people's architects[34], it being more important that people themselves can be architects.[35]

This kind of outlook was however different from several of Šein's fellow members of the Tallinn

School, who saw the architect primarily as a building artist who had full control over the design of the environment.

The critique of International Style universalism put forward an approach that would take into account the difference between various places and communities, negating the use of similar design patterns in dissimilar places. These theories were well received in the context of a Soviet conception of mass society that was hostile towards differences between communities. Šein's approach would then offer an alternative approach to the symbolically mediated Neofunctionalism, and the later dominant Postmodernism, yet keeping its distance from official Soviet Modernism.

The emphasis on the freedom of choice of the user in the new housing developments was also related to the discussions on theories of environmental psychology. Research on the ways in which new towns affect human behaviour and ways of thinking provided the basis of a critique of mass-produced and standardised architecture and encouraged arguments for differentiation of the needs of the inhabitants. In speaking about differentiating activities that need closure or contact, researchers often argued against collective housing and spoke for the 'need to ensure personal autonomy'.[36] Following the official Soviet modernist doctrine, when most everyday activities would be carried out outside one's home, and flats could be changed depending on changes in the family, then the sense of belonging associated with home traditionally was lost. Thus the aim of this discipline was to restore the 'sense of home' that had withered away in the new towns.[37] This rhetoric of 'progressive conservatism' became influential among the Tallinn Architects during the 1980s, combined with a return to traditional streetscapes, postmodern planning principles and the importance of the so-called human city.[38]

This also leads to a question about the relationship of the Tallinn School and Neofunctionalist architecture of the 1970s to technological rationality and progress. The 1990s' interpretation of Neofunctionalism sees it in a wholly negative way: in contrast with the functionalism of the 1920s the new generation lacked 'fascination and belief in technological progress' and the machine aesthetic was 'desirable inside the boundaries where architecture was capable for its symbolisation'.[39] Yet several micro-environments from the beginning of the 1970s show a different approach. And, throughout the 1970s, Lapin demonstrated a rather ambivalent attitude towards technology and the machine. In 1973, in the journal *Kultuur ja Elu* ('Culture and Life') he wrote on the all-encompassing machine age:

> a child who is born in the 1970s grows up inside a speeding car and on the background of pulsating television screens . . . Most of contemporary architecture, a field of art directly influencing our daily life, is made of industrially produced details and materials – it is machinic. The art of building pays no more attention to the decoration of façades with ornament derived from nature, but to the emotional effect of volumes, repetitive rhythms, surfaces of materials. That is why architecture can be considered a field of art that represents the machine age in the clearest and most radical form. Structures with exceptionally

> complex technology, where the main emphasis is on functionality (eg, factories), could be considered machines rather than architecture.[40]

Lapin's rhetoric seems not to criticise dominant Soviet technocracy, but in fact it was rather distanced from it. Mechanisation had been a central feature of the Soviet Union's official utopia, promising better living standards, and shorter working hours. But it was only partially achieved and in many cases, such as the new towns for example, in an inverted form. Lapin seems to indicate that mechanisation was not a mistake, but that it had not been extensive enough. Instead of an architecture that was produced by a machine, he looks forward to architecture that performs as a machine in the service of the user. In the article, he writes that one should pay more attention to the industrialisation of the building process, since its aim of shifting labour from building site to factory, has not yet been realised. Furthermore, 'in developing mass construction, architects should work out clear, comprehensive and human-centred principles of urban planning, that would reverse prejudice about the lack of perspective of the technical city.'[41] In his print series from the mid 1970s, 'Machines', 'Woman-Machine' and 'Man-Machine', Lapin adopts a somewhat Marcusian position towards technology, criticising the narrow association of machines only with production, and suggests putting them in the service of pleasure and freedom of choice.

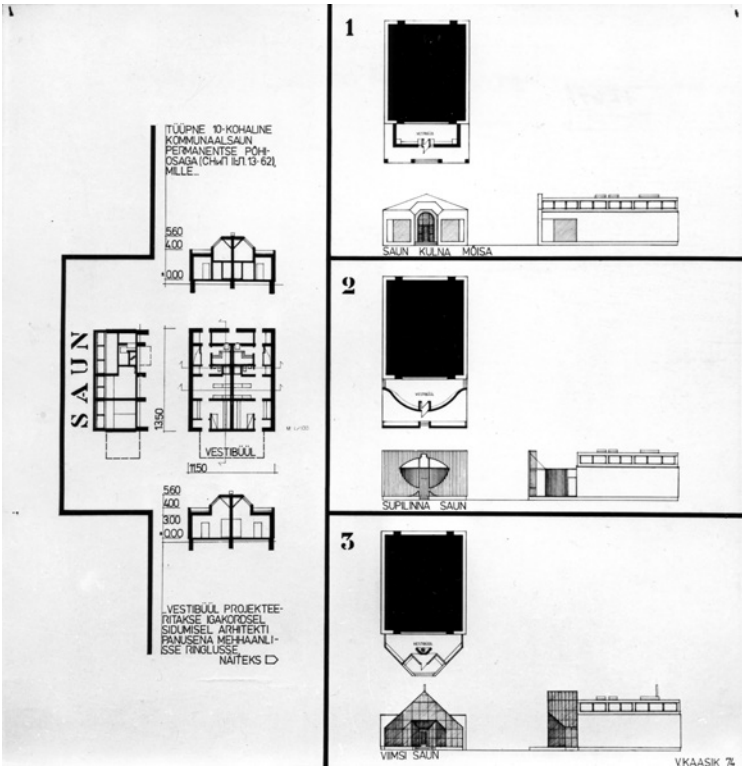
This 'playful technocracy'[42] had a role in the late-Modernist architecture of the whole decade and was preserved in works that, in the first instance, could be considered Postmodernist. Tiit Kaljundi's display at the exhibition in the Academy of Sciences library placed the question of freedom of choice in the context of small towns: how to raise the consciousness of people in small towns, so that they would not leave for larger cities, yet would be offered a similar diversity (Fig. 7). Analysing the architecture of the small towns (façades-screens turned toward the main street and the use of signage to raise consciousness), he suggests the answer is a different kind of approach to architecture, in the form of buildings that would value 'activities, as well as the overall architectural image'. The works he cites include Künnapu's Pärnu Sanatorium and the office of the Rapla KEK Construction Company by Toomas Rein. He makes reference to the 'Instant City' project of Archigram, that transports 'colourful cultural events' from town to town. Here then is a Venturian semantic approach, that looks at architecture as language, side by side with the late-modernist micro-environments and pop-utopias. 'Human dimensions' indicated by Šein, but also by a writer Mati Unt[43] in his review of the exhibition, lie here simultaneously in events and in the 'design of human interactions', as well as in legible symbolism.

A key influence in constructing this parallel between late-modernism and Postmodernism in Estonia in the 1970s was Robert Venturi, whose theories were for the first time introduced in 1973 in the cultural weekly *Sirp ja Vasar*.[44] Veljo Kaasik's project from 1974, also shown in the architectural exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library, was already a direct interpretation of Venturi's 'decorated shed', demonstrating a separation of form and function (Fig. 8). The work shows a

Figure 7. Tiit Kaljundi, 'The Questions of the Small Town, 1978'; display board at the architectural exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library in Tallinn, 1978. (Courtesy: Museum of Estonian Architecture.)

standardised design for a sauna to which, according to its different locations, was added a new screen-façade: a soup bowl for Supilinn (literally: soup city), an historic façade near a manor house, a greenhouse in the Viimsi area (referring to a state farm that was growing flowers). The main difference from Venturi, however, was what lay behind the signifying screen, since the project commented

Figure 8. Veljo Kaasik. 'Template of Saunas (typical sauna for ten persons, with a permanent main structure, for which a new vestibule is designed in each new case), 1974'; display board at the architectural exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library in Tallinn, 1978. (Reproduction: held by the Museum of Estonian Architecture, original lost.)



on the context of a standardised design process and looked for ways to relate a project type with its surroundings. Kaasik was working with an industrial building, yet the façades of the saunas were intended to hide its industrial nature and blend into the existing context.

Kaasik explains this move towards Venturian screens in a later article, where he writes that the

principle of authenticity, dominant in modernism, 'where the unity of form and content is sufficient proof and guarantee for one or another project',[45] was not enough any more. An alternative was to understand architecture as language:

> that gives architecture its meaning and emphasis, allowing to take into maximum account time, place and possibilities and to manipulate the result by using symbols and linguistically expressed signs.[46]

Kaasik's main question, however, is how to apply American theories in the context of Soviet Estonia where the standards of mass construction dominated both architectural practice and construction materials. As a way out, he proposes reversing the building restrictions to one's own benefit, starting from the every-day, and using contradictions and absurd situations as part of the work:

> Values that are based on the aesthetics of imported materials should in this case give way to others, linguistically expressible layers of meaning/symbols which have been achieved with minimal means. Restrictions and rules are being consciously made to talk.[47]

He turns Venturian symbolism against the stereotypes of the building industry and the institution of architecture, where in the case of important public buildings, foreign finishing materials were hiding empty modernist content. Kaasik carries this criticism to the 1980s when, in the exhibition at the Art Salon in 1982, he presented the documentation of a dialogue with his client for a single-family dwelling as an important part of the design process.[48] The desires and dreams of the client now stand in the position of restrictions. Kaasik's work also demonstrates the transformed role of the architect, who had to give up an 'heroic' position, dominant from the interwar modernist period onwards, and his ambitions for total environmental design, demonstrated by the Tallinn School architects at the beginning of the 1970s.

Venturi's turn to the commercial and vernacular architecture of small-town America has retrospectively been criticised, for while he erased the difference between the low and the high, he left the autonomy of the architectural institution untouched and simply 'recouped the low for the high.'[49] The symbolic and the vernacular were rapidly integrated with the dominant institution and led to an excess of communicative and signifying sides to architecture. For the Tallinn architects in the 1970s the introduction of Venturian theories of architectural semantics functioned as a tool for critiquing one-dimensional modernist rationalism, but also as a way to intervene in the production processes of architecture.

Irony and critique of institution

A common feature of several works exhibited at the Academy of Sciences library in 1978 was their humour and parody, but also their self-irony. These included Okas's project for Lapin's monument (see Figure 4 above), Lapin's 'Architectural Styles in Estonia in the 20th Century' (see Figure 2 above), but also Harry Šein's allegorical collages, using cuttings from the local press, of prefabricated new towns, Ain Padrik's 'Exhibitionist Structure' (Fig. 9), where the house had been torn off the ground with piles and pipes and Vilen Künnapu's photographic montages of a house flying above Manhattan. It

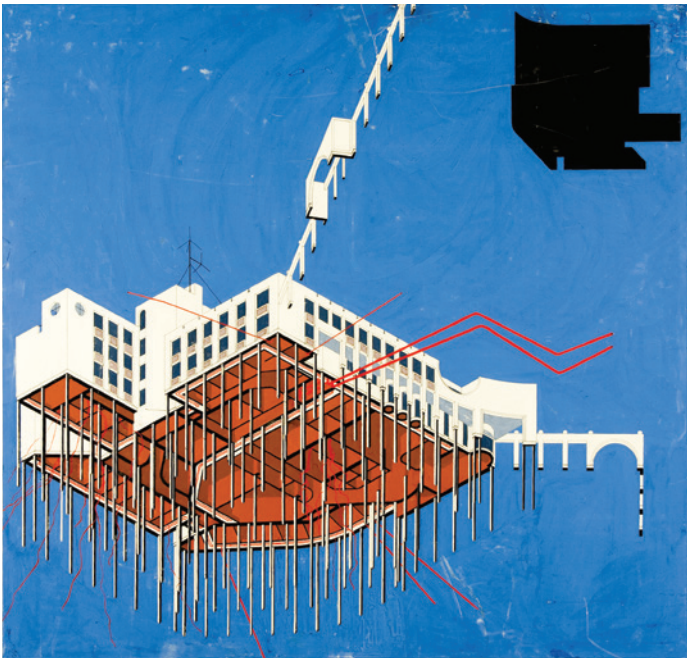


Figure 9. Ain Padrik, 'Exhibitionist Structure (Office building for the collective farm "Western Fisherman" in Haapsalu, unbuilt), 1978'; display board at the architectural exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library in Tallinn, 1978. (Courtesy: Museum of Estonian Architecture.)

was this ironic notion of architecture that fascinated several reviewers of the show. In the cultural weekly *Sirp ja Vasar*, where the editors had invited people from other specialities to write about the show, a journalist commented that 'the parody here is not only negative, mocking the past or the present, but ... works for producing new values'.[50] Mihkel Mutt, a writer, described the works as *mise en scene*s 'because this is what you would call the large collages full of an enigmatic hotchpotch', and added that this way of presenting architecture 'has a certain appeal compared to the overall seriousness'.[51]

The overall seriousness could here signify the official architectural discourse that saw architecture as part of the discipline of engineering and the

construction industry. The architects countering this used parody and irony as a critique of the unyielding institution of architecture and as a way to step out from the prescribed frames and 'the architect's corridor'.[52] If we understand the 'institution' not only as a series of organisations that manage architectural life (architects' unions, educational institutions) but also as the way architecture and its role is seen in society, then irony works here in both ways: as a critique of perceived norms and outdated conventions as well as turning attention to the ways in which meaning is constructed in architecture and how it is related to social and political processes. This could be also a reason why most interesting comments on the exhibition came from people working in other disciplines.

