

PROGRAM

Venue: **Workshops and talks:** Valmiera Museum, Bruņinieku iela 1, Valmiera

DAY 2 / Saturday, 10 August

10:00–11:30

Lecture by **Haralds Matulis**: *How Language Got Political: Different Perspectives on Language**

11:45–13:00

Talk by **Francisco Martínez**: *Things that Cannot be Said**

15:00–16:00

Talk by **Maria Kapajeva**: *Artistic Research: Dyslexic Writing in Colonial Mother Tongue**

18:00–19:30

Artist talk and film screening by **Anna Kin**: *Affective Dialogue About Languages in Transition**

DAY 3 / Sunday, 11 August

10:00–11:30

Talk by **Dens Dimiņš**: *Language and its Symbolic Dimension**

11:45–12:45

Talk by **Patricia Couvet**: *Slangs, Dialects and Queer Linguistics, a Set of Cases Studies **

Talk by **Niels Van Tomme**: *Disarming Language**

DAY 4 / Monday, 12 August

10:00–11:00

Talk by **Jussi Koitela**: *Presentation of Art as an Intervention to Disciplines of Knowledge Production**

DAY 5 / Tuesday, 13 August

09:45–12:45

Presentations of creative projects by Summer School participants

EXTENDED PROGRAM

ABSTRACTS AND LECTURERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Saturday, 10 August

Haralds Matulis

How Language Got Political: Different Perspectives on Language

Language has been important to humans. It allows to communicate, it is instrumental in knowledge acquisition. A philosopher famously said: "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world." However, language goes beyond just describing the world, it has crucial importance in constituting and upholding the power relations in the society. The lecture will take a comparative look at how language is defined and used in different fields of philosophy, linguistics, and social sciences. We will conclude with an analysis and discussion of how these different attitudes toward language are reflected in the artistic and curatorial practices of contemporary art.

Haralds Matulis is a writer and researcher. He studied philosophy as well as social anthropology, cinema, literature, and digital humanities. He currently works at the Institute of Literature, Folklore, and Arts of the University of Latvia (ILFA), focusing on data analysis and computational methods for humanities research. In the past, Haralds has worked in the field of cultural policies to improve the situation of creative professionals in Latvia and has diverse experience in teaching at universities and workshops on topics such as literature, philosophy, creative writing, and career planning for creatives, amongst others. He is author of two books, *Vidušķiras problēmas* [Middle-Class Problems] (2018) and *Eksistenciālims* [Existentialism] (2020).

Recommended reading:

Althusser, Louis, (1970) *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*

Barthes, Roland, (1967) *The Death of the Author*

Biber, Douglas and Conrad, Susan, (2009) *Register, Genre, and Style*

Goffman, Erving, (1956) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*

Lyotard, Jean-François (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1921) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1953) *Philosophical Investigations*

Saturday, 10 August

Francisco Martínez

Things that Cannot be Said

Francisco Martínez will present three artistic projects that dig into the tension between showing and concealing, between what can be publicly said and not in eastern Estonia: *Life in Decline* (2019-2021), *Keeping Things in the Dark* (2021-2023), and *Ex Libris* (2024). Through the projects he collaborated with artists and designers exploring alternative forms of representation.

In this liminal region, secrecy operates as the elastic gum that connects the parts and the whole, facilitating the possibility of ambivalence and adaptation. Overall, secrets play an important role in human affairs and are central to the working of social order, not because of being true or false, but as a route to understanding the relationship between the personal and collective as well as between power and refusal. They refer to that which is generally known but cannot be spoken, establishing a complex relationship between those who know it and those who pretend they don't.

Yet what cannot be said also manifests the limits of the ethnographic gesture, based on verbal descriptions and participant observation. What seemingly does not fit in the present or refuses to be part of prevailing representations, proves itself as opaque to the methodologies we have developed in the social sciences, resisting analytical exposure. For instance, we need to deploy an atmospheric vision when stepping into a basement, dance choreography of suspicion when entering a bunker, fall into the gravitas of a mining hole, address the unobservable in a vacant apartment, smell the effluents of an oil shale processing plant, get lost in an abandoned library, or hear someone operating behind the half-open doors of a garage. Such under-the-radar activities are most often unnoticed because of happening with the lights out; still, they take place and time, leak and leave traces despite not fitting into measurable notions of data.

