



**TRADITSIOONI**  
**THE BIRTH OF A**  
**SÜND.**

**TRADITION.**

**Eesti kuldaja**

**Art from Estonia's**  
**kunst**

**Golden Age**

**Enn Kunila**

**from Enn Kunila's**  
**kollektsoonist**

**Collection**











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TARTMUS

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# SISUKORD

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**Head** tartlased, Lõuna-Eesti rahvas ja kõik Eesti kunstisõbrad!

Mul on olnud ammu ajast soov ja unistus teha oma kunstikolleksiooni näitus Tartu Kunstimuseumis. On ju eesti maalikunsti sünd 20. sajandi alguses olnud olulisel määral seotud Tartuga ja minu kunstikogu tuumiku moodustavadki sellest perioodist ehk eesti kunsti kuldajast pärinevad tööd.

Tartuga on seotud mitmed meie kunsti suurkujud, eesotsas Konrad Mägiga. See näitus on pühendatud Eesti Vabariigi 100. juubelile ning Konrad Mägi 140. sünniaastapäeva tähistamisele.

Näituse kuraator Eero Epner on samuti Tartus sündinud ja kasvanud ning lõpetanud kunstiajaloolasena Tartu Ülikooli. Tema nägemuseks on selle näitusega rõhutada Tartu tähtsust eesti kunsti sünniloos. Sellest mõttest tekkiski näituse pealkiri: „Traditsiooni sünd“.

Näitust saadavad kaks Eero Epneri kirjutatud raamatut: käesolev kataloog ja Konrad Mägi elulugu. See elulooline raamat annab lisaks Konrad Mägi kunstnikufenomeni avamisele ka hea ülevaate selle aja kultuuritaustast Eestis laiemalt. Tähtis koht näitusel on ka Konrad Mägi loomingul –

väljas on 16 tema tööd eri loominguperioodidest. Kokku on näitusel eksponeeritud 57 maali ja 3 skulptuuri 17 kunstnikult.

Täna väga meeldiva koostöö eest Tartu linnapead Urmas Klaasi ja Tartu linnavalitsust, Signe Kivi, Hanna-Liis Konti, Jaanika Kuznetsovat ja Tartu Kunstimuseumi kollektiivi. Samuti kuulub tänu meie meeskonnale: näituse kuraatorile Eero Epnerile, kujundajale Tõnis Saadojale, graafilisele disainerile Tiit Jürnale, meediaspetsialistile Marika Reinolile ja Inspiredi meeskonnale, keeleteoimetajale Ester Kangurile, tõlkijale Peeter Tammistole ning koordinaatorile Maris Kunilale. Suurim tänu kõigile, kes näituse õnnestumisele kaasa on aidanud!

Meeldivaid kunstielamusi soovides  
Enn Kunila



**Dear** people of Tartu, Southern Estonians, and all of Estonia's art enthusiasts!

It has long been my wish and dream to hold an exhibition of my art collection at the Tartu Art Museum. The birth of Estonian painting in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after all, has to a great extent been associated with Tartu, and works from that period, in other words the Golden Age of Estonian painting, form the core of my collection.

Many of our art luminaries are associated with Tartu, headed by Konrad Mägi. This exhibition is dedicated to the centenary of the Republic of Estonia and to commemorating the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Konrad Mägi.

The vision of Eero Epner, the curator of this exhibition who was also born and raised in Tartu, and graduated from the University of Tartu as an art historian, is to organise this exhibition to emphasise Tartu's importance in the history of the birth of Estonian art. This idea led us to the title of the exhibition: *the Birth of a Tradition*.

Two books written by Eero Epner accompany this exhibition: this catalogue and Konrad Mägi's biography. Along with illuminating the phenomenon

of Konrad Mägi as an artist, this biographical book also provides an excellent overview of the broader cultural background in Estonia during that era. Konrad Mägi's works also have an important place at this exhibition – 16 of his works from different creative periods are exhibited. A total of 57 paintings and 3 sculptures by 17 artists are on display at the exhibition.

I extend my sincere thanks for their very gratifying cooperation to the Mayor of Tartu Urmas Klaas and the entire Municipal Government of Tartu, Signe Kivi, Hanna-Liis Kont, Jaanika Kuznetsova and everyone at the Tartu Art Museum. Many thanks also go out to our team: the curator of the exhibition Eero Epner, the designer of the exhibition Tõnis Saadoja, our graphic designer Tiit Jürna, our media specialist Marika Reinol and the Inspired team, our copy editor Ester Kangur, our translator Peeter Tammisto and our exhibition coordinator Maris Kunila. My greatest thanks to everyone who has contributed to the success of this exhibition!

I very much hope to spark interest in this exhibition among the people of Tartu and the art public from all over Southern Estonia.

Yours truly,  
Enn Kunila









# TRADITSIOONI SÜNNIKOHT

**Kunstiajaloo** topograafia on keeruline ja vastuoluline ning seda pole kuigivõrd harutatud. Küsimusele „Kus on kunst loodud ning miks just seal?“ leidub palju vastuseid, tihti ootamatuidki. Kui me avame mõne tavapärase maailma kunstiajaloo entsüklopeedilise ülevaate, siis võime enam-vähem kindlad olla, et loeme sealt kunsti kohta, mis on loodud Euroopa metropolides. Ateena, Rooma, Veneetsia ja Firenze, Pariis, München, Berliin, Viin – just neis linnades sündinud kunstiga saaksime piiritleda maailma kunstiajaloo kuni Teise maailmasõja lõpuni, mil raskuskese nihkus New Yorki, sest sinna oli sõja eest asunud nimetamisväärne hulk Euroopa kunstnikke. Väikeste remarkidena esinevad kunstiajaloo Oslo, Kopenhaagen, Peterburi, Amsterdam, London, Madrid ning vahest veel mõni linn. Seal aga ei maksa isegi piimaga kirjutatult otsida mõnda paika Ladina-Ameerikas, salapärasest urgast Hiinas ega ka Soome teise suurusjärgu linnu või Ida-Euroopa keskusi. Muidugi on viimastel kümnenditel olukord natuke paranenud – juba keeratakse kaevurilambid ajaloolaste laupadel ka perifeeria poole, avastatakse paiku ja kohti väljaspool Euroopat ning tasapisi Euroopa enese sees, kuid üldiselt reedab kunstiajaloo geograafia endiselt kestvaid kolonialistlikku mõttelaadi. See, mis sündis metropolides, on tähelepanu all, ja see, mis sündis mujal, on parimal juhul ... lihtsalt sündinud.

Ent siinkohal oleks huvitav küsida: miks just need linnad? Miks mitte näiteks Hamburg või Lissabon? Miks ei kujunenud kunstiajalugu defineerivaks keskuseks Euroopas asuvad Bern või Brüssel, Stockholm või Kraków? Kas see on riiklike jõujoontega ära määratud? Kuna Antiik-Kreeka ning renessansiaegne Itaalia olid tähtsad tõmbekeskused, kuhu koondusid ressursid, inimesed ja võim, kas siis on loogiline, et nende riikide olulisematesse linnadesse tulid sageli kokku õukondade, valitsejate või metseenide juures tegutsenud kunstnikud? Või on siiski olemas ka teatud spetsiifiline linnalisus, kunstiloomingu tekkeks eriliselt sobiv keskkond, mida ühes linnas on, teises aga pole, Veneetsias on, Milanos aga enam mitte nii väga?

Enne topograafia poetiseerimist ning linnade erilisest aurast kõnelemist võiks tähelepanu juhtida ratsionaalsetele argumentidele. Mõni linn ongi teatud sfäärides edukam, kui seal jõutakse teadmiste külluseni. Kunstnikest tulvil, arenes Pariisis ja ennekõike just kohvikutes teadmiste, muljete ja kõige muu vahetamine, mis tekitas lausa ülekuulluse ning sellest osasaamiseks ei pidanud alati isegi keelt oskama. Ühel hetkel oli Pariisi kogunenud niivõrd palju autoreid, et sinna minemine polnud enam valik, vaid kohustus – kui sind ei olnud selles linnas, olid sa automaatselt kõrvalejätetu, marginaliseeritud,

18 tühine kärbsenust kunstiajaloo tagakaanel. „[Aleksander] Tassa pidas oma vaimustuses ainult neid kunstnikeks, kes Pariisis olid või olid vähemalt sinna minemas,“ on Aleksander Vardi (käesoleval näitusel on muu hulgas väljas tema Notre-Dame'i-vaade) vahetult enne Pariisi-sõitu meenutanud oma kohtumist Tassaga. Tõtt-õelda polnud Tassa ainus, keda köitis Pariis. Kui sinna jõuab Konstantin Süvalo (temaltki on eksponeeritud Pariisi-vaade), väljendab ta oma esimestes kirjades vaimustust ning soovib kaaluda, kas Eestile on ikka vaja kahte kunstikooli, kuna niikuinii olevat parim Pariisis õppimine. 1906. aasta aprillis kirjutab Peterburis viibinud Konrad Mägi sõbrale: „Olen mõne kunstijüngriga tuttavaks saanud, kes Pariisis on õppinud ja need seletasid, et ainult Pariis on linn, kus kunstis täiusele võib saada.“ Seega polnud Pariis vaid linn, kus kunst sündis – ainult Pariisis võiski kunsti luua. Ühtäkki oli Pariisist saanud kunstiajaloo pealinn, mis lumepallina veeredes liitis endaga üha rohkem kunstnikke, kuni sellest pallist väljajäämine tähendas märkamatu ärasulamist.

Teisalt ei kutsu uusi kunstnikke mõnda linna ainult kunstnikud, vaid ka kunst ise. Rooma, Firenze või Pariis kubisesid kunstist: igal tänavanurgal võis komistada mõne skulptuuri või galerii peale, kõndida mõnes sammaskäigus või astuda mõnda kirikusse, nii et kunstist oli saanud antud linna loomulik keskkond.

Veel tänapäevalgi on terve rida linna, kus kunst on ekstravagantsus, erakordsus, haruldus, unikaalsus – mõelgem kas või büroometropolide Bonni või Brasília peale, kus linna üldise atmosfääri määravad ära pigem funktsionaalsus ning mobiilsus. Ent hetkel, kui kunst muutub linna orgaaniliseks osaks, muutub ka kunsti loomine seal tunduvalt lihtsamaks – seda eriti ajastutel ja kohtades, mil kunstnikuks olemine ei ole normaalsus, vaid ebatavalisus. See on ka üks põhjusi, miks eesti esimesed modernistid siit lahkusid ning välisriikide metropolides õppisid, töötasid ja oma esimesed teosed löid – see polnud palju lihtsam mitte niivõrd praktilistel põhjustel (Eestis ei olnud kõrgemaid kunstikooli), kuivõrd töörahu, enese defineerimise ja kollektiivi kuulumise tõttu. Töötades linnades, kus sind ümbritsesid kunst ja kunstnikud, oli sul tunduvalt lihtsam kehtestada end kunstniku ja kunstnikkonna liikmena, ka tagasiulatuvalt, ühe kunstiajaloolise keti lülina. Samas pangem tähele, et kõik modernistid naasid Eestisse ja jätkasid töötamist siin, hakates muu hulgas üles ehitama moodsa kunsti ajalugu. Ja enamik neist tegi seda Tartus.

Miks Tartu? Ilmselt leidub siin terve rida põhjusi. Ühelt poolt ei saa – nagu enamiku Tartuga seotud asjade puhul – ka siin ülikooli tähtsusest mööda vaadata. Juba 1802. aastal avati Tartus joonistuskool, mis oli ainuke kunstiharidust

andnud asutus nii Eesti- kui ka Liivimaal, vaid aasta hiljem asutati kunstimuuseum ning 1835. aastal toimus ka esimene kunstinäitus. Lisaks loeti ülikoolis loenguid kunstiajaloo, linnakeses ja tema ümbruses tegutsesid aga enamasti baltisakslastest kunstnikud ja kunstihuvilised, kelle hulka võib lugeda ka Raadi mõisa hiiglaslike kunstikogude omanikke, Liphartide suguvõsa. Veel nii mõndagi juhtus 19. sajandil, mil Tartut võis pidada kahtlusteta oluliseks kunstiloo dirigendiks terves siinses regioonis. Ent sajandi lõpul senine hoog rauges, baltisakslaste kunstihuvi elas küll veel edasi, kuid polnud enam säärast indu, mis varem. Kõik eeldused selleks, et Tartu kunstikeskusena hääbuks, olid loodud. Ometi läks teisiti.

Palju on räägitud Tartu renessansist ehk linna elavnemisest 1890. aasta paiku, mis tähendas ennekõike majanduslikku ja sotsiaalset ärkamist. Rahvaarv küll plahvatuslikult ei kasvanud, kuid märgatava kiirusega tõusis just eestlaste osakaal, keda 1881. aastal oli 55% elanikest, kuusteist aastat hiljem aga juba 68%, ning see kasvas hoogsalt ja ennekõike sakslaste arvelt. Samuti tähendas Tartule palju ajalehe Postimees ületoomine siia 1886. aastal ning eriti kümme aastat hiljem toimunud ostutehing, millega Jaan Tõnisson ja tema ümber koondunud inimesed said lehe omanikuks, suunates

selle poliitilise võitluse relvaks. Linn kihas, midagi oli õhus, ei saa unustada ka üliõpilaste igikestvat liikuvust, mis on alati Tartus tooni andnud.