The exhibition was received in different ways: the writings and comments of those who assessed the show according to the standards of a traditional architecture exhibition (where what is considered 'the best' is presented), and those who saw it as part of a critical discussion revolving around issues of architecture and urbanisation, starting from the architects' position. The first saw the exhibition as a certain preparatory exercise before starting to build 'real' houses. This included comments in the guestbook such as: 'It is interesting that architects are still making jokes.'[53] On the other hand, there were those commentators who considered the exhibition itself significant, 'Extremely problematic exhibition. Keep up this spirit!' or 'An exhibition that has a sense of humour and yet is thoughtful.'[54] Others played along in a deadly serious way, like the writer Mati Unt whose comment on the transformation of playgrounds to cemeteries was that 'if it were true, then people would take better care of green areas and parents would forbid their kids from vandalising more.'[55]

But irony could be seen as a specific way of how to rethink architectural practice in a situation where the choice was seemingly between a conservative return to history and modernist mechanisation.[56] In a recent book on architectural practices in the 1970s that presents an alternative to the move to Postmodernism, Felicity Scott (referring to Anthony Vidler) analyses the work of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) through the trope of irony. While at first it seems an unsuitable approach to practical building work, irony was for OMA a self-conscious way to reveal the absurdity of modernist form-programme relationships without drifting into Postmodernism: 'irony had become a way of continuing modernist investigations. It was a type of practice that allowed Modernism to operate in a postutopian present without turning into a "dried-out cynicism"'.[57] If irony in architecture and conceptual architectural practice was more familiar for the Tallinn architects through the *Japan Architect* magazine's competitions[58] than through the early work of OMA, it is the analogy with the 'postutopian' present that allows the opening up of the implications of the 1978 exhibition.

One of the central works in the exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library, in terms of the attention it attracted as well as its political relevance was Lapin's 'The City of the Living – The City of the Dead' (see Figure 3 above); Jüri Okas has recalled that this came as a surprise to other participants.[59] The project inserted a cemetery into the

public areas of the system-built residential district, which usually functioned for car parking or dog walking. The cemetery would have included garages as tombs and bodies were to be buried in cars – the scene in the centre of the design image depicts a Lada being lowered into a grave – commenting in this way also on the growing consumerism throughout the decade. The upper part of the project drawing included several direct and indirect allusions to the representatives of architectural institutions, buried among the houses: the head of the Architects' Union, who had been in charge of all three mass-housing projects in Tallinn, the common grave of the Architects' Union, but also chapels to Lapin himself and his wife. The upper corner featured a Suprematist 'small explosion' that was meant to refer to the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe housing in the US at the same period.[60]

In addition to the direct critique of modernist housing areas and the architectural institution, the work could also be seen as a project that aimed to 'complete' the micro-districts, proposing to lay out cemeteries, in the verdure between the houses, that the 'inhabitants [would] be able to remain in their neighbourhoods forever without ever needing to cross a single thoroughfare'.[61] Although Lapin made reference to the demolition of modernist housing in USA, he himself does not directly criticise the housing but rather presents a deterritorialisation of the new town through its repressed side.

The goal of hygienic modernism and the rationally organised city was to eliminate or contain physical as well as moral dirt. This included abnormality, deviation, sickness and death. In the late-Soviet society that followed modernist principles this was equally strong: death and funerals were something negative that was not to be exposed.[62] In a review of the architects' exhibition Mati Unt writes that 'One hardly ever sees the dead in new towns and we do not know where people disappear after their death, to the air, to earth or to hell.'[63] But this containment was delusional, as deviation and difference existed beside order and cleanliness in a hidden way, among other parameters. Death was actually inscribed into the rationalist living space. In her article about the development of the first modernist area with industrially produced housing in Tallinn, Triin Ojari describes how the winning design from the All-Soviet housing competition for small economic flats in 1956 underwent several cutbacks in its details in the local design office and became rather more Spartan than had been intended: 'the protocols demanded simplification of the interior finishing works, reducing the height of the spaces to 2.5 m, replacing the balcony in the living room with a French window, installing a 1.2 square metre bath in the bathroom and excluding a sink. Next to a demand for the minimum width of the staircases (2.2 m) [was, however, a remark] that one should check the possibility of taking out a coffin.'[64]

A cemetery in the middle of a new town is thus the return of modernism's repressed elements, in a form that Freud called the uncanny – *das Unheimliche* ('the unhomely'), something strange in a familiar and everyday environment, 'everything that ought to have remained … secret and hidden but has come to light.'[65] Instead of demolishing the new town or trying to restore there 'a sense of home', proposed by theorists of environmental

psychology, Lapin produces an environment that shows the illusory nature and fruitlessness of such an undertaking. In that sense Lapin is not offering an harmonious illusion of the future nor is he reconstructing a nostalgic past, but he destabilises the present, opening in this way a place for an alternative practice.

In the exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library, irony worked as a way to position oneself in relation to the dominant architectural institution without submitting to the bureaucratic system or taking a dissident position. It was also an answer, at this particular moment in time, to the question of what architecture's social role could be after modernist mass-production and standardisation had reached a (dead) end and before the all-encompassing Postmodern symbolic production had taken over.

Notes and references

1. Conversation between Andres Kurg and Toomas Rein, 9th October, 2007.
2. The participants in the exhibition were: Leonhard Lapin, Jüri Okas, Toomas Rein, Veljo Kaasik, Avo-Himm Looveer, Jaan Ollik, Tiit Kaljundi, Andres Ringo, Ülevi Eljand, Harry Šein, Vilen Künnapu, Ain Padrik, Matti Õunapuu and Tõnis Vint. Lapin, Künnapu, Looveer and Eljand had studied architecture together in the same class at the Estonian State Art Institute (graduating in 1971); Šein and Kaljundi graduated from the same Institute a year later. A manifesto from 1972, 'Programme for an Exhibition of New Architecture', declaring that 'in architecture, everything is permissible' and that contemporary architecture had to represent new democracy, was signed by Kaljundi, Künnapu, Lapin, Looveer and Eljand. In 1976 Lapin had put together an exhibition on monumental art in the Tallinn Art Hall, including also a section on experimental environmental design that included Kaljundi, Lapin, Okas, Künnapu and Vint. Padrik, Rein, Künnapu, Okas, Ollik, Šein, Kaasik and Eljand worked together at the Collective Farm Design Office 'EKE projekt'; among other works Looveer, Kaljundi, Lapin, Õunapuu and Šein were in 1973–1975 involved in the design of the Tallinn Olympic Yachting Centre (for the 1980 Moscow Games).
3. Leonhard Lapin (b. 1947) worked after graduation in the State Office for Heritage Protection and Restoration. This institution was influential for his interest in early modernist art and architecture. In 1975 he became a freelance artist and architect, exhibiting mostly print-works, but also paintings and 'architectons'. He has designed single-family dwellings, been active as an exhibition designer, poet (under the name Albert Trapeež), art and architecture critic. From the late 1960s onwards he became interested in Kazimir Malevich's work and Suprematism; he was also in close contact with Malevich's student Pavel Kondratev during the 1970s.
4. Leonhard Lapin, *Pimeydestä valoon. Viron taiteen avantgarde neuvostomiehityksen aikana* (Helsinki, Otava, 1996), p. 122.
5. Preparatory protocol for the exhibition at the Academy of Sciences library, I meeting, February 1978. (Leonhard Lapin's archive.)
6. Tõnu Karu, 'Arhitektuurinäitus', *Sirp ja Vasar* (9th June,1978).
7. Jüri Arrak, 'Arhitektuurinäitus', *Sirp ja Vasar* (9th June, 1978).
8. Paul Härmson, 'Kas tõesti tühjusest?', *Sirp ja Vasar* (23rd June,1978).
9. Mart Port, 'Ettekanne "Arhitektuur ja arhitektid arenevas ühiskonnas" ', *Ehitus ja Arhitektuur*, no 2/3 (1981), p. 18.

10. Tiit Kaljundi mentions that the seizure of power in the Union was a conscious one, using all legal means to change things and that they did not want to adopt the dissident's position. Interview between Andres Kurg and Tiit Kaljundi, 17th July, 2007.
11. Veljo Kaasik, 'Mida arvata Venturist?' in *Arhitektuur. Kogumik ettekandeid, artikleid, vastukajasid, dokumente ja tõlkeid uuemast arhitektuurist* (Tallinn, Leonhard Lapin's manuscript collection, 1979), p. 74.
12. In 1973 Vilen Künnapu introduced Louis Kahn, James Sirling and Archigram, among others, under the title 'Complex architecture' in the cultural weekly *Sirp ja Vasar*. See: Vilen Künnapu, 'Keeruline arhitektuur', *Sirp ja Vasar* (5th May,1973). A longer article by Künnapu on Louis Kahn was published in 1974 in the Estonian Art Review *Kunst*. See: Vilen Künnapu, 'Louis Kahn', *Kunst*, no. 1, (45) (1974), pp. 48–52. A translation of an interview and article by Aldo Rossi is found in the self-published collection of articles from 1979: *Arhitektuur. Kogumik ettekandeid, artikleid, vastukajasid, dokumente ja tõlkeid uuemast arhitektuurist*, (Tallinn, manuscript collection, 1979), pp. 54–57. A translation of Rob Krier's article on city space was published in a manuscript collection in 1980. See: Rob Krier, 'Linnaruum' in *Tallinna Seminar*, ENSV Arhitektide Liit (Tallinn, manuscript collection, 1980), pp. 101–107. A longer overview of American Postmodernism of the 1970s including Michael Graves, Charles Moore, Peter Eisenman, Robert Venturi, is in: Vilen Künnapu, 'Keerulise ja vastuolulise arhitektuuri probleeme', *Ehituskunst* no 1 (1981), pp. 48–52.
13. Vilen Künnapu, 'Kümme arhitekti Tallinna kunstisalongis', *Kunst*, no 2 (62) (1983).
14. In a text from 1972, 'A Proposal', that describes the possibilities of decorating the city through spontaneous interventions, Vilen Künnapu and Juhan Viiding write: 'There is no point to forbid your kids from writing on the pavement and the walls of the houses. The network of lines by a child's hand is a property of the street and the house.' See: Vilen Künnapu, Juhan Viiding, 'Ettepanek' in V. Künnapu, *Üle Punase Jõe. Valitud tekste 1972–2001* (Tallinn, Tallinna tehnikakõrgkool, 2001), p. 12. The text was initially published in *Sirp ja Vasar*, but this sentence was omitted: see: V. Künnapu, J. Viiding,. 'Ettepanek', *Sirp ja Vasar* (1st September, 1972.)
15. The term 'Postmodernism' emerged in architectural discussions in Estonia at the end of 1970s. In a diagram from 1979, on the development of architectural styles in the twentieth century, Lapin uses Postmodernism as a common term for architectural currents at the end of the twentieth century (combining neorationalism, neofunctionalism, structuralism). The diagram was published in 1981 in the Estonian architectural journal *Ehituskunst*: Leonhard Lapin, 'Arengujooni Eesti seitsmekümnendate aastate arhitektuuris', *Ehituskunst*, no. 1 (1981), p. 10. In the same issue Vilen Künnapu explained 'Postmodernism' in a footnote to his review of American architecture as a term that has been 'interpreted in different ways. Recently its meaning has broadened to include all neo-historicist architecture'. See: Vilen Künnapu, 'Keerulise ja vastuolulise arhitektuuri probleeme', *Ehituskunst*, no. 1 (1981), pp. 48–52. In a recent interview, Juhani Pallasmaa dated the intense discussions on Postmodernist architecture in Finland to 1979–80; he points out the exhibitions in 1980 at the Museum of Finnish Architecture that contributed to the discussions: 'Creation and Recreation. America Draws', an exhibition of American architectural drawings and 'Symbol and Interpretation', an exhibition of Cranbrook Academy design students' work, curated by Daniel Libeskind. According to Pallasmaa the catalogues of the exhibitions were studied also by the Tallinn architects. See, Andres Kurg, interview with

