

**Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art Summer School 2025:
Art, Agency and Institutional Transformation**

OPEN LECTURE PROGRAM IN ALŪKSNE

Ojāra Vācieša iela 2 (Alūksne Art School)

7 AUGUST, THURSDAY

10:00–11:30

Talk by Paul O'Neill: *Beyond Care: Curatorial Para-hosting, Institutional Flip-Flopping*

11:45–13:15

Seminar by Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus: *The Soros Centers for Contemporary Art and the Shaping of Institutional Modernity in Eastern Europe*

14:30–16:00

Presentations by Marika Agu and Sten Ojavee: *Archive and Soros Realism revisited*

16:00–16:30

Presentation by Lolita Jablonskienė: *SCCA-CAIC-NGA-Lithuania: Continuity, Ruptures, Returns*

8 AUGUST, FRIDAY

10:00–11:15

Talk by Alexei Gordin: *Institutional Critique That Cannot Be Taken Seriously*

16:15–17:45

Talk by Inga Surgunte: *Culture and Health: Mutual Benefits and Instrumentalisation**

18:00–19:30

Discussion led by Lība Bērziņa and Māra Žeikare: *Experiences and Conclusions from the Project "Inclusion and Contemporary Art"**

9 AUGUST, SATURDAY

09:30–10:00

Presentation by Andris and Elza Gauja: *Spēkstacija – a Residency Project*

10:15–13:15

Workshop by FABULA: Tīna Alise Drupa and Rūta Jumīte: *Seasonal Relations Mapping**

15:00–16:00

Talk by Inesa Brašiškē: *Frames, Curtains, and Walls **

16.15 - 17:45

Workshop by Yana Foqué: *Sometimes a Nicer Sculpture is to be able to Provide a Living for your Family**

10 AUGUST, SUNDAY

10:00–11:30

Lecture by Santa Hirša: *A Topology of Critique: Theoretical, Practical, and Historical Models of Relocating Art Criticism*

Open Lectures and workshops are free of charge

Working language: English

For more information about participating in the Open Lecture Programme, please contact Andra Silapētere:

silapetere@lcca.lv

EXTENDED PROGRAM

ABSTRACTS AND LECTURERS' BIOGRAPHIES

7 August

Paul O'Neill

Beyond Care: Curatorial Para-hosting, Institutional Flip-Flopping

Can contemporary art museums, and the established art institution more widely learn from contemporary art curating, small-scale organisations and debates around hosting, escape and publicness?

Oscillating between speculation, critique and proposition, this talk takes a few twists and turns while engaging with notable paradigm shifts in contemporary art, knowledge production and the perception of curatorial framing. Building on concepts of “the curatorial” – a particular mode of practice, rather than an adjective – as a form of research-in-and-with-public attentiveness, this book outlines Para-hosting as an attentive and cooperative means through which not only curators but also art institutions / museums / academia can practice Publicness.

Para-hosting is proposed as a methodology of institutional support through self-organisation without absorption. Through its explicitly collaborative dynamics, para-hosting offers a potential for Escape with transformative possibilities for museums to account for what happens beyond their extant power structures. Ultimately, what Paul proposes are forms of Institutional Flip-flopping, which consists of a switching out, turning things upside down and inside out of the existing agential paradigms of the art institution.

Dr. Paul O'Neill is an Irish curator, artist, writer, and educator. Paul is the Artistic Director of PUBLICS, since September 2017. PUBLICS is a curatorial agency, contemporary art commissioner and event space with a dedicated library and reading room in Helsinki. Between 2013-17, he was Director of the Graduate Program at the Center for Curatorial Studies (CCS), Bard College, New York.

Paul is author of the critically acclaimed book *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, (MIT Press, 2012), which has been translated into many languages. Paul has authored and co-edited numerous agenda-setting anthologies on curating. Most recent being the new co-edited volume *Not Going it Alone: Collective Curatorial Curating* (Apexart, New York, 2024), and *CURIOUS* (Open Editions, London, 2024)

Paul has co-curated over 70 shows across the world, and is widely regarded as one of the foremost research-oriented curators, educators and scholar of curatorial practice, public art, and exhibition histories, and most recently has published three artist' books as author, co-editor; *Maryam Jafri: Independence Days* (2022), *Kathrin Bohm: Art on the Scale of Life* (2023), and *Dave McKenzie Banners and Letters* (2023). Paul is currently working on two new publications of his curatorial texts called *Flip-Flopping Institutional Paradigms* and *CURED* planned for publication next year.