Since these art projects were site-specific and embedded within the local material culture, I could access what is laying beyond verbal forms of relation. Inherently silent, ordinary objects tend to be below the radar of normative surveillance. All in all, these exhibitions demonstrate the force of the aesthetic realm to think, conduct social research, and modify the register of the sensible.

Parasitic Reading. Workshop

The workshop is an open platform for knowledge contagion through acts of collective, out-loud reading. This pedagogical experiment aims to invoke archaic forms of storytelling in which communities are formed by gathering to listen and tell stories. It is also inspired by the knowledge transfer gestures proposed at the end of Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451*, in which people try to preserve written ideas by recalling books verbatim.

My proposal of parasitic reading has four specific yet complementary goals: to instigate a new kind of attentive listening practice, to try and make something new out of all the fragments, and to generate an imaginary sense of community, even if temporarily.

In preparation for the workshop, summer school participants are asked to submit an extract (max 250 words) of any written text that they would like to share with the rest of the group. These fragments would resonate with the respective understanding of languages, yet they will not necessarily be read

by the people who selected them. The text could be a poem, a fieldnote, a song, lines from a theatre piece, film or novel, from an academic paper, from an artistic catalogue, or a cookbook.

Francisco Martínez is an anthropologist dealing with contemporary issues of material culture through ethnographic experiments. In 2018, he was awarded the Early Career Prize of the European Association of Social Anthropologists. Currently, he works at Tampere University and convenes the Collaboratory for Ethnographic Experimentation (EASA Network). Francisco has published several books, including *The Future of Hiding* (Cornell UP, 2025); *Ethnographic Experiments with Artists, Designers and Boundary Objects* (UCL Press, 2021); *Repair, Brokenness, Breakthrough* (Berghahn, 2019); *Remains of the Soviet Past in Estonia* (UCL Press, 2018). Also, he has led different art projects – including, ‘Objects of Attention’ (Estonian Museum of Applied Art & Design, 2019); ‘Greetings from Another Time and Space’ (Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia, 2019); ‘Life in Decline’ (Estonian Mining Museum, 2021); and ‘Keeping Things in the Dark’ (Riga Art Space, 2022).

Recommended reading:

Francisco Martínez, (2003), *What kind of documents do curators produce? Contemporary cases from Estonia*.

Francisco Martínez. (2023), *How to make ethnographic research with exhibitions*, Routledge, 73-81 p.

Francisco Martínez, (2024), *Lights out: practicing opacity in Estonian basements*, Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia, 285-297 p.

Saturday, 10 August

Mara Kapajeva

Artistic Research: Dyslexic Writing in Colonial Mother Tongue

Mara Kapajeva will give an artist talk with a focus on the importance of language in her practice: what kind of languages she uses and what political, social and emotional connotations they carry. Through her personal stories and relations with the languages, in her work she discusses the importance of language in self-identification and defining her positionality. Her recent book *a year-long scream*, published in May 2024 (OPA! Publishing), is a collection of her writings that brings together questions about identity, language, and belonging through a feminist lens.

Maria Kapajeva is an artist who works between the UK and Estonia. Her work often highlights micro-histories and peripheral stories with a feminist urge to make them visible. In her artistic practice, she uses different mediums that she chooses depending on their conceptual support of her ideas. Kapajeva enjoys working with found and vernacular photographic images, video installations, textile, and embroidery as well as other materials. She has received awards such as the Wiralt Fellowship of the Estonian Ministry of Culture (2023) and Kraszna-Krausz Photo Book Award (2021), the Runner-Up Award at FOKUS Video Art Festival in Denmark (2018), and was shortlisted for Aperture PhotoBook Award (2018). She exhibits internationally and her works are in such collections as Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art and Tartu Art Museum. Currently Kapajeva does a practice-based PhD at the Estonian Academy of Arts and runs her studio "Circle in Cube" in Tallinn as a space for sharing art, ideas, and support. www.mariakapajeva.com

Few texts and names that keep inspiring:

Audre Lorde, *The Uses of Anger: Responding to Racism* (and her other writings)
bell hooks, (2009) *Belonging: A Culture of Place* (and her other writings)
Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, (2012) *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*
Françoise Vergès, (2021) *A Decolonial Feminism*,
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (1988) *Can the Subaltern Speak?*
Kate Tempest, (2020) *On Connection*
Lola Olufemi, (2021) *Experiments in Imagining Otherwise*
Madina Tlostanova, (2018) *What Does It Mean to Be Post-Soviet?* (and her other writings)
Madina Tlostanova, Suruchi Tharap-Björkert, Redi Koobak, (2016) *Border Thinking and Misidentification: Postcolonial and Post Socialist Feminist Dialogues*,
M.NourbeSe Philip, (2008) *ZONG!*
Sara Ahmed, (2017) *Living a Feminist Life*
Sara Ahmed, (2024) *The Feminist Killjoy Handbook* (and her other books)
Sophie Chauhan, (2023) *Curious Affinities*
In Russian:
Афина Фаррукзад, (2020) *Болезнь белизны*
Оксана Васякина, (2021) *Рана*
In Estonian:
Sveta Grigorjeva, (2023) *Frankenstein*
My books:
a year-long scream, 2024 (in three languages: Estonian, English and Russian)
Dream is Wonderful, Yet Unclear, 2020 (in three languages)
You Can Call Him Another Man, 2018

Saturday, 10 August

Anna Kin

Affective Dialogue about Languages in Transition. Artist talk and film screening

"ღ" is a research-driven art project, which presents the state of different ethno-linguistic groups following imperial collapse and political transition. For this artwork, people from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia are asked to recite their alphabets. By doing so, Kin aims to showcase languages that have suffered forced assimilation by their former political regimes. Now, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, these languages are either rejuvenating or fading. "ღ" is an invitation to explore individuality, diversity, and the power of language. The project is a work in progress, and Kin plans to keep extending this video art collection as a lifelong project. "Kin's artwork is named after the Kartvelian letter 'ghan', whose form echoes the heart symbol. This piece places a conversation about anticolonial language politics in dialogue with affect," Leah Feldman, project's supervisor.

Anna Kin is an Almaty-based research-driven artist, manager of cultural projects and language enthusiast. She currently works in the field of socially engaged art, photography, performance and new media. Explores the traces of the Soviet Empire through the languages and cultures of the peoples of Central Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The artistic method includes the practice of caring and solidarity. The artist enters into dialogue with people through various mediums – happenings, workshops, total installations.

Recommended reading:

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (2010) *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, Columbia University Press.
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (2010) *The Story of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri*, Columbia University Press.
Frantz Fanon, (2004) *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press.
Achebe, (1973) *The African Writer and The English Language*
Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, (1988) *Decolonising the Mind*, Heinemann.
Aimé Césaire, (2010) *Letter to Maurice Thorez*, Duke University Press.

Sunday, 11 August

Dens Dimiņš

Language and Its Symbolic Dimension

Conceiving language and its symbolic dimension (largely based on Pierre Bourdieu's *Langage et le pouvoir symbolique*), we could look at contemporary linguistic trends in media and literature, especially in politically pregnant narratives. Bourdieu looks at how linguistic exchanges and values of languages correlate with their power to dominate, to impose themselves in the political, social, art and other fields. The authors of linguistic exchanges employ particular semantic and pragmatic strategies and manipulations (not necessarily connoted negatively). There are 'official' narratives channelled through public media and 'popular' language spoken from the trenches, in war reports, social media, in graffiti and elsewhere, with both shared and divergent traits. Keywords: *symbolic forms and objects, ideologies, stance-taking, performative strength, power, representation, manipulation, sense=consensus=doxa, orthodoxy, legitimacy, domination, censorship*

Dens Dimiņš studied classical philology and translatology at Latvijas Universitāte (Riga) and Icelandic language and literature at Háskóli Íslands (Reykjavik). His dissertation focuses on evidentiality in the linguistic system of Icelandic. He further studied linguistics and literature in Wisconsin and Berlin. He is interested in linguistic diversity and language in various registers and discourses. He has published several articles on political rhetoric and power in Latvian media as well as on strategies in literary translation. He has translated about 40 literary works from French, Icelandic, German and other languages.

Recommended reading:

Bourdieu, Pierre (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. [Tr. by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson.] Harvard University Press.

Grenfell Michael James (ed.) (2011) *Bourdieu, Language and Linguistics*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Shusterman, Richard (ed.) (1999) *Bourdieu, a Critical Reader*. Blackwell Publishers.

