

*Paper prepared for the
Fifth Euroacademia International Conference
Re-Inventing Eastern Europe*

Riga, 29 – 30 January 2016

*This paper is a draft
Please do not cite or circulate*

From Kissing the West to Losing the Virginity: Estonian Performance Art during Perestroika

Liis Kibuspuu
Estonian Academy of Arts

Abstract

In June 1988 Siim-Tanel Annus, an Estonian performance artist having sailed on a boat from Tallinn to Helsinki kissed the ground of the Finnish coast on arrival. The intention of the artist was to precede with the action the pope who was coming to Finland soon after and bring Southern blessing to the neighboring country. However, a Soviet artist kissing the soil of the West had a political connotation for the audience. The interpretation of (post-)Soviet art primarily through socio-economical perspective has contributed to the East-West confrontation.

In my paper I will discuss the topic of Estonian performance art and its reception during perestroika in an endeavour to overcome the obstacle of the East-West dichotomy. The isolation of the Soviet society has been both over- and underestimated. Is there a mid-ground in the essence of the genuine artworks that surpasses the dualistic prejudice?

Characteristic for Estonian performance art of the 1980s was its closed world of transhistorical archetypes, metaphors and myths. The controversy of the political turmoil in the second part of the decade and the socially seemingly disengaged art with its obsession with the spiritual presents us with the question of artists' relation to their own era and history. The metaphoric symbols in the performance art of the period are open both to political and art-centered interpretations. The artistic rituals were often carried out in a serious manner which left no room for irony. Raoul Kurvitz, another performance artist of perestroika, has reflected on the period as a transition from earnestness to cynicism (Kurvitz 2010, 172–173). The “age of innocence” in Estonian performance art was therefore short-lived. The transition corresponds with the shift in the society from idealization of the West to sobering up to the reality of capitalism.

Key Words

Performance art, perestroika, Estonia, metaphor in art, narrative memory.

East and West

An Estonian writer Tõnu Õnnepalu has compared Eastern and Western Europe during the time of the Iron Curtain with two lovers who communicated by mail. The real life encounter, however, didn't turn out to be as impressive as had been expected: the West wasn't as wondrous and free and East as savage and interesting as the other had secretly hoped. (Õnnepalu 2005) The disappointment was preceded by a period of “courting” during perestroika, when the borders opened and it became possible to visit each other freely for the first time. Also, the first open artistic contacts took place at that time. Although Soviet art had been shown in the West before, it was now expected to finally see the non-official art, the artists of resistance, those beautiful savages of the East. The interest in the Soviet performance art in the West during the period can somewhat be explained by the wish to meet these wild artists of the East and see them in action. The West needed the artistic fresh air from the East almost as much as the East needed it from the West.

The loss of „innocence“ in the performance art of perestroika stands for the artists' failure and unwillingness to adapt their creative worlds to the conditions of Western capitalism. For example, Siim-Tanel Annus had started to give performances, or “rituals” as he called them himself, at the beginning of the 1980s in his home garden. Balancing on the verge of what was permitted under Soviet regime, he had managed to create a unique space for self-expression which had also caught the eye of some Western visitors. When Gorbachev announced perestroika, the invitations from abroad started to arrive, calling to participate in exhibitions and give performances outside of Estonia. In 1991, at the peak of his popularity, Annus decided not to give any more performances. On the one hand, he had had a warm welcome and had felt the growing interest towards his work in the West. On the other hand, he had confronted the limitations of the free society, where the control of the bureaucracy, the commodification of the artwork, the hunger for sensation had deprived the art the authenticity he valued himself.