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

Recommended reading:

1. *Not Going It Alone Collective Curatorial Curating*. Apexart, 2024.
2. *CURIOUS*. Open Editions, 2024.

7 August

Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus

The Soros Centers for Contemporary Art and the Shaping of Institutional Modernity in Eastern Europe

The seminar will focus on the Soros Centres for Contemporary Art (SCCA) as a key institutional actor in the reconfiguration of the contemporary art field in Eastern Europe during the 1990s. Operating at the intersection of cultural policy, international funding structures, and the broader ideological framework of post-socialist transformation, the SCCA introduced a new model of art management based on corporate procedures, bureaucratisation, and professionalisation.

We will examine how this network, functioning under the Open Society Foundations, contributed to the structural reorganisation of local art institutions, the promotion of new artistic canons, and the support of selected forms of artistic practice—particularly young art, new media, and postmodern discourse. At the same time, we will consider the implications of this model for older generations of artists, traditional media, and existing institutional structures.

The seminar will draw on theoretical concepts such as centre-periphery dynamics, symbolic compensation, and strategic essentialism, to reflect on how cultural capital was mobilised in place of limited economic resources, and how artistic production was shaped in relation to both local conditions and expectations from the Western art world.

Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus, PhD is an assistant professor and the Head of the Department of the 20th and 21st Century Visual Arts Documentation at the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Her research interests span the cultural dimensions of the global Cold War, and the theory and aesthetics of art. She focuses on artistic and institutional responses to global modernization in the 1950s and 1990s. Currently, she is leading a research project on artistic exchange between Poland and socialist Asian countries in the 1950s. She is a member of the International Political Science Association.

Recommended reading:

1. Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus. Transition and visual arts in Estonia 1988–1995: cultural policy, financing, legislation, and social changes. *Journal for Baltic Studies*, 2024
2. Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus. "Corporate and Market Strategies." *Proceedings of the Art Museum of Estonia*, (ed. Annu Alles) vol. *Issues that Tackle the 1990s*.
3. Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus. Conservative Traditions in Polish Art History. The Challenges of Overcoming Entrenched Paradigms. *Widok*, 2024

Marika Agu and Sten Ojavee

Marika Agu in her presentation will propose a view on the history and contemporary work of the archive at the Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art by tracing its organizational principles from its initiation and explains their impact on generative archival practice to present day through empirical examples based on the curatorial work at the archive since 2017. The talk presents how archival material can be treated as a source for new ideas to arise while contributing to on-going cultural discussions and identity-building of the archive. In particular, examples of archived materials play a significant role in understanding how institutional agendas are reflected in artistic practice. These examples help articulate the dynamics within the Estonian contemporary art field.

Soros Realism revisited

Sten Ojavee will examine the role of the Soros Centre for Contemporary Art in Estonia—part of a broader network of 20 centres across post-Soviet Europe—in shaping local art scenes during the 1990s. Funded by the philanthropic efforts of George Soros's Open Society Foundations, these centres aimed to integrate local art scenes into the global art world while fostering mutual learning between the artistic fields of Eastern and Central Europe. The network has been criticised—under the term Soros Realism—for constructing a unified discourse that may have overshadowed local specificities. Drawing on archival materials from the Estonian centre, this talk reconsiders such critiques in light of the 18 distinct socio-cultural contexts in which the centres operated. It argues that broad generalisations risk obscuring the unique developments, priorities, and histories of the individual art fields these centres helped to shape—while also attributing disproportionate influence to the centres themselves.

Marika Agu works as curator and archive project manager at the Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art. While combining her training from the fields of semiotics, art theory and librarianship, her curatorial projects include generative archival practices, strong sense for site and time-specificity and interdisciplinarity, while suggesting symbolic and material shifts in ways of creating and perceiving contemporary art. In parallel to curating, she publishes articles at Estonian and international media outlets as well as holds a position of associate lecturer at the Estonian Academy of Arts.

Sten Ojavee is a curator based in Tallinn, Estonia, and has worked at the Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art since 2017. His research interests centre on fashion, clothing, and the construction of identities, explored through the lenses of cultural sociology and art history. Most recently, he co-curated the 11th Sequences Festival, Can't See, held in Iceland in late 2023. In addition to his curatorial practice, he is a visiting lecturer at the Estonian Academy of Arts and currently serves as the acting director of the CCA.

Lolita Jablonskienė**SCCA-CAIC-NGA-Lithuania: continuity, ruptures, returns**

In analyzing the history of the SCCA network in Eastern and Central Europe, researchers and practitioners rightly emphasize that the priorities, as well as the intensity of certain activities and the symbolic capital possessed or accumulated by the centres, depended on the local context. This includes both the condition of the country's contemporary art scene and the diversity of the institutional field.

