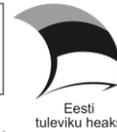




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Gender and Sexualities in (post)Soviet/ (post)Socialist Music, Theatre and Visual Arts

19-20 April 2017

Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and Graduate School of Culture Studies and Arts

PROGRAM:

Wednesday, 19 April

EAMT, Room C105

10.30 **Welcome coffee (on the 2nd floor)**

11.00 **Opening words**

11.15-12.45 **Stephen Amico**

How to Do Things with Theory: Queerness, Cultural Authority, and Post-Soviet Popular Music

Moderator: Hannaliisa Uusma

12.45-14.00 **LUNCH**

14.00-15.30 **Rebeka Põldsam**

Tulips and Carnations - Representations of post-Soviet Gender Subjectivities in Estonian Contemporary Art

Moderator: Hannaliisa Uusma

15.30-16.00 **COFFEE BREAK**

16.00-17.30 **Yngvar B. Steinholt**

1. *Invisible Unmissable: Russian Punk's Mothers of Invention" (The role of women in Russian punk communities, based on fieldwork in 2009-11)*

Moderator: Brigitta Davidjants

2. *"Painting the Void: Psychopathology in Ianka Diaghileva's Poetry" (Diaghileva and her poem about depression)*

Moderator: Brigitta Davidjants

19.00 **Documentary film evening in Artis cinema (Kino Artis)**

I Don't Believe in Anarchy (dir. Natalia Chumakova and Anna Tsyrlina, 2014)

Introduction and discussion by Barbi Pilvre (Tallinn University)



Thursday, 20 April

EAMT, Room A404 (Organ Hall)

09.30 Welcome coffee (on the 4th floor)

10.00-11.30 Tiina Pursiainen Rosenberg

Is All Said and Done? Performing Genders on the Contemporary Stage

Moderator: Rebeka Põldsam

11.30 -12.15 Harry Liivrand

About Gaysensibility in post-Soviet Estonian Art, Especially in the 1990ies

Moderator: Rebeka Põldsam

12.15-13.15 LUNCH

13.15-15.45 Presentations of doctoral students and young researchers:

1. *Crafts and gender in Soviet Estonia*

by **Karin Nugis** (PhD Candidate in art history at the Estonian Academy of Arts)

2. *Telling the Chairman's Tale. Intertwined Queer Past and Soviet Legacies in Jaanus Samma's "NSFW. A Chairman's Tale"*

by **Riikka Taavetti** (PhD Candidate in political history at the University of Helsinki)

3. *Mother, lover and the bitches: construction of femininities and urban romanticism in late- and post-Soviet Estonian punk*

by **Hannaliisa Uusma** (PhD Candidate in music sociology at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre)

15.45-16.00 COFFEE BREAK

16.00-17.15 Terje Toomistu

Toward the Imaginary Elsewhere: The Performative Power of the Soviet Hippies

Moderator: Hannaliisa Uusma



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ABSTRACTS APRIL, 19

How to Do Things with Theory: Queerness, Cultural Authority, and Post-Soviet Popular Music **By Stephen Amico** **The Grieg Academy, University of Bergen, Norway**

Since the inception of the academic study of popular musics, while the necessity and value of musical-theoretical approaches have been questioned, a sociocultural and/or critical-theoretical approach has overwhelmingly been posited as essential, its requisiteness indisputable. However, as the field of popular music studies has grown increasingly cross-cultural in scope, and the mutually constitutive relationship between music and geotemporally specific sociocultural constructions understood as one of the most productive loci of exploration, the largely western (often Anglo-American) provenance of Theory itself becomes, at best, problematic. What are the possible difficulties, for example, inherent in the critical examination of music's intimate relationship to gender and sexuality in a location outside of Theory's "home turf," understanding gender, sexuality, *and* Theory/theories not as transcendent universals, but as constructions indissolubly linked to specific times and places?

With these issues in mind, in this presentation I will be examining the work of three post-Soviet popular music artists – Russian singer Dmitrii (Mitia) Fomin, and the Ukrainian groups Kazaky and Kamon!!! – through the lens of queer theory. My goal will be to critically address how and if such Western constructions might be productively used in the exploration of non-Western musics and sexual identities, and how the resulting accord/discord may relate to the culturally and historically specific genesis and situation of (a) Theory itself. Can Theory bridge gaps and bring to light shared (and possibly emancipatory) experience? Or does the asymmetrical power structures in which Theory is created and disseminated lead inevitably to the creation of a troubling academic-cultural authority?