Theory and Methods

In my paper, I will give a short introduction to some selected performative practices of Estonia during Perestroika, primarily concentrating on the years 1987–1989. This was the period where the first artists got the chance to perform in the West. It was also the period of a discrepancy between the groundbreaking social changes and the politically seemingly disconcerted art. Not denying the already existing, although academically disputable (Bryzgel 2013, 14–18), binary concepts of the East and the West in Europe, I will stand by the belief that artworks always have other motivations and backgrounds than merely political or economical ones, therefore also contributing to the possibility to interpret them outside those categories. If we were to search for an escape of the dichotomy of Eastern and Western art practices, a turn towards the actual artworks, instead of only mapping their social circumstances is needed. Thus, not trying to completely avoid political significations, I would like to accentuate the “presence” of an artwork like discussed by Keith Moxey (Moxey 2013, 54), metaphorical reference theorized by Paul Ricoeur and the concepts of myth, language, art and play in the interpretation of Ernst Cassirer in addition. That being said, I will nevertheless place the topic within the framework of the transition period in the society, where exhilaration of the crumbling of the existing boundaries was followed by a disappointment of the erection of the new ones. Concerning the Eastern European performance-art, Amy Bryzgel’s project and book “Performing the East” is a valuable resource of reference and comparison. Her project also shows that more than being re-invented, the performance-art of the Eastern Europe is yet to be discovered, not only by the West but also by other Eastern countries. As the East is far from being a homogeneous entity, it also contains very different artistic practices. Learning about them could be a small step towards less dualistic and more pluralistic Europe.

Other resources for the paper include local art reviews of the era, as well as interviews and personal archives. While the narratives about the past are given through the perspective of our present day, they illustrate the notion of memory being an actively creative process (Lawler 2008, 38–40), thus the methods of narrative research are engaged (Chase 2005, 651–679). A substantial part of the materials used are ephemeral in nature. As performance art is not object-oriented in a traditionally art historical manner, but instead “de-contains” (Jones 2012, 12) the artwork, it inevitably seems to escape the researcher’s immediate aesthetic analysis. David Carr has shown, that history doesn’t only concern the past, but before we remember something, we need to experience it in our present (Carr 2012, 97–98). Thus an immediate connection between past and present is created which is why performance art during Perestroika should have presence and relevance today.

Estonian Art in the Middle of the 1980s

In the middle of the eighties a new generation of artists entered the art scene of Estonia. By then the art critics had been long complaining about the stagnation and predictability in art. The artistic worlds of the older and the new generation of artists, while being different, shared a common indifference towards politically explosive reality of Perestroika. In comparison, the artists of Yugoslavia and of the satellite states of Soviet Union were at the time much more openly socially engaged and critical, playing around with communist symbolics for example (Erjavec 2003, 4–7). It would be easy to dismiss the controversy of socially disengaged art and political turmoil of the period by condemning the Soviet Estonian art to the ivory tower it had comfortably inhabited by then for decades. It is true that in the restricted art scene of the Soviet system, the social performance had a life of its own which cannot be subject to simplistic binary models (Yurchak 2005, 18–21). Instead of jumping head first to the fire, the artists had adopted a unique expressive communication, which wasn’t neither non-official or official but rather “permitted” art in-between. In Estonia, it seems to have been the under-thought of majority of the artworks that even in the strictest prison there are palaces of the mind to explore. Therefore the flourishing of the obscure, the surreal, the metaphysical and the subjective. However, there was some excitement in the art-world in the middle of the 1980s, because the new generation of artists showed a character of their own. Their relationship with the outside world had changed. In contrast with the opposite avant-garde agenda, the new post-modernist approach had a more positive relationship to the reality. They boldly reached for the communicative tools of the contemporary world and expected an immediate reaction from the audience. They were not afraid of larger-than-life symbols, obvious connotations and occasionally even kitsch. They were not afraid of being too intensive. For them art was a quasi-religious spiritual experience and artist was a medium (Sarv 1990). So instead of being politically poignant, Estonian performance art of the second part of the 1980s engaged transhistorical archetypes, universal myths and bold metaphors. Their relationship with the present was a metaphorical one. Paul Ricoeur has pointed out, that the poetic function and the referential function of language (or art for that matter) are not mutually exclusive. The poetic function of a metaphor always also contains the referential value. Therefore poetry or art is never only about itself. Metaphorical perception at the same time destroys and sustains the straightforward meaning of a language, out of which completely new meanings are born. (Ricoeur 1978) These two simultaneous viewpoints — referential and poetical — are helpful when looking at the Estonian performance art in the 1980s.