Juhani Pallasmaa regarding his relationship with the Tallinn architects: Andres Kurg, Mari Laanemets, eds, 'Environment, projects, concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972–1985 (Tallinn, Museum of Estonian Architecture, 2008). Künnapu also mentions the exhibition of the Cranbrook Academy students in his article in *Ehituskunst*, *op. cit.*

16. For overviews of the Tallinn School see:*Yhdeksän arkkitehtia Tallinnasta* ('Nine Architects from Tallinn'), ed., Markku Komonen (Helsinki, Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1984); *Tio arkitekter fran Tallinn*, ed., Karin Winter (Stockholm, Museum of Swedish Architecture, 1990); 'Neuf architectes de Tallinn', *Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (September, 1984); 'Neun Architekten aus Tallinn', *Werk, Bauen+Wohnen* No. 6 (1985); Silvia Milesi, 'Fra integrazionalismo e regionalismo. Alcuni giovani architetti di Tallinn', *Casabella*, 529 (1986); Benedikt Loderer, 'Tallinner Schule': Aufbruch in Estland' in *Hochparterre. Zeitschrift für Design*, *Architektur und Umwelt*, 6 (June, 1989).
17. The second national awakening refers to a period from 1987, when together with the overall liberation of Soviet perestroika demands for local autonomy and independence emerged in Estonia, to 1991 when the country was declared independent. It also implies a continuum with the first national liberation movement from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, leading to the independent Estonian Republic of the interwar years (1918–1940).
18. Leonhard Lapin, 'Funktsionalism Eesti uuemas arhitektuuris', *Kunst*, no 1 (55) (1979).
19. The name Tallinn School was given by *Arkkitehti*'s editor Markku Komonen, in his introduction to the article. See: Leonhard Lapin, 'Funktionalismi Eestin uudessa arkkitehtuurissa', *Arkkitehti*, no. 3 (1980), pp. 53–58.
20. This is how Lapin calls official architecture. See, eg: Leonhard Lapin, 'Arengujooni Eesti 1970. aastate arhitektuuris', *Ehituskunst*, 1 (1981).
21. This critique owes much to the contacts of the Tallinn School with the generation of young Finnish architects in the late 1960s and 1970s. See: Andres Kurg, interview with Juhani Pallasmaa regarding his relationship with the Tallinn architects; Andres Kurg, Mari Laanemets, eds, *Environment, projects, concepts. Architects of the Tallinn School 1972–1985* (Tallinn, Museum of Estonian Architecture, 2008).
22. Leonhard Lapin, 'Funktsionalism Eesti uuemas arhitektuuris', *Kunst*, no. 1 (55) (1979).
23. *Ibid.*
24. This is how Vilen Künnapu characterises the architecture of James Stirling, Alison and Peter Smithson and Archigram, amongst others: see, Vilen Künnapu, 'Keeruline arhitektuur', *Sirp ja Vasar* (5th May, 1973).
25. Leonhard Lapin, *Arengujooni Eesti 1970. aastate arhitektuuris, op. cit*.
26. Krista Kodres, 'Valged majad on midagi muud' in *Teisiti. Funktsionalism ja neofunktsionalism Eesti arhitektuuris* (Tallinn, Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 1993).
27. *Arhitekt Avo-Himm Looveer*, eds, Jaan Ollik, Karin Hallas-Murula (Tallinn, Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 2003), p. 20.
28. Vilen Künnapu, 'Tänav', *Üle Punase Jõe. Valitud tekste 1972–2001* (Tallinn, Tallinna tehnikakõrgkool, 2001), p. 62.
29. Krista Kodres, *Valged majad on midagi muud*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
31. Harry Šein, 'Tühjusest, millest siis muust', *Sirp ja Vasar* (25th August,1978).
32. *Ibid.*
33. Alan Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture. Oxford History of Art* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 222.
34. The title 'People's Architect of the Soviet Union' was an honorary rank, given to selected architects in the USSR; in Soviet Estonia the title was given to Mart

Port. A lower and more common honorary rank was 'Soviet Estonian Merited Architect'.

35. Harry Šein, *Tühjusest, millest siis muust, op. cit*.
36. Mati Heidmets, 'Linn inimeses' ('City inside the Human Being'), *Looming*, no 4 (1978), p. 630.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 631.
38. Ignar Fjuk, 'Inimeselinn ehk edasiviivast alalhoidlikkusest' ('The Human City or On Progressive Conservatism'), *Ehituskunst*, 1 (1981), pp. 22–27.
39. Krista Kodres, 'Valged majad on midagi muud', *op. cit.*, p. 29.
40. Leonhard Lapin, 'Masinaajastu ja kunst', *Kultuur ja Elu*, no. 9 (1973), p. 56.
41. Leonhard Lapin, 'Arengujooni Eesti 1970. aastate arhitektuuris', *op. cit.*, p. 21.
42. This is how Simon Sadler has described Archigram: see, Simon Sadler, 'Archigram and Technocracy' in *Universal versus Individual. The Architecture of the 1960s*, eds, Pekka Korvenmaa, Esa Laaskonen (Alvar Aalto Academy, 2002), pp. 86–89.
43. Mati Unt, 'Arhitektuurinäitus', *Sirp ja Vasar* (9th June,1978).
44. Vilen Künnapu, 'Keeruline arhitektuur', *op. cit.*
45. Veljo Kaasik, '*Mida arvata Venturist?*', *op. cit.*, p. 75.
46. Veljo Kaasik, 'Venturi ja Me', *Ehituskunst*, nos 2–3 (1982–1983), p. 60.
47. *Ibid.*
48. The work presents the exchange of letters with corresponding dates: client's preliminary sketch is followed by the architect's proposal, followed by the client's critique. The architect answers by 'making twists and turns' (in order not to follow the critique directly; but also to make the programme more complex). The house was built in Tartu, Nisu 48; according to Veljo Kaasik the choice of the experimental façade bricks was by the client (who was a physicist by training) and Kaasik himself did not supervise the completion of the project.
49. Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1996), p. 60.
50. Enn Siimer, 'Arhitektuurinäitus', *Sirp ja Vasar* (9th June,1978).
51. Mihkel Mutt, 'Arhitektuurinäitus', *Sirp ja Vasar* (9th June,1978).
52. Interview between Andres Kurg and Tiit Kaljundiga, 17th July, 2007.
53. The book of opinions and inscriptions on the Architectural exhibition, 1978.(Tiit Kaljundi's archive.)
54. *Ibid.*
55. Mati Unt, 'Arhitektuurinäitus', *op. cit.*
56. My attempt here to find a way out from the binary is a paraphrase from Felicity D. Scott: 'To refuse the dualism of melancholy versus uncritical techno-optimism, I want to adopt a central lesson from these interconnected theoretical lineages: capitalism can be understood to resolve all contradictions only if we continue to regard the dialectic itself as the sole mechanism of historical transformation.'; Felicity D. Scott, *Architecture or Techno-utopia. Politics after modernism* (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 2007), pp. 10–11.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
58. The *Japan Architect* magazine was available for readers at the Estonian State Library in Tallinn from 1971; in 1975 Tiit Kaljundi submitted a project for the magazine's competition 'House for a Superstar', where the participants had to design a residential building for a celebrity of their choice. Kaljundi's proposal was a house for the popular American paediatrician Benjamin Spock whose theories were a radical contrast to the ones prevailing in the Soviet Union. Through translations he became known and extremely popular in the Soviet Union in the mid-1970s. *Baby and Child Care* was the first title available in Russian; in 1976 it was translated into Estonian and became an instant bestseller. Kaljundi used a parallel between

the different stages of human life and the different parts of space: the house was meant to grow out of the landscape, symbolising birth, childhood, youth, self-definition, the era of deeds, memory, eternity. The winners of the 1975 *Japan Architect* competition were chosen by Arata Isozaki; the first prize went to Tom Heneghan for his conceptual project 'Raquel Welch House', where the house of the superstar, herself a product of the mass media, existed also only in a media form, as a press release and images in a journal; the second prize went to Hans Hollein who, significantly for the context of Lapin's work, proposed a mausoleum for Aristotle Onassis.

59. Conversation between Andres Kurg and Jüri Okas, 4th August, 2005.
60. Conversation between Andres Kurg and Leonhard Lapin, 28th July, 2005. Lapin's reference to Pruitt-Igoe as well as his diagrams (see Note 15 above) show his familiarity with Charles Jencks's influential book *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977); there are, however, no direct references to Jencks in the writings of architects before the 1980s.
61. Mati Unt, 'Sügisball', *Looming*, no. 9 (1978), p. 1433.
62. Interview between Andres Kurg and Tiit Kaljundi, 17th July, 2007.
63. Mati Unt, 'Arhitektuurinäitus' ('Architectural exhibition'), *Sirp ja Vasar* (9th June, 1978).
64. Triin Ojari, 'Modernismi parameetrid: Mustamäe kujunemisest', in *Kümme. Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseumi aastaraamat* (Tallinn, Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 2000), p. 61.
65. Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' in *Art and Literature. The Pelican Freud Library Volume 14* (London, Penguin Books, 1985), p. 345.

RESÜMEE

SEGILÖÖDUD PIIRID.
Hilisnõukogude muutused kunstis, ruumis ja subjektsuses Tallinnas aastatel 1968–1979

Sissejuhatus

Siinse töö eesmärk on uurida, kuidas alternatiivne kunst Nõukogude Liidus seostus alates 1960. aastate lõpust toimunud muutustega ruumilises keskkonnas ja subjektiloomes ning küsida, kas nende muutuste taustal on adekvaatne selle kunsti nimetamine "mitteametlikuks". Hilisnõukogude kunsti iseloomustavat vastandust mitteametliku ja ametliku vahel uuritakse antud töös osana laiemast avaliku ja privaatse dihhotoomiast, mis on struktureerinud mitmeid riigisotsialistlike ühiskondade käsitlusi. Väidan, et alternatiivsed kunstipraktikad ei leidnud aset mitte eraelu autonoomsetel saartel, vaid neid saab paremini iseloomustada kontaktide ja seoste kaudu nendest väljaspool asunud valdkondade ja ruumidega. Käsitlen sellist piiride murdumist kui ühte peamist sümptomit laiemas ahelas, kus muutused hilisnõukogude igapäevaelu korralduses, kultuuris ja vaba aja veetmises seostusid globaalse moderniseerumise (ja postmoderniseerumise) jõududega ning sellele vastavate subjektiformatsioonidega. Võtan vaatluse alla alates 1960. aastate lõpust Tallinnas tegutsenud rühma kunstnikke ja disainereid, kelle töö oli välja kasvanud Hruštšovi sulaaja ja sellele järgnenud perioodi uutest diskursustest ja institutsioonidest – disainist ja tehnilisest esteetikast, informatsiooniteooriast ja küberneetikast –, asudes samas 1970. aastate teisel poolel nende diskursuste suhtes kriitilisele seisukohale.