See kõik kõlab loogiliselt ning siit vaid samm edasi järgnekski väide, et Tartu kujunemine Eesti kunstielu keskuseks oli orgaaniline jätk senikirjeldatule. Siiski seda nii julgelt väita ei saa. Väga üldistatult võib tõdeda, et nii linna asunud maainimesed, ajaleht Postimees kui ka üliõpilaskorporatsioonid olid vahest sotsiaalselt rohkem või vähem liberaalsed, ent kultuuriküsimustes oldi kahtlemata konservatiivsed. Kunstnikud pidasid korporatsioonidega lahinguid maitseteemadel veel 20. sajandi esimese kümnendi lõpuski, kui toimusid kähmlused tudengite ja modernistide vahel. Jaan Tõnissoni Postimees nimetas uut kunsti paremal juhul naeruväärseks, halvemal juhul vaimuhaiguseks ning avaldas 1911. aasta esimestel päevadel muu hulgas järgmise lugejakirja: „Kõik see kultiveeritud „europlus“ ei ole õieti muud midagi kui kadaklik varjukujutus. Ülikultuuraks ülistatud „europaseritud“ olek ei ole mitte muud midagi, kui välispidine vaabetis, mille all hing ära närbub, nagu lill lubjatise all.“ Kui 1906. aastal toimus Tartus Eesti esimene kunstinäitus, nägi suur osa publikust esmakordselt elus kunstiteoseid ning ei osanud esimese hooga valida õiget lähenemist, kuidas neid vaadata. Nii pidi ajalehes

20 avaldatama spetsiaalne juhend: „Kunstitöösid ei tohi lähedalt vaadata, ainult mõne sammu tagant, mõnikord veel kaugemal.“ (Artiklis hurjutatakse neid, kes seisavad kunstile liiga lähedal ning seda peaaegu näpuga puudutavad, sest mõned olidki seda teinud ja imestanud, et värvi nii paksult on.) Niisiis oli Tartu sotsiaalselt vibreeriv, kuid kultuurilist modernismi ei ennustanud nende märkide järgi miski. Ühtlasi ärgem unustagem fakti, et Tartu pole kunagi olnud tööstuslinn, mis aga tähendab, et siin puudus tehnoloogiline masinapark ning futuristlikud ideed, mis tõukasid suuresti tagant Euroopa modernismi teket. Selle asemel oli Tartu rahulik ülikoolilinn, mis asus aeglaselt liikuva jõe sängis, ning mille kausikujulise vormi põhja kogunes suvel soisest aluspinnast ja kütvast päikesest piisavalt sooja õhku, et panna inimesed tegema väljasõite linnalähedastele väljadele. Miski ei ennustanud, et just selles romantilises linnakeses hakkab sündima eesti moodne kunst, mida publik peagi juubeldavalt tervitab. Miks? Mis oli Tartu saladus? Siin ei olnud eestlaste jaoks kunstikooli ega üleüldse mingisugust kunstialast infrastruktuuri (kui unustada hetkeks tehasetöölisele mõeldud joonistuskursused), rääkimata ressurssidest. Tartus polnud metseene, inimestel puudus isegi võimalus osta lõuendit ja värve. Kunstipealinna tavapäraseid trumpe Tartul

ei olnud. Seda, et just Tartuga saab seostada ühe Euroopa väikeriigi kunsti hüpet, võiksime pidada pigem üllatuseks kui asjade loomulikuks käiguks.

Seetõttu arutlegem pisut laiemalt võimalike põhjuste üle. Toogem näiteks välja Tartu geograafiline asupaik. Linn asub Lõuna-Eestis ning on kahtlemata selle piirkonna suurim keskus, samuti pole see päris juhuslik ka kunstiajaloo seisukohalt. Käesoleval näituselgi on väljas tervelt kaheksa Tartust, selle lähemast või kaugemast ümbrusest pärit kunstniku looming. Tartus kasvanud Aleksander Vardi, Endel Kõksi ja Adamson-Ericu kõrval tuleb välja tuua ka Jaan Grünberg Rannu vallast, Karl Pärsimägi Võrumaalt, Villem Ormisson Pärsti vallast, Konstantin Süvalo Karksist ning muidugi Konrad Mägi Udernast. Euroopa mõõtkavas olid nad kõik sündinud Tartu eeslinnas, Eesti kaarti aluseks võttes saab aga rääkida laiemalt Lõuna-Eestist – ja see pole enam pelgalt geograafiline määratlus. Viimastel aastatel on hakatud uurima lõunaeesti kultuuri eripärasid ka 20. sajandi alguse modernismis ning avastatud, et mitte ainult silmatorkavalt palju kunstnikke, vaid ka toonaseid kirjanikke on pärit Tartust, selle lähiümbrusest või Lõuna-Eestist: Konrad Mägi koolivend Friedebert Tuglas, Tartus sündinud ja Võrumaal kasvanud Artur Adson, Tartumaalt pärit Gustav Suits, Reola koolis käinud Henrik Visnapuu,

Võrumaalt pärit Marie Heiberg, Richard Roht, Karl Ast Rumor, Jaan Vahtra (kes oli ka kunstnik) ning Juhan Jaik. Küsimus pole vaid geograafilises läheduses või topograafilistes nüanssides – lõunaeesti kultuuri puhul on üldstatult väidetud, et see on arhailisem, karmim, mitte nii lihvitud ja moderniseeritud. Ta olevat ka müstilisem, salapärasem, tumedam. Räägitakse suuremast ekspressiivsusest, agressioonist, lühemast süütenöörist, samuti spetsiifilisest lõunaeesti nihestatusest, anarhilisusest, teatud ebaratsionaalsusest ja lineaarse loogika vastu eksimisest. Kuidas võis säärane arhailisus ja anarhilisus kaasa aidata modernsuse sünnile? Ent just nende kahe kombinatsioon seda võiski teha. Arhailisus suunas paljusid kirjanikke kasutama lõunaeesti keelt või selle murrakuid ning see mõjus üldise ühtlustatud kirjakeele poole liikuvast Eestis kahtlemata avangardselt. (Ka Konrad Mägi kohta on muide meenutatud, et tema kõnepruuk oli olnud elu lõpuni tartumurdeline.) Anarhilisus tähendab aga julgust kaanonist välja astuda, teha midagi kontrollitud režiimist väljaspool, lõhkuda seniseid hierarhiaid, astuda tundmatutele väljadele – käituda suuresti nii, nagu modernistid käitsid.

Teiseks võiks Tartu kujunemisel Eesti 20. sajandi alguse olulisimaks kunstikeskuseks rõhutada kahe ajaloo näitelaval seni pigem kõrvalrolli

mänginud inimese tähtsust: Aleksander Tassa ja Konrad Mägi õde. Nimelt oli just Tassa see, kes hakkas esimesena kaoses korda looma ning kes juba 1910. aastate keskel proovis organiseerida kunstiühingut, mille ülesandeks oleks kunstielu teadlikum ja järjepidevam organiseerimine ning ka moodsa kunsti populariseerimine. Põhjust, miks ta seda just Tartus tegi, ei ole vaja kaugelt otsida – temagi oli siin sündinud ja üles kasvanud. Kuigi kunstnikuna ei tõusnud Tassa esimese suurusjärgu tähtede hulka, on tema rolli eesti modernismi halli kardinalina raske üle hinnata, sest just tema ühendas, toimetas, koordineeris, tehes seda kõike just Tartus.

Ent kunstielu organiseerimise poole ei püüeldud vaid ülikoolilinnas. Juba 1907. aastal oli Tallinnas asutatud Eesti Kunstiselts, viis aastat hiljem alustasid tegevust joonistuskursused ning peatselt loodi ka kunstikool, rääkimata näituse organiseerimisest. Ometi ei kujunenud Tallinn toona nii tähtsaks keskuseks kui Tartu. Miks? Välja võib tuua erinevaid organisatoorseid küsimusi, linnades valitsenud poliitilis-vaimset atmosfääri jne, kuid spekulatsioonide hetkeks ka üksikisiku rolli üle ajaloo ning küsimuse: kas sünnitas linn kunstielu või juhtus vastupidi, kunstielu tõi endaga kaasa ka müüdi ühest linnast? Kas Tartu oli vältimatu keskkond, kus kujutatud kunst pidi õide puhkema, või tõmbas hoopis

22 kunstielu elavnemine kaasa Tartu enese? Kui see viimane, siis kuidas ikkagi ja kes tegi korrektuurid senisesse kunstimaailma topograafiasse?

Meenutagem siinkohal veel kord, et 20. sajandi alguseks oli baltisaksa kunstielu võrdlemisi hääbunud ning eestlastele oli sinna ligipääs niisama keeruline kui hiirel karu jahtimine: proovida ju võib, ent see ei vii kuhugi. Ehkki Tartu renessansi teeneks saab lugeda esimeste kunstinäituste toimumise, ei tähenda see veel, et seal oleks valitsenud üldine heakskiit moodsusele, sest linna atmosfääri dikteerisid konservatiivsed korporatsioonid, ajaleht Postimees ja maalt linna tulvanud talupojad, kel arusaadavalt polnud mitte mingisuguseid varasemaid kokkupuuteid kujutava kunstiga. Nii kirjutabki kirjanik Aino Kallas oma päevikusse: „Kardan, et nüüd olen jõudnud tühimuse ajajärku oma Tartu-elus. Väikelinlik kodusus, mis algul nii soojendas mu Peterburis külmetanud hinge, rõhub mind nüüd; mind tüütavad aina samad näod, samad teretussõnad, kogu see väike, kitsas ringkond, mida alatised tülid lõhuvad veel peenemaks.“ Mõni aeg hiljem lisab ta: „Midagi ei juutu ega liigu mu ümber ega minus eneses. Mu väsimuse peamiseks põhjuseks on kindlasti vaimselt surnud elu, mida Tartus mööda saadan.“ Mari Koort, Jaan Koorti abikaasa, ütleb kunagi hiljem, et pärast Pariisi tundus Tartu „päris külana“ ning tema abikaasa jaoks

oli linn olnud „kitsas ja umbne“. Sedasama tunneb ka Pariisist naasnud Konrad Mägi: „Päälle Pariisis olekut näib kõik igav,“ kirjutab ta Tartust, ning järgnevatel aastatel leiame korduvalt tema kirjadest mõtteid, mida võiks nimetada Tartu-tühimuseks. „Ei ole kerge siin välja kannatada, kuid loodan siit pea, vähemalt ajutiseks pääseda. Muidu on olemine närune ja olen päris kade Sinu pääle, et nii huvitavasse linna oled pääsenud.“ Või: „Siin, Tartu kasarmu pääl, ei ole ka mitte midagi mõistlikku. On kogu aeg lõpmata suur raha nälg ja muidu seisab tuju ka alla poole nulli. Viimasel ajal olen rahvaga võrdlemisi vähe kokku puutunud. Saab vana viisi Vernereri pääl [kohvik Tartus] istunud ja muidu mitte midagi mõistlikku tehtud.“ Või: „On ju ka veel üks asi, mis seda seisukorda iseäranis hapuks teeb ja nimelt see, et ei ole kaaskannatajaid. On ju siin mõned üksikud õige sympatilised inimesed, aga ikkagi tunned nende hulgas ennast võerana. Käin siin nii päris varjuna ümber ja iga päevaga tüütavad ikka enam ja enam need näod ära. Ka see ainuke oas Werner on vähe igavaks läinud, aga et kuskil olla ei ole ja et tööks vähe tuju on, siis saab sääl [...] edasi istunud.“

Seega ei saa kuidagi öelda, et Tartu oleks linnana 1910. aastate keskel olnud erakordselt vibreeriv, dünaamiline, uudsust ja avangardi õhutav. Tartu oli linn, mis ta oli alati olnud: rahulik, veidi melanhoolne,

ammutades vaimutoitu ülikoolist, seal aga õpetati ladina keelt ja antiikfilosoofiat, mitte futurismi esimesi aluseid. Ent nüüd tulebki mainida Konrad Mägi õde, tagasihoidlikku Emiliet, kellest me ei tea peaaegu mitte midagi peale selle, et tal olid vaimsed huvid (ta suutis otse vene keelest lugeda Lermontovi „Deemonit“) ning et just tema juures elas Pariisist naasnud noorem vend. See elupaik Tartus Ülejõel võis saada otsustavaks nii Tartu kui eesti kunstiajaloo jaoks. Me ei tea täpselt Mägi voodi mõõtmeid ega asupaika, oli see kusagil kapi taga või eraldas Emilie vennale eraldi toa, kuid kusagilt sealt sai alguse Tartu tõus eesti maalikunsti keskuseks.

Võib-olla tõmbas just Konrad Mägi karismaatiline isiksus siia ka teisi ja käivitas mitmeid protsesse – lõpuks oli just tema kunst see, mis äratas publikus enim tähelepanu ja huvi, kehtestades kiiresti ja küll vastupanu leides, kuid siiski veenvalt moodsa kunsti eluõiguse. Mägi naasmine Tartusse oli tema isiklikus universumis väiksemat sorti katastroof – Pariisi prisked mahlased viljad kuivasid kokku tohletanud vissideks. Kuid ta kogus end kiiresti ning peatselt võis teda näha suhtlemas, rääkimas, žüriides istumas ja ka kunstikursusi pidamas, kuhu tõmbas hoolimata kõrgest õppemaksust paljusid. Mägi puhul ei saa me kindlasti rääkida linnatruudusest – ta tuli Tartusse vastumeelselt ning kippus siit edaspidi pidevalt

minema, pendeldades algul mitu aastat Viljandi vahet („neetud asi, et omal kodu ei ole – on surmani see õhus rippumine ära tüüdanud“), kus elas tema noorpõlvearmastus. Hiljem sõitis Mägi suviti pidevalt loodusesse maalima – selles aga ei mänginudki Tartu otsest rolli, sest kunstnik ei suutnudki linnades töötada. Ometi jäi Mägi kuni surmani elama Tartusse ning seda esmalt just tänu õe pakutud elamiskohale. Seal, Emajõe linnas oli ta ka koolis käinud ning kümme aastat tehases puidust voodiotsi treinud.

Mägi karismaatilisuses ei maksa meil aga kahelda. Tema sõpruskond oli avar, sinna kuulusid Tuglas ja Tassa, Vabbe ja Starkopf, enamasti temast nooremad kunstnikud-kirjanikud, keda ta tõmbas ligi nagu liimipaber kärbeid. Mägil oli palju sõpru, ta ei olnud erak, talle saadeti kirju, mis algasid soojalt, nagu „Kallis Konrad“ või „Armas Mägi“. Üks noortest sõpradest mäletab, et Mägiga tekkis tal „lihtne, südamluk vahet“ . Vahel tuli Mägile spontaanseid postkaarte, kus lõbus seltskond kümnekesi talle oma joviaalsed tervitusallkirjad saatis. „Ta oli lahke ja alati valmis juhendama, kui midagi viltu läks, seletas, kuidas paremini teha ja mõnikord näitas seda isegi pintsliga,“ kirjeldab üks õpilane, kellele Mägi andis laenuks ka venekeelseid Poe raamatuid. „Meeldiv vestluspartner paljudele,“ mäletab teine. Hoolimata Mägi iroonilisest ja mässavast vaimust, suutis

24 just tema isik luubina ajastu kunstikiiri koondada. Karismaatilisi kunstnikke oli ju teisigi, meenutagem kas või laia joonega Ants Laikmaad, kuid tundub, et Konrad Mägis oli veel see miski: mingi moodsuse kohalolu, kaasaegse Euroopa vaimu pidev juuresolek, mis peegeldus kõiges – tema laitmatult maitsekates rätsepaülikondades, kohvikukultuuri ning seeläbi dialoogi kui väärtuse rõhutamises (kohvitassi kõrval vesteldud vaidlustel on kunstiajaloole sageli olnud suurem mõju kui mõnel hierarhilisel õppeasutusel), kuid ennekõike ikkagi tema kunstis.