Moderator: Hannaliisa Uusma (Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre)

Tulips and Carnations. On the post-Soviet Gender Subjectivities in Estonian Contemporary Art Works **By Rebeka Põldsam** **Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia**

Theorist Hasso Krull has named Estonian culture a culture of interruption. According to the so-called large narrative, the Soviet period was a set of interruptions until Estonia re-gained its independence and cultural connections recovered. The collapse of the Soviet Union did not leave Estonian artists untouched: the tables turned and the new state had new winners. Immediately after the end of the Soviet period, young male artists started to depict decaying Soviet military buildings, where nobody could be sent anymore. Otherwise male artists' focus turned to their individual selves and self-building in new context. Therefore, until now some foreign curators and art historians joke that 'Estonian artists only create existentialist auto-portraits!' However, Estonian women artists' artistic choices have been looking a bit further away from their selves compared to male artists by moving more dynamically in time, space and various social groups. It was the women artists who tried to map and conceptualise the social change that happened with decomposition of the Soviet Union from women's viewpoint. In the 1990s, legendary feminist artist Mare Tralla marked and



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reacted at technological improvements in her work. While Ly Lestberg's and Ene-Liis Semper's works gave spectacular depictions of social breakthroughs, that were received with awe, confusion and admiration. In the noughties and early tens, Liina Siib, Tanja Muravskaja and Eléonore de Montesquiou started to depict Russian-speaking Estonians social position in politics, labor market and family life. Marge Monko, on the other hand, started to look at the Soviet women's aesthetic education's estrangement in time. I will present a number of aforementioned case-studies, asking what is the image of the post-Soviet gender subjectivity in contemporary art? What could we do with these results of analysis? What could be the most obvious comparisons and where to look forward in this study?

Moderator: Hannaliisa Uusma (Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre)

Invisible Indispensable: Russian Punk's Mothers of Invention

By Yngvar B. Steinholt

UiT- The Arctic University of Norway

The recent international media accounts of Pussy Riot tended to misleadingly associate the art activist collective with Russian punk, producing a false image of a Russian punk music scene where women played a leading role. In reality, the 'alternative' music scenes of Russia, punk included, remain very much male-dominated. Whereas men and boys inhabit the musical playground, on stage and in the mosh pit, women and girls have since Soviet times been relegated to –and often indispensable in– organising and maintaining that very same playground. However, since their off-stage efforts tend to be taken for granted, important female idealists and enthusiasts receive very little credit or acknowledgement.

A closer look at the punk scenes of St Petersburg showed that women were much more deeply and actively involved in punk than suggested by their visibility (and not least their presence in male punk narratives). The current presentation presents punk women who –each in their own way– played the roles of key social entrepreneurs in the punk communities they inhabited.

The presentation is based on material from the AHRC-funded research project 'Post-socialist punk: Beyond the double irony of self-abasement', which conducted fieldworks in three Russian locations (Vorkuta, St. Petersburg, and Krasnodar) between 2009 and 2011, and which resulted in the book *Punk in Russia: Cultural mutation from the 'useless' to the 'moronic'* (Routledge 2014)

Moderator: Brigitta Davidjants (Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre)

Painting the Void: Psychopathology in Ianka Diaghileva's Poetry"

By Yngvar B. Steinholt

UiT - The Arctic University of Norway

The work of Siberian poet and singer Iana 'Ianka' Diaghileva's (1966-91) includes several songs and poems about mental suffering. The accuracy of Diaghileva's observations in these poems becomes apparent when



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her texts are compared to psychiatric diagnostics (e.g. DSM-IV) and cognitive psychological theory (e.g. Seligman 1975). The current presentation focuses on the 1987 poem *Klassicheskkii depresniak* ('Classic Depressive'), a poem with a pronounced scarcity of verbs and verbal forms which correspond to an absence of action and agency, vague and ambiguous markers of identity and space, and frequent markers of stasis and absence. The lexical analysis shows how the poem maps the state of depression in the form of phases of stasis and absence, where even individual identity is rendered irrelevant. The presentation then proceeds to compare Diagileva's poem to the approaches of psychiatry and clinical psychology respectively, represented by the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for a major depressive disorder within psychiatry and the concept of 'learned helplessness' within cognitive approaches to psychological theory. The comparison not only highlights the accuracy with which Diagileva portrays depression, but also the (self-) therapeutic nature of the poem.

Moderator: Brigitta Davidjants (Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre)

Documentary film evening in Artis cinema (Kino Artis)

I Don't Believe in Anarchy (dir. Natalia Chumakova and Anna Tsyrlina, 2014)

Introduction and discussion by Barbi Pilvre (Tallinn University)

APRIL, 20

Is All Said and Done? Performing Genders on Contemporary Stage

By Tiina Rosenberg

Stockholm University, Sweden

The point of departure for this paper is approaches to the performing arts that have inspired recent generations of queer feminist artists, performers, protestors, and scholars. Philosopher Judith Butler and queer scholars have been responding to phenomena already present in queer culture by creating theoretical frameworks for them. Had it not been for Butler's work, artists might not have had the understanding of gender queerness that they now have. Butler's notion of the body not being a stable foundation for gender expression, and at the same time pointing out subversive strategies that challenge heteronormative conceptions, has been a productive stepping stone for queer feminist performance artists. Her insight has given them a way of thinking critically about gender, as well as other intersectional axes of power, such as age, class, disability, and race, all of which continues to be of great importance for the performing arts.