Jo Napoli, Donna (1996) *Linguistics. An Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Sunday, 11 August

Patricia Couvet

Slangs, Dialects and Queer Linguistics, A Set of Case Studies

Departing from the Pickle Bar public programs on language, *Lavender Linguistic Institute* (2022), *SLURS* (2023) and *Sturm and Slang* (2024), curator Patricia Couvet will introduce some examples of projects and art practices that challenge language practices (gestures and wordings) through slangs, queers, linguistics, or dialects in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. In a steadily more politicized public sphere, language is increasingly weaponized: without enough regard to its empowering and liberating potential. The three programs of performances, workshops, and lectures at Pickle Bar celebrate and redeem the necessarily fluid nature of language as an agency of self-determination and empowerment. The selected case studies intend to illuminate the complex processes of adaptation, evolution, and hybridization in the face of geopolitical changes and cultural upheavals, be it communities creating special gestures, secret languages, and codes to provide their own security, or reclaiming the language from the state. The talk will further address the processes and challenges of language legitimization, taking examples of slangs within the French context.

Patricia Couvet is a curator based in Berlin. With a background in cultural history (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), her work relies on the entanglement of human and social sciences with the curatorial. Currently, she co-curates with Anastasia Marukhina two initiatives by the art collective Slavs and Tatars in Berlin: The Residency Mentorship and Co-founded With Pickle Bar. Recent projects include *Sturm and Slang* (co-curated Anastasia Marukhina) – Pickle Bar, Berlin, 2024, *L'Horlogerie à Répétition*, The Left Place, Reims, 2023; *Proximities* at La Box, Bourges (co-curated with Alicja Melzacka); Nikolay Karabinovych's solo exhibition *Why Do You Stand at the Door?* – Jewish Museum of Belgium, 2022.

Dedicated to an unlikely form of knowledge production – one where hospitality and discourse are inseparable – Pickle Bar is a non-profit art space located in Berlin's Moabit district founded by the art collective Slavs and Tatars with curators Anastasia Marukhina and Patricia Couvet where we address items of urgency in oral and cultural histories, material culture, language and gender studies across Eurasia (Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia). Founded in 2020, Pickle Bar focuses on performative as well as discursive formats and has initiated research projects in partnership with leading institutions and universities.

Recommended reading:

Alice Becker-Ho, (2015) *The Essence of Jargon Argot & the Dangerous Classes*, Autonomedia
Daniel Heller-Roazen, (2008) *Echolalias: On the Forgetting of Language*, MIT Press.
Slavs and Tatars, (2012) *Khhhhhhh*, Mousse Publishing.
Cécile Canut, (2018) *Tell Me That I Am Not a Ciganin, Damn Your Mother! The Social and Political Consequences of Enregisterment in Bulgaria* .
Roback, A. A. (1944) *A Dictionary of International Slurs*. Sci-Art Publishers.
William Leap, (2020) *Language Before Stonewall*.

Sunday, 11 August

Niels Van Tomme
Disarming Language

In 2019, Christine Sun Kim and Niels Van Tomme curated the group exhibition *Disarming Language: disability, communication, rupture* at the Tallinn Art Hall. This exhibition and programme brought together artists, graphic designers, writers, and activists to establish critical vantage points that imagined disability beyond a stigmatised “condition”. Its purpose lay in establishing new conceptual and experiential frameworks that used language and communication in innovative ways, through, with, and beyond disability, past limiting ableist perspectives. Highlighting the background story behind *Disarming Language*, the curatorial strategies driving it as well as some of its featured artworks, this talk asks if and how the exhibition’s possibilities and/or limitations for disability awareness emerged.

Note: Christine agreed to Niels talking about this project.

Activating Captions. Workshop

In 2021, Christine Sun Kim and Niels Van Tomme continued their curatorial collaboration with *Activating Captions* at argos centre for audiovisual arts in Brussels. Traditionally, captioning is the conversion of the audio content of a film, video, television programme, or live event into text and the display of this text on a screen, monitor, or other visual display system. Captions are essential for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, as well as for numerous others. *Activating Captions* creatively expanded the habitual uses of captions in film and video in engaging with artists for whom these media prove an important setting to experiment with text and image, turning captions into a multi-layered, generative site for critical linguistic interventions. This workshop will engage participants in the process of developing *Activating Captions*. It imagines a new, more expandable future for the accessibility of audiovisual artworks by providing conceptual, pragmatic, and personal tools.