Võib vaid ette kujutada, mida tähendas umbes 40 000 elanikuga linnale see, kui seal elas Konrad Mägi. Ühelt poolt muidugi tema pidev avalik kohalolu: Mägi istus päevade kaupa Werneris või mõnes teises kohvikus ja oli seetõttu pideva tähelepanu all, sa võisid tartlasena silmata iga päev nurgalauas tuttavat kuju ja teada, et see seal oli moodne kunstnik. Vahel võtsid Mägi ning tema kaaskond ette ka linnarahvast provotseerinud samme, näiteks loobiti Soome tantsijannat keset teatrietendust mädamunadega (too ei olevat piisavalt modernne, kõlas nende etteheide), teinekord lubati (küll varjunime all) igale näitusekülastajale peale maksta, siis jälle mõni väiksema kaliibriga ebakonventsionaalne tegu avalikus ruumis, kas või sealsamas kohvikus. Kuidas ka poleks, Mägi oli kahtlemata tuntud ja

säärasena oli ta üks esimesi, kes kehtestas Eestis kunstnikupositsiooni. Suurepäraseid autoreid oli ju teisigi, siinsamas linnas tegutses näiteks harukordne Kristjan Raud. Ent Konrad Mägi boheemlik ja karismaatiline natuur, provokatiivsed aktsioonid ja teatraalne väljenduslaad (kord kunstikooli direktorina tantsis ta avalikult Vanemuise laval naiseriites, roos hammaste vahel) – see kõik kuulutas avalikkusele, et saabunud on uut tüüpi kunstnike ajastu, käes on sõltumatute, autonoomsete, üdini modernsete loojate aeg. Võtkem näiteks Johann Köleri, kes kunstnikuna oli teinud suurejoonelist rahvusvahelist karjääri, kuid kes kodumaal oli tuntud ennekõike rahvusliku liikumise tegelasena ning tema kunstnikuks olemine tuli paljudele täieliku üllatusena. Konrad Mägi oli aga ennekõike ja ainult kunstnik ning seda enam mitte kitsalt akadeemilistes ringides, vaid avalikkuse ees – see avalikkus oli Tartu, sest just siin asus tema säng hoolsa vanema õe väikses, kuid maitsekas korteris.

Ja teiseks muidugi Mägi kunst. Kui ta 1910. aastal esimest korda oma tööd Tartusse näitusele saatis, oli tagajärjeks triumf, mis nüüdisaegsest vaatepunktist võiks tunduda normaalsena, kuid ajastu raamile asetatuna mõjub ikkagi üllatavalt. Meenutagem veel kord, et Mägi nägemuslikud, hallutsinatoorsed ja üdini moodsas kunstikeeles loodud Norra maastikud jõudsid linna, kus alles neli



aastat varem olid inimesed näpuga maalide värvikihti paksust mõõtnud, nina peaaegu kaevamas vagusid ultramariini või rohelist. Kuid nüüd korraga oli seesama (või peaaegu seesama – näitusekülastajate sotsiaalset profiili on kahjuks võimatu taastada) publik põrmus. Inimesi aina vooris, teoseid aina osteti, nii et keset näitust paluti Mägil maale Norrast juurdegi saata. On ehk liiga bravuurikas väita, et Mägi tööd 1910. aasta näitusel Tartus kehtestasid modernsuse soodsa vastuvõtu Eestis, miski ei juhtu üleöö ega ühe inimese tegevuse tulemusel, kuid üllatav on säärane asjade käik kahtlemata.

Kuid selle kõige ajas etteulatuvaks jätkumiseks oli kahtlemata vaja ka teatud infrastruktuuri või institutsionaalset aluspõhja. Selleks sai 1918. aastal asutatud Kunstiühing Pallas, millest kasvas järgmisel aastal välja samanimeline kõrgem kunstikool. Just Pallase kooliga seostatakse teatud eesti kunstiajaloo kaanoni väljakujunemist, mille jälgi võime märgata veel aastakümneid hiljemgi – lähtumine prantsuse maalikoolist, teemaringis loodusmotiivide ülekaalukas domineerimine, töömahukus, värvikesksus, sageli tooniandvad melanhoolsed atmosfäärid, poliitiliste teemade ning ajaloolis-mütoloogiliste allegooriate vähesus. On raske öelda, millist rolli Konrad Mägi siin täpselt mängis. Esimene oletus lubaks väita, et olulisem oli

tema kunst ning vähem tähtis tema institutsionaalne panus, kuid võib-olla olid asjad just vastupidi. Mägi valiti kooli esimeseks direktoriks ning ehk just tema isiku tõttu saabusid nüüd Tartusse teisedki õppejõud, kes muidu polnud Tartuga seotud: mainigem kas või Ado Vabbet, kes jõudis kohale Narvast ning kellest kujunes Pallase üks pikaajalisemaid ning ehk mõjukamaid õppejõude Nikolai Triigi kõrval, kes tuli kauaaegse sõbra Mägi kutsel Tallinnast. Samuti on meenutatud, et Mägi ei osalenud direktorina küll alati igapäevases majandusalases juhtimises, kuid Pallase ühe esimese õpilase Aleksander Vardi sõnul oli Mägi liim, mis hoidis tervet Pallast koos. Kui Mägi umbes aastaks Itaaliasse sõitis, olid Pallases puhkenud sisetülid, kunstnikud ei saanud enam omavahel läbi, ja olukord lahenes alles siis, kui Mägi naasis ning mingi sõnulseletamatu autoriteediga kaalukaunid jälle tasakaalu seadis.

Õppejõuna toonitas Mägi aga pidevalt, et õpilased ei järgiks tema ega ka kellegi teise eeskujut. Õpilased mäletavad, kuidas ta oli keelanud väliste eeskujude jäljendamise, maneerlikkuse ja matkimise. Seetõttu ei kujunenud ka eesti kunstiajalugu Konrad Mägi epigoonide hanereaks, vaid iseseisvate kunstnike ühiselt ehitatud tervikuks, mida hoidsid koos mingid sisemised tõekspidamised.

26 Kuidas ka poleks, 1920. aastate alguseks oli üpris selge, et Tartu oli kunstielu keskus ning siin pannakse alus ühele traditsioonile, mis veel ennast traditsioonina ei näita, kuid selleks ometi kiiresti saab. Nii jäi see olukord 1940. aastate alguseni ning Teise maailmasõja lõpunigi, mil organisatoorsed muudatused ja erinevad muud kriisid nihutasid keskme üpris kiiresti Tallinna. Sellega hajus kunstielu tsentrumiks olnud Tartu staatus säärasena, nagu see oli sajandi algul ning jätkus juba teistsugusena – mitte halvema ega paremana, aga uutmoodi.

Ent rääkides ajavahemikust 1910–1945 ja Tartu rollist eesti kunstiajaloo, ei saa siiski mööda minna ka esoteerilisematest väljadest ning sellegipoolest kõnelda linna ja tema atmosfääri mõjust kunstile. Kunstnikud mitte ainult ei elanud ega töötanud Tartus, vaid ka maalid seda – Konrad Mägi, kes linnu üldjuhul ei kujutanud, oli erand, mis kinnitas reeglilt. Tartu on üks enam maalitud Eesti linnu (ja võib-olla isegi troonib selle tobeda edetabeli tipus) – sinna naasti oma loomingus ikka ja jälle ning eri nurkade alt. Käesoleva näituse tunnustöö on mastaapne Endel Kõksi ülemlaul Tartule, kuhu ta on koondanud ikoonilised Tartu ehitised (enamik neist nüüdseks hävinud). See on Tartu defineerimine hoonete ja arhitektuuri kaudu, linna samastamine, ennekõike aga teatud ehitistele sümbolväärtuse

omistamine: kirikud, ülikooli peahoone, Kivisild ja veel mõned majad võrduvadki Tartuga. Kaarel Liimandi Tartu-vaade on seevastu hoopis teistsugune: pastelsetes ja mahedates toonides puudub selles Kõksi paraadlikkus, rakurss ei ole panoraamne, vaid tunduvalt intiimsem, ning linna ei mõtestata mitte ainult miljöö, vaid ka linna inimeste kaudu, kelleks pole huvitaval kombel üliõpilased, vaid töölisklass. Vasakpoolsete autorite esiletõusuga 1930. aastatel hakatigi Tartut kujutama aguliromantika kaudu. Siiski nägid Eduard Wiiralt ja Peet Aren Tartut juba 1920. aastatel ennekõike väikeste viltuvajunud puumajade asumina, mille vahel liiguvad veidi tontlikud ja ehmunud ilma linlased. Niisugune lähenemine on märgatav vahe sellega, kuidas defineeriti Tartut 19. sajandi baltisaksa kunstis, kus Tartu tähendas ennekõike idüllilisi valgusküllaseid pargimaastikke vanade võimsate hoonete ja pühapäeva veetva härrasrahvaga. Siia kõrvale lisandusid 1920. ja 1930. aastatel maalid, mille südamikus oli läbi linna voolav Emajõgi koos jõeäärse saginaga: paatide tõrvamine, kalaturul kauplemine ja muu säärane. Tartu oli võluv, temast kumas maalilisust ja vaheldusrikkust, tooni andsid võimu või religiooni klassitsistlikud sümbolid, väärivad kivimajad, ja tasapisi lagunevad rohtukasvanud aedadega hooned. Nende kahe pooluse vahel liiguvadki kunstnikud Tartu kujutamisel, kuid üha rohkem muutub Tartu

nende visiooni järgi linnaks, kus midagi ei muutu. Aeg seisab siin paigal, nihkeid või transformatsioone pole märgata, kalduvajunud hooned jäävadki kaldu ega kuku iial ümber. Tundub, et Tartut nähakse nagu Roomat – igavese linnana, mis tunduvalt väiksemas mõõtkavas, aga siiski jääb truuks oma algsele olekule, mida kunstnikud hoolikalt konserveerivad, justkui tulevast katastroofi ette aimates. Kui sõda on teinud laastava hävitustöö, käivad nad mööda linna ning maalivad üles või joonistavad plaatidele kadunud linna: suitsevaid varemeid, risuhunnikuid, telliskivitükke. Enne Teist maailmasõda oli Tartu olnud kunstnike pilgu läbi romantiline unustatud linn, pelgupaik, kuhu eskapistlikus meeleolus varjule minna. Nüüd aga on linn, mida ei puutunud modernsuse peadpööriv areng, sõja tallermaa, mida hävitanud lennukid ei osutu mitte ainult sõja, vaid igasuguse uuenemise ja tehnoloogiliste utoopiate kehastuseks. Tartu pidi asuma väljaspool moodsa maailma mõõdet, kuid sunniviisiliselt sinna kaasatuna on tulemuseks linna vältimatu apokalüpsis. Nii mõjuvad pea kõik toona maalitud Tartu-vaated dokumentidena veeuputuse-eelsest linnast: see oli paik, mida ei haaranud uuenemine ja kõik oli nagu alati ning maalidelt võib asjatult otsida olematuid ajastu märke. Tänavalaternad, bussid, autod, moodsates riietes inimesed – need ei kuulunud Tartut kujutades kunstnike menüüsse.

Too linn pidi jääma kohaks, kus hoitakse alles üht teatud olekut, seda kuidagi muutmata.

Kõike eelnevat silmas pidades on hämmastav, et just Tartus sai teoks eesti kunstikultuuri uuenemine.

Eero Epner  
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# THE BIRTHPLACE OF A TRADITION

**The** topography of art history is a complicated and contradictory theme. The particularly studious disentanglement of this theme has not begun since there are many awkward answers to the question, “Where is art created and why just there?” If we open an ordinary encyclopaedic overview of global art history, we can be more or less certain that we will read about art that had been created in Europe’s metropolises. Athens, Rome, Venice and Florence, Paris, Munich, Berlin, Vienna – we could delimit global art history more or less with the art born in those cities until the end of the Second World War, when the centre of gravity shifted to New York, since many European artists had moved there to escape the war. Oslo, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Amsterdam, London, Madrid, perhaps one or two other cities also appear as more minor remarks on the periphery of art history. Yet there is no point in looking for any locations in Latin America, any mysterious dens in China or even Finnish cities of the second order of magnitude, or Eastern European centres, even if they are written in invisible ink. Naturally, the situation has improved somewhat over the last decades. Historians are already turning the miners’ lamps on their foreheads towards the periphery as well. Locations and places beyond Europe, and gradually within Europe itself, are being discovered, yet generally

speaking, the geography of art history still betrays the continuation of a colonialist way of thinking. What was born in the metropolises is in focus, and what was not born has at best...also been born.

Yet at this point it would be interesting to ask further: why these cities in particular? Why not Hamburg, for instance, or Lisbon? Why didn’t Bern or Brussels in the heart of Europe, or Stockholm or Cracow develop into centres that defined art history? Is this determined by the lines of force generated by states? Since ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy were important centres of power, where resources, people and power converged, it is logical that artists working for courts, rulers or patrons often also converged in the most important cities of those states. Or is there nevertheless also a certain specific urbanity, some kind of particularly favourable environment for the generation of works of art that exists in one city and is not found in another? Something that exists in Venice but not so much anymore in Milan?