Metodoloogiliselt olen aluseks võtnud viimase aja kultuuri- ja sotsiaalteoorias kasutusel olevad kriitilised ruumiteooriad, mis näevad koha spetsiifikat ühendustes ja koostoimes väljaspoolsete protsessidega ning pakuvad dünaamilise mudeli ruumide seostamiseks tegevuse ja funktsiooniga. Nende teooriate hulka kuuluvad Henri Lefebvre'i käsitlus sotsiaalsest ruumist ja ruumistamisest ning selle edasiarendus ja tõlgendus kultuurigeograafias (Doreen Massey), Jürgen Habermasi uurimus kodanliku avalikkuse struktuurimuutusest ning selle tõlgendused sotsiaalses ja poliitilises teoorias (Nancy Fraser, Seyla Benhabib, Craig Calhoun) ja Michel Foucault' käsitlus distsiplinaarsusest ja subjektistamisest ning selle edasiarendus poliitilises filosoofias (Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri). Nõukogude perioodi käsitleva ajalookirjutuse puhul toimib selline kriitiline raamistus kahel tasandil: pakkudes välja dünaami-

lisemaid viise ruumide ja identiteetide seostamisel ning nihutades fookuse rahvuskeskselt ajalookirjutuselt – mis on Nõukogude Liidu lagunemise järel taasiseseisvunud riikides siiani domineeriv – transnatsionaalsetele trajektooridele ja ühendustele.

Peamised allikad

Koondades kunsti, arhitektuuri ja disaini valdkondi, on käesoleva uurimuse allikate valik lai, esindades sageli erinevaid vaatepunkte ja hääli. Minu eesmärk on uurida mitte ainult kunsti-, arhitektuuri- ja disainiobjekte, vaid kirjeldada laiemalt kogu suhete ja mõjude võrgustikku, milles paiknesid alternatiivse kunsti ja arhitektuuri praktikad riigisotsialistlikus ühiskonnas. Oluliseks lätteks on siin olnud kunstnike ja arhitektide tekstid 1970. aastatest. Leonhard Lapini märkmed, käsikirjad, kunsti- ja arhitektuurikriitika, aga ka retrospektiivselt avaldatud raamatud selle aja kohta on olnud asendamatud. Sama olulised on 1970. aastatest pärinevad kriitikatekstid Vilen Künnapult, Ando Keskkülalt ja Andres Toltsilt. Nende kõrvale olen seadnud toonase kunstikriitika Ene Lambilt, Boris Bernšteinilt, Jaak Kangilaskilt, Tamara Luugilt, Eha Komissarovilt ja Sirje Helmelt. Retrospektiivsete väljaannete hulgas on standardtekstideks Jaak Kangilaski ja Sirje Helme *Lühike eesti kunsti ajalugu* (1999)[1] *ja Mart Kalmu Eesti 20. sajandi arhitektuur* (2001)[2]; need on olnud lähtekohaks minu enda väidetele. Toonast perioodi mõtestavad ümber Katrin Kivimaa *Rahvuslik ja modernne naiselikkus eesti kunstis 1850–2000* (2009)[3] ja Mari Laanemetsa *Lääne modernismi ja nõukogude avangardi vahel. Mitteametlik kunst Eestis 1969–1978* (2011)[4]; viimane tõstab Eesti toonase mitteametliku kunsti olulise joonena esile interdistsiplinaarsuse.

Nõukogude mitteametlikku kunsti puudutav kirjandus on olnud väga lai. Kolm keskset raamatut (millest kaks on välja kasvanud samanimelistest näitustest) esindavad lääne külma sõja aegset diskursust, mis eelistas näidata mitteametlikku kunsti riigipoolsele rõhumisele vastu seisva individuaalse vabaduse väljendusena. Need on Paul Sjeklocha ja Igor Meadi *Mitteametlik kunst Nõukogude Liidus* (1967)[5], Igor Golomshtoki ja Alexander Glezeri *Mitteametlik*

1 Sirje Helme, Jaak Kangilaski, Lühike Eesti kunsti ajalugu. Tallinn: Kunst, 1999.

2 Mart Kalm, Eesti 20. sajandi arhitektuur. Tallinn: Sild, 2001.

3 Katrin Kivimaa, Rahvuslik ja modernne naiselikkus eesti kunstis 1850–2000. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2009.

4 Mari Laanemets, Zwischen westlicher Moderne und sowjetischer Avantgarde: Inoffizielle Kunst in Estland 1969–1978. Humboldt-Schriften zur Kunst- und Bildgeschichte, Bd. 14. Berlin: Mann, 2011.

5 Paul Sjeklocha, Igor Mead, Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967.

kunst Nõukogude Liidust (1977)[6] ning Norton Dodge'i ja Alison Hiltoni *Uus kunst Nõukogude Liidust* (1977)[7]. Nõukogude Liidu lagunemise järel 1991. aastal mitmekesistus vaatepunktide hulk mitteametlikule kunstile ning mitmed autorid tulid välja oma tõlgendustega sellest perioodist. Sellised raamatud on Andrei Jerofejevi *Mitteametlik kunst. Nõukogude kunstnikud 1960. aastatel* (1995)[8], Boris Groysi *Stalin-stiil* (1993)[9] ja *Ajalugu saab vormiks. Moskva kontseptualism* (2010)[10], Viktor Tupitsõni *Museoloogiline mitteteadvus. Kommunaalne (post)modernism Venemaal* (2009)[11] ja hiljutine Jekaterina Andrejeva *Nõustumatuse nurk. Moskva ja Leningradi nonkonformismi koolkonnad 1946–1991* (2012)[12]. Kui autorid nagu Groys ja Tupitsõn on välja tulnud uute julgete tõlgendustega kunstist ja kunstirühmituste tegevusest Venemaal, siis teised on käibesse toonud varem tundmatut materjali ja uusi teadmisi. Sellele vaatamata on enamikus käsitlustes jäänud mitteametliku kunsti mõiste muutumatuna käibele. Seda kasutavad jätkuvalt ka uue põlvkonna uurijad. Erandiks on siin Susan E. Reidi tööd, mis tõmbavad tähelepanud ametliku ja mitteametliku läbipõimumisele 1960. aastatel (sellele on osutatud juba tema 1996. aastast pärit doktoritöös *Destaliniseerimine ja nõukogude kunsti remoderniseerimine. Kaasaegse realismi otsingud, 1953–1963*[13]).

Kõrvuti mitteametliku kunsti käsitlustega olen kasutanud uurimusi nõukogude ühiskonnast 1960. ja 1970. aastatel. Moshe Lewini *Gorbatšovi fenomen. Ajalooline tõlgendus* (1991)[14] kaardistab muutusi, mis leidsid aset perestroikale eelnenud kümnenditel; Stephen Kotkini *Ärahoitud maailmalõpp. Nõukogude Liidu kokkukukkumine 1970–2000* (2001)[15] portreteerib sama perioodi, mis päädis NSVLi lagunemisega. Janos Kornai *Sotsialistlik süsteem. Kommunismi poliitökonoomia* (1992)[16] ja Katherine Verdery *Mis oli sotsialism ja mis tuleb*

6 Igor Golomshtok, Alexander Glezer, Unofficial Art from the Soviet Union. London: Secker and Warburg, 1977.

7 Norton Dodge, Alison Hilton, toim-d, New Art from the Soviet Union: The Known and the Unknown. Washington D.C: Acropolis Books, 1977.

8 Andrei Erofeev, Non-Official Art: Soviet Artists of the 1960s. Lowestoft: Craftsman House, 1995.

9 Boris Groys, Stalin-stiil. Tlk Kajar Pruul. – Akadeemia 2– 5, 1998, lk 417–1106.

10 Boris Groys, History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010.

11 Victor Tupitsyn, The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)modernism in Russia. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2009.

12 Ekaterina Andreeva, Ugol nesootvetstvija. Shkoly nonkonformizma. Moskva-Leningrad 1946–1991. Moskva: Iskusstvo–XXI Vek, 2012.

13 Susan E. Reid, Destalinization and the Remodernization of Soviet Art: The Search for a Contemporary Realism, 1953–1963. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996.

14 Moshe Lewin, The Gorbachew Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991.

15 Stephen Kotkin, Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse 1970–2000. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

16 János Kornai, The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

pärast seda? (1996)[17] andsid nõukogude majanduse kirjeldamiseks vajaliku tausta ja sõnavara, võimaldades seda kõrvutada lääne kriitilise kirjandusega. Edwin Baconi ja Mark Sandle'i toimetatud kogumik *Ümbermõtestatud Brežnev* (2002)[18] käis välja uue ja ebakonventsionaalse vaatenurga Leonid Brežnevi pikaajalisele valitsusperioodile, kritiseerides muuhulgas selle iseloomustamiseks tihti kasutatud mõistet "stagnatsioon". Slava Gerovitši *Uudistekeelest küberneetika keeleni. Nõukogude küberneetika ajalugu* (2002)[19] andis väärtusliku ülevaate küberneetika kui distsipliini arengust Nõukogude Liidus; Aleksei Jurtšaki *Kõik oli igavene, kuni seda enam polnud. Viimane Nõukogude sugupõlv* (2005)[20] osutas võimalusele mõelda hilisnõukogude ajast teistmoodi kui binaarsuste kaudu.

Minu ettekujutus viisidest, kuidas igapäevaelu ja materiaalne kultuur funktsioneerisid riigisotsialistlikus ühiskonnas, võlgneb palju kolmele kogumikule, mille on koostanud David Crowley ja Susan E. Reid ning mis tegelevad idablokiga laiemalt: *Stiil ja sotsialism. Modernsus ja materiaalne kultuur sõjajärgses Ida-Euroopas* (2000)[21], *Sotsialistlikud ruumid. Igapäevaelu kohad idablokis* (2002)[22] ja *Naudingud sotsialismis. Puhkus ja luksus idablokis* (2010)[23]. Samuti olen globaalse moderniseerimise, arhitektuuri ja subjekti vaheliste seoste mõtestamisel kasutanud hiljutisi teedrajavaid arhitektuuriajaloo-uurimusi, mis käsitlevad sõjajärgseid eksperimentaalseid praktikaid ja postmoderniseerimist läänes: Reinhold Martini *Organisatoorne kompleks. Arhitektuur, meedia ja korporatiivne ruum* (2003)[24] ja Felicity Scotti *Arhitektuur või tehnoutoopia. Poliitika pärast modernismi* (2007)[25]. Nendega paralleelselt uurib Branden Josephi *Pärast Dream Syndicate'i. Tony Conrad ja kunstid pärast Cage'i* (2008)[26] sõjajärgsete aastate kunstiavangardi kohtumisi

17 Katherine Verdery, What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next? Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.

18 Edwin Bacon, Mark Sandle, toim-d, Brezhnev Reconsidered. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002.

19 Slava Gerovich, From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002.

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

21 Susan E. Reid, David Crowley, toim., Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe. Oxford: Berg, 2000.

22 David Crowley, Susan E. Reid, toim., Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc. Oxford: Berg, 2002.

23 David Crowley, Susan E. Reid, toim-d, Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2010.

24 Reinhold Martin, The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media and Corporate Space. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

25 Felicity D. Scott, Architecture or Techno-utopia: Politics after modernism. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT press, 2007.