Perestroika Era Performance-art: Siim-Tanel Annus and Raoul Kurvitz

In the Estonian performance art during perestroika two figures stand out: Raoul Kurvitz (1961) and Siim-Tanel Annus (1960). In a way they are the opposites of the art scene of the 1980s: *l'enfant terrible* and *l'enfant prodige* respectively. And the true opposites that they are, they constitute the different sides of a same coin. Although there were other performers and most of the the actions ultimately were the result of a collective effort, Kurvitz and Annus ended up being the most reflected poster boys of the art form. It should be pointed out, that there were no women in the Soviet era performance art other than a few as the "requisites" for some of Kurvitz' pieces. Neither Kurvitz nor Annus saw performance-art as their main activity, partly because the art form didn't really exist as a discipline at that time in Estonia and partly because the 1980's was truly a decade of pictures. Although being artistically inclined, they decided to study respectively architecture and history at the university. Situating between fields definitely contributed to the interdisciplinary approach. For both of them, the performances were a way to broaden their mostly pictorial works to the outside world, initially often meant to accompany exhibitions. Kurvits found the love of his life in the neoexpressionist painting, not unlike many international artists in the 1980s including a few members of *Rühm T* (Group T) which Kurvitz had founded together with other like-minded artists, architects, musicians and poets. Annus had started already in his teens attending the class of a legendary graphic artist and mysticist Tõnis Vint. His early works, some of which were already on display in USA in 1976 when Annus was only 16 years old, were inspired by the guru's spiritual yet clean and composed aesthetic style. The pictures of Kurvitz and Annus stand worlds apart. Neoexpressionist art, which was introduced by the new generation of artists, shared an attitude deprived of any respect towards traditional good taste and sophisticated painting technique. Vint's school stayed true to the intellectual and orientally minimal composition style. The connection between the pictorial artworks and the performances of the artists are discernible.

Also in their performances, Kurvitz and Annus stay in the opposite sides. While Raoul Kurvitz even in his sincerest performances stayed the coolest-thing-that-ever-happened-to-the-eighties in Estonian art, Siim-Tanel Annus holds a much more seriously prophetic ground. Kurvitz especially accentuated the drive to catch the spirit of the era, seeing himself as being a true member of the rock-generation. Annus was also notably spiritual but in a much more eternity-oriented and transhistorical manner. Where Annus was ascending, Kurvitz was descending, where Annus was winning, Kurvitz was losing, where Annus was building, Kurvits was dismantling. Although Annus' performances also included a few breaking of obstacles, it was only in the service of being newly born. For Kurvitz process of destruction was a natural state of the world.

In interpreting those opposing qualities of Annus' and Kurvitz' performances, there is a temptation to see their connection with the transitional era of Perestroika, where the society was torn between contrasting influences and developments. However, the different creative personalities of the two artists and their natural subjective preferences, which associate with an inner logic of a work of art, are as important. As influential as the socio-political background of a work of art is, it shouldn't be overestimated. One possibility to look into the presence of an artwork itself, is to study the narratives of the contemporary spectators of the performances in question.