Before poeticising this topography and speaking about the distinctive aura of cities, we should direct our attention to rational arguments. Yes, some cities are indeed more successful in certain spheres if for instance, something known as the “overflow

30 of knowledge” takes place. This happens when different skills, experiences or even branches of the economy in a particular city are sufficiently adjacent and dynamic that a fusion of knowledge takes place between them, the sum total of which is greater than its parts. Thus the automobile industry developed in Detroit thanks to the shipbuilding on the shores of nearby Lake Erie. New York’s financial sector fed off of the cotton industry. Yet this is also how the distinctiveness of Paris is explained. Since the city was overpopulated with artists, the exchange of knowledge, impressions and everything else developed here, and primarily in cafés in particular. This “overflowed” and one did not always have to even understand the language in order to partake in this. At one point, so many artists had gathered in Paris that going there was no longer a choice, but rather an obligation – if you were not in that city, you were automatically shunned, marginalised, trivial flyblow on the back cover of art history.

“In his enthusiasm, [Aleksander] Tassa considered as artists only those who were in Paris or were at least on their way there,” Aleksander Vardi has recalled his meeting with Tassa just before Vardi went to Paris. Tassa was not the only one. When Konstantin Süvalo arrived in Paris, he expressed his rapture in his first letters and recommended considering if

Estonia really needed two art schools since studying in Paris was purportedly the best anyway. In April of 1906, Konrad Mägi wrote to a friend while living in St. Petersburg: “I have gotten acquainted with some art disciples who have studied in Paris and they explained that Paris alone is the city where one can attain perfection in art.” Thus: Paris was not the city where art was born – rather, Paris was where art could be created. Paris had suddenly become the capital of art history, which swept up more and more artists as it snowballed until remaining apart from that snowball meant melting away unnoticeably.

On the other hand, only artists alone do not attract new artists to some city, rather it is art itself that attracts them. Rome, Florence and Paris were teeming with art. One could stumble upon some sculpture or gallery, walk in a colonnade, or step into some church on every street corner, so that art had become the natural environment of the given city. Even nowadays there is a whole series of cities where art is an extravagance, extraordinariness, a curiosity, uniqueness – consider for instance the office metropolises Bonn or Brasília, where functionality and mobility are more what determine the city’s general atmosphere. Yet the moment that art becomes an organic part of the city, it also becomes considerably easier to create

art there – especially during eras and in places where being an artist is not normality but rather unusualness. This is also one of the reasons why all of Estonia's first modernists left Estonia and studied, worked and created their first works in the metropolises of foreign countries – it was so much simpler, not only for practical reasons (there were no higher art schools in Estonia) but also due to self-definition and belonging to a collective, and peace of mind from being able to work as artists. Working in cities where one was surrounded by art and artists on a daily basis made it much easier to establish oneself as an artist and a member of the community of artists, even if just in one's own concept of oneself. Incidentally, this was also the case retrospectively – defining oneself as a link in the chain of art history. At the same time, observe that all the modernists returned to Estonia and continued to work there, among other things also starting to build up modern art history in Estonia. And most of them did so in Tartu.

Why Tartu? There are evidently a lot of reasons here. On the one hand – as is the case for most things associated with Tartu – one cannot overlook the importance of the university in this respect either. A drawing school was already opened in Tartu in 1802 and it was the only institution that

provided education in art in both Estland and Livland. Only a year later, an art museum was also established and the first art exhibition was held in 1835. Additionally, lectures were given on art history at the university. Yet mostly Baltic German artists and art enthusiasts were active in the town and its surroundings, including the Liphart family, which owned the vast art collections of Raadi Manor. A number of other things happened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century where Tartu was without a doubt an important conductor in art history in the entire surrounding region, but the former momentum died down at the end of the century, and the interest that Baltic Germans displayed in art continued to move forward out of inertia, but it no longer had the same kind of fervour as before. All the prerequisites had been established for Tartu to fade away as an art centre – and nevertheless the opposite happened.

Much has been said about Tartu's renaissance, in other words the city's upturn around 1890, which first and foremost meant economic and social awakening. Although the population did not grow particularly explosively, the relative proportion of Estonians living in the city grew noticeably quickly. Estonians accounted for 55% of the population in 1881, but sixteen years later the population was already 68% Estonian. The proportion of

32 Estonians grew swiftly, and primarily at the expense of Baltic Germans. It also meant a great deal to Tartu when the newspaper *Postimees* moved to that city in 1886. Even more significant was the purchase ten years later by which Jaan Tõnisson and the people that converged around him became the owner of the newspaper and began wielding it as a weapon in political struggle. The town was buzzing, something was in the air, and let us not forget the everlasting dynamism of the students, which has always set the tone in Tartu.

All this may sound logical, and just one more step from here could lead to the claim that Tartu's evolution into the centre of the art scene in Estonia was the organic continuation of what has been described up to this point, but this can nevertheless not be asserted so boldly. Very generally speaking, we can acknowledge that country folk who had moved to the city, the *Postimees* newspaper, and university students' associations could have been more or less socially liberal, but they were without a doubt conservative regarding questions of culture. Artists waged battles of taste with students' associations even as late as the 1910s, when scuffles took place between students and modernists. Jaan Tõnisson's *Postimees* called new art ludicrous at best and mental illness at worst, and

among other things published the following letter from a reader during the first days of 1911: "All this cultivated "Europeanness" is actually nothing more than a shadow of Germanisation. The "Europeanised" condition that is glorified as supreme culture is nothing more than an exterior glazed coating beneath which the soul wilts, like a flower under plaster." When the first Estonian art exhibition was held in Tartu in 1906, a large proportion of the public saw works of art for the first time in their lives and at first did not even know how to choose the right way to look at them. Thus a manual had to be published in the paper especially for such people: "Works of art must not be viewed at close range, only from a few steps away, sometimes from even farther." (The article scolds people who stand too close to the artworks and almost touch them with their fingers because some of them actually did so and were surprised to find that the paint had been applied so thickly.) Thus: Tartu was socially vibrant, but nothing presaged cultural modernism according to these signs. Let us also not forget the fact that Tartu has never been an industrial town. This means that there was no technological base of machinery and futuristic ideas here that to a great extent impelled the generation of European modernism. Instead, Tartu was a peaceful university town situated in the bed of a slowly flowing river.



Sufficient warm air gathered in the bottom of its bowl-shaped form in the summer from the marshy subsoil and the heat of the sun to induce people to make excursions to fields near the city. Nothing foreshadowed that the birth of modern Estonian art, which the public would soon jubilantly greet, would begin in this romantic little town in particular.

Why? What was Tartu's secret? There was no art school here for Estonians or any art-related infrastructure whatsoever (if we ignore for the moment the drawing courses meant for factory workers), to say nothing of the lack of resources – Tartu lacked not only patrons, the ordinary peasant did not even have the possibility here to purchase a proper canvas and paints. Tartu did not have the usual trumps that the art capitals had, and the fact that a great leap in the art history of a small European country can be associated with Tartu in particular should come to us more as a little surprise rather than the natural progression of things. For this reason, let us speculate a little on the possible reasons for this in a broader sense.

Consider, for instance, Tartu's geographical location. It is located in Southern Estonia and is undoubtedly its largest centre. It must be pointed out that this is not entirely by chance from the standpoint of

art history either. There are several artists at this current exhibition who are from Tartu or its near, or slightly further, vicinity: alongside Aleksander Vardi and Endel Kõks who grew up in Tartu, we should also highlight Karl Pärsimägi from Võru County and Villem Ormisson from Pärsti Rural Municipality, and of course Konrad Mägi from Uderna. On a European scale, they were all born in Tartu's suburbs. If we locate this on the map of Estonia, however, we can speak more broadly of Southern Estonia – and this is no longer merely a geographical definition. In recent years, the distinctive features of Southern Estonian culture have started being considered rather extensively in the modernism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has been discovered, for instance, that not only a remarkably large number of artists were from Tartu or its near vicinity. Many writers of that time also hailed from that area: Konrad Mägi's schoolmate Friedebert Tuglas, Artur Adson, who was born in Tartu and raised in Võru County, Henrik Visnapuu, who went to school in Reola, Marie Heiberg, Richard Roht, Karl Ast Rumor, Jaan Vahtra (who was also an artist) and Juhan Jaik, all of whom were from Võru County, Gustav Suits came from Tartu County – and so on. This is not only a question of geographical proximity or topographical nuances, rather it is more a question of Southern Estonian culture. This culture has generally been

described as being more archaic, harsher, not as polished and modernised. It is also said to be more mysterious, more secretive and darker. Greater expressiveness, aggression, and a shorter fuse are spoken of, as well as a specific Southern Estonian dislocation, archaicness, a certain irrationality and violation of linear logic. How could such archaicness and anarchicalness contribute to the birth of modernity? Yet it is precisely the combination of those two aspects that could have done so. Archaicness inspired many writers to use the Southern Estonian language, or different dialects of that language. This undoubtedly came across as being avant garde in Estonia, which was moving towards a universal uniform written language. (It has incidentally also been recalled that throughout his life, Konrad Mägi's language usage in speech did not correspond to the Tartu dialect.) Anarchicalness, however, means the boldness to deviate from canons, to do something beyond the controlled regimen, to break down hitherto existing hierarchies, to enter unfamiliar fields – in other words, to behave largely the way modernists behaved.

Secondly, the importance of two people who had hitherto played more of a secondary role on the stage of history should be stressed in Tartu's evolution into Estonia's most important centre for art in the early

20<sup>th</sup> century: Aleksander Tassa and Konrad Mägi's sister. Namely, it was Tassa in particular who was the first to start creating order in chaos and who already tried to organise an art association in the mid-1910s. The aim of this association was intended to be a more methodical, consistent organisation of the art scene and also the popularisation of modern art. One does not need to search far and wide to find the reason why he did this precisely in Tartu – he was born and raised there. Even though Tassa did not rise to become one of the first rate stars as an artist, it is difficult to overestimate his role as the grey eminence of Estonian modernism, since it was he who pasted, worked and coordinated, and he did it all right in Tartu.

Yet it was not only Tartu where people aspired to organise the art scene. The Eesti Kunstiselts (Estonian Art Society) was already founded in 1907 in Tallinn. A drawing course started being offered five years later, and soon an art school also began to operate, to say nothing of organising an exhibition. Nevertheless, Tallinn did not develop into as important a centre as Tartu at that time. Why? Various organisational questions, the different prevailing political, intellectual and spiritual atmosphere in the cities, and so on, can be highlighted, but let us speculate for a moment on the role of the individual in history. Namely, let

us ask: did the city give birth to the art scene or vice versa, was the art scene brought along by individuals and sold from one city? Was Tartu an inevitable environment where figurative art simply had to burst into bloom, or instead, did the fact that the art scene became livelier rope in Tartu itself? And if the latter option is true, then how were corrections made in the hitherto existing topography of the art world, and who made those corrections?

Recall at this point once again that by the outset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Baltic German art scene had more or less faded, and anyway, access to that art scene was as complicated for Estonians as hunting bears was for mice: one could try, but it would not lead anywhere. Although the holding of the first art exhibitions can be considered the service rendered by the Tartu renaissance, this does not by any stretch of the imagination mean that an overall approval of modernity prevailed in the town, since conservative students' associations, the *Postimees* newspaper, and peasants who moved in droves from the countryside to the city, who – quite understandably – had no previous contacts with figurative art whatsoever, dictated the town's atmosphere. This is how the writer Aino Kallas wrote in her diary: "I'm afraid that I've now reached the tedium stage of my life in Tartu. The

small-town homeliness that initially so warmed my soul, after it felt such cold in St. Petersburg, now oppresses me; I'm fed up with the same faces all the time, the same words of greeting, that whole narrow, little circle, which perpetual quarrels break up into even smaller groups." Some time later she added: "Nothing happens or moves around or within me. The main reason for my weariness is surely the spiritually and intellectually dead life that I pass by in Tartu." Mari Koort, Jaan Koort's wife, said some time later that after Paris, Tartu felt like a "real village" and the city had been "narrow and stale" for her husband. Konrad Mägi felt the same way after returning from Paris: "After being in Paris, everything seems boring," he wrote from Tartu, and in the following years, we repeatedly find something in his letters that could be called weariness of Tartu. "It isn't easy to endure here but I soon hope to get away, at least temporarily. My condition is otherwise crappy and I'm pretty jealous of you that you've made it to such an interesting city." Or: "There's another thing that makes this condition especially disagreeable, namely the fact that I've got no fellow sufferers. There are a few really likeable people here, but you still feel like a stranger among them. I go about here quite like a shadow, and these faces bore me ever more and more

36 with each passing day. That one and only oasis, Werner, has also become a bit boring, but since I've got nowhere else to be and I'm not in much of a mood for work, then I [...] carry on sitting there."

Thus: no, it cannot be said that Tartu in the mid-1910s would have been exceptionally vibrant and dynamic as a city, breeding novelty and the avant garde. It was that small town that it had always been: a peaceful, somewhat melancholy town that received its intellectual and spiritual nourishment straight from the veins of the university. Yet Latin and ancient philosophy were taught at the university, not the basic fundamentals of Futurism. Now, however, Konrad Mägi's sister, the modest Emilie, comes into play. We know almost nothing about her aside from the fact that she had intellectual and spiritual interests (she was able to read Lermontov's *Demon* in its original Russian), and that her younger brother lived at her place after he returned from Paris. These lodgings in Tartu's Ülejõe district could prove decisive for the art history of Tartu and Estonia. We do not know the precise dimensions of Mägi's bed or exactly where it was located, whether it was behind some closet or if Emilie set a separate room aside for her brother, but somehow, Tartu's ascent to become the centre of Estonian painting started from that bed.

This is because it was perhaps Konrad Mägi's charismatic personality in particular that drew others to this place and activated several processes. Ultimately it was his art in particular, after all, that attracted the public's attention and interest, quickly establishing modern art's right to life, admittedly encountering resistance but nevertheless convincingly. Mägi's return to Tartu was a minor catastrophe in his personal universe. The exuberance of Paris dried up into a tasteless backwater, but he quickly pulled himself together, and soon he could be seen interacting, speaking, participating in juries, and quite shortly, teaching art courses as well, to which he attracted many students regardless of their high tuition fees. In Mägi's case we certainly cannot speak of loyalty to the city. He came to the city reluctantly and thereafter constantly kept trying to leave, initially going back and forth between Tartu and Viljandi for several years ("It's a damn nuisance not to have your own home – I'm fed up to death with all this hanging in air"), where the love of his youth lived. Later he constantly went to the countryside in summers to paint, although this was no longer Tartu's fault: Mägi was unable to work in cities. Nevertheless Mägi continued to live in Tartu until his death. This was primarily thanks to the lodgings his sister provided, which aligned him for the

longer term with this town situated in the riverbed, where he once attended school and had carved wooden bedsteads in the factory for ten years.