Note: Christine agreed to Niels giving this workshop.

Niels Van Tomme (he/him) is a curator and lecturer who works internationally at the intersection of contemporary culture and critical social awareness. He was director and chief curator at argos centre for audiovisual arts in Brussels (2018-24) and De Appel in Amsterdam (2016-18), curator at the Bucharest Biennale 7 (2014-16), visiting curator at the Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture in Baltimore (2011-16), and director of arts and media at Provisions Learning Project in Washington, DC (2008-11). His exhibitions and programmes have been shown internationally, including at the Akademie der Künste (Berlin), The Kitchen (New York), Contemporary Arts Center (New Orleans), Tallinn Art Hall (Tallinn), Gallery 400 (Chicago), Värmlands Museum (Karlstad), National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC), and P! (New York).

Recommended reading:

Alison Kafer: “Introduction: Imagined Futures” in *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (2013) Indiana University Press.

Stephanie Bailey: “Christine Sun Kim and Niels Van Tomme Activate New Possibilities” (2021) Occula Magazine.

Activating Captions resources: <https://www.argosarts.org/activatingcaptions/help>

Monday, 12 August

Jussi Koitela

Presentation of Art as an Intervention to Disciplines of Knowledge Production

Lecture maps the disciplines of knowledge production within presentation of art and how those can be intervened through curatorial practice, focusing on Survival Kit 15. It looks at how sensitivity to daily experiences of spaces, social contexts and bodily embodiments in exhibition making can intervene on existing forms of knowing and platform new languages for articulating marginalised lived experiences.

Jussi Koitela is an independent curator and Director of M-Cult. His curatorial work intertwines art, embodied research methods, urban spatial contexts, collaboration, hospitality, and materiality in various forms of exhibitions and knowledge production. He is currently curator of the Pavilion of Finland at the 60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia together with Yvonne Billmore (20 April–24 November 2024). Between 2019 to 2023 they also curated ‘Rehearsing Hospitalities’, Frame’s public programme.

His selected curatorial work includes: *Conflicting Relations* at Vera List Center for Art and Politics, New York, *Editorial Tables: Reciprocal Hospitalities* at The Showroom, London, *Secured - Politics of Bodies and Space* at Arsi Vantaa Art Museum, Vantaa. *Performing the Fringe* at Konsthall C and Pori Art Museum, *Entangling Matter and Meaning/Intra-Structures - Monster of the Seven Lakes* at Treignac Projet, *Mattering City* at SixtyEight Art Institute Copenhagen, *City Agents* at Estonian Museum of Contemporary Art (EKKM), Tallinn, *Skills of Economy Sessions* at Finnish Theatre Academy, *Baltic Circle Festival* and *Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art*, and *You Must Make Your Death Public* at de Appel Art Centre, Amsterdam.

Monday, 12 August

Malin Arnell and Mar Fjell
Please, Don't End Here. Workshop

Please, Don't End Here will engage through play, improvisation, secret codes and gestures as a way to acknowledge the language and silence of queer life practices and various traditions within performance art.

The workshop will take us along the desire path of the not yet known. To follow our desire requires us to play, to take risks and to dare to be vulnerable. We understand vulnerability as a silence that needs to be listened to. Play as a spacetime of possibility and care. We trust in the entanglements of vulnerability and play, as a renegotiation, as a presence, as a horizon of understanding, as a listening, and as the not yet.

During the workshop we will mostly non-verbally mingle with each other and with the surrounding materialities of which we are a part.

As a preparation, the participants are encouraged to perform the exercise included in the reading list.

When **Dr. Malin Arnell and Mar Fjell** come together, they become an interdisciplinary art worker, performer, collaborator, researcher, educator, and musician. Since 2017, they have shared breaths through many forests, waterbodies, islands and cities – now inhaling Valmiera, Latvia. They engage in affectivity within queer eco-erotic ethics, exploring participatory practices and vibrating togetherness. Their work embraces all things queer and opens up an unending dynamism of entanglements. Commissioned by the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (LCCA) in Riga, they will contribute with a new site-responsive work for the exhibition *Measures*, Survival Kit 15.