In my presentation, I will attempt to identify these priority lines, which were not necessarily enshrined in official documents, within the work of SCCA-Lithuania (1993–1999), the Contemporary Art Information Centre (2000–2009), and the National Gallery of Art (since 2009). I will trace their continuity, ruptures, and subsequent returns, drawing on my practical experience of working in these institutions and my inevitably subjective memory.

Lolita Jablonskienė is a contemporary art critic and curator based in Vilnius. In 1993–1999, she worked as a deputy director of the Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts-Lithuania, from 2000 headed the Contemporary Art Information Centre of the Lithuanian Art Museum and joined the museum's team to work for Vilnius' forthcoming National Gallery of Art which opened in 2009. In 2002, was appointed chief curator of NGA and since 2023, she is its director. Jablonskienė has curated art exhibitions in her home country and abroad, contributed art critical texts to Lithuanian and foreign press, lectures at the Vilnius Academy of Arts.

Recommended reading:

1. Julija Fomina. How to Represent a Present? Constructing the Notion of 'the Contemporary' in the Lithuanian Art Exhibitions of the Last Decade of the XX Century, in: *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* (Studies on Art and Architecture), Nr.27/ 1-3, ed. by Virve Serapik, Tallinn: *Estonian Society of Art Historians and Curators*, 2018, p. 250–265
2. Lolita Jablonskienė, All at Sea Together: the Baltic Art Scene of the 1990s, in *Nineties. Contemporary Art in Latvia*, ed. by I. Astakhovska, Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, 2010, p. 190–199
3. Skaidra Trilupaitytė, Neil McLaughlin, "The International Circulation of Attacks and the Reputational Consequences of Local Context: George Soros's Difficult Reputation in Russia, Post-Soviet Lithuania and the United States", in *Cultural Sociology*, 7 (4), 2012, p. 431–446

8 August

Alexei Gordin

Institutional critique that cannot be taken seriously

During his talk, Gordin will concentrate on his art practice over the past 10 years. His work can be characterized by a certain critique of the art world, including its institutions and the main mechanisms of the art market. However, he does not position himself as a critic of these aspects but rather engages in friendly mockery. This approach stems from his extensive collaboration with institutions, where self-irony and the constant questioning of his own choices play significant roles.

The artist as an antihero has become the main protagonist of his narrative-based work. In Gordin's opinion, the artist remains the final link in the chain of professional relationships within the "art bubble."

In this one-hour presentation, Gordin will focus on the main contradictions of the art world and the self-doubts of being a professional artist, as reflected through the paintings, photos, and videos he has produced.

Alexei Gordin is mainly known as a painter; however, he also works with photography, video and performance. Gordin's work is influenced by caricatures and combines text and pictures, referring to comics and meme culture.

Alexei Gordin studied painting at the Estonian Academy of Arts (BA, 2011) and the Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki (MA, 2016). He has exhibited in group exhibitions in Kiasma, Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn Art Hall and many galleries across Estonia and Europe. In 2017 he received the Young Painter Prize. Gordin's works belong to collections of Tartu Art Museum, POCO, Lithuanian National Gallery of Art, KUMU and KIASMA as well as to Zuzeum private collection.

Yana Foqué**Sometimes a Nicer Sculpture is to be able to Provide a Living for your Family**

In the late 1990s, the DIA Beacon took what seemed to be a radical new approach to presenting its permanent collection. Rather than organizing the works chronologically, alphabetically, or thematically—as most institutions tend to—they chose to curate the collection based on the side jobs that artists had held before becoming established. As a result, one gallery was filled with works by artists who had once driven taxis. Another featured those who had worked as waitresses, nannies, studio assistants. The result was a collection hung not by movement or medium, but by the invisible labour that underpinned and made the work possible. The building became a collage of economic realities and artistic ambition—full of stylistic dissonance, yet everyday-life coherence. I referenced this exhibition for years, inspired by its imaginative and honest framing—until, when preparing to cite it more formally in an article, I reached out to the museum and was told that no such show had ever taken place. The exhibition, titled *Side Jobs*, had occurred only in my dreams—and yet, it unconsciously sparked my own interest in the topic, which I have been actively researching ever since (approximately since 2016). Looking into the parts of artistic practice that are often considered embarrassing, trivial, or merely economic reveals a great deal about artistic survival, dignity, and the conditions under which artists work—or the structures that sustain or exploit them. These questions remain, perhaps even more so in today's gig economy, profoundly real and revealing.