26 Branden W. Joseph, Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage. New York: Zone Books, 2008.

toona esilekerkinud informatsioonitehnikatega ja viise, kuidas kunst nende suhtes positsioneerus.

Töö teoreetilised lähtekohad pärinevad järgmistest raamatutest: Henri Lefebvre'i *Ruumi tootmine* (1974)[27], Doreen Massey *Ruumile* (2005)[28], Jürgen Habermasi *Avalikkuse struktuurimuutus* (1961)[29], Michel Foucault' *Distsiplineeri ja karista. Vangla sünd* (1975)[30] *ja Seksuaalsuse ajalugu 1. Teadmistahe* (1976)[31] ning Michael Hardti ja Antonio Negri *Dionüüsose töö* (1994)[32] ja *Impeerium* (2000)[33]. Viimane, laiendades subjektiteooriaid ja liites neid informatiseerumise ja immateriaalse töö protsesside käsitlustega, andis ühtlasi koordinaadid Nõukogude Liidu 1960.–1970. aastate arengute asetamiseks globaalsete muutuste konteksti. Habermasi erinevate sfääride kirjelduste edasiarendamisel ja nende võrdlemisel minu uurimismaterjaliga on kasulikud olnud järgmised artiklikogumikud: Jeff Weintraubi ja Krishan Kumari *Avalik ja privaatne mõtlemises ja praktikas. Vaatenurki suurele dihhotoomiale* (1997)[34] ja Lewis H. Siegelbaumi *Sotsialismi piirid. Privaatsfäärid Nõukogude Venemaal* (2006)[35]. Kaks N. Katherine Hayles'i raamatut, *Piiritletud kaos. Korrapärane korratus kaasaegses kirjanduses ja teaduses* (1990)[36] ja *Kuidas me muutusime post-inimesteks. Virtuaalsed kehad küberneetikas, kirjanduses ja informaatikas* (1999)[37], on aidanud mul mõista, kuidas küberneetika seostub laiemate kultuuriliste ja poliitiliste nähtustega ning näha pingeid ja seoseid Norbert Wieneri teostes.

Töö ülesehitus

Siinne töö järgib kahte paralleelset liini. Esimene uurib kriitiliselt nõukogude privaatsfääri representatsioone ning nende seost mitteametliku kunstiga.

27 Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
28 Doreen Massey, For Space. London: Sage Publications, 2005.
29 Jürgen Habermas, Avalikkuse struktuurimuutus. Uurimused ühest kodanikuühiskonna kategooriast. Tlk Andres Luure. Tallinn: Kunst, 2001.
30 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Vintage, 1995.
31 Michel Foucault, Seksuaalsuse ajalugu 1. Teadmistahe. Tlk Indrek Koff. Tallinn: Valgus, 2005.
32 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Labor of Dionysos: A Critique of the State-Form. Theory out of Bounds, vol. 4. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
33 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.
34 Jeff Weintraub, Krishan Kumar, toim-d, Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
35 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, toim, Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia. New York, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
36 N. Katherine Hayles, Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1990.
37 N. Katherine Hayles, How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1999.

Nonkonformistliku või mitteametliku kunsti käsitlused, millest varasemad kirjutati juba 1960. aastatel, nägid kodusid eraelu saartena, mis seisid vastu vaenulikule avalikule sfäärile ja pakkusid nii pelgupaika kui ka kunsti loomiseks vajalikku autonoomiat. Selline privaatsfääri ja mitteametliku kunsti vahelise seose käsitlus välistas alternatiivsete ruumistuste ja identiteetide vaatluse. Selle seisukohaga väideldes reastan ma oma töö hiljutiste uurimustega, mis rõhutavad avaliku ja privaatse vahelise piiri läbitavust ja poorsust ning asendavad privaatsfääri kujuteldava autonoomia keerukama arusaamaga seostest "interjööride" ja "eksterjööride" vahel.

Teine liin uurib tehniliste muutuste ja tarbimisühiskonna ümber keerelnud diskussioonide mõju grupi Tallinna kunstnike loomingule ja igapäevaelu ümbermõtestamist nende töödes. Olles sageli arhitekti või disaineri professionaalse taustaga, käsitlesid nad oma kunstilise sekkumise territooriumina keskkonda kui tervikut. Selline ümbritseva keskkonna kujundus, mis kasutas uut tehnikat ja kohandas seda igapäevaeluga, ei hõlmanud mitte ainult esteetilist, vaid ka sotsiaalset sfääri, ja kujutles uuelaadset vaatajat ja uuelaadset kaasamist. Nende kunstnike töid võib seega näha praktikana, mis uute tehniliste vahendite, meedia ja kommunikatsioonisüsteemide kasutamise kaudu sisestas kunsti alternatiivseid tähendusi, aga ka katsena vastata uute tehnoloogiate poolt restruktureeritud subjektile. Sisemise ja välimise vahelise piiri ümbermõtestamine on seega oluline mõlema liini jaoks: kodude puhul on kahtluse alla seatud eristus avaliku ja privaatse vahel, subjekti puhul, mida mõistetakse muuhulgas pideva informatsioonivahetuse kaudu, on hajunud eristus autonoomse "interjööri" ja välismaailma vahel.

Töö lähtekohad

Postsotsialistlikul perioodil nii Baltimaades kui Lääne-Euroopas kirjutatud nõukogude kunsti ajalugude esimene laine 1990. aastate alguses huvitus peamiselt mitteametlikust kunstist ja alternatiivsetest positsioonidest, mis vastandasid end senikehtinud ametlikele ajalugudele. Diskursus, millele panid aluse lääne kunstikollektsionäärid ja läände emigreerunud kunstnikud, keskendus nonkonformistlikule kunstimaailmale (seda maailma samas ka aktiivselt konstrueerides), representeerides seda ametlikust ideoloogiast sõltumatu ja rikkumatuna. Ehkki Baltimaade kontekstis on enamus uurijaid märkinud ametliku ja mitteametliku eristuse keerukust, sobis mitteametliku kunsti vastupanu kuvand rahvusliku vabanemise diskursuse ning identiteedipoliitikaga, mille eesmärk oli nende riikide lahkukirjutamine Nõukogude Liidu (ja Venemaaga) seotud minevikust.[38]

38 Vt Sirje Helme, Mitteametlik kunst. Vastupanuvormid eesti kunstis. – Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 10. Tallinn: Teaduste Akadeemia Kirjastus, 2000, lk 253–272.

Mitmed hiljutised kunstiajaloo käsitlused on seadnud sellise binaarse ametliku-mitteametliku kunsti vastanduse kahtluse alla, viidates "süsteemisisese mässu" võimalustele ja tähendusloome protsessidele, mis leidsid aset avalikus ruumis.[39] Sellise uurimissuuna eesmärk on vaadelda kunsti, mida näidati avalikult ja mille kohta avaldati kriitikat, ning kummutada levinud käsitlus kahest paralleelselt käibivast diskursusest, mis toimisid eraldi sfäärides "kus avalikult öeldi üht, aga privaatsfääris räägiti teist juttu."[40] Susan E. Reid on 1990. aastate keskel tehtud uurimuses Nõukogude Vene kunstiinstitutsioonidest sulaperioodi algusaastatel viidanud, et käsitlus totalitaarsest ühiskonnast ühenduses esteetilise modernismi paradigmaga on kunstilise uuenduslikkuse ja arengu pärusmaana välja valgustanud ainult "servaalade" või nonkonformistliku kunsti, jättes ametlikud institutsionaalsed võimustruktuurid ja esteetika diskursuse tähelepanuta. Selle perioodi mõistmiseks pöördub ta oma töös "lubatud kunsti" juurde, kus testiti ning määratleti lubatud reformi piire.[41] Uurimuse kohaselt eksisteerisid reformimeelsed kunstnikud ja konservatiivid ühises suhtlusruumis, mitte eraldiseisvates sfäärides.[42]

Kahe vastandliku autonoomse diskursuse mudeli seavad kahtluse alla ka erinevad teoreetilised lähenemised. Näiteks kriitiline poliitikateooria on vaidlustanud traditsioonilise mudeli identiteedist, mis eelneb poliitilisele avalikkusele, ja väidab, et teatud maani on identiteediloome puhul oma osa kõigil avalikel diskursustel.[43] Ehk veelgi rohkem õõnestavad ametliku-mitteametliku jäika eristust poststrukturalistlikud subjektikäsitlused, mille kohaselt on subjekt alati konstrueeritud sotsiaalsete, mitteteadvuse ja keeleliste struktuuride poolt ning identiteet moodustub sotsiaalse kogemuse kaudu. Autonoomsed eraelu saared on selle käsitluse kohaselt illusoorsed.

Siinse uurimuse huvikeskmes on 1970. aastate alguses Tallinnas esile kerkinud kunstipraktikad, mis seostuvad 1950. aastatel alanud moderniseerimisprotsessi ja industrialiseerimise diskursuste ja institutsioonidega, tehnilise esteetika ja disaini, küberneetika ja informatsiooniteooriatega. Keskendun Eesti Riikliku Kunstiinstituudi lõpetanud disaineritele ja arhitektidele, kes osalesid samal ajal ka aktiivses kunstielus: Ando Keskkülale, Andres Toltsile, Sirje Rungele, Leonhard Lapinile, Jüri Okasele ja Vilen Künnapule.

Eesti kunstiajaloo käsitlustes on nende toonast tegevust seostatud peamiselt neoavangardi praktikatel põhineva kunstiga: häppeningide, assamblaaži

39 Susan E. Reid, Destalinization and the Remodernization of Soviet Art, lk 8.

40 Timothy Garton Ash, We the People: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin & Prague. London: Penguin, 1990, lk 137.

41 Susan E. Reid, De-Stalinisation in the Moscow Art Profession. – Regime and Society in Twentieth-Century Russia. Toim Ian D. Thatcher. London: Macmillan, 1999, lk 146.

42 Susan E. Reid, De-Stalinisation in the Moscow Art Profession, lk 147.

43 Craig Calhoun, Nationalism and the Public Sphere. – Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy. Toim Jeff Wintraub, Krishan Kumar, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, lk 86.

ning filmi ja foto kasutamisega, igapäevase ja banaalse ainestiku poole pöördumisega.[44] Kohalike eripärade suhtes tundlikuma mudeli on hiljuti välja pakkunud Mari Laanemets, osutades samaaegselt erinevates kunstivaldkondades tegutsenud arhitekte ja disainereid iseloomustanud interdistsiplinaarsusele.[45] Siinne uurimus liigub edasi kahes suunas, vaadates kuidas 1960. aastate informatsiooniteooriad mõjutasid nõukogude disainidiskursust ja alternatiivset kunstipraktikat, ning uurides samaaegselt, kuidas läbikäimine uute teooriate ja distsipliinidega viis mitte ainult kunstiobjekti ümbermõtestamisele, vaid ka teistsuguse subjektikäsitluseni. Selline vaatepunkt püüab vältida toonase kunstiproduktsiooni jäika liigitamist ametlikuks või mitteametlikuks, näidates selle asemel, kuidas domineeriva võimu suhtes kriitilised diskursused ja praktikad kasvasid välja läbikäimisest ametlike institutsioonide ja avalikult käibivate diskursustega.