For example, a performance by Siim-Tanel Annus was soon after its execution in December 1987 described by Evi Pihlak, an art critic and an avid supporter of the young artist. The text only survives in its entirety in a manuscript and is therefore as sincere as any mediated experience can be. Her narrative starts with a description of the scene in Annus' garden: the fires have been lit, so it can be seen from afar. Every person coming to the scene is thus already feeling the excitement of the forthcoming rite. The Finnish TV has surprisingly gotten the permission from Moscow to film the event. The following description of the scene with its prepared decorations and ornaments concentrates only on the aesthetic qualities. After the music of an experimental musician Ariel Lagle starts to play, the artist appears. The rites of crowning himself, lighting the fires, putting on a blindfold and ascending a cart on rails, then driving through a door covered with a flaming veil, are interpreted by Pihlak in a rather mystical and transcendental manner. The conditional name for the performance (as Annus didn't like to name his performances), „*Läbimine*“ (“Transcendence”), is very ambiguous itself. In fact, the only occasion Pihlak makes a somewhat politically inspired connection is when Annus lights a bar on his shoulders from both ends. In Estonian collective memory it refers to the promise for the nation at the end of the epic „*Kalevipoeg*“ (“The Son of Kalev”): „*Aga ükskord algab aega, kus kõik piirud kahel otsal lausa lähvad lõkendama...*“ — „But once a time arrives, when all torches from both ends will burn...”. The verse refers to a future era when the hero Kalevipoeg will return home and the nation will be free at last. Pihlak doesn't put much importance to it though, as she immediately coins a few other, politically neutral interpretations for the image. Then, unexpectedly, the whole event takes a turn towards the very much politically loaded reality, with militia arriving at the scene and transporting both Annus and the Finnish TV crew to the station. After irritatedly describing the audacity of the incidence, Pihlak then returns to the mythological and spiritual analysis of the performance. She clearly sees the worlds of art and life as separate entities. In the tainted mundane existence there is always hope because of the human soul's brighter aspiration for the skies, she concludes.

The Finnish film crew, however, wasn't as spiritually inclined. A film that was broadcasted later couldn't have been a better praise for Annus in the West. There couldn't have been anything more refreshing to the Scandinavian welfare state art media than hearing about artists being actually repressed by the power structures in immediate vicinity. A platform for Annus' art being interpreted politically was formed. The afterlife of the performance therefore includes the association with the fall of the Berlin Wall (Orav 2015, 114) and Annus getting an image as a prophet of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The aura was additionally fueled by the symbol of awakening which had accompanied Annus' performances from the start and which during Perestroika was transformed into the symbol of the awakening nation.

In another case, in 1988, one of Raoul Kurvitz' performances took place on a young artists' review exhibition called „*Ma ei ole kunagi käinud New-Yorgis*“ (“I Have Never Been to New York”) on the Song Festival grounds in Tallinn. The name of the exhibition was coined by an art critic Sirje Helme and proclaimed openly the Soviet art's isolation from the art centre of the era. The exhibition didn't necessarily draw artistic inspiration from its exclamatory title — it only recognized that albite different, all the presented artists were connected by their banishment from the West. The organizers did however see a chance for a province in the face of the avant-garde's crisis in New York (Kalm 1989, 6). The identification of oneself as the “other” of the West has been very much self-inflicted. Raoul Kurvitz gave on the exhibition a performance *Ma olin Timbuktu* (“I was in Timbuktu”), which in one interpretation can be read: “I have never been to New York, however, I have been to the ends of the earth and it was a hell”. A spectator sees a man in a suite and wearing a boxing glove, crawling and writhing on the ground in a hopeless effort to drink from a glass of water. Later the artist literally falls flat on face into a low bath of water. Although the performance can be seen as a social critique towards “winners”-generation and yuppie culture (Orav 2015, 116), a much more universally open interpretation of existential *angst* and absurd isn't completely out of place. The symbolism of the torment of a thirsty man evokes obvious reaction in any viewer despite their background. We are in fact again in the world of archetypes, equipped with modern attributes. A spectator's comment about the performance, which mentions it being about the human misery (Kalm 1989, 7), refers to the audience's inclination to perceive the artworks in a more universal manner as well.