In this 1.5-hour session, rather than discussing various side jobs of artists, I propose we collaborate. Let's explore how artists' lives are influenced by their often-overlooked side jobs. Your task is to find and present a case study of an artist whose work inspires you and examine how their practice has been shaped by other forms of labour. Consider well-known or lesser-known artists whose side jobs have significantly impacted their artistic identity and output, whether by sustaining their livelihood or causing their artistic presence to fade due to these demands.

This is not only an exercise in research—it's an invitation to peek into how I approach institutional critique and tell a bit about the reason why I show or select the artists I've worked with in my career, driven by a curiosity into how we construct narratives around art, value, and creative legacy.

* The title is a reference to a work by Ben Kinmont, from his ongoing project in which he began an antiquarian (cook) bookselling business to help support his family. As Kinmont notes, the artwork is not the business itself, but its contribution to the cost of living. The project also frames domestic activity as meaningful and sustaining. This workshop draws on Kinmont's gesture to reconsider the economic structures that shape artistic lives and legacies.

Yana Foqué is a Belgian curator, editor and writer whose main interest lies in institutional critique, expressed through notions of collaboration and authorship, and the social, political and historical structures that shape them. Her writing has been published by Frieze and Metropolis M, among others. Until relocating permanently to the Baltics, she held the position of Executive Director & Chief Curator at Kunstverein, Amsterdam, where she shaped its experimental program while overseeing its publishing arm and international partnerships.

Inga Surgunte**Culture and Health: Mutual Benefits and Instrumentalisation**

As a committed culture and health practitioner, Inga advocates for a balanced collaboration between culture and health that respects cultural integrity and avoids reducing culture to a tool of healthcare policy or economic strategy. Her lecture will explore how cultural engagement has increasingly been recognised as contributing to physical and mental well-being. Drawing on case studies such as the WHO's 2019 report and the UK's social prescribing model, Inga will highlight how culture is often framed as a tool for promoting health and reducing healthcare costs. While acknowledging these benefits, she will critically assess the risks of instrumentalising culture—oversimplifying artistic processes into therapeutic interventions aimed solely at measurable outcomes. The lecture will also introduce alternative approaches that prioritise artistic freedom and view culture as a platform for human connection and social change, rather than just therapy. Inga is looking forward to an open discussion with the participants on this complex topic.

Inga Surgunte, Research Assistant at the Latvian Academy of Culture, focuses on the cultural sector's role in sustainable development, health, and well-being. She explored culture and health policies in her 2023 master's thesis. With museum and heritage experience since 2008, Inga developed Latvia's first mental health-focused permanent exhibition at the Eduards Veidenbaums Museum. She co-authored the 2023 guide 'Talking Points: Arts and Health in Communities'. Currently, Inga leads the Museums on Prescription programme in Cēsis and represents Latvia's Ministry of Culture in the European Commission's Culture and Health OMC group, contributing to the EU's current work plan for culture.

Recommended reading:

1. Fancourt, Daisy, Finn, Saoirse (2019). What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review. Copenhagen: World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe. Available at: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/what-is-the-evidence-on-the-role-of-the-arts-in-improving-health-and-well-being-a-scoping-review-2019>
2. Zbranca, Rarita, Dâmaso, Mafalda, Blaga, Oana, Kiss, Kornélia, Dascăl, Marina Denisa, Yakobson, Dana, Pop, Oana (2022). CultureForHealth Report. Culture's contribution to health and well-being. A report on evidence and policy recommendations for Europe. CultureForHealth. Culture Action Europe. Available at: https://www.cultureforhealth.eu/app/uploads/2023/02/Final_C4H_FullReport_small.pdf
3. Museums on Prescription programme realized by the Cēsis municipality as part of the Interreg project "Arts on Prescription in the Baltic Sea Region 2023-2025": https://youtu.be/X0OqdP8_DuU

Lība Bērziņa and Māra Žeikare
A Conversation about Inclusion – Experiences and Conclusions from the Project “Inclusion and Contemporary Art”

For the past six months Lība Bērziņa and Māra Žeikare have been working on a contemporary art project taking place in South Kurzeme in Latvia. Within the framework of this project, conversations and workshops are held with local communities of people with disabilities and artists, aiming to promote inclusion and access to culture for people with disabilities in more remote regions. During the summer school programme Lība and Māra will initiate a discussion with school's participants about the main conclusions and what they reveal about the current situation in Latvia in terms of cultural accessibility and inclusion — and what that says about us as a society.