Muuhulgas uurin, kuidas tol perioodil Tallinnas töötanud kunstnikud kasutasid küberneetikast ja informatsiooniteooriatest – nii Norbert Wieneri kui ka Marshall McLuhani tekstidest – pärit sõnavara ning kuidas see erines 1960. aastate sulaaja reformistide seisukohtadest. Väidan, et valitud perspektiiv lubab nende kunstnike ja disainerite praktikaid seostada protsessidega, mis on seotud distsiplinaarse korra lagunemisega.[46]

Töö teiseks lähtepunktiks on ametliku-mitteametliku vastanduse vaatamine osana laiemast avaliku ja privaatse sfääri vaheliste suhete käsitlusest. Avaliku ja privaatse vahelise eristuse mõistmiseks on erinevaid mudeleid: osa vasakmõtlejate jaoks võib privaatne, mida samastatakse sotsiaalse puudumise, teistest äralõigatuse ja eraldatusega, omada negatiivset tähendust.[47] Liberaalsest vaatepunktist on privaatne positiivse tähendusega ning osutab õigusele kontrollida oma eraelu ja end ümbritsevat ruumi; suuresti sarnaselt positsioonilt räägitakse tänapäeval näiteks eraelu ja isikuandmete kaitsest. 19. sajandi lõpu romantismi kujutlus kunsti autonoomiast toetub samuti sellisele indiviidikäsitlusele: autonoomne kunstnik vastandab end selles ruumis konformistlikule ja ühtlustavale massile.[48] Selline privaatne ruum on eksperimenteerimise, uute koosolemisviiside ja -vormide otsimise koht. Jürgen Habermas näitab aga oma käsitluses kodanlikust avalikkusest, kuidas see "vaba siseelu" võimaldav privaatsus on põimunud turu nõudmiste ja omandiga ning moodustab omamoodi ajastu valeteadvuse, kus eraisik

44 Sirje Helme, Jaak Kangilaski, Lühike Eesti kunsti ajalugu, lk 164–168.

45 Mari Laanemets, Zwischen westlicher Moderne und sowjetischer Avantgarde.

46 Vt Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire, lk 260–279.; Gilles Deleuze, Postscript on the Societies of Control. – October, vol. 59 (Winter), 1992, lk 3–7.

47 Vt Judith Squires, Private lives, secluded places: privacy as political possibility. – Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vol. 12 (4), 1994, lk 387–402.

48 Vt Virve Sarapik, Kunst kui pelgupaik. Sotsialistlik utoopia ja utoopiline sotsrealism. – Keel ja kirjandus 7, 2002, lk 465.

on samaaegselt nii omanik – kodanlane – kui ka vaba indiviid, "inimene inimeste seas."[49]

Nõukogude perioodi privaatsfääri on analüüsitud enamasti sarnaselt liberaalsele tõlgendusele: see oli bürokraatlikult reguleeritud ühiskonnas eksisteeriv vabaduse oaas, kus korraldati korterinäitusi, vahetati keelatud kirjandust, püüti kinni võõramaiseid raadiolaineid. Juba nõukogude perioodil tegid sedalaadi alternatiivsete jutustustega algust läände põgenenud dissidendid ja osa sovetolooge, kelle käsitlustes vastandus autentne "soe ja külalislahke" privaatsfäär võltsile ametlikule elule; kahe paralleelselt käibiva diskursuse – ametliku ja mitteametliku – vastandamisest on aga hiljem saanud kogu nõukogude elu analüüsimise üks levinumaid töövahendeid.[50] Pärast Nõukogude Liidu lagunemist on informaalsed võrgustikud ja paralleelmaailmad levinud uurimisteema muuhulgas ajaloolaste ja etnoloogide seas: palju on uuritud elu kommunaalkorterites ning sõpruskondade tähendust alternatiivse avalikkusena, samuti on uurimusi potipõllundusest, musta turu kaubandusest, lemmikloomade pidamisest, autodest ja varuosadega hangeldamisest.[51] Nendele praktikatele omistatav tähendus seisneb keskvõimule vastanduvate alternatiivse võimu rakukeste loomises; tihti problematiseerivad uurimuste järeldused liiga lihtsustatud privaatse-avaliku eristust nõukogude kontekstis. Näiteks Peterburi uurijad Jelena Zdravomõslova ja Viktor Voronkov eristavad ametlikku avalikkust, mis sisaldas kontrollitud ideoloogilisi norme ja reegleid, ning informaalset avalikkust, kus leidis aset keskvõimust sõltumatu suhtlus ning mis võimaldas individuaalset initsiatiivi.[52] Osa autoreid aga kritiseerib lääne modernsuse kirjeldustest üle võetud privaatse ja avaliku eristuse sobivust nõukogude süsteemi puhul tervikuna, sest ametlikus ideoloogias polnud kohta omandil, puudus eraomandi kaitse lääne mõistes ning kõik kuulus riigile.[53]

Susan E. Reid omakorda on osutanud nõukogude modernsuse kahesuunalisele iseloomule privatiseerumisprotsessis: ühest küljest lubasid uued tüüpkorterid eraldatust, võimalust omaette olla, teiselt poolt oli aga tegu viimse detailini standardiseeritud ruumiga, mida lisaks kujundasid erinevad meediakanalid, tehnilised vahendid, tarbekaubad, mis sidusid kodud neist väljapool asuvate struktuuridega. "Seega, samad ajaloolised protsessid, mis võimaldasid

49 Jürgen Habermas, Avalikkuse struktuurimuutus, lk 108.

50 Susan E. Reid, The Meaning of Home: "The Only Bit of the World You Can Have to Yourself". – Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia. Toim Lewis H. Siegelbaum. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, lk 149–150.

51 Vt Lewis H. Siegelbaum, toim, Borders of Socialism.

52 Elena Zdravomyslova, Viktor Voronkov, The Informal Public in Soviet Society: Double Morality at Work. – Social Research, vol. 69 (1), 2002, lk 50–69.

53 Vt Marc Garcelon, The Shadow of the Leviathan: Public and Private in Communist and Post-Communist Society. – Public and Private in Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy. Toim Jeff Weintraub, Krishan Kumar. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997, lk 303–332.

eraldatud privaatsfääri, tõid ühtlasi ilmale jõud, mis õõnestasid selle iseseisvust ja tungisid üle selle läve."[54]

Privaatse ja avaliku sfääri eristust hilisnõukogude ühiskonna kontekstis on hiljuti analüüsinud antropoloog Aleksei Jurtšak raamatus *Kõik oli igavene, kuni seda enam polnud. Viimane Nõukogude sugupõlv.* Ta käsitleb spetsiifilisi hilissotsialismi aja praktikaid – vaimustust rokkmuusikast, naljade ja anekdootide rääkimist, ajaveetmist kohvikutes –, kritiseerides nende levinud kujutamist binaarsete vastanduste kaudu nagu dissidendid *versus* aktivistid, ametlik *versus* mitteametlik, homogeenne "meie" *versus* rõhujatest "nemad". Selle asemel väidab ta, et need praktikad kuuluvad omaette sotsiaalsusesse, mis ei vastandanud end riigile, vaid mille lõid üksteise sisse paigutuvad mõisted: "meie", "mitte-meie", "riik", "riigi esindajad" ja "rahvas".[55]

Selline vahepealne sotsiaalsus pakkus viljaka pinnase kultuurile ja teadmistele. Jurtšaki sõnul toimis see läbi performatiivse nihke autoriteetse diskursuse suhtes: seda keelt korrati ja järgiti kui rituaalset tegevust, hindamata selle tähendust kas õigeks või valeks; see toimis dünaamilise vahendina uute tähenduste ja praktikate ellukutsumisel. Selle tulemusena loodi nihe valitseva diskursuse suhtes ning süsteem deterritorialiseeriti spetsiifilisel moel – nii, et mitmed sotsialismi väärtused hoiti alles. Isegi kui toonasesse retoorikasse suhtuti irooniaga, võeti sotsialistlikku süsteemi toetavat eetikat tõsiselt:

> "Erinevalt dissidentlikest strateegiatest, mis vastandusid süsteemi valitsevatele tähistamisviisidele, reprodutseeris deterritorialisatsioon seda tähistamisviisi, samas seda nihestades, sellele luues ning uusi tähendusi lisades."[56]

Deterritorialiseeritud eluviis, koos spetsiifilise sõnavaraga, mis sinna juurde kuulus, ei olnud süsteemis "sees" ega sellest "väljas". Tõlgendades ja kohandades olemasolevaid teadmisi ja vahendeid, olid sellised keskkonnad suuresti sõltuvad nii süsteemi rahalisest kui institutsionaalsest toest, samuti hierarhiatest ja kultuurilistest ideaalidest, mida süsteem ette nägi.

Hiljutised kriitilised ruumiteooriad pakuvad viisi, kuidas analüüsida Jurtšaki poolt välja toodud eristusi, mis dekonstrueerivad privaatse ja avaliku reduktiivset dihhotoomiat, konkreetsete nõukogude perioodi ruumistuste kontekstis. Need ruumiteooriad suhtuvad kriitiliselt käsitlustesse, mille kohaselt kohtadel on kindel piir ning ühe koha erinevus teisest tuleneb selle sisemistest karakteristikutest või sisemistest protsessidest. Sellele vastukaaluks kirjeldatakse kohtade spetsiifikat väljakasvavana koha ühendustest ja seostest

54 Susan E. Reid, The Meaning of Home, lk 157.
55 Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, lk 103.
56 Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, lk 116.

väljaspoolsusega (või ka koha äralõigatusest), esitades nii dünaamilisema mudeli ruumide seostamiseks tegevuste ja funktsioonidega.[57] Lähtudes Henri Lefebvre'i ruumi kui sotsiaalse produkti ideest, on mitmed autorid uurinud ruumi rolli ühtaegu nii ühiskonna ja kultuuri tootmise eeltingimuse kui ka resultaadina.[58] Nii visandatakse staatilise käsitluse asemel ettekujutus ruumist, mis moodustub pidevalt toodetavate ja taastoodetavate suhete keerukast võrgustikust. Nende autorite vaatepunktist ei ole ruum midagi, mis on fikseeritud, vaid see on alati avatud manipulatsioonidele, transgressioonidele, kasutusele ja väärkasutusele.[59] Selliste käsitluste analüüsiobjektiks ei ole seega ruum kui selline (nagu see on traditsioonilise arhitektuuriajaloo puhul), vaid ajas lahtirulluv aktiivne ruumi tootmise protsess.[60]

Järgides nende ruumiteooriate visandatud dünaamilist ruumistamise mudelit, võime Jurtšaki poolt kirjeldatud deterritorialiseeritud sotsiaalsust näha mitte kinnistatuna konkreetsetes, kindla kvaliteediga kohtades, vaid ruume läbistavana: sees ja väljas, privaatses ja avalikus, ametlikus ja mitteametlikus. Deterritorialiseeritud sotsiaalsuse tähendus avaneb suhtes konkreetsete praktikatega. Tallinnas töötanud arhitektide ja kunstnike loomingu puhul tõstsid nende avastatud territooriumid läbi igapäevaste sündmuste ja nende kujutiste fookusesse marginaalsed kohad või redefineerisid avalikke (näituse) ruume sümboolses keskmes. Selle käigus seati traditsioonilised piirid, klassifikatsioonid ja hierarhiad kahtluse alla või mõtestati ümber; neist tegevustest, kasutustest või hõivamistest kasvasid aga välja uued piirjooned või territorialisatsioonid.

Kolmandaks uurin oma töös subjektsuse ümberkujunemist alates 1960. aastatest seoses moderniseerimise ja informatiseerimisega. 1960. aastate lõpust alates ja 1970. aastate jooksul läbis seni masstootmisel põhinev lääne industriaalühiskond olulise transformatsiooni, mille käigus korraldati tehnoloogiliste muutuste toel ümber tootmise ja tarbimise põhimõtted. Sellega paralleelselt toimus igapäevaelu ja väärtuste transformatsioon: keelduti vabrikuühiskonnast ja traditsioonilisest peremudelist, esile kerkis uus retoorika mobiilsusest, paindlikkusest, teadmistest ja kommunikatsioonist. Ka Nõukogude Liidus olid sulaperioodi reformid muutnud igapäevaelu vorme, reorkestreerinud töö ja vaba aja vahekorda ning – mis peamine – loonud uuelaadse diskussiooniruumi, mida kasutati suurema ühiskondliku vabaduse nõudmiseks. Kuigi kodanikuühiskonda puudutavad reformid Brežnevi ajal sumbusid, ei kadunud

57 Doreen Massey, For Space, lk 62–71.

58 Christian Schmidt, Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: towards a three-dimensional dialectic. – Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre. Toim Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipfer, et al. New York: Routledge, 2008, lk 28.