Reading list:

Exercise: *Play a game or play around*

WORK ON CREATIVE PROJECTS AND FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Creative projects are group works, undertaken over three sessions throughout the Summer School, in which the participants share experiences and ideas about the role of contemporary art in understanding and problematizing social and political contexts of language. They involve reflection, imagination and experimental approaches.

The aim of this collective and participatory practice is to carry out artistic research and to present a free-format artwork or event (15–30 minutes) at the Summer School's conclusion. This could take the form, for instance, of an experimental video work, a performance, or a pop-up exhibition. Participants are invited to use the knowledge acquired in the Summer School to share understandings and to develop these through ideas, themes, and issues related to their chosen projects.

PARTICIPANTS

Anete Liepiņa is a student of Cultural Sociology and Management currently working as an art mediator at the Venice Biennale of Art. She was born in the small town of Gulbene, therefore she is familiar with rural regions and communities, with which she has been working since 2021, when the association tabureTE was founded. Has looked for herself through studies in psychology and music management while working on projects in the field of music and art. Facing mental health concerns, she has become interested in a deeper understanding of art and its research, especially contemporary art. Recently she has been studying the creation of new forms and research through the art of photography, enhanced by the opportunity to ask questions during the mediation process.

Candy Choi is a founder and director of multi-disciplinary international art organisation Young Blood Initiative, she is a curator and creative originally from Hong Kong. Over the past 12 years, she has been residing in Europe: London, Amsterdam and Riga. Candy Choi has a background in fashion as an art form where she has worked in Paris and London Fashion Weeks. During the years living in Amsterdam, she founded The Vinyl Art Project – a sound-art focused project and later, in 2014, Young Blood Initiative – an art platform and organisation for experimentation and collaboration – where she has been curating exhibitions and public programmes in Amsterdam, London and Berlin, and collaborated with organisations in Hong Kong, South Korea and Finland. Her projects are usually in line with current affairs and the mood of the society. In the past year, she has curated *Be Water* and *Silence is Compliance* in support of the social movement in Hong Kong, and most recently *Wake Up and Smell the Tear Gas!* that investigates the role of art in activism.

Caner Turan works as an engineer in Istanbul. He holds a degree in Art History from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul (2023) and is a first year PhD student in the Art History Program at Istanbul Technical University. His research interests include the *experience* of art history in general as well as intersubjectivity and radical empathy in curatorial practices from the aspect of language, and further the ontological and epistemological value of art history and institutional art critique from a contemporary perspective. Outside his academic work, he enjoys writing short stories investigating human nature, alienation, an existential understanding of human being in the universe. Some stories have been published in national literature journals. Turan also loves to be an improvisational actor and trainer in his spare time.

Indra Gleizde is a Latvian-born resident of the Netherlands, a lens-based artist and community-engaged collaborative art project producer. With educational background in cultural anthropology and photography, her artistic path is research, search and tests in emancipating horizontal relationality between humans and nature, the individual and society, centre and periphery. Her work finds audience through publications, exhibitions, presentation performances and workshops. Along her artistic practice, she is fully involved in several ongoing trajectories of the Myvillages' art platform Rural School of Economics, or RSoE (2021-ongoing), with a mission to acknowledge local rural human and non-human knowledge, co-creating art projects through place-bound local networks of contributors.

Jekaterīna Golubkova (byline Katya Golubkova), born in Rīga, Latvia; seeking a global career, she graduated from Japanese Studies at the International Journalism Department at the Moscow State University of International Relations in 2006, with a Japanese language stint at Niigata University of Management (Japan) in 2007. Before joining Reuters, she worked for the Latvian news agency LETA as a Moscow correspondent. In different roles at Reuters in Russia, she reported on the Yukos case, banking crises, the protests led by Alexey Navalny, the sanctions put on Russia after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the invasion of Eastern Ukraine by its troops shortly after. As the head of business coverage for Reuters in Russia and CIS since late 2015, was also sporadically performing the duties of Reuters Moscow bureau chief, including dealing with HR and safety issues, until 2022. She has been Reuters chief correspondent for Japan's energy security since March 2023.