First Encounters with the West

When the the invitations from the West, at first primarily from Finland, started to land, no handbooks of the survival in the capitalism were offered for the artists. The reality was bound to hit. In 1988 when Annus arrived in Finland for the first time it felt for him like something that wasn't necessarily going to happen again. He recalls in his interviews the idea of the “mythical” West, the land of “milk and honey”, being present in the deepest Soviet hopelessness in the beginning of the 1980s. The crossing of the 80 km by sea from Tallinn to Helsinki for the first time was an experience he shared with many other Estonians during perestroika. The occasion required some ceremoniality and he wore his usual requisite for performances — a crown. The character of the King had first appeared in 1986 in a performance which took place in Riga, which places it at the beginning of perestroika. It may be a coincidence, but it evokes a connection between the release of the state boarders and the artist's leaving of his home garden. Exposing himself to the outside world required the regalia to keep the control as a sovereign ruler of his world of art. Independence was after all one of the key concepts of the era and there is no-one more independent than a king. Annus in the character of the King gave the above-mentioned kiss to the ground and therefore created a space for numerous, among others political, interpretations of the act. The following performance called “Supper for a Million and a Half” was organized by Erkki Pirtola as one of the events of The World Conference of Antroposophy. Tired of being a poor Soviet who only receives humanitarian aid from the Northern neighbors, Annus had an idea how to bring his own Southern blessings. He lay down on a stretcher and let himself be covered with cabbages and other vegetables, also adding some barrels of wine. Thus decorated, his idea was to be carried to the slum areas of Helsinki “to feed the poor”. Through some family history, he was aware that “the poor” actually did exist in the West. The organizer, however, became concerned about the safety of the artist and advised to change the location. Finally the performance happened in the more secure conditions on the territory of Finlandiatalo but still consequently ended in an unplanned cabbage fight with the audience. The independence of the King as a sovereign ruler of his world was therefore questioned. In Estonia, the audience had been devout or sometimes mildly amused, but never as active as to take the initiative of changing the course of the performance. The independent King had encountered the independent people of a free society.

Raoul Kurvitz made his first appearance in the West in 1989 also in Finland, Billnäs. The performance “When Lord Zarathustra was Young and Polite” was accompanied by at the time Kurvitz' favorite composer's, Richard Wagner's music. Wagner and his concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* has been an inspiration to many interdisciplinary artists, but besides that he also captures the mood of the dramatic fatality. Two girls, dressed in black and their face covered with a black hood, assist as Kurvitz himself in a white dhoti approaches on a small boat across water. Next follow the rituals of water, flogging and shouting in nonsensical German. At the end Kurvitz famously throws himself into a dam. Retrospectively, Kurvitz has claimed that only in this first performance abroad was he completely sincere. After that the decline into sarcasm started, which turned the performances into cynical representations of themselves. Not

underestimating the power of a creative memory, probably the only thing that had changed for a spectator by the next performance on a traveling exhibition of Estonian avant-garde oriented art “Structure and Metaphysics” in Helsinki, was the alleged artist’s position. The metaphysics of the title of the exhibition was definitely his element. Modern ritualistic behaviour continues with sealing the lipstick-kisses on the stones hanging on the ropes from the ceiling. The girls have changed from white to black, their genitals exposed. Later Kurvitz uses a sword-like weapon to cut the ropes of the stones, which then fall into the barrels below, releasing a buff of feathers. All the used archetypal materials and set pieces are so loaded with meanings and connotations that they have a life of their own.

The first encounters with the Western world held an unpleasant surprise for the independent and creatively ambitious artists. “Smash something, set something on fire, cut your veins!”, recalls Raoul Kurvitz the scandal-hungry expectations for his art in one of his public interviews. “What I did here in the garden I couldn’t do there”, Annus remembers in turn. The spiritual idea of the artwork was lost, instead he had to concern himself with regulations, for instance where and at what time of the day he could use a chainsaw. Annus paradoxically discovered that he had been more free in his home garden inside a totalitarian state than in a “free” world of the West. The foreign media was mostly interested in what was it like to be held by the militia and how were things with food back home. Both Annus and Kurvitz also mention the outrageous royalties of the capitalist art world as an influencing factor for their turn towards cynicism and spectacle. These recollections of the artists refer to the clash of two different worlds: not necessarily the Eastern and the Western ones but of a self-sufficient concept of art versus the context-oriented, curious and materialistic reality. In that sense the isolation from the rest of the world during Soviet period is an ambiguous concept. On the one hand, the border of the Soviet Union indeed existed in a physical sense and the free movement of people and ideas was indeed limited. On the other hand, as many contemporaries have noted, the Iron Curtain had holes and information leaked through — in Tallinn for example, the Finnish TV could be seen. It is evident that there is no “objective” line as to how isolated exactly was the Soviet society, it depended too much on the personal psychological and perceptual characteristics. In fact, the isolation, which seems to have been relevant to performance artists of perestroika and their disappointment in the limitations of the Western society, was the isolation from the everyday practices and support systems of the capitalist art world, not from its media image or ideology.