59 Elisabeth Grosz, Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001, lk 9.

60 Christian Schmidt, Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, lk 41.

hierarhiate-vastane võitlus ja vastupanu "bürokraatlikule diktatuurile", muutudes domineeriva võimu jaoks üha raskemini ohjeldatavaks. Nagu Michael Hardt ja Antonio Negri on hilisnõukogude süsteemi analüüsides kirjutanud:

> "Pika intensiivse moderniseerimise tagajärjel päritud raskepärane nõukogude bürokraatia asetas nõukogude võimu võimatusse olukorda, kus tuli reageerida uutele nõudmistele ja soovidele, mida, esmalt moderniseerimisprotsessi sees ja seejärel selle välispiiridel, esitasid globaalselt esilekerkivad subjektsused."[61]

Vaatamata eriti noorema põlvkonna kasvavale rahulolematusele hüljati 1970. aastate keskpaigaks ka need vähesed katsed "parandada" bürokraatia kurssi (sellise reformimise tuntuim teetähis Eestis oli Gustav Naani artikkel võimust ja vaimust ning sellele järgnenud poleemika[62]). Hilisnõukogude perioodi iseloomustanud tagasitõmbumine privaatsfääri, huvi erinevate esoteeriliste praktikate, rahvuslike juurte või kaugete usundite vastu on antud perspektiivist vaadeldav märgina – ehkki küll negatiivse märgina – sedalaadi subjektsuse reaktsioonist enda sotsiaalsest arutelust väljasulgemisele ning lukustamisele "kapitali sotsialistliku haldamise struktuuridesse, millel selleks hetkeks ei olnud enam mingit tähendust".[63] Just subjekti tasandil avaldusid Hardti ja Negri arvates ida ja lääne vahelised võimukonfliktid kõige intensiivsemalt, väljendudes Nõukogude Liidu võimetuses ära tunda subjekti transformatsiooni. See viis tööjõu kiirelt langeva tootlikkuse ning majandusliku seisakuni, samas kui läänes kaasati see uuelaadne subjekt ümberkorraldatud tootmisprotsessi ja ta mängis võtmerolli selle käigushoidmisel, protsessis, mida tuntakse majanduse informatiseerumise või postindustriaalse majandusena.

Vaatluse all olnud kunstnike töödes võib leida arusaama subjektsusest, mis on välistele jõududele avatud ning ühenduses keskkonda läbistavate võrgustikega, samuti käsitlust informatsiooniprotsessist, mis ühendab meeleorganeid (kui vastuvõtjaid) ja närvisüsteemi (kui protsessorit) keskkonnaga, nagu ka käsitlust uuest tehnikast, mis toimib inimese pikendusena keskkonda. Näiteks seadis Ando Keskküla oma diplomitöös Eesti Riikliku Kunstiinstituudi tööstuskunsti osakonnas 1973. aastal eesmärgiks disaini ja ühiskonna suhte ümberdefineerimise küberneetiliste mõistete kaudu. Täpsemalt pidas ta silmas tehnika poolt muudetud keskkonda, vaadeldes tehiskeskkonda kui ökosüsteemi, mis allus kommunikatiivsetele struktuuridele ja pidi eluspüsimiseks säilitama sisemise

61 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire, lk 277.

62 Gustav Naan, Võim ja vaim. Bürokraatia ja intelligents tänapäeva kodanlikus ühiskonnas. – Looming 12, 1969, lk 1856–1878.

63 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Empire, lk 279.

stabiilsuse ehk homöostaasi.[64] Tema sõnul oli keskkond aktiivne jõud inimeste igapäevaelus, sidudes subjekti oma nähtavate ja nähtamatute võrgustike külge. Keskküla huvisfääris oli konflikt, mis kerkis esile "vananenud" esemete ja uute tehniliste vahendite ning neile vastavate subjektsuste vahel: uued esemed tõid kaasa ka uut tüüpi suhte oma kasutajaga ja kehtestasid uuelaadse psühholoogilise stereotüübi, mis oli vastuolus vanade kasutusmustritega. Käsitlus tehniliste vahendite mõjust inimpsühholoogiale toetus Marshall McLuhani teooriale, mis redefineeris erinevad meediad (McLuhani jaoks kuulusid nende hulka ka esemed, tööriistad jms) inimese pikendusena, mis mõjutavad "kogu psüühilist ja sotsiaalset tervikut."[65] Kui esemed muutusid, muutusid seeläbi ka inimesed. Disaini roll oli tehnika arengut arvestades uute kasutusmustrite loomine ja seeläbi tehiskeskkonna homöostaatilise tasakaalu hoidmine (tagades sujuva "asjadevahetuse" ja hoides nii ära esemelise keskkonna vananemise).

Sirje Runge ja Leonhard Lapin kirjutasid aasta hiljem vajadusest uurida uute, informatsiooniväärtust omavate kunstivahendite potentsiaali, mis loovad uut laadi kaasava keskkonna. Viidates kasutajaskonna muutunud tajumisviisidele, kutsusid nad kunstnikke üles uurima küberneetilise ajastu masinatega loodud kujundeid ning teadmisi:

> "Uus ajastu rakendab informatiivselt tunnetuslikke, motoorseid, kineetilisi, helilisi ja sõnalisi vahendeid, et haarata kõik inimese meeled ja kogu tsentraalne närvikava. Uute informatsioonivahendite sissetungi ühiskonna olme- ja kultuuriellu illustreerigu TV võidukäik; […] kineetika visuaalses kunstis, häppening teatris ja kontserdis."[66]

Vaatluse all olnud disaineri ja arhitekti taustaga kunstnike tegevus 1970. aastate esimesel poolel oli seega tähelepanuväärne kahest aspektist. Vaadates keskkonda informatsiooniväljana ja uurides võimalusi vaataja kaasahaaramiseks, oli see (erinevalt privaatsfääri tagasitõmbumisest) positiivne vastus esilekerkiva subjektsuse vajaduste ja nõudmiste – kommunikatsiooni ja informatsioonivabaduse, populaarse kultuuri avalikku ruumi toomise, mittehierarhilise sotsiaalse korralduse – poole pöördumisel. See oli aga ka vastuseks muutunud tööstusele, tehnikale ja kommunikatsioonisüsteemidele ning seadis kahtluse alla nii senikehtinud sotsiaalsed ja ruumilised mudelid kui ka kunstniku rolli, sundides otsima alternatiive bürokraatlik-distsiplinaarsele sotsialistlikule ühiskonnale.

64 Ando Keskküla, Joonismultifilm. Stsenaarium, lavastus, kujundamine. Diplomitöö. Eesti Riiklik Kunstiinstituut, Tööstuskunsti osakond. Tallinn, 1973.

65 Ando Keskküla, Joonismultifilm.

66 Sirje Lapin, Leonhard Lapin, On sügis, lehed langevad. – Thespis. Meie teatriuuendused 1972/73. Toim Vaino Vahing, Tartu: Ilmamaa, 1997, lk 290.

Ülevaade artiklitest

Ülaltoodud teemad – mitteametliku kunsti mõiste problematiseerimine, kunsti- ja arhitektuuriloomingu käsitlemine seoses ruumilise konteksti ja subjektsuse muutustega – koonduvad doktoritööna esitatud artiklites, mis on avaldatud ajavahemikus 2009–2012 ning millest igaüks keskendub ühele kaasusele alates 1960. aastate lõpust Tallinnas töötanud arhitektide ja kunstnike loomingus. Samuti esindab iga artikkel ühte episoodi subjekti ja ruumiliste suhete keerulisest dünaamikast. Siia koondatud artiklite seeria järgib paralleelselt liikumist kodudest linnaruumi (ja selle representatsioonide juurde) ja avalikku ruumi ning liikumist kunstist arhitektuuri. Ühtlasi näitab see trajektoor, kuidas kunsti äärealalt ja grupisisestelt üritustelt asuti otseselt arhitektuuri ja linnaehitust kritiseerides ümber ühiskondliku tootmise ja poliitilise võimuga tihedalt seotud praktika keskmesse, sattudes nii kõrgendatud tähelepanu alla ja põhjustades arhitektuuriinstitutsioonis olulisi muutusi.

Esimene artikkel "Tühi valge ruum. Kodu kui tervikkunstiteos hilisnõukogude perioodil" keskendub Mare ja Tõnis Vindi kodule 1960. aastatel ehitatud tüüpelamus Mustamäel. Kohe pärast korterisse kolimist 1968. aastal asusid kunstnikud seda ümber kujundama, lähtudes oma huvist juugendi ja tervikkunstiteose ideede vastu ja viies ellu ettekujutust kunsti ja elu omavahelistest seostest. 1960. aastate lõpul kujunes Vintide korter Tallinna kunstnike ja intellektuaalide kooskäimiskohaks, alternatiivseks ruumiks, kus vahetada informatsiooni ja arutleda kunsti üle. Vastukaaluks tõlgendustele, mis näevad Vintide kodu autonoomsena, igapäevaelust tagasitõmbununa, riigina riigis, vaatan ma seda 1970. aastatel kultuuris ja tehnikas aset leidnud muutuste taustal. Uurin, kuidas väidetavalt autonoomse kunsti ruumi mõjutasid avalikud huvid ja väärtused, aga ka seda, kuidas interjöör seostus sellest väljaspool asuva keskkonnaga, sisaldades muuhulgas kommunikatsioonisüsteeme ja massimeediakanaleid.

Üheks selliseks kanaliks, mis muuhulgas avaldas tutvustava artikli Vintide kodust, oli 1958. aastal asutatud ajakiri Kunst ja Kodu, mis 1970. aastatel tegi läbi olulised muudatused nii oma sisu kui ka välimuse osas. Teises artiklis "Mõranenud piirid. Kodude representatsioon kriitilistes ja kunstilistes praktikates 1970. aastatel" vaatan, kuidas Kunstist ja Kodust sai vahend, mis edastas teistmoodi suhet kodusfääri, näitas alternatiivseid käsitlusi ümbritsevast keskkonnast ja igapäevaelust ning esitas uusi ideid muutunud kunstipraktikaks. Artikkel keskendub ajakirja sellele osale, mis andis praktilisi näpunäiteid koduomanikele. Vaatan, kuidas Kunstis ja Kodus esitatud kunstnike ja disainerite tööd seostusid nende tegevusega väljaspool ajakirja. Üheks selliseks kunstnikuks oli Sirje Runge, kes 1975. aastal lõpetas Eesti Riikliku Kunstiinstituudi tööstuskunsti eriala ja kelle toonased tööd uurisid informatsiooni,

uue tehnika ja linnakeskkonna seostamise viise. Runge poolt ajakirjas esitatud ettepanek koduse värvusmuusika süsteemi lahenduseks seostub tema diplomitööga, kus pakuti välja kolm lahendust linnakeskkonna kaunistamiseks: värvides tummad majaseinad või unustatud tagahoovid üle kirevates toonides, ehitades tühjadele kesklinna kruntidele ajutised modulaarsed struktuurid või teostades nn disainifantaasiaid ja lisades linnakeskkonda ootamatuid, kohati irratsionaalseid objekte.