Moderator: Rebeka Põldsam (Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia)

About Gaysensibility in post-Soviet Estonian Art, Especially in the 1990ies/ Geisensibiliteet Eesti 1990. aastate kunstis

By Harry Liivrand

Academic Library of Tallinn University

(Märkmeid Toomas Volkmani, Rauno Thomas Mossi ja Mark Raidpere loomingu põhjal)

Kõigepealt lähen ajas punktiirselt natuke tagasi, et anda siin käsitletavatele kunstnikele ajaloolised raamid. Kui kunstiajaloolasena astuda spekulatsiooni libedale, aga ahvatlevale ja inspireerivale rajale, võiksin väita,



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et eesti professionaalne kunst sündis homoerootilise maalikunsteosena aastal 1855. Just sel aastal lõpetas meie traditsiooniliselt esimeseks eesti rahvusest professionaalseks kunstnikuks peetav Johann Köler Peterburi Kunstiakadeemia ajaloomaali alal üle-elusuuruse figuraalkompositsiooniga „Herakles toob Kerberose põrguvärvast”. Selle antiikmütoloogiaainelise teose keskmes (jätame süžee siinkohal kõrvale) on alasti kangelane, sangarlikule füüsilisele iluideaalile vastavalt jõuline musklis kuju nagu visuaalne eeskuju tänapäeva nahkmeeste subkultuuris. Samasugune ideaalse atleedikehaga kangelane inspireeris Kölerist üle saja aasta hiljem, 1970.-80. aastatel, Nõukogude Eesti geikunsti esinumbrist akvarellisti ja kostüümikunstnikku Agu Pilti. Eesti gaykunst kui visuaalne mäng tähenduste ja koodidega algas maskuliinse mehekeha ilu uurivast ja kinnitavast aktifotost, mille pioneeriks on Ly Lestberg. 1990. aastate kõige iseloomulikumad, omapärasemad ja samas erinevaid geisensibiliteediga suhestumispraktikaid esindavad kunstnikud (jätan teadlikult naiskunstnikud kõrvale, see on teine teema) on minu arvates aga fotograaf Toomas Volkmann, foto- ja videokunstnik Mark Raidpere ning maalija Rauno Thomas Moss, kelle loomingust fookuseerun alljärgnavalt Raidperele kui sel alal kõige emblemaatilisemale ja rahvusvaheliselt kõrget tunnustust pälvinud kunstniku näitele. Kui 2005. aasta Veneetsia kunstibiennaal lennutas raketina rahvusvahelisele kunstiorbiidile fotograafi ja videokunstniku Mark Raidpere, oli Raidperel Eesti kunstielus juba tuntus erakliku, sõltumatu ning auhinnatud kunstnikuna. Raidpere oli sel biennaalil üks väheseid kunstnikke, kes oma privaatsfääri nii otsekoheselt, ühtaegu omamoodi reality show’ varjundiga dokumentaalsusega (videod emaga ja isast) kui ka räige sümbolistlikkusega (autoportreed) publiku ette laotas. Raidpere sarja "Io" tuleb siiani pidada üheks olulisemaks eneserefleksiooni jäädvustuseks eesti gaykunstis.

Moderator: Rebeka Põldsam (Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia)

PRESENTATIONS BY DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Crafts and Gender in Soviet Estonia **by Karin Nugis** **Estonian Academy of Arts, Estonia**

The research focuses on Estonian crafts and design in 1960s-1980s and I’m primarily interested in the identity construction of crafts in the discourses of modern art and design. Gender has been one of the core categories (among others) continuously defining the essence of the crafts. Craft has been associated with value criteria as “manual”, “material”, “traditional”, “local” and “feminine”. Opposed to modernist fine art, which has been described as “universal”, “intellectual”, “formalist” etc. One can easily trace similar a discursive opposition between craft and modern art in the discussions about craft's identity in Soviet Estonian art. This paper will trace the roots of craft's alleged “feminine” origins and follow the argumentation in Soviet art history to explain how gender has enabled the marginalization of the realm in Soviet art world.

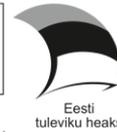
Karin Nugis (MA) is art historian who works as junior researcher and lecturer at Estonian Academy of Arts. Her research focuses on Soviet Estonian crafts and design in 1950s-1980s with a special interest in the



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identity construction of crafts in the discourses of modern art and design. She teaches courses of 20th century art and design.