Lība Bērziņa is a promoter of inclusive culture in Latvia, founder of NGO “COLORIZE”. She has extensive experience in leading various projects while working in several non-governmental organizations and has also gained international experience through both projects and practical work (in Turkey, Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, and other countries). Lība holds a bachelor's degree in art (University of Latvia), a master's degree in art therapy (Rīga Stradiņš University), and a second master's degree in design (Art Academy of Latvia). She also holds a certification as an environmental accessibility expert. Lība has consulted the Song and Dance Festival, the conversation festival “Lampa”, and collaborated with contemporary art festivals such as “Homo Novus”, “Survival Kit”, and others.

Māra Žeikare is an art historian who works at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art as a project manager and curator of education and art mediation programs (since 2017). She has implemented a large-scale educational project in Latvian schools called The Artist is Present – Contemporary Art Residencies in Schools (2022–2024), fostering closer collaboration with schools in Latvia's regions and encouraging long-term creative practices by artists within schools, creating artworks with student participation. In collaboration with the “COLORIZE” association and the LCCA, she works on ensuring that contemporary art can be experienced by everyone — including those who face challenges in attending cultural events due to disability, environmental inaccessibility, or social exclusion.

FABULA: Tina Alise Drupa and Rūta Jumīte
Seasonal Relations Mapping

Situated beside the Krava hydropower station, the river Vaidava embodies tension between cyclical and seasonal rhythms of water and rigid structures of human engineering, designed to still and harness its movement for energy extraction. Human thinking and placemaking among complex natural ecosystems often remain fixed in linear time and static views, for example, incapable of capturing the river's cyclical flows, seasonal changes, and layered histories.

This workshop offers a counter-practice to dominant, extractive ways of knowing a place—foregrounding the non-linear time, seasonality, and cyclical rhythms embodied in the Vaidava river and its surroundings. By mapping these often-overlooked dynamics, we resist the flattening logic of industrial time and reclaim space for relational, multispecies ways of sensing and learning.

Collective Fabula is a new Riga-based creative duo that consists of **Tina Alise Drupa and Rūta Jumīte**. Fabula explores new relational practices & pedagogies, by exploring territories beyond hierarchy-driven value systems.

Tina is a multispecies storyteller, researcher, social engagement designer, and facilitator. She holds degrees in Human Ecology from College of the Atlantic in Maine and Design from the Art Academy of Latvia. She teaches Speculative Design course at the Art Academy of Latvia, organises summer schools and actively facilitates learning projects in Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, USA. Tina also explores her interests through text for international journals (Robida, It's Freezing in LA!, Tvērums, etc).

Rūta is a multidisciplinary designer focusing on regenerative design, emerging pedagogies, research, and graphic design. Rūta holds a master's degree in "Creative Sustainability" from Aalto University in Finland and has been awarded the Latvian Design of the Year Award in both 2023 and 2024. She actively collaborates with major local art and culture institutions in Latvia and works as an ecocentric designer for projects in Finland, Argentina and Denmark. Rūta teaches design research at the Art Academy of Latvia and leads an international Design Summer School.

Recommended reading:

1. Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee. Essay authors: Tyson Yunkaporta, Jenny Odell, Paul Salopek, James Bridle, Linda Hogan, Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, David Hinton, Layli Long Soldier, Marcia Bjornerud, David Farrier, Roger Reeves, Evie Shockley, Nick Hunt, Robert Moor, Jane Hirshfield, Ed Roberson, Erica Berry, Shangyang Fang, Sam Laughlin. *Emergence Magazine* Volume 5: Time, *Emergence Magazine*, 2023

2. *Seasonal Neighbours*. Eds: Anastasia Eggers, Ils Huygens. Essay authors: Claire Chassot, Jonathan De Maeyer, Anastasia Eggers, Fernando Garcia-Dory (Inland), Ciel Grommen, Pia Jacques, Carolien Lubberhuizen, Ioana Lupascu, Sébastien Marot, Karolina Michalik, Yacinth Pos, Caroline Profanter, Maximiliaan Royakkers, Ines Marita Schaerer, Arnd Spahn, Mona Thijs and Ewoud Vermote. *Seasonal Matters Rural Relations*, Onomatopée, 2024

3. Juri Velt. *Tender and Toxic Tales*. Dpr-barcelona, 2024

Inesa Brašiškė
Frames, Curtains, and Walls

This presentation examines critical artistic practices that interrogate institutional frameworks and mechanisms within Lithuania's contemporary art scene. Through three case studies of both most recent and lesser known artistic and curatorial works by Elena Narbutaitė, Darius Mikšys, and Monika Kalinauskaitė, the talk explores how these practitioners employ diverse gestural strategies to challenge, subvert, and reimagine the structures and dynamics that govern artistic production and institutional protocols.