We need not doubt Mägi's charisma. His circle of friends was broad. It included Tuglas and Tassa, Vabbe and Starkopf, mostly artists and writers who were younger than he was, whom he attracted like flypaper attracts flies. Mägi had a lot of friends. He was not a hermit. Letters were sent to him that began warmly, like "Dear Konrad" or "My esteemed Mägi". One of his young friends recalls that he developed an "easy, genial relationship" with Mägi. Sometimes Mägi received spontaneous postcards, where a light-hearted group of some ten friends sent him their jovial signatures in greeting. "He was affable and always prepared to instruct. When something went wrong he explained how to do it better and sometimes even demonstrated it with a brush," describes one of his students, to whom Mägi also lent Russian translations of Poe's books. A pleasant interlocutor for many, recalls another. Regardless of Mägi's ironic and rebellious spirit, it was his personality in particular that succeeded in concentrating the rays of art of that age, like a magnifying glass. There were other charismatic artists, recall for instance Ants Laikmaa and his largess, but it seems that there was "something else"

in Konrad Mägi: some sort of presence of modernity, the constant presence of the spirit of contemporary Europe, which was reflected in everything – his impeccably tasteful tailored suits, his coffee culture and thereby his emphasis on dialogue as a value (arguments played out in conversations over cups of coffee have often had a greater effect on art history than some hierarchical educational institutions), but naturally first and foremost in his art.

One can imagine what it meant to a city with about 40,000 inhabitants that Konrad Mägi lived there. On the one hand, of course, his constant public presence: Mägi sat for days on end in the Werner café, or in some other café, and thus was constantly in focus. As a resident of Tartu, you could glance at a familiar figure at the corner table every day and know that the man over there was a "modern artist". Sometimes Mägi and the company that surrounded him also undertook steps that provoked the townspeople. For instance, they openly attacked a Finnish dancer with rotten eggs in the middle of a theatre performance (their complaint was that she was not sufficiently modern). Another time he promised (admittedly under a pseudonym) to pay some money to everyone who visited an exhibition. There were also some other nonconventional acts of a more minor calibre in public space, for instance in that very same café. Be that as

it may, Mägi was undoubtedly well-known – and as such he was one of the first to establish the position of the Artist in Estonia. There certainly were other excellent artists as well. The phenomenal Kristjan Raud, for instance, lived and worked in this same city, but Konrad Mägi's bohemian nature, provocative actions, and charismatic-theatrical style of expression (once as the director of the art school, he danced in public on the stage of the Vanemuine Theatre dressed in women's clothing with a rose between his teeth) defined for almost the first time for the public that the age of a new type of artist had arrived – the period of independent, autonomous, profoundly modern artists was at hand. Take Johann Köler, for instance, who had fashioned a magnificent international career as an artist, yet who was known in his homeland first and foremost as a figure in the nationalist movement. The fact that he was an artist came as a complete surprise to many. Konrad Mägi, however, was first and foremost, and only an Artist, and no longer in narrowly academic circles, but rather before the public – and this time that public was in Tartu, since it was right there that his bed was located in his diligent older sister's austere yet tasteful apartment.

And secondly, of course, Mägi's art. When he sent his works to Tartu for an exhibition for the first time in 1910, the result was a triumph, which could seem

normal if we look at it from today's point of view, but which still comes across as a surprise when it is placed in the context of its time. Recall once again that Mägi's visionary, hallucinatory Norwegian landscapes created in an utterly modern language of art arrived in a city where only four years earlier, people had measured the thickness of the coats of paint on paintings with their fingers and were practically digging furrows in the ultramarine or green of the paintings. Yet now that same public (or almost the same public – it is unfortunately impossible to reconstruct the social profile of the exhibition's visitors) was suddenly prone on the ground. People kept on coming and coming, works kept being bought and bought, so that in the middle of the exhibition, the organisers asked Mägi to send more paintings from Norway. It is perhaps too high-spirited to claim that Mägi's works at the 1910 exhibition in Tartu established the favourable reception of modernity in Estonia. Nothing happens overnight or through the efforts of one person, but such a course of events is assuredly surprising.

Yet a certain infrastructure or institutional foundation was undoubtedly also needed for all of this to continue over time in the future. To this end, the Pallas Art Society was founded in 1918. The following year, a higher art school bearing the same

name grew out of that society. The development of a certain canon of Estonian art history is associated with the Pallas school in particular. We can notice its vestiges even decades later – taking its impetus from the French school of painting, the overwhelming domination of scenes of nature in their circle of themes, labour-intensiveness, orientation towards colour, melancholic atmospheres that often set the tone, and the scarcity of political themes and historical-mythological allegories. It is difficult to say exactly what Konrad Mägi's role was here. The first assumption would allow us to assert that his art was more important and his institutional contribution was less important, but maybe things were really the other way around. Mägi was chosen to serve as the school's first director, and perhaps it was due precisely to his personality that many other teachers then came to Tartu who were not otherwise connected with that city: let us mention Ado Vabbe, for instance, who came from Narva and who became the most long-term and perhaps the most influential teacher at Pallas alongside Nikolai Triik, who as Mägi's long-time friend came from Tallinn at his invitation. It has also been recalled that Mägi did not actually always participate as director in the daily financial administration of the school, but according to Aleksander Vardi – who was one of the first students at Pallas – Mägi was the glue

that held all of Pallas together. When Mägi left for Italy for about a year, internal strife had broken out in Pallas. Artists as the school's authorities no longer got along with each other and the situation was brought under control only when Mägi returned and with some sort of authority that was not put into words balanced the scales once again.

Yet as a teacher, Mägi constantly stressed that students should not follow his or anyone else's example. Students recall how he had forbidden the simulation, mannerism and imitation of external models. For this reason, Estonian art history did not evolve into a series of Konrad Mägi epigones, but rather into a complete whole built up jointly by independent artists and held together by some sort of internal convictions. Be that as it may, it was quite clear by the outset of the 1920s that Tartu was the centre of the art scene and that this was the place where the foundation was being laid for a new tradition that did not yet reveal itself as a tradition, but which nevertheless would quickly become one. That is how this situation remained until the outset of the 1940s and even to the end of the Second World War, when organisational changes and other various crises shifted the centre rather quickly to Tallinn. This brought to an end Tartu's status as the centre

40 of the art scene, as it had been since the outset of the century, and the city's role continued in a different form – not worse or better, but differently.

Yet when speaking of the period from 1910 to 1945 and Tartu's role in Estonian art history, we nevertheless cannot bypass the more esoteric fields and must talk about the effect of the city and its atmosphere on art as well. Artists not only lived and worked in Tartu, they also painted it – Konrad Mägi, who as a rule did not depict cities, was the exception that proves the rule. Tartu is one of the cities that has been painted the most in Estonia (and it might even be at the top of this silly ranking). It was returned to time and again, and from different angles. The theme work of this exhibition is the large-scale *Song of Songs to Tartu* by Endel Kõks, where he has brought together Tartu's iconic structures (most of them have perished by now). This is the definition of Tartu through buildings, the identification of architecture with the city, yet above all the ascribing of symbolic value to certain houses: Tartu equals churches, the main building of the university, the Stone Bridge and a few other buildings. Kaarel Liimand's view of Tartu, on the contrary, is altogether different: Kõks's showiness is missing in its pastel, mellow tones. Its angle is not panoramic, rather it is far more intimate. The

city is interpreted not only by way of its milieu, but also through the city's people, who interestingly are not students but rather the working class. With the emergence of left-wing *auteurs* in the 1930s, Tartu started being depicted through the romantic atmosphere of districts of working class wooden housing. Yet already in the 1920s, Eduard Wiiralt and Peet Aren also saw Tartu primarily as a settlement of little lop-sided wooden houses, among which somewhat spooky townspeople move about with startled expressions. This differs appreciably from how Baltic German art defined Tartu in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where Tartu meant above all idyllic park landscapes with an abundance of light, along with mighty old buildings, and gentlefolk engaging in Sunday recreation. To these were added paintings in the 1920s and 1930s at the centre of which was the Emajõgi River flowing through the city, along with bustling activity on the riverbanks: the tarring of boats, trading at the fish market and other such activities. Tartu was "charming". There was something picturesque and varied in it, where either classicist and dignified stone houses that symbolise power or religion and are meant to stand forever, or buildings at the grassroots level, which look like they are just about to collapse, set the tone when looking at these paintings. Artists move between these two poles in depicting Tartu,



but Tartu becomes ever more a city where nothing changes in their vision. Time stands still here. Shifts or transformations are unnoticeable here. Lop-sided buildings remain lop-sided and never fall over. It seems as if Tartu is seen like Rome – as an eternal city, which, on a considerably smaller scale yet nevertheless, remains true to its original condition, which artists carefully conserve, as if anticipating the approaching catastrophe. Because when the war had done its devastating work of destruction, they went about the city and painted or drew onto panels the lost city: smoking ruins, heaps of debris, pieces of bricks. Tartu, which before the Second World War was a city in romantic dreams for artists, an escapist refuge that the dizzying development of modernity did not touch, was now the scene of destruction. The warplanes that had passed over it became the embodiment not only of war but also of all manner of renewal and technological utopias. Tartu was supposed to be situated beyond the dimension of the modern world, but when it was forcibly involved in it, the result was the inevitable apocalypse of the city. Thus almost all views of Tartu that were painted at that time come across as documents of a city before the flood: this was a place that renewal did not affect, where everything was as it had always been, and one can search paintings for signs of the times in vain because they simply are not there.

Streetlamps, buses, automobiles, people in modern clothing – all of this was not part of the menu of artists in depicting Tartu. They did not see that. Tartu had to remain a place where a certain state of being is preserved without changing it in any way.

It is all the more astonishing that the renewal of the culture of Estonian art took place in this particular city.

Eero Epner  
Art historian



# KONRAD MÄGI

*Konrad Mägi (1878–1925) sündis Tartumaal, hiljem õppis ja töötas Peterburis ning Pariisis, aga ka Norras, Itaalias ja teistes riikides. Ta oli üks Kunstiühingu Pallas asutajaid ning kunstikooli Pallas (asutatud 1919) esimene direktor.*

*„On kaks teed, kuidas kunst võiks hõlmata elu. Üks tee on lai, avar, ohutu ja mugav tee, teine on järsk, mis viib üle kuristike, täis surmaohtusid. Mugav tee on mõistuse tee, mis hõlmab elu vaid selle juhuslikkuses, selle kurvas ja rumalas argisuses. Järsk tee, mis viib üle kuristike – see on hinge tee, kelle jaoks elu on sügav uni ja piinlev eelaimus teistsugustest suhetest, teistsuguste sügavikest kui need, mille meie hale mõistus võib tungida.“*

*Kirjas sõbrale (1908)*

*Konrad Mägi (1878–1925) was born in Tartu County. He later studied and worked in St. Petersburg and Paris, but also in Norway, Italy and other countries. He was one of the founders of the Pallas Art Society and the first director of the Pallas Art School (founded in 1919).*

*“There are two ways for how art could incorporate life. One way is broad, spacious, safe and convenient, the other is steep, leads over chasms, and is filled with mortal dangers. The convenient way is the road of reason, which incorporates life only in its randomness, its sad and foolish ordinariness. The steep road that leads over chasms – that is the road of the soul, for which life is deep sleep and an agonising presentiment of different kinds of relationships, different kinds of profundities than the ones that our pitiable reason can penetrate.”*

*In a letter to a friend (1908)*

Konrad Mägi  
Saaremaa motiiv  
1913–1914  
Õli, papp  
36 × 39 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Saaremaa Motif  
1913–1914  
Oil, cardboard  
36 × 39 cm

44





**Konrad Mägi** saabus Saaremaale 34-aastasena. Oli suvi, kuid pidevalt sadas vihma, taevas seisis madalad kottis pilved ning päike näitas end haruharva. Mägil põdes radikuliiti - külmetamised odavates üürikorterites Tartus, Peterburis, Pariisis ja Oslos, kus maa seest kerkis jahe sooõhk ja akende vahel lõgistas külm meretuul, olid jätnud oma jälje. Ta oli tulnud Kihelkonna kanti, et end veidi kuulsa kohaliku mudaga ravida, mis osutus aga vaid illusiooniks: mudaravi aitab küll parandada kudede verevarustust, kuid see ei ravi, ainult aeglustab kroonilist haigust. „Lühike, kõhn, kõveravõitu,“ kirjeldab üks tema sõber Mägit. Kõik oli halvasti.

Siiski on nii see kui ka järgmine suvi – päikeseline, terve suve peale sajab vaid mõni millimeeter vihma – kunstniku *annus mirabilis*’eid, imeaastad. Olles äsja naasnud välismaalt, kus ta oli elanud peaaegu kümme aastat, ei suutnud Mägi kohe tööle hakata. Inspiratsioon hajub, käsi ei tõuse, tuju on nullis. See kõik muutub Saaremaal – looduse keskel. Siin hakkab Mägi esmakordselt pärast Norrat (kust ta lahkus 1910. aastal) uuesti programmiselt maalima ning vahetab oma käekirja, minnes pintslikirjas väikeseks, värvides äärmiselt kirevaks ja jõuliseks, panoraamsete Norra vaadete asemele astuvad mikroskoobi tasandil uuringud rohujuurtest,

**Konrad Mägi** was 34 years old when he arrived in Saaremaa. It was summer but it rained constantly. Low-lying saturated clouds hung in the sky and the sun revealed itself very rarely. Mägi suffered from radiculitis. Living in cold, cheap rental apartments in Tartu, St. Petersburg, Paris and Oslo, where cool marsh air rose from within the ground and cold sea winds rattled between the windows, had left its mark. He had come here to the Kihelkonna area for some treatments using the famous local mud, but this was only an illusion: mud treatment admittedly helps to improve blood circulation in tissues, but it does not cure. It only slows down chronic illness. “Short, thin, kind of crooked,” is how a friend described Mägi. Everything was bad.