Telling the Chairman's Tale. Intertwined Queer Pasts and Soviet Legacies in Jaanus Samma's "NSFW. A Chairman's Tale"

By Riikka Taavetti

University of Helsinki, Finland

This presentation discusses art exhibition by Estonian visual artist Jaanus Samma, "NSFW. A Chairman's Tale" (2015), and addresses how the possibilities of remembering queer pasts intertwine with the legacies of the Soviet pasts in contemporary Estonia. Samma's exhibition is based on rumours, legends, oral history interviews and archival documents on Soviet Estonian man, nicknamed the Chairman, who was in the mid-1960s trialled and convicted for sex with another men. The exhibition was originally produced for the Estonian pavilion at the Biennale of Venice, 2015 and it was on view in Tallinn at the Museum of Occupations in 2016.

In the presentation, it is discussed how the life story of the Chairman is presented in the exhibition and how Samma's artistic interpretation of his sources cites and comments presentations of historical research. In addition, it is analysed how the exhibition was received in the Estonian media. In the presentation the exhibition is connected to the international discussion on remembering queer pasts within national histories. It is demonstrated how the memories of queer sexualities produced in the exhibition conform, are made to conform, and refuse to conform to the public images of Estonian post-war history and the repressions and resistances during the Soviet era.

M.Soc.Sci., MA Riikka Taavetti (riikka.taavetti@helsinki.fi) is a PhD Candidate in political history at the University of Helsinki. She has received master's degree in political history at University of Helsinki and in archival science at the University of Jyväskylä. Her ongoing dissertation research addresses the construction of queer and "othered" sexualities in Finnish and Estonian memories of the post-World War II era. Her study focuses on life writings and collections of them, archives, art and public discussions on history. She is affiliated with international ERA-Net Rus Plus research project titled Living Memories (<http://www.livingmemories-era.net/>). Taavetti has also studied youth sexuality in life writings, socialist feminism and LGBTIQ youth well-being.

Mother, Lover and the Bitches: Construction of Femininity and Urban Romanticism in Late- and post-Soviet Estonian Punk

By Hannaliisa Uusma

Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonia

The focus of the presentation is construction of femininity and urban romanticism in the songs of legendary male based Estonian punk-rock band Vennaskond (*Brotherhood*). The band was founded in 1984 behind the Iron Curtain and is still playing today. The presentation considers both the influence of international rituals



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and norms of punk and rock tradition as well as the possible influence of the transition society and cultural space to the style of constructing femininity as a part of post- and late-Soviet masculinity performances.

The presentation is based on sociomusicological study of around 200 Vennaskond's songs written between 1984-2014.

Key words: punk, late- and post-Soviet masculinities, Western *femme fatale*, Soviet groupies, motherland, (post)-Soviet society and cultural space, Estonia.

Hannaliisa Uusma is a musician and sociologist. In 2011, she received a MA degree in sociology from the Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University, majoring in gender maneuvering in Estonian popular music. In 2013, she started working on her PhD dissertation "Construction of masculinities in post-Soviet Estonian music" at the Musicology Department of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. In 2014, she was a visiting researcher on post-colonial studies, punk and gender in the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany.

Toward the Imaginary Elsewhere: The Performative Power of the Soviet Hippies **By Terje Toomistu**

Based on my independent ethnographic research and illustrated with extracts from documentary film "Soviet Hippies" (forthcoming in May 2017), this paper engages with the hippie movement in Soviet Union, which is seen as a coinciding effect of global cultural flows and a local sociopolitical context. By using their bodies as the sites of affect and performative agency, the hippies in Soviet Union opposed the normative assumptions on bodies and behaviour and created common grounds for communication with kindred spirits across the urban Soviet Union. Drawing substantially from affect theory, I argue that the Soviet hippie subjectivity was deeply ingrained with what I have come to regard as the 'imaginary elsewhere.' The imaginary elsewhere encompasses not only the perceived West, but also the transcendent experiences that the hippies pursued through spiritual practices, psychoactive substances and sensory experiences generated by distorted sounds of rock music. The realms achieved through these practices formed an internalized elsewhere, catering to a sense of 'dropping out' of Soviet daily life. To paraphrase Timothy Leary, by turning on and tuning in, the hippies in Soviet Estonia were in constant motion toward the affective promises of the imaginary elsewhere.

The engagements with the imaginary elsewhere drew the hippies into mimetic communication with their imagined counterparts in the West as well as among themselves, eventually forming a network of alternative youth across the urban Soviet Union often referred to as *sistema* (the system). Their symbolic expressions in music, the arts, travel, fashion, or spirituality, bore their performative agency, their opposition to Soviet society, its bleak promise and prevailing norms.

This event is organised by the Graduate School of Culture Studies and Arts, supported by the ASTRA project of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (European Union, European Regional Development Fund).



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