Inesa Brašiškė is an art historian and curator specializing in modern and contemporary art and artists' films, with a particular focus on East Central Europe. Brašiškė's writing has appeared in publications such as Mousse Magazine, MoMA C-Map Post, and CAA News. She holds a degree in Modern and Contemporary Art: Critical and Curatorial Studies (MODA) from Columbia University. Currently, Brašiškė serves as Head of Research and Curator at Sapieha Palace in Vilnius.

Santa Hirša

A Topology of Critique: Theoretical, Practical, and Historical Models of Relocating Art Criticism

This lecture will focus on the role of art criticism in the circumstances of the institutionalisation of critique. In the current era of hype-driven capitalist realism, art criticism has been commodified and instrumentalised, losing its original critical distance and the functions of evaluation and analysis. Art criticism as a writing practice has lost its traditional position of mediating between the artist and the audience, between journalism and academic art history. Some of these functions were historically taken over by critical art practices (such as conceptual art or institutional critique as an artistic method) but today critique as a means of questioning positions of power has become performance, spectacle and another currency of the art world. This lecture will try to map the location of art criticism within the system of power relations in art, focusing specifically on practices and discourses that merge with notions of institutional critique in the Baltic region.

Santa Hirša is an art critic and historian based in Riga. Her research focuses on the phenomena of late socialist art, modernism and proto-contemporary art in Soviet culture. Santa Hirša received the *Normunds Naumanis Award for Art Criticism* in 2021 and has worked as an editor for many art publications as well as authored several monographs.

PARTICIPANTS

Alise Krajeviča was born, raised, and currently lives in Alūksne. Her artistic achievements are the debut illustrated book “Pelēks suns sapņo par zelta zivtiņām” (2021) by Krista Anna Belševica, and participation in several group exhibitions — portrait exhibition of women inmates in Ilģuciemš Prison during the JRRMV project “Art Belongs to the People. Renaissance” (2016) and the contemporary outdoor exhibition “MALĒNIĒŠA DNA” (2024). Another milestone in her career is becoming a teacher at Alūksne Art School. During her school years, Alise distanced herself from traditional art and turned to digital media, but over the decade her creative journey came full circle — now she creates using traditional, digital, and hybrid techniques.

Anastasija Konkina has been curious about arts and culture since childhood, growing up in Riga, Latvia, surrounded by diverse spaces and people. During her school years, Anastasija’s primary interest was in visual arts, which led her to graduate from Māras Muižnieces Riga Art School. Later, her focus shifted toward participating in the organization of various cultural and arts-related events. Her deep interest in cultural life was the main reason she chose to pursue her education at the Latvian Academy of Culture. Throughout her studies, she actively engaged in voluntary work, participated in cultural events, and took part in meaningful discussions with people she met along the way, all of which contributed to her professional growth.

Anežka Januschka Kořínková is an independent curator and cultural worker based in Prague. Her practice focuses on social issues, power structures, and the rewriting of narratives, often through a feminist lens. She co-curates Gallery 35M2, is part of the curatorial team at Fotograf Gallery, and teaches curatorial studies at Tomas Bata University in Zlín. She studied Theory and History of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. She is particularly engaged with the cultural context of post-Soviet countries, especially the Baltic region.

Dalma Pszota is a Budapest-based art historian, design theorist, and curator. Raised in rural northern Hungary, she blends local roots with metropolitan perspectives. Her interests include feminism, cultural theory, ecologically aware practices, and the underground art scene. She has lived in Estonia, and Greece, and is passionate about walking cities, good books, conversations and food.

Elīza Brice is a graduate of Art Academy of Latvia’s Art History & Theory BA programme and MA Curatorial Studies student. Her research interests are currently primarily linked with environmental art, in particular ecocriticism as a form of creative strategy and critique, while creatively she is interested in site-social-eco curation as a way of forming interdisciplinary entanglements and unusual circumstances. She has gained work experience in various Riga cultural spaces (Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, ISSP, RIXC, Artists’ Union of Latvia) and state institutions (National Cultural Heritage Board of Latvia, Latvian National Centre for Culture) as well as organised creative projects for PILOT experimental art space and Lucavsala Community Garden.