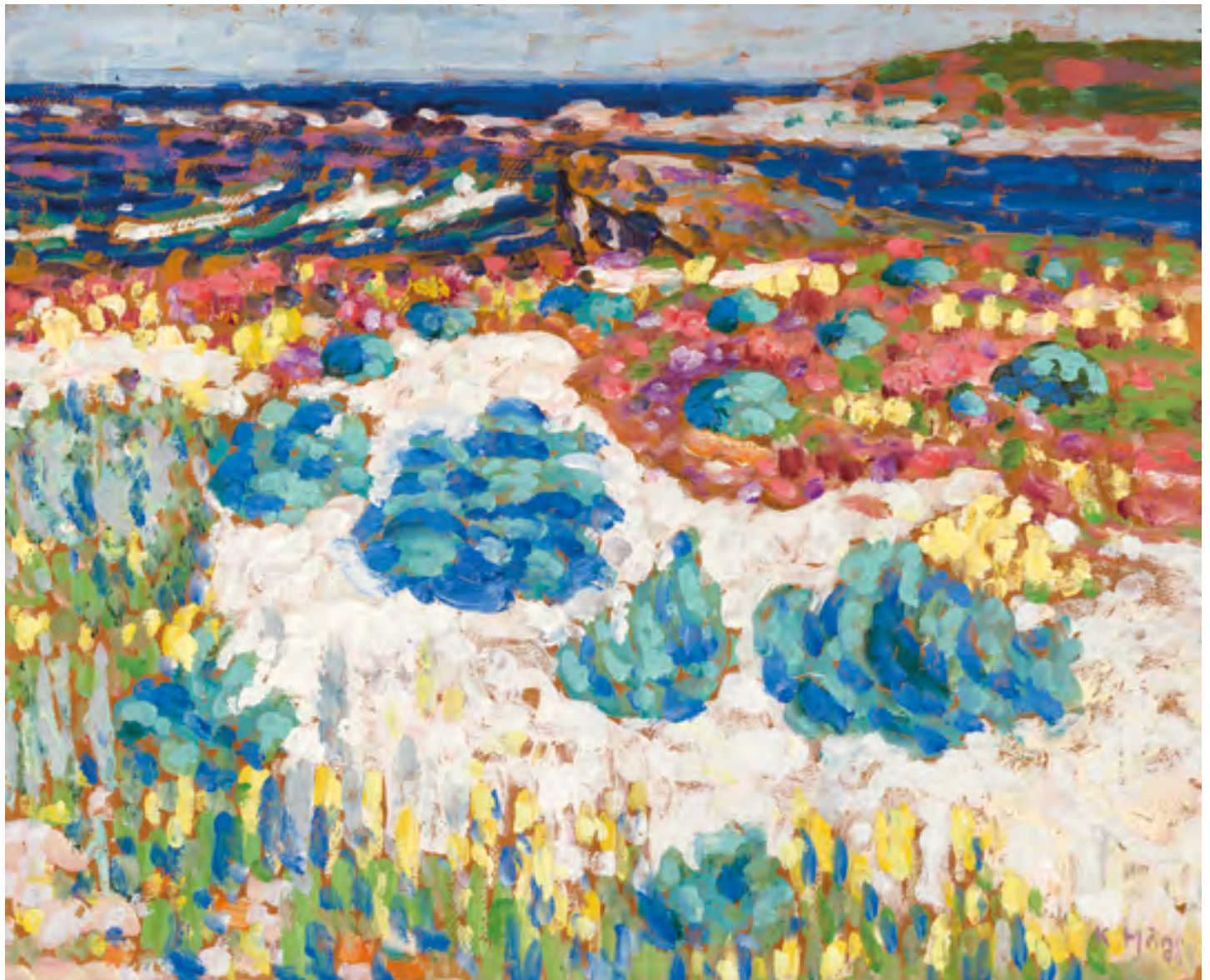
Nevertheless that summer and the following one – utterly sunny, only a few millimetres of rain fell over the whole summer – were Mägi’s *anni mirabiles*, miraculous years. Having just returned from abroad, where he had lived for nearly ten years, Mägi was unable to force himself to start working right away. Inspiration waned, he could not get started, and his mood was bleak. This all changed in Saaremaa: in the bosom of nature. Here Mägi started painting programmatically again for the first time since Norway (which he left in 1910), and

46 pöösastest, kiviklibust. Eesti maastikku on tolleks hetkeks maalinud ju teisedki, ent mitte sel moel, st moodsa kunsti vahenditega, mille puhul küsimusel „kuidas?“ on suurem kaal kui küsimusel „mida?“: pigem ikka „kuidas maalida, kuidas liigub pintsel“, mitte niivõrd „mis on see objekt, mida ma parajasti maalin“. Kujutamiseviis muutub sõltumatumaks sellest, mida kujutatakse. Saaremaa kahe suve maalid moodustavad omaette peatüki nii Konrad Mägi loomingus kui ka kogu eesti kunstiajaloo, sõnastades samal ajal ühe edaspidi väga tähtsat rolli mänginud põhimõtte – maal algab siis, kui on värv. Sellest printsibist hakkavad kinni pidama paljud. Seega võiks öelda, et Saaremaal ebaõnnestunud mudaravil viibides saab alguse üks teatud kaanon.

he changed his style, using smaller brushstrokes and extremely vivid, bold colours. Studies of grass roots, bushes and shingles at the microscopic level take the place of panoramic views of Norway. By that time, quite a few other artists had painted the Estonian landscape, but not in this way – using the means of modern art, where the question “how?” carries greater weight than the question “what?”. “How to paint, how the brush moves”, not so much “what is this object that I am currently painting”. The manner of depiction becomes dependent on what is being depicted. The paintings of those two summers in Saaremaa form a separate chapter not only in Konrad Mägi's oeuvre, but also in Estonian art history as a whole, formulating a principle that also played a very important role in the future as well – a painting begins when there is colour. Many artists started subscribing to this principle, and thus it could be said that here in Saaremaa, undergoing failed mud treatments, a certain canon was born.

Konrad Mägi  
Saaremaa. Etüüd  
1913–1914  
Õli, papp  
38,7 × 48,2 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Saaremaa. Study  
1913–1914  
Oil, cardboard  
38.7 × 48.2 cm





48 **Käesolev** teos kuulus legendaarsele keeleteadlasele Paul Aristele, kelle kodu seinal rippudes on maal jäänud ka ühel fotol perekonnaliikmete selja taha. Mil moel maal Aristen jõudis, pole teada, kuid mõistatusi on Saaremaa-perioodiga seotud veelgi. Näiteks teame nüüdseks, et ehkki Mägi sai 1913. aasta suvel ehk esimesel Saaremaa-suvel juuli lõpus teada vanema venna surmast, ei peegeldu see trauma mitte mingil moel tema loomingus – samas kui nii mitmedki oleksid just säärastest kriisidest inspiratsiooni ammutanud. Teiseks oli Saaremaa juba siis muutunud hämmastavalt populaarseks ja kuigi esimesel suvel oli kehvade ilmade tõttu suvitajaid veidi vähem kui tavaliselt, siis ometi kirjutab ajaleht, et „muude supelvõõraste seas viibib ka praegu tuntud Eesti kunstnik Mägi siin, kes juba nii mitu pilti meie Saare rahva elust riide pääle on pannud”. Mägi maalidel me inimesi ometi ei näe: saar on tema maalidel tühi ja unustatud ning ainsa märgina, et siin kunagi on ka tsivilisatsioon olnud, näeme tema teostel kirikutorni, majakat ja kellatorni. Lisaks polnud Mägi kaugeltki üksinda: seltskondliku inimesena leidis ta kiiresti kontakti kohalikega, Tartust oli ta kaasa võtnud aga oma sõbra matemaatikatudengi – kes, tõsi küll, oli ülihäbelik ning poleks ilmselt maali peale tulnud ka siis, kui Mägi oleks teda palunud. Kolmandaks tekitab siiani küsimusi, kummal suvel Mägi mingit

**This** work belonged to the legendary linguist Paul Ariste. As it hung on a wall in his home, this painting has been recorded in a photograph behind family members. It is not known how the painting made its way to Ariste, but there are other enigmas connected to the Saaremaa period as well. For instance, by now we know that Mägi found out at the end of July in 1913, in other words his first summer in Saaremaa, that one of his older brothers had died, yet this trauma was not reflected in any way in his creative work – at the same time as so many others would have drawn inspiration from just such crises. Secondly, Saaremaa had become astonishingly popular even then already, and although there were slightly fewer of them than usual during his first summer there due to the bad weather, the newspaper still wrote that “among other summer holiday visitors, the well-known Estonian artist Mägi is also currently staying here, and he has already put so many pictures onto cloth of the life of our Island people.” Yet we do not see people in Mägi’s paintings: the island is deserted and forgotten in his paintings, and as the only sign that there has ever been civilisation here, we see a church tower, a lighthouse and a bell tower in his works. Additionally, Mägi was far from being alone: as a socialising person, he quickly established contact with the locals. He had brought a friend, a



teost maalis. Me teame, et need olid kaks täiesti erinevat suve. Esimene oli vihmane, teine põuane. Esimesel näitas päike end haruharva, teisel kiirgas lakkamatult. Esimesel kerkis ööpäeva keskmine temperatuur harva 19 kraadini, teisel ei langenud see kolm nädalat alla 21 kraadi. Esimesel oli kõik vihmamärg, teisel oli maastik ja isegi kivid päikese käes roidunud. Kuigi esmane oletus lubaks väita, et Mägi maalis pigem päikese käes, siis ei saa selles lõpuni kindel olla. Ühe töö Mägi tõesti ka dateerib Saaremaal ja selle all seisab hoopis „1913“ ehk esimene suvi. Samuti on pilvealuse valgusega vahel paremgi maalida kui lauspäikesega: värvid kaotavad oma sügavuse, päike pleegitab kõik toonid. Kuigi töö pealkirjas on „etüüd“, võime Mägi maalide pärisosaks – eriti varases loomeetapis – lugedagi etüüdilikkust ehk kiiret improvisatsioonilist lähenemist, kus maale ei konstrueerita peas eelnevalt valmis, vaid usaldatakse oma impulsse ning tervik sünnib ühel teistsugusel moel.

student of mathematics, along with him from Tartu but, true enough, this friend was extremely shy and surely would not have allowed himself to be painted even if Mägi would have asked him to. Thirdly, questions remain to this day concerning which works Mägi painted during which summer. We know that they were two entirely different summers. The first was rainy, the other was a summer of drought. The sun revealed itself very rarely during the first summer, and during the second, it shone constantly. During the first summer, the 24-hour average temperature rarely exceeded 19 degrees, but during the second, it did not drop below 21 degrees for three weeks. During the first summer, everything was wet with rain, but during the second one, the landscape and even the rocks were fatigued in the sun. Although our initial presumption allows us to claim that Mägi more likely painted in the sunshine, we cannot be completely certain of this. Mägi actually dated one work in Saaremaa and “1913” stands at its bottom edge, in other words the first summer. Also, it is sometimes even better to paint in light beneath clouds than in total sunshine: colours lose their depth, and the sun bleaches all tones.

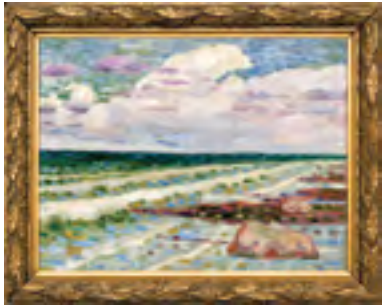
Although “study” is in the title of the work, we can consider the approach of the study, in other words a rapid improvisational approach, an

integral part of Mägi's paintings – particularly in his early creative stage. Here paintings are not completely constructed in advance in the artist's mind, rather the artist's own impulses are trusted and the whole is born in a different way.

Konrad Mägi  
Mererand Saaremaal  
1913–1914  
Õli, papp  
47,7 × 64,3 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Seashore in Saaremaa  
1913–1914  
Oil, cardboard  
47.7 × 64.3 cm





52

**Konrad Mägi** maalis Saaremaal enamasti maismaid. Ka eelmisel kahel tööl näeme, kuidas merd kas pole või on ta lükatud pildi ülaserava, kus tema jaoks on jäetud vaid kitsas riba. Ka teistel Saaremaa-töödel on meri kõrvalrollis, kuna fookus on rannal, taeval, pilvedel. Käesolev maal on seetõttu haruldane näide Konrad Mägi meremaalidest, mille kõrvale on tema loomingust raske tuua võrdlust. Võimalik, et mere vähene kujutamine tulenes Mägi huvist värvide vastu ning meri pakub eri variatsioonides küll õrnu üleminekuid, sulandumisi ja värvide voogamist, kuid see ei klappinud omakorda Mägi käekirjaga. Tema otsis dramaatilisi kombinatsioone, jõulist pintslikirja, tugevaid pörkumisi. Käesolev maal on seetõttu värvidega üpris kokkuhoidlik – Mägi on endale harjumatult otsinud pigem variatsioone ühe üldkoloriidi sees, mitte kõrvutanud eri toone. Ta opereerib peamiselt rohelise ja sinisega ning nende allvarjunditega, kivide puhul ka pruuniga, ent sellest ka piisab. Värvinappusest tuleneb ka maali melanhoolne, rahulik ja mõtlik atmosfäär – niivõrd erinev kogu Mägi ülejäänud Saaremaa-perioodist.

Ühtlasi oleks veel ehk huvitav teada, kas meremaal kui žanr kuulub eesti klassikalisse maalikunsti. Nii ja naa. Ühelt poolt näeme ridamisi teoseid, kus meri on justkui fookuses, ent samal ajal

**As** a rule, Konrad Mägi painted dry land in Saaremaa. We also see in the previous two works how there either is no sea or it is pushed to the picture's upper edge, where only a narrow strip is left for it. The sea is in a secondary role in other Saaremaa works as well, since the focus is on the beach, the sky, and the clouds. Thus, this painting is a rare example of Konrad Mägi's seascapes, alongside which it is difficult to find a comparable work in his oeuvre. The fact that he depicted the sea so little might possibly have derived from Mägi's interest in colours. The sea admittedly offers gentle transitions, blendings and the flow of colours in its different variations, but this, in turn, did not dovetail with Mägi's style. He sought dramatic combinations, bold brushing style, and powerful collisions. This is why the painting is rather frugal with colours. Uncharacteristically for him, Mägi has searched more for variations within one overall colouring and not placed different tones side by side. He operates mostly with green and blue and their sub-branches, and also with brown in the case of rocks, yet this is sufficient. The melancholy, calm and reflective atmosphere of this painting also derives from the paucity of colour – so different from all the rest of Mägi's Saaremaa period.