Both Siim-Tanel Annus and Raoul Kurvitz decided to end their career as performance artists at the beginning of the 1990s, before it had actually begun. Although they made an appearance in 1997 at the Venice Biennale, they both have expressed rather the obligation than the desire of representing Estonia as its best known performance artists. Were it the growth of cynicism or the depressing reality of the Western bureaucracy what was the reason behind it — the age of innocence was over. The decline in the Western interest towards the East, was also notable — the avalanche of invitations for the artists stopped as soon as the Iron Curtain fell and autonomous states started to form. The disappointment in “the other” from both sides had been completed.

Art and Play

Ernst Cassirer makes a distinction between art and play by theorizing human imagination. According to him it can be divided in three stages: the invention, the personification and the production of pure sensuous forms. The first and the second are present in any kind of play, the third one is needed to create art. (Cassirer 1944, 209) In the context of performance art of perestroika in Estonia, the third stage of Cassirer’s imagination forms the “structure and metaphysics” of an ambiguous work of art. Defying the risk of pushing a boarder of a performance a little bit too far, I would like to mention two examples of amateur performances in addition.

Performances as amateur plays or shows were distinctively popular during Perestroika according to Evi Pihlak. She found a connection with the national awakening period at the end of the 19th century when also amateur theater groups flourished. The premise for it, according to her, is an active attitude towards social change. (Pihlak 1988) As the professional performance art was concerned with the metaphysical elements, the popular performance took a much more openly political stand.

For example, on the 6th of August 1987 — a few weeks before the meeting of Hirvepark where the citizens of Soviet Estonia demanded that the authorities acknowledge the Pact of Molotov-Ribbentrop for the first time — a group of Tartu University students organized a play in Rõuge, South-Estonia called „*Ise Seisvuse matused*“ (“The Burial of In-Dependence”). The footage of the play shows a ritual burial of a young maiden in a white dress while people mourn and boyars celebrate. Later the pretty In-Dependence rises from the dead and crawls out of the grave. The people celebrate and the boyars get buried instead. The play ends with a celebration where now Re-In-Dependence (*Taas Ise Seisvus*) dances cancan on a table. Curiously the whole scene takes place on a building site of a Soviet housing estate. This kind of childish enjoyment of a play — the invention and the personification — doesn’t mind the plain obvious symbolism and brings indeed back the vibe of the romantic nationalism of the 19th century.

A peculiar example of an amateur long-term performance in the transition period and a fascinating connection with the symbol of the sovereign king, was a phenomenon of the Independent Royalist Party of Estonia. Although being an officially registered party, one of the first of its kind in post-communist Estonia, it was in essence a clever political performance project, which balanced on the verge of absurd, and protested against the extremes of the society which emerged during Perestroika and later. Confirming the fact that during the era “anything was possible” and that not everybody was satisfied how things had developed, the Royalists who seemingly supported the ridiculous idea of Estonia becoming a kingdom, ultimately got 8 seats on free elections in the first Estonian parliament in 1992. Therefore, unconsciously, they achieved the ultimate goal of any social art project: to transcend the border between performance and life.

Conclusion

Ernst Cassirer has stressed out that art together with language, myth and knowledge cannot be measured against a strict notion of truth. As he puts it:

Instead of measuring the content, meaning, and truth of intellectual forms by something extraneous which is supposed to be reproduced in them, we must find in these forms themselves the measure and criterion for their truth and intrinsic meaning (Cassirer 1953, 8).