Elīna Šteinberga is a multi-disciplinary artist based in England. Her artwork investigates quotidian consumer commodities such as spray whipping cream and blue plastic carrier bags, scrutinising their materiality and logistics as a means of unveiling invisible systems of power. Her practice increasingly gravitates toward institutional critique, with a particular focus on the human body as the centre of affective experiences shaped by ruling systems and ideologies, exploring both its resistance and agency. Šteinberga is also deeply interested in alternative models of art community-building. She has organised art, poetry, and music walks, and in the summer of 2023, she established and currently runs an annual art residency, Plosti, in Latvia, bringing together a cohort of British and Latvian artists.

Frederik Klanberg has chosen to dedicate his life to arts and culture. His practice is an interwoven entity consisting of artistic, pedagogic, and institutional nodes. His work often centres on creating space for careful and intentional deliberation of contemporary issues. He believes that

cultural institutions can serve as sites of study, possibility, and rehearsal for a kinder and more equitable world. Frederik has worked as a Policy Adviser to the Directorate and as a lecturer at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. He has also served as Head of Advocacy for the pan-European cultural organisation De Structura and is an active member of various representative boards and artist collectives. Currently, he teaches at the Estonian Academy of Arts and works as Curator for Education & Public Programmes at the Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn. His work is guided by a belief in nonviolent education, practice, and collaboration.

Kristofers Kārklīņš born and primarily educated in Riga, Latvia, he later moved to Belgium and earned a European Baccalaureate in Luxembourg. He currently lives and studies in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Alongside his bachelor's degree in PPE (Political Science, Philosophy, Economics, and History), he completed a minor in Postcolonial Studies, engaging with critical theory, human geography, and institutional critique. He is a political organiser and activist committed to fighting food waste and involved in anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, anti-militarisation, and animal rights movements. Kristofers began taking art and pottery classes in primary school, later specialising in art during his secondary education. He also joined his bachelor's art committee and pursues creative work on the side, crafting leather bracelets and belts, patches, t-shirts, and pins.

Lais Rabello de Andrade is a PhD candidate in Art Education at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto (FBAUP), with a project hosted by i2ADS and funded by FCT. Her research investigates Eastern European biennials as speculative infrastructures of knowledge, memory, and resistance, approached from a Global South and decolonial perspective. Her interests include curatorial infrastructures, institutional critique, situated epistemologies, and post-socialist/post-colonial entanglements. She is also a researcher on the project Extreme Sites (CEAA/ESAP), and holds degrees in Art Theory and Criticism (FBAUP), Philosophy (PUC-SP), and Art Education (FAAP), as well as a postgraduate specialization in Criticism and Curatorship (PUC-SP).

Laura Konsand is a freelance writer and cultural worker based in Rotterdam and Tallinn. Her research interests include collective, participatory, and feminist art practices as well as activism. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in Curatorial Studies at the Estonian Academy of Arts. In her research, she explores institutional and collective critique practices, as well as art's relationship to infrastructures that shape the present in both visible and invisible ways, aiming to understand and question them. Laura holds a bachelor's degree in Semiotics and Culture Theory from the University of Tartu.

Lihi Shmuel is a Berlin-based art critic and curator with a background in writing and community-based art. She's interested in mindful and critical approaches to art, especially where they intersect with institutional change, cultural accountability, and collective practices. On her blog, she reflects on exhibitions, trends, and the politics of the art world. She's curated projects like NO [ONE'S] LAND and started *communipainting*, a collaborative creation experiment. Right now, she's co-writing a communal paper with the ODBK about inclusion and representation in art institutions.

Megija Milberga is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Fine Arts in NYU, where she is studying modern art and architecture in Eastern Europe. Her research interrogates site-consciousness as a tool of insurgent citizenship in Soviet-era architecture in the Baltic states. Her research has been supported by the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies. She holds a B.Sc. from the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga and an M.A. (summa cum laude) from KU Leuven. She is the recipient of the Fulbright Foreign Student Fellowship. She has gathered work experience at Kim? Contemporary Art Centre in Riga, as well as Rupert artist residency in Vilnius. She has presented her research at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies convention, as well as the Frick Symposium for Art History, representing New York University.

Paulina Pidzik grew up between the forest and the river. Since her studies, she has lived in Krakow. A poet. An author of two volumes of poetry: (wejście w las), Kontent 2019 and (miejsca

ich jesiony), Biuro Literackie 2022. A laureat of many poetry competitions. A photographer. Her thoughts and hands are mostly occupied by pinhole photography. Student of the Sputnik Photos Mentoring Program 2022/2023, as part of which she prepared a project (zeszyt do odpamiętywania). A lawyer. Lecturer at the Department of Criminal Law at the Krakow University of Economics. A qualified first aid rescuer. She is touched by a light and the world.