Runge diplomitöö analüüsile keskendub detailsemalt kolmas artikkel "Keskkond ja tagasiside. Kunsti- ja disainipraktikad Tallinnas 1970. aastate alguses", mis vaatab selle taustal kunstipraktikate, tehnilise esteetika ja disaini suhet küberneetika ja informatsiooniteooriaga. Teiseks uuritavaks tööks selles artiklis on Ando Keskküla samal erialal tehtud diplomitöö, mis koosnes animafilmi "Bluff" stsenaariumist, pikemast teoreetilisest seletuskirjast ning filmi kavanditest.[67] Ka seal kerkis keskse teemana esile disaini muutunud roll kaasaegses, informatsiooniga läbipõimunud keskkonnas. Kui kahe esimese artikli raskuspunkt oli kodude ja sellest väljaspool asuva keskkonna vahelise piiri ümbermõtestamisel, siis kolmas artikkel pöördub linnakeskkonna poole, hoovide ja tänavate juurde, mida kohandati kunstnike töödes ja kujutleti teistsugustena. Minu huviks on, kuidas 1960. aastatest pärit informatsiooniteooriat, mis oli oluliselt mõjutanud nõukogude disainiteooriat, kohandati 1970. aastatel alternatiivsete kunstipraktikate poolt ja kuidas see leidis tee postindustriaalset keskkonda puudutavatesse töödesse. Samuti vaatan, kuidas läbikäimine uute teooriate ja distsipliinidega viis nii kunstiobjekti kui inimsubjekti ümbermõtestamiseni. Selline perspektiiv võimaldab nende kunstnike ja disainerite tööd vaadata distsiplinaarse korra lagunemisega seostatavate globaalsete protsesside kontekstis.

Sama teemat viib edasi neljas artikkel "Müra keskkond. Jüri Okase "Rekonstruktsioonid" ja selle publik", mis on pühendatud arhitekti ja kunstniku Jüri Okase töödele, eelkõige tema seeriale "Rekonstruktsioonid" (1974–1978) ning näitusele Tallinna Kunstihoone galeriis 1976. aastal. Väidan, et "Rekonstruktsioone" ei tuleks vaadata mitte formaalse tõlgenduse kaudu, kunstniku hermeetilise maailma otsese projektsioonina, vaid neid saab tõlgendada referentsiaalselt, leides muuhulgas mitmeid võimalikke puutepunkte dialoogiks publikuga. Üheks põhjuseks, miks hilisematel kümnenditel domineeris Okase tööde formaalne tõlgendus, oli tööde sobimatus 1980. aastatel esile kerkinud seisukohtadega kunstist kui identiteediloome vahendist, mis aitab moodustada koherentset rahvuslikku subjekti. Tööde seose kaotamine kujutatud kohtadega lubas neid seeläbi lähendada eemaletõmbumise ja vastupanu diskursustele. Artikli teises osas vaatan Okase töid läbi entroopia ja müra mõistete, nii nagu

67 Ando Keskküla, Joonismultifilm.

neid on kasutatud 1960. ja 1970. aastatel populaarses informatsiooniteoorias. Vastukaaluks eemaletõmbumisele ja põgenemisele osutab Okase huvi müra ja entroopiakeskkonna vastu paradigmaatilisele nihkele: müra viitas teist laadi keerukusele ning seadis kahtluse alla väljakujunenud piirid keskkonda sisse- ja väljaarvatu vahel. See väljendus linnakeskkonna puhul huvis graffiti vastu, anonüümsete ja näiliselt isetekkeliste struktuuride vastu, (post-industriaalse) kasutu igapäevakeskkonna vastu. Selle nihke laiem tähendus seostus aga mitteametlikus kunstis olulise eemaletõmbumise ruumi tähenduse muutusega: muutunud entroopia mõiste kaudu esitatud keskkond Okase töödes oli ühtmoodi ebamugav või segadusseajav nii ametliku monumentaalse linnaruumi ning industriaalehituse vaatepunktist kui ka opositsioonilisest vaatepunktist, mis pooldas tagasipöördumist sõdadevahelise iseseisvusperioodi arhitektuuri ja traditsioonilise urbanismi vormide juurde. Mõlema jaoks ohustas see keskkond nende autonoomiat ja ühtsust ning tõi nähtavale destabiliseeriva teise, mis kasutu ja korratuna oli süsteemi piiridest välja arvatud.

Sarnaselt Okasele olid ka mitmed tema kolleegid 1970. aastate lõpul seotud projektidega, mis mõtestasid ümber linnakeskkonna kujundamise viise muutunud kultuurikontekstis ja masselamurajoonide seostamist olemasoleva linnaga. Nende projektid olid väljas 1978. aastal Teaduste Akadeemia raamatukogu fuajees toimunud neljateistkümne arhitekti näitusel. See on minu viimase artikli "Tallinna kooli arhitektid ja nõukogude modernismi kriitika Eestis" teema. Kõnealune näitus kritiseeris hiljuti püstitatud paneelmajarajoone – mida mõisteti anonüümsete ja võõrandunutena – ning arhitekti taandamist elamuehituskombinaatide ripatsiks. Sellele vastukaaluks laenasid arhitektid oma eriala laiendamiseks ideid tolle perioodi kunstist ja esitasid põhjaliku ja terava kriitika, mis leidis ühiskonnas laia vastukaja. Nende loodud alternatiivne käsitlus toetus osaliselt domineerivatele mõistetele ja formaatidele, aga laiendas nende kasutust ja tähendusi. Kasutades ühelt poolt laia publiku toetust ja teisalt ametlike struktuuride pakutud vahendeid, esitasid nad väljakutse kehtivatele võimusuhetele, muutsid neid ning asusid 1979. aastal juhtivatele kohtadele Arhitektide Liidus.

Selle analüüsi järeldused on lähedased Jurtšaki kirjeldatud deterritorialiseeritud sotsiaalsuse mõistele: arhitektide diskussioonide ja näituste käigus esile kerkinud miljöö töötas vastu avaliku ja isikliku, meie ja mitte-meie, seesmise ja välise binaarsele vastandusele. Ent kui Jurtšaki käsitluse kohaselt iseloomustas deterritorialiseeritud sfääre üldine apoliitiline hoiak, mittesekkumine otseselt poliitilistesse teemadesse,[68] siis minu töö on sealt edasi liikudes osutanud võimalusele, kuidas deterritorialiseerunud sotsiaalsus omas mõju laiematele ühiskondlikele protsessidele.

68 Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, lk 147.

Kokkuvõte

Siinse uurimuse fookuses on olnud ümbermõtestatud avaliku ja privaatse sfääri piiride, moderniseerimisprotsesside ja uut laadi subjektsuse esilekerkimise vaheline suhe. Oma töös näitasin, et mitmetel praeguses ajas täisjõu saanud muutustel on oma eellugu 1960. aastate lõpust esile kerkinud ning 1970. aastatel Tallinnas tegutsenud kunstnike töödes ning neis resoneerunud arutlustes. Jälgisin grupi Tallinnas töötanud kunstnike ja arhitektide praktikaid ning seadsin kahtluse alla nende seostamise mõistega "mitteametlik kunst", esitades alternatiivse käsitluse nende töödest lähtudes ruumilise konteksti ja subjektistamise tehnikate muutustest. Laiemalt püüdsin luua traditsioonilisest kunstiajaloost erineva raamistuse, ühendades kunsti selle ruumilise keskkonnaga ning nihutades perspektiivi rahvuslikult historiograafialt rahvusülestele seostele.

Andes esmalt ülevaate mitteametliku kunsti mõistest ja selle seostest nõukogude privaatsfääriga, liikus mu töö alternatiivse mudeli juurde 1970. aastatel tegutsenud kunstnike ja arhitektide tegevuse uurimiseks. Seadsin kahtluse alla privaatse ja avaliku sfääri suhte moderniseeruva nõukogude ühiskonna kontekstis ja väitsin, et piir nende sfääride vahel oli poorne ja ebapüsiv. Sama raske on selgelt piiritleda mitteametliku kunsti välja; see mõiste ise on aga tagasiviidav külma sõja aegse konfrontatsiooni loogika juurde. Töö kahes esimeses artiklis keskendusingi mitteametliku kunsti ja kodusfääri problemaatilistele seostele, uurides, kuidas väidetavalt autonoomset kunstisfääri läbistasid avalikud süsteemid ning kuidas interjöörid seostusid endast väljaspool asuva keskkonnaga. Sealt edasi pöörasin tähelepanu muutunud keskkonna mõistele, sidudes selle tol ajal laialt levinud küberneetika ja informatsiooniteooria ideedega. Selle kohaselt nähti süsteeme, sealhulgas inimolendeid, informatsiooni tagasiside ahela kaudu keskkondadega lõimunuina. Lõpuks keskendusin arhitektide töödele, mis pakkusid välja keskkonda sekkumise ideed ning saavutasid laia avalikkuse silmis olulise mõju, muutes ehitatud keskkonna kohta käibivat diskursust. Nõukogude alternatiivse kunsti kirjeldustes levinud tagasitõmbumise kui opositsioonilise taktika mudeli asemel pakkusin välja viisi nende praktikate analüüsimiseks dünaamilisemalt: mitte sidudes neid spetsiifiliste kohtadega, vaid käsitledes neid avalikku ja privaatset, ametlikku ja mitteametlikku läbivatena.

Töö pakkus 1970. aastate kunstnike ja arhitektide tegevusest lähtudes välja teistsuguse kunstiajaloo periodiseeringu. Mitmetes nõukogude perioodi kultuuriajaloo käsitluses on 1970. aastaid kujutatud reaktsioonina optimistlikele 1960ndatele: 1968. aasta Praha kevad oli lömastanud tehnoutoopilised ootused reformitud sotsialistlikule ühiskonnale, sotsiaalseid muutusi tagant tõuganud energia kandus aga üle privaatsfääri. Oma artiklites olen visandanud

keerukama pildi 1970. aastatest. Selle esimene pool oli arhitektuuris ja kunstis intensiivsete otsingute aeg, mil muutused tehnikas ja kommunikatsioonisüsteemides avaldasid mõju kunstnike ja disainerite tegevusele ning seadsid kahtluse alla kunsti ja ühiskonna läbikäimist kirjeldavad senised mudelid. Olen neid muutusi seostanud nn distsiplinaarse ühiskonna lagunemisega nagu seda on teiste hulgas kirjeldanud Michel Foucault ja Gilles Deleuze: seniste töö, perekonna ja teadmise mudelite kriitikaga ja teistsuguste subjekti tootmise mehhanismide esilekerkimisega. Bürokraatlik-distsiplinaarse sotsialistliku ühiskonna seest (nagu võis muuhulgas näha Lapini, Runge ja Keskküla töödes) võrsusid ideed keskkonna – ja ühiskonna – uutel alustel ümberkorraldamiseks.

Valitud fookus moderniseerimisele ja sellega kaasnenud muutustele ruumis ja subjektsuses püüdis distantseeruda eelnevatest analüüsidest, mis mõistsid selle perioodi kunstiloomingut rahvusliku vastupanu kaudu. Nende käsitluste vaieldamatu teene on nõukogude perioodi kunstiajaloost välja arvatud materjali väljatoomine ja tõlgendamine, püüdes selle kaudu eristada eesti kunsti hegemoonilisest nõukogude minevikust. Ent osa 1970. aastate kunsti ei sobitu pelgalt rahvusliku vastupanu narratiiviga. Asetades need tööd ja praktikad uurimuse keskmesse, oli mu eesmärk selle perioodi kunstiajaloo teistsugune tõlgendus, tuues välja alternatiivid, mis häirivad peavoolu jutustusi eesti kunstist ja arhitektuurist nõukogude perioodil. Veelgi enam, vaatenurk moderniseerimisele ja sellega kaasnenud muutustele on potentsiaalselt kasutatav ka teiste endise Nõukogude Liidu vabariikide alternatiivse kunsti puhul, kus samaaegselt ametlikul ja mitteametlikul väljal tegutsenud kunstnike tegevuse kirjeldamisel pole senine tagasitõmbumisele taanduv sõnavara olnud piisav.

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