Although an intrinsic meaning of an art work can be somewhat contingent, he is pointing out something meaningful in the context of perestroika art in Estonia: the need to see the artworks in the reality of their own. Instead of measuring the art of the East against the diagram of the West or even against its own political “truth”, the third way out of the dichotomy would be to look at the art independently from its background. What we see in the Estonian performance art during Perestroika is the “innocence” of the artist, who still believes in the art’s ability to speak for itself thus transcending barriers. This innocence crumbled when it hit the measure of the audience of the West, who wanted to see the artists as protesters against a concrete mutual Soviet enemy not as the visionaries of some metaphysical worlds. In contrast, the amateur plays with no artistic ambition were much more deeply rooted in the local socio-political soil. Although the transformative and the destructive elements of the artistic performances can be interpreted in a resistive or system defying manner, these readings are primarily retrospective in nature, and the political incentives never were the only motives behind the artworks.

References

- Bryzgel, Amy. 2013. *Performing the East: Performance Art in Russia, Latvia and Poland since 1980*. London; New York: I. B. Tauris.
- Carr, David. 2012. „Kogemus kui ajalugu“ („Experience and History“). *Tuna*, Nr. 1: 96–108.
- Cassirer, Ernst. 1944. *An Essey on Man*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Cassirer, Ernst. 1953. *Language and Myth*. New York: Dover Publications Inc.
- Chase, Susan E. 2005. „Narrative inquiry: Multiple Lenses, Approaches, Voices“. In *The handbook of qualitative research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 651–679. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Erjavec, Aleš. 2003. „Introduction“. In *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition. Politicized Art under Late Socialism*, edited by Aleš Erjavec, 1–54. Berkley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press.
- Jones, Amelia 2012. “The Now and the Has Been: Paradoxes of Live Art in History”. In *Perform, Repeat, Record*, edited by Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield, 11–25. Bristol; Chicago: Intellect, The University of Chicago Press.
- Kalm, Mart 1989. “Ma ei ole kunagi käinud New Yorgis” (“I Have Never Been to New York”). *Kunst*, 2, No. 74, 6–7.
- Kurvitz, Raoul 2010. “Flame-Throwing: Estonian Performance in the Eighties”. In *Lost Eighties. Problems, Themes and Meanings in Estonian Art on 1980s*, compiled by Sirje Helme, edited by Andreas Trossek, co-edited by Johannes Saar 170–175. Tallinn: Center For Contemporary Arts, Estonia.
- Lawler, Steph. 2008. „Stories and the Social World“. In *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, edited by Michael Pickering, 32–49. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Moxey, Keith. 2013. *Visual Time. The Image in History*. Durham; London: Duke University Press.

Orav, Kristin. 2015. „The Role of Visualizing Failure in Estonian Art, 1987–1999: The „Winners’ Generation“. *Signs and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 103–131.

Pihlak, Evi. 1988. „Kastna performance“ *Sirp ja Vasar*, September 23.

Ricoeur, Paul. 1978. „The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling“. *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 143–159.

Sarv, Vaike. 1990. „Sovetliku šamaani raske roll“ („The Difficult Task of Soviet Shaman“). *Teater. Muusika. Kino* 12: 16–19.

Yurchak, Aleksei. 2005. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Õnnepalu, Tõnu. 2005. „Ida ja Euroopa“ („East and Europe“). *Diplomaatia*, July/August, No. 22/23. Accessed January 10, 2016. <http://www.diplomaatia.ee/artikkel/ida-ja-euroopa/>.

The author is currently a PhD student at The Institute of Art History in the Estonian Academy of Arts. Her research includes the discursive changes in the arts during perestroika, focusing on pictures, performance, music and their relations. She works as a curator of educational programmes in the Adamson-Eric Museum, a branche of the Art Museum of Estonia, where her duties concern with mediation of art history to different age groups. Besides art education and research, her previous professional engagements have involved heritage preservation and documentation of early modern architecture.