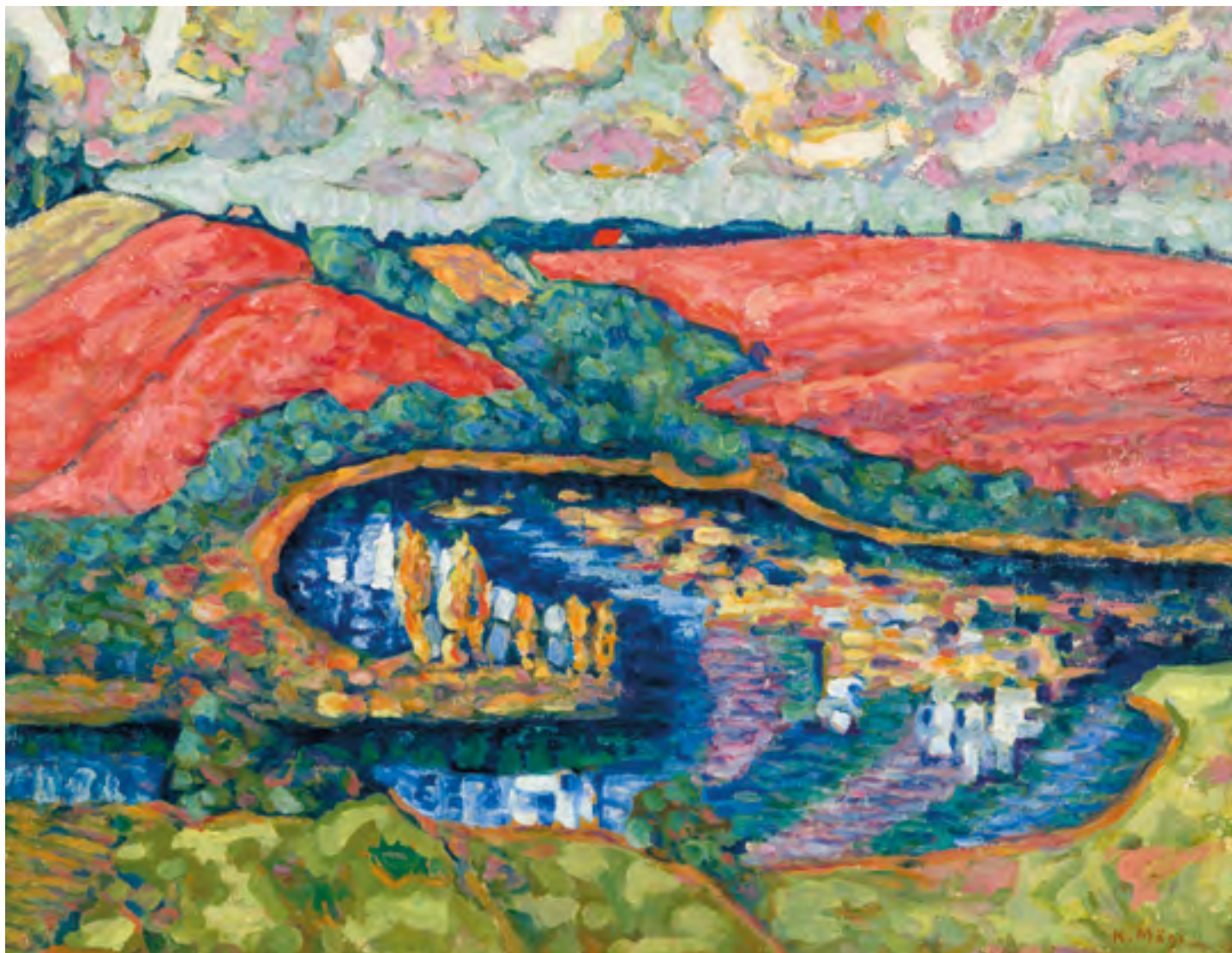
siiski mingis mõttes kõrvalosas. Eerik Haamer ja Richard Uutmaa näitavad meile küll järjepidevalt, mida tähendab merega koosolemine, kuidas defineerib meri inimeseks olemist ning dikteerib tema elurütmi, pingeid ja otsinguid. Kuid meri pelgalt visuaalse objektina – merd iseeneses, merd *an sich* ilma inimeste, laevade, kalavõrkude ja maaliliste rannikuribadeta kohtab eesti maalikunstis üllatavalt harva. Ikka on meri taltsutatuna kusagil lahesoppides, kandmas paate mõnes sadamas või pakkumas vaid transpordipinda Kalevipoja laevale. Arvestades Eesti seoseid merega, võib säärane marinistide vähesus hämmastav tunduda – tuletagem meelde, et ka Konrad Mägi loomingus jäi see meile teadaolevalt ühekordseks eksperimentiks.

It is perhaps interesting to ask further, was the seascape part of classical Estonian painting? Yes and no. On the one hand, we see a number of works where the sea appears to be the focus, but to a certain extent it is always in a secondary role there. Admittedly, Eerik Haamer and Richard Uutmaa continually show us what it means to live together with the sea, how the sea defines being human and dictates man's rhythm of life, tensions and expectations. Yet the sea as only a visual object – the sea in and of itself, the sea as such without people, ships, fishing nets, picturesque strips of beach, and other such features, is surprisingly rare in Estonian painting. The sea is usually in tamed form in some cove, bearing boats in some harbour, or simply providing a transportation surface for Kalevipoeg's ship. Considering Estonia's connections with the sea, such a lack of seascape artists is certainly surprising, and let us recall that as far as we know, it remained a one-time experiment in Konrad Mägi's oeuvre as well.

Konrad Mägi  
Maastik roosade  
põldudega  
1915  
Õli, lõuend  
52 × 67,5 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Landscape with  
Pink Fields  
1915  
Oil, canvas  
52 × 67.5 cm

54





**Maal** on loodud Viljandi lähedal Esimese maailmasõja ajal, mil Mägi oli kehva tervise tõttu sõjaväeteenistusest vabastatud ja viibis sageli oma lapsepõlvesõbra Frieda Sangernebo juures Viljandis. Sangernebo oli tema metseen, pakkudes Mägile peavarju ja ülalpidamist. Võrdlemisi mornis meeleolus Mägi hakkas siiski ka Viljandis tööle, maalides muu hulgas ka portreesid mustlastest, kuid ennekõike ikkagi maastikke.

Hoolimata sellest, et Saaremaast on möödas vaid aasta, muudab Mägi oma käekirja. See ongi ehk üks tema suurimaid voorusi: Mägi ei läinud kunsti luues kindla peale välja, vaid võttis pidevalt uusi riske, katsetades käekirjaga. Kunst ei olnud talle mitte soosingu leidmise, sümboolse ja reaalse kapitali kogumise vahend ega ka lihtsalt eneseväljendusviis, vaid tema seadis kunstile väga kõrged sisemised eesmärgid. „Õnn ei ole meie jaoks, vaeste maa poegade jaoks,“ kirjutab ta ühes varases kirjas. „Meie jaoks on kunst ainuke pääsetee, kuna hetkel, kui hing on täis elu igavest kannatust, avab kunst meile selle, mida elu anda ei suuda. Seal, kunstis, omaenese loomingus, võib leida rahu.“

Loodus on Mägi maalidel alati peategelane. Inimene on kaotatud, vaid väikesed mikroskoopilised majakatused kusagil taamal meenutavad

**This** painting was created near Viljandi during the First World War, when Mägi had been exempted from military service due to poor health. He frequently stayed at the home of his childhood friend Frieda Sangernebo in Viljandi. Sangernebo was his patron, offering Mägi room and board. Mägi nevertheless started working again in Viljandi, albeit in a relatively cheerless mood, painting among other things portraits of gypsies, but still landscapes first and foremost.

Regardless of the fact that only a year had passed since he was in Saaremaa, Mägi changed his style. This is perhaps one of his greatest virtues: Mägi did not settle for the sure thing when creating art, instead he constantly took new risks, changing and experimenting with styles. For him, art was not some means for finding favour or accumulating symbolic or actual capital, and it was also not merely a means for expressing himself. Instead, he set very high internal objectives for art. “Happiness is not for us poor sons of the earth,” he wrote in an early letter. “For us, art is the only way out, since at the moment when the soul is filled with the eternal suffering of life, art opens up to us what life is not capable of. There, in art, in one’s own creative work, one can find peace.”

56 meile tema olemasolu. Suured punased põllud (Saaremaal ei kasutanud Mägi kunagi niivõrd suuri värvipindu) leegitsevad dramaatiliselt, muljet süvendavad veelgi taevas sõudvad väändunud pilved ja punasega kontrasteeruv tumesinine järv. Ent hoolimata maali üldisest dramaturgiast ning Esimese maailmasõja kaugest kontekstist, ei mõju teos ärevalt, vaid pigem raugena, justkui näeksime loodust tema puhkehetkel. Puud järvekaldal seisavad liikumatult, punakad põllud näivad midagi ootavat, pilved taevas on tunduvalt vaguramad ja tuhmimad kui nii mõnelgi teisel Mägi maalil.

Nature is always the main character in Mägi's paintings. Man is done away with. Only little microscopic roofs of houses somewhere in the distance remind us of the existence of that being. Large red fields (Mägi never used such large surfaces of colour in Saaremaa) blaze dramatically. Contorted clouds floating past in the sky and a dark blue lake contrasting with the red intensify the impression even further. Yet regardless of the painting's overall dramaturgy and the distant context of the First World War, this work does not come across as being anxious, but rather as being languid, as if we are seeing nature at the moment when it is about to burst out. The trees on the lakeshore stand motionlessly, the reddish fields appear to be waiting for something, and the clouds in the sky are considerably more tranquil and pallid than in quite a few other Mägi paintings.



Konrad Mägi  
Lõuna-Eesti maastik  
1916–1917  
Õli, lõuend  
51,5 × 65 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Southern Estonian Landscape  
1916–1917  
Oil, canvas  
51.5 × 65 cm





58

**Konrad Mägi** sidemed Lõuna-Eestiga olid ühtaegu isiklikud ja teisalt üldse mitte nostalgilised. Ta sündis Lõuna-Eestis Hellenurmes ning kasvas üles Udernas, kus möödus tema lapsepõlv ning kus saadud looduskogemused võisid saada aluseks kogu tema loomingule. Samas teame, et Mägi ei naasnudki enam kodukanti ning erinevalt paljudest teistest eesti modernistidest ei pööranud kodu konstrueerimisele, taasesitamisele ja visualiseerimisele mingit tähelepanu. Tema veendumuse kohaselt oli maal omaette autonoomne tervik, sõltumatu nii ümbritsevast reaalsusest kui ka autori biograafiast.

Käesolev töö on valminud suvedel, mil ta viibis kohtunik-kunstnik Martin Taevere külalisena Võru lähistel. Taevere ei olnud Mägi kauaaegne sõber, ta oli seltskonnas kuulnud Mägi kehvast tervislikust seisukorrast ning kutsus kunstniku omaalgatuslikult endale külla. Mägi suved Lõuna-Eestis kujunesid rõõmsateks ja traagilisteks korraga. Rõõmus oli ta kahtlemata seetõttu, et leidis loodusega hea kontakti ja tegi meelsasti tööd – Taevere on meenutanud, et Mägi käis maalimas peaaegu iga päev ning tema tempoga nii kõndimisel kui ka maalimisel oli raske sammu pidada. 1917. aasta juunis kirjutab Mägi Võrumaalt, et kõnnib järvede kallastel ning plaanib koha ja vähki püüda, õhk on

**Konrad Mägi's** ties to Southern Estonia were simultaneously personal and absolutely unsentimental. He was born in Hellenurme, Southern Estonia and grew up in Uderna, where he spent his childhood and where the experiences of nature that he acquired might have formed the basis for his entire oeuvre. At the same time, we know that Mägi never returned to his home neighbourhood and that unlike many other Estonian Modernists, he paid no attention to the construction, representation and visualisation of "home". For him, a painting was a separate, autonomous whole, independent of both the surrounding reality and the author's biography.

This work was completed during the summers when he was staying in the vicinity of Võru as the guest of the judge and artist Martin Taevere. Taevere was not a long-time friend of Mägi. Rather, he had heard of Mägi's poor health through the social network, and at his own initiative invited Mägi to visit him. Mägi's summers in Southern Estonia turned out to be both happy and tragic simultaneously. He was undoubtedly happy that he made good contact with nature and that he worked gladly – Taevere has recalled that Mägi went painting almost every day and it was hard to keep up with his pace both in walking and in painting. Mägi wrote from Võru County in June of 1917 that he was taking walks

ta aga nii uniseks teinud, et tahaks ainult magada. Ilmselt tundis ta end täielikult lõõgastununa.

Teisalt süvenesid Lõuna-Eesti suvedel Mägi tervise-probleemid ning ta hakkab aimama elu peatset lõppemist. Nii siginevad tema töödesse nüüd ka tumedad toonid, ent samuti teatud ülevus – nii nagu Richard Uutmaa tõuseb ka Mägi käesoleval maalil kõrgemale mäekünkale ning vahetab Saaremaa rohujuure-tasandi maastiku panoraamselt haarava linnuperspektiivi vastu.

on the shores of lakes and that he was planning to catch pike perch and crayfish. Yet the air had made him so sleepy that all he wanted to do was sleep. Relaxation was apparently complete.

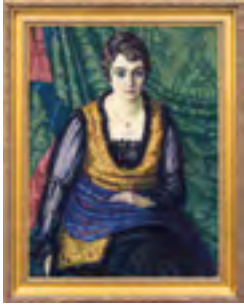
On the other hand, Mägi's health problems worsened during his summers in Southern Estonia and he started anticipating that the end of his life was approaching. Thus, dark tones emerged in his works at that time, but also a certain loftiness – similarly to Richard Uutmaa, for instance, Mägi also ascended to the top of a taller hill in this painting and exchanged the Saaremaa grassroots level for a bird's eye view, who looks at the landscape panoramically.

Konrad Mägi  
Alvine Käppa portree  
1919  
Õli, lõuend  
102 × 76 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Portrait of Alvine Käppa  
1919  
Oil, canvas  
102 × 76 cm

60





**Mida** sa maalid, kui sa maalid inimest? Kas sind huvitavad tema psühholoogia või sotsiaalne staatus? Kas eesmärgiks on jäädvustada teda ajaloo tarbeks või dokumenteerida hoopis tema hingeseisundit? Kas portree peab peegeldama inimese hobisid või hoopis tema rolli perekonnas? Mis huvitab sind kunstnikuna: kas ilme, poos, kontekst, koloriit või kompositsioon? Kuigi pealtnäha on inimese kujutamine seotud üpris väheste küsimustega – modell istub sinu ette ja sa lihtsalt maalid –, siis tegelikult tähendab see tervet rida teadlikke valikuid.

Alvine Käppast ei tea me mitte midagi. Leidub vihjeid, et tegemist võis olla Tartu lasteaiakasvatajaga, kuid sellisel juhul pidi ta olema seotud kellegi jõukaga, sest üldiselt tellisid Konrad Mägilt portreesid varakamad inimesed, näiteks Postimehe ärijuht, Tartu seebivabrikant, oma tütredest palub portree maalida riigikohtunik. On muidugi võimalik, et Mägi kohtas tänaval kedagi Alvinet, kes pakkus talle puhtmaalilist huvi, või oli ta Mägi õpilane, kui kunstnik hakkas tunde andma. Samas aga maksab tähelepanu pöörata Alvine Käppa riietele ning kaelaehetele ja väiksele kuldsele sõrmusele – need ei paista just odavad välja.

Konrad Mägi silmis polnudki tähtsust, kes Alvine Käppa oli. Ta ei maalinud kunagi niivõrd konkreetset

**What** do you paint when you paint a person? Are you interested in the subject's psychology or social status? Is the aim to record the subject for history, or to document the subject's state of mind instead? Should the portrait reflect the subject's hobbies or the subject's role in the family instead? What are you interested in as an artist: facial expression, pose, context, colouring, composition? Although depicting a person is seemingly associated with rather few questions – the model sits down in front of you and you simply paint – then it actually means a whole series of conscious choices.

We know practically nothing about Alvine Käppa. There are clues that she may have been a kindergarten teacher in Tartu, but in such a case she would have had to have been associated with some wealthy person because as a rule, more propertied people commissioned portraits from Konrad Mägi, for instance the business manager of the *Postimees* newspaper, a soap manufacturer from Tartu, and a justice of the Supreme Court who requested a portrait of his daughter. Naturally, it is possible that Mägi met someone named Alvine on the street who was of purely painterly interest to him, or perhaps she was Mägi's student when the artist started giving lessons – yet at the same time, it is a good idea to pay attention to Alvine Käppa's clothing and

62 inimest, kuivõrd oma iluideaali: tuberkuloosihaige jumega, pikkade sõrmede ja suurte silmadega naisterahvast. Kuna sellest jäi tema kui maalikunstniku silmis väheseks, kuhjas ta modellid enamasti üle eri peakatete, uhkete rõivaste ja ehetega (Alvine Käppa puhul on ta riputanud üles veel suure rohelise tekstiili), sest need võimaldasid töötamist värvidega (inimnahk säärast võimalust ei paku). See põhjustas sageli tööde tellijate poolset rahulolematust, mis võis viia ka portreede jätmisele Mägi kätte. Ka Alvine Käppa portree ei kuulunud modelli suguvõsale, vaid hoopis Mägi sõpradele. „Mida sa maalid, kui sa maalid inimest?“ küsiti Mägi käest vahel. „Ideaali,“ kõlas ilmselt vastuseks.

necklace, and her little gold ring, all of which do not come across as being particularly inexpensive.

However it may be, the question, “Who was Alvine Käppa?” was evidently of no particular importance to Konrad Mägi. He never painted a concrete person so much, but rather his ideal of beauty: a woman with the white complexion of someone slightly ill with tuberculosis, with long fingers and big eyes. Since that was too little for him as a painter, as a rule he piled various headwear, fancy clothing and jewellery onto his models (in the case of Alvine Käppa, he has additionally hung up a large green textile) because these made it possible to work with colours (human skin does not offer such possibilities). This often led to dissatisfaction on the part of those who commissioned these works, which could also lead to the portraits being left in Mägi’s possession. Alvine Käppa’s portrait was also one such work that did not circulate in the model’s family, but instead belonged to Mägi’s friends. What do you paint when you paint a person? could sometimes have been asked of Mägi. The ideal, he probably replied.

Konrad Mägi  
Itaalia maastik.  
Rooma  
1922–1923  
Õli, lõuend  
84,7 × 90,5 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Italian Landscape.  
Rome  
1922–1923  
Oil, canvas  
84.7 × 90.5 cm





64 **Kui** seda maali Roomas näitusel eksponeeriti, küsisime kohalike käest, millist kanti on Mägi kujutanud. „Tundmatut,“ vastasid nemad. Jah, mingid detailid tulid tuttavad ette, kuid tervikuna on antud vaade nende sõnul Mägi fantaasia. See ei üllata. Kui Konrad Mägi kujutas mõnda paika, oli ta harva dokumentaalselt täpne, liikudes kiiresti üldistuste, modifikatsioonide, tähtsusetust nokitsemisest ülelibisemiste juurde. See on tugevas kontrastis Mägi esimese maaliõpetaja kunstiga, kelle tööd olid nii detailselt täpsed, et võis peaaegu üle lugeda linnatänaval kõndiva koera karvade arvu.

Rooma jõudis Mägi oma elu lõpul, 1921. aasta detsembris. „On niisugune tundmus nagu oleks üle hulga aastate koju jõudnud,“ kirjutab ta sealt. „Kuigi praegu siin väga ebamugav elada on, siiski tundmus suurepäraline ja tahtmine elada ja midagi veel ära teha – siin tunnen elul mõtet olema.“ Ta oli Roomas 1921. aasta detsembrist kuni järgmise aasta veebruari viimaste päevadeni. Mägi oli õnnelik. Üksinda mööda linna rännates jõudis ta kirikutesse („lihtsalt jumalikud“), mis on „täis suurepäraseid kunstiteoseid“ kõigist mõeldavatest ajastutest. Jaanuari lõpus kirjutab ta sõbrale: „Olen juba üle kuu aja „igaveses linnas“. Linnas on igas suhtes huvitav, aga iseäranis huvitavad on kirikud.“ Itaalia futurism, mis paistis silma eriti

**When** this painting was on display at an exhibition in Rome, we asked locals what part of the city Mägi had depicted. “Some unknown place,” they replied. Yes, some details were familiar, but as a whole, this view is Mägi’s fantasy, according to them. This is not surprising. When Konrad Mägi depicted some place, he was rarely documentarily precise, quickly moving to generalisations, modifications and sliding past unimportant detail work. This is in stark contrast to the art of Mägi’s first painting teacher, whose works were so precisely detailed that you could practically count the number of hairs on a dog walking along the street.

Mägi arrived in Rome towards the end of his life in December of 1921. “I have the kind of feeling as if I had come home after many years,” he wrote from there. “Even though life here is currently very uncomfortable, I still feel excellent and the will to live and to yet do something – here I feel that life has meaning.” He was in Rome from December of 1921 until the last days of February of the following year. Mägi was happy. As he wandered about the city alone, he entered churches (“simply divine”) that were “full of excellent works of art” from all conceivable time periods. At the end of January, he wrote to a friend: “I have been in the “eternal city” for over a month. It is interesting in the city in every



tulise minevikueitusega, ei mõjutanud Konrad Mägit mitte kuidagi. Ta kirjutab selle asemel hoopis nii: „On imelik tundmus, kui vaadata vanu Rooma varemeid, neid grandioos ehitusi ja seda tervet suurt stiili. See luitunud marmor, üksikud detailid, purustatuna – kõik kokku teeb vähe kurvaks.“

See, mis Mägit nüüd vaimustab, on Itaalia ise: kliima, inimesed, atmosfäär. „Minu natuuris on ikka vist midagi väga palju lõunamaalast. Kõik see terve Rooma on niisugune, et ta igapäevaga huvitavam paistab. Igatahes siit maalt ma nii kergesti lahkuda ei taha,“ kirjutab ta. Mägi naudib Itaaliat ning sellest naudingust sünnib nüüd ka midagi uut. Viimaste aastate loominguline kriis saab Itaalias hetkega läbi. Ühtäkki märkab ta siin Roomas ka inimesi – taas ilmuvad nad tema töödesse, kuigi juba Normandias oli ta neid vahel maastikul kujutanud.

Kuid mitte ainult inimesed ei ilmunud nüüd Mägi teostele. Roomas hakkab kunstnik nägema ka maju või kui isegi mitte „maju“, siis arhitektuurseid objekte, mingisuguseid ehituslikke katkeid, fragmente millestki majalaadsest, kuid sedagi on palju, kui arvestada, et siiani oli Mägi maalinud tehnilikest objektidest vaid mõned korrad Viljandis varemeid, Saaremaal kellatorni ja majakat, Otepääl kirikut ning päris palju taluhooneid, mis olid paigutatud

respect, but the churches are especially interesting.” Italian Futurism, which stood out in terms of its particularly vehement denial of the past, had no effect whatsoever on Konrad Mägi. Instead he wrote as follows: “It’s a strange feeling to look at Rome’s old ruins, those grandiose buildings and that entire grand style. That faded marble, isolated details, broken – all of this together makes one kind of sad.”

What delighted Mägi then was Italy itself: its climate, people, atmosphere. “There is still probably something very much of the southerner in my nature. All of this entire Rome is such that it looks more interesting with each passing day. In any case, I don’t want to leave this country so easily,” he writes. Mägi enjoys Italy and something new is now also born out of this enjoyment. The creative crisis of the past few years ended almost immediately in Italy. Here in Rome, Mägi suddenly also noticed people, they appear in his works for almost the first time, although he had sometimes placed them in the landscape in Normandy already.

Yet it was not just people who now appeared in Mägi’s works. Mägi also started seeing houses in Rome, or if not even “houses”, then architectural objects, some sort of constructional scraps, fragments of something resembling a house, yet

66 aga niivõrd kaugelt, et nende kujutamiseks piisas vahel poole sentimeetri pikkusest pintslilöögist. Mägi töödesse tulevad Roomas ka purskkaevud, pargipingid, skulptuurid. Jah, linnas, mis oli täis minevikku, hakkas Mägi korraga nägema kaasaega.

**Capri** saar on eesti maalikunsti

even that is quite a lot considering that until then, the only man-made objects that Mägi had painted on a few occasions were the castle ruins in Viljandi, a bell tower and a lighthouse in Saaremaa, the church in Otepää, and farm buildings in quite a few paintings, which were situated so far in the distance, however, that sometimes a brushstroke only half a centimetre long was sufficient for depicting them. Fountains, park benches and sculptures also appear in Mägi's works in Rome. Yes, in a city that was filled with the past, Mägi suddenly started seeing the present time.

Konrad Mägi  
Capri maastik  
1922–1923  
Õli, lõuend  
60,5 × 68,5 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Capri Landscape  
1922–1923  
Oil, canvas  
60.5 × 68.5 cm





68 kujuteldaval maakaardil hämmastavalt sage külaline – käesoleval näituselgi on tervelt kuus maali, mis on loodud Capri saarel. Saare võlu oli ilmselt ühtaegu nii sotsiaalne ja maaliline. Ühelt poolt võlus siinseid kunstnikke teistsugusus: teistsugune valgus, teistsugused värvid (pangem tähele näiteks tumesinise esilekerkimist nii Ants Laikmaa kui ka Konrad Mägi teostel), teistsugused varjud ja atmosfäär. Capri saarel kohtusid nad millegagi, millega nad põhjapoolsetel laiuskraadidel kohtuda ei saanud. Samas on veel hulgaliselt paiku samasuguste tingimustega, ometi tõuseb nende seast esile Capri. Võib oletada, et üheks põhjuseks oli Itaalia lähedus ning Itaalias käisid eesti kunstnikud väga sageli – erinevalt näiteks Kreekast või Hispaaniast. Samas oli ka Capril olemas teatud vabam sotsiaalsem õhkkond, mis tõmbas kunstnikke samamoodi nagu omaaegne Ahvenamaa koloonia (vt Nikolai Triigi maali „Ahvenamaa motiiv“ kohta käivat teksti). Capri oleid toona kogunenud mitmed kirjanikud-kunstnikud, sest see oli omalaadne refuugium, pelgupaik modernsuse pealetungi eest. Mujal Itaalias olid juba pead tõstnud fašistid, kuid Mägi saabudes oli Capri tähtsaimaks meheks valitud liberaal, kes muu hulgas organiseeris samal aastal konverentsi Capri maastiku kaitseks. Ta tõrjus saarelt moodsa elu pealetungi, sõides vastu hotellide ja kortermajade ehitamisele. Saare

**The** island of Capri is an astonishingly frequent visitor on the imaginary map of Estonian painting – even at this exhibition there are altogether five paintings that were created on Capri Island. The island's charm was evidently simultaneously both social and painterly. On the one hand, differentness charmed Estonian artists: a different kind of light, different kinds of colours (note, for instance, the emergence of dark blue in the works of both Ants Laikmaa and Konrad Mägi), different shadows and atmosphere. On Capri Island, they encountered something that they could not encounter at northern latitudes. At the same time, there are lots of other places with similar conditions, but for some reason Capri comes to the fore from among them. It can be assumed that one reason was the closeness of Italy, and Estonian artists visited Italy very frequently – unlike Greece or Spain, for instance. At the same time, Capri had a certain atmosphere that was more social and free, and which attracted artists just like the Åland colony did in its day (see the text on Nikolai Triik's *Åland Motif*). Many writers and artists had gathered at that time on Capri because it was a kind of refuge, a place where one could escape from the onslaught of modernity. Fascists had already started agitating elsewhere in Italy, yet when Mägi arrived, a liberal had been elected as Capri's most important man, who among other things organised

asukad ja nende külalised (raske öelda, kes rohkem) tahtsid, et see saar oleks väike puutumatu looduse ja inimlike vabaduste oaas keset moderniseeruvat Euroopat. „Me pole veel küpsed selleks, et kasvada üles tänavatel,“ kirjutab üks britt. Tõsi, juba järgmisel aastal võeti linnapea ametist maha.