Justina Semčenkaitė is a trained fashion designer focused solely on sustainability. Alongside working on conceptual objects, creating them to escalate different social issues, she teaches sustainable fashion at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Having obtained Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Fashion Design from the Vilnius Academy of Arts (2018), currently Justina is a Ph.D. candidate in Design. Her style is bright, surreal and ironic, often using pink and her objects frequently delve into themes of socio-cultural stereotypes, fashion experiments and activism. Her best-known projects — the experimental fashion collection **GIRL POWER** and the exhibition *Welcome to the Pretty Ugly World*. Besides maintaining creative expression through fashion, Justina is also a community coordinator of FASHION REVOLUTION movement in Lithuania, which is focused on campaigning for ethical fashion, fair pay and working conditions for garment workers.

Katsiaryna Silvanovich holds degrees in art history and history – in the context of which she majored in international relations, history of the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire, and contemporary art. During her training, she has become familiar with diverse research fields such as social and cultural history, global history, subaltern studies and gender studies. Katsiaryna is now a contemporary art worker with experience as a cultural programs assistant at the Cité internationale des arts (Paris) and as a research programs assistant with AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions. Katsiaryna is also an aspiring curator interested in the Eastern and Central European art scene, inter-diasporic issues and feminism.

Mary Mikaelyan is an artist from Yerevan, Armenia, currently based in Cologne, Germany. Working through different media, she examines the potentialities and the politics of actual, bygone, imagined and possible spaces, structures, systems and practices. Using the methods of archiving, diary, documentation and fiction, she studies the complex relations between memory, knowledge, imagination and possibility. She researches invisibility in terms of geographies, the relations between sciences, varied knowledge practices and art making and the construction of presence in multiplicity of pasts and histories. Parallel to her artistic research, her practice involves self-organized artistic and curatorial initiatives.

Mika Solomon was born in Portland, Oregon (US), but has Latvian citizenship because of his mother's side of his family. He recently finished his master's diploma work in the drawing specialization department of the Art Academy of Latvia. The diploma work was centered around utilizing drawing techniques to visualize emotions, relations, and affect in his apartment. By integrating fantasy and nature-inspired abstractions into images of the space he lives in, Solomon explored the unseen elements and interactions between elements in the environment. By acknowledging all things in the apartment as active participants in a web of affective exchange, his visual research departed from an anthropocentric view which places the human inhabitant dominantly above the household belongings/instruments/utilities etc. Topics he often works with include: sensory materialization, fantasy, imagination, differing approaches to harmony, and cuteness. In 2024 he participated in the group exhibition "Parēja" at Pilot Gallery in Rīga, Latvia. His work is also included in the #16 issue of Mākslas Žurnāls, an independent art publication from Latvia.

Milāna Rudenko is a multidisciplinary artist, born in Latvia and based in The Hague, Netherlands. Her primary professional study field revolves around graphic design, which she combines with film, photography, performance, textile works, installations and other mediums. Currently, she works with topics such as mental health awareness, rediscovering of feminist archives, architectural heritage, body as a form of protest, etc. For her, personal connection and care for the topics she works with, and research is crucial. Her works reflect an engagement with both the immediate environment and broader societal issues.

Momchil Enchev is a visual artist based in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. Currently he is an undergraduate in the Visual Studies major at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. Since 2021, he has worked in the field of cultural management and has initiated a series of

programs aimed at the social reintegration and artistic education of youth living in custody of the social services in the Municipality of Veliko Tarnovo (2022/2023). His work has been exhibited in Greece, North Macedonia, Poland, and Bulgaria. His artistic interests are based on the ideas of metamodernism and phenomenology through which he explores the “constantly renewed mass image” and the cultural change within our “social body”. Some of his works are owned by private Bulgarian and South Korean collections.

Paula Elmere holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Philosophy. Her professional life has revolved around the practical usage of foreign languages, communication and management. Her academic research interests delve into the metaphysical, social, political, and psychological identity-shaping nature of language in the context of a traumatic and repressive past. Her recent and significant research project is her master’s thesis, which examines the Latvian post-Soviet case within the postcolonial discourse, attempting to broaden its perspectives by applying the responsive phenomenology of German scholar Bernhard Waldenfels.

Paula Punkstina is a Latvian visual artist based in The Hague, The Netherlands. She is a fashion design graduate from Riga School of Design and Art, currently a student at the Royal Academy of Art. In her work, Paula tries to examine themes such as identity, constructed belief systems, and concepts of collective and post-memory.