Paula Stutiņa curator, researcher and artist with BA in Art History from Art Academy of Latvia and a professional education in applied arts. Currently works as a curator at Tukums museum, teacher of art and culture at Riga Ballet school and research assistant for Latvian Pavillion at the Venice Biennale 2026, dealing with Bruno Birmanis archive. She likes to think broadly and float away in philosophical "what if" conversations. Her personal interests include art and its emotional impact on individuals, combining spaces and shapes to create atmosphere. When she is not creating exhibitions or research, she is painting and sketching abstract compositions. Recently art and culture availability and quality in smaller cities has become a concern of hers, since she mainly works in one.

Sarah Wenzinger is a Berlin-based conceptual artist, cultural worker, and activist-researcher who studied theater directing at the HfS Ernst Busch and is currently doing a Masters at the Institute for Art in Context at the UDK Berlin. Their practice explores artistic strategies to challenge power structures in the fields of (urban) space, climate crises, and technology by transferring theories across contexts — reshaping and testing them through collaborative practice and has developed long-term, participatory projects for institutions like the Neue Nationalgalerie, HKW Berlin, and the Bauhaus Archiv. Spatial practice, open-source tools of collaborative creativity and interweavings between radical education and visual art form the knots of her work, which invites into a debate with the situated knowledge of the present and new narratives of a just future.

Smaranda Krings is a Vienna-based cultural manager and curator with many years of experience in the intersection of art, music and social issues. She specializes in project design, management and production with a focus on sustainable community building. In 2019, she co-founded QMA, an initiative aiming at contributing to a Vienna art scene where heterogeneity is the norm, and a constant influx of new artistic perspectives is given. Since then, a big part of her work centers around the promotion and support of artists new to Vienna or artists part of marginalized communities. In this role, she is a member of juries, is active as an author for publications and a speaker and workshop host. As part of D/Berater:innen, she also offers consultations for art institutions. Since 2024, she is also active in the field of music management, working with the award-winning newcomer Chovo.

Sintija Krīviņa is a cultural and social anthropology student at the University of Latvia. In her studies, she is particularly passionate about Russian colonial legacies and decolonial perspectives in Latgale. Sintija comes from Daugavpils, Latgale — a region that often occupies the margins of Latvian identity, reflecting the broader complexities of the area. She is a youth activist involved with the international organization CDN Eastern Europe and has participated in and co-organized multiple events focused on political participation, regional resilience, and decolonial futures. Additionally, Sintija is part of the 2025 LAPA "Youth for Regional Resilience" project in Latgale, where she contributes to shaping activities that connect youth, sustainability, and local identity.

ORGANISERS & TEAM

Andra Silapētere is a curator and researcher at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (LCCA). Silapētere's field of research and interests include topics of exile, migration, identity and belonging. Her exhibitions and programs have been presented at the Latvian National Museum of Art in Riga, Praha Kunsthalle, Pickle Bar and District in Berlin, James Gallery, CUNY in New York, Den Frie in Copenhagen, 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 a book "Portable Landscapes: Latvian Exile Art Histories" (K.Verlag).

Andris Freibergs is a Latvian artist and researcher who explores the complexities of sexuality through bodily, visual, and textual forms, employing experimental methods of enquiry. The intricacy of lust serves as a primary point of departure in attempts to trace the potential probabilities of answers within aesthetic, ethical, and existential uncertainties. His work is driven by an interest in the fluid boundaries between performance and installation; sexual fantasies and 'reality'. He has worked with several organisations, including the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, ISSP, TUR Contemporary Space for Art, PSM Gallery, and Latvian Centre for Performance Art, contributing to project writing and management, production, communications, and education.

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.

Sigita Urlovskā currently works as a Project Manager's Assistant at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, where she is involved in implementing organizational processes while deepening her understanding of the contemporary art processes in Latvia. Sigita studies Cultural Sociology and Management at the Latvian Academy of Culture. She is passionate about planning and developing cultural projects – guiding ideas from the conceptual stage to becoming public events, in processes where creativity, collaboration, and practical execution meet. She has experience both as an assistant and as a project manager, as well as in cultural research.

Programme and its realization: Andra Silapētere, Andris Freibergs, Mārīte Lempa, and Sigita Urlovskā

Visual identity and design: Rūta Jumīte

Media and communication: Dana Zālīte

Hosted by Alūksne Art School

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