Rūdis Bebris is a philosopher, contributor and art critic, co-founder, editor, and literary editor of philosophy magazine *Tvērums*, scientific assistant in the Department of Philosophy and Ethics in the University of Latvia. Has also worked as a Latvian language and literature teacher. Interested in many areas that philosophy addresses but primarily drawn to the topics of aesthetics and philosophy of art, mainly the ontologies and definitions of art.

Tina Pētersone is an independent curator from Riga, Latvia, holding an MFA in Curating from Goldsmiths, University of London. In 2021, she co-founded the art space TUR and developed an exhibition program, two of which have been nominated for the Purvītis Prize, the most prestigious art award in Latvia. In 2022, Tina was selected by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia to participate in the Cité Internationale des Arts residency in Paris. She was also awarded the CEC ArtsLink International Fellowship and a residency hosted by the Hyde Park Art Center in Chicago, IL, USA. In 2023, she received the Baltic Fellowship to work at the Performa Biennial in New York City. Her recent significant projects include curating a large-scale group exhibition titled 'Field of Vision' at the Zuzeum Art Center and co-curating a group exhibition titled 'Selling Out' in Ljubljana, Slovenia, showcasing artists from the Baltics to the Balkans.

Toms Babincevs' academic interests include philosophy of language and metaphysics and the intersections of both, as well as aesthetics and feminism. He is currently studying for a Ph.D. in humanities and arts at the University of Latvia and writing a thesis on Ludwig Wittgenstein’s early philosophy in an attempt to challenge prevailing interpretations of Wittgenstein’s work concerning metaphysics, the mystical and the distinction between senseless and nonsensical propositions. Also, he has written multiple reviews of exhibitions in the Latvian art scene and regularly creates episodes and segments for different Latvian radio broadcasts. He is a co-founder and the editor in chief of a philosophy journal *Tvērums*. Recently he has been translating philosophical texts from English to Latvian.

Valts Valters Kronbergs is a student of Sociology and Management of Culture at the Latvian Academy of Culture, currently working as an Assistant Research Project Manager at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art. Born in Jūrmala, he has grown fond of culture and arts. His interest grew rapidly when he joined Sculpture Studio DOMA, run by the renowned sculptor Vija Dzintare. There, he began his artistic practice in sculpture and participated in group exhibitions. His interest in contemporary art began with the annual Survival Kit festival, during which he got acquainted with the contemporary art world. Currently he expresses a particular interest in cultural sociology, sculpture

and spatial artistic practices, public art in the context of human-environment relations, and contemporary art studies.

Zuleykha Ibad is a recent graduate and emerging curator with a background in fine arts, art management and curatorial studies. They are interested in relationships between artistic practice, contexts and its representation. Many of their projects question environmental empathy, gender, art world and revisiting (non)western historical references. Their approach involves challenging conventional visitor experiences and common knowledge, incorporating daily and linguistic habits.

ORGANISERS & TEAM

Andris Freibergs is a graduate of Riga School of Design and Art and currently studies at the University of Fine Arts Münster and the Latvian Academy of Culture, focusing on artistic research through contemporary, theoretical and interdisciplinary perspectives. His research focuses on sexuality, body fluidity, socio-political clashes and impulsivity. In creative practice, he works with text, body, digital communication and installation. He is deeply interested in contemporary art as a dialogue, its possible cognitive encounters. Works at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art as an Education Project Manager and is part of Contemporary Art Space TUR_telpa's team.

Andra Silapētere is a curator and researcher at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art. Her field of interests include the topics of exile, migration, identity and belonging. Silapēteres' exhibitions and programs have been presented at the Latvian National Museum of Art in Riga, Praha Kunsthalle, District in Berlin, James Gallery, CUNY in New York, Den Frie in Copenhagen, PUBLICS in Helsinki, Riga Art Space. In 2022 she was a co-curator of the Latvian pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale with the artist duo Skuja Braden. Together with Inga Lace she is now preparing the book *Portable Landscapes: Latvian Exile Art Histories* (K. Verlag).

Mārīte Lempa is an art and culture project manager and producer. She is interested in the fields of photography and digital landscape architecture. She has studied culture and business management and photography at the International Summer School of Photography. She has been involved in a number of cultural and artistic projects, organizing film, music and contemporary art festivals and events.

Organized by the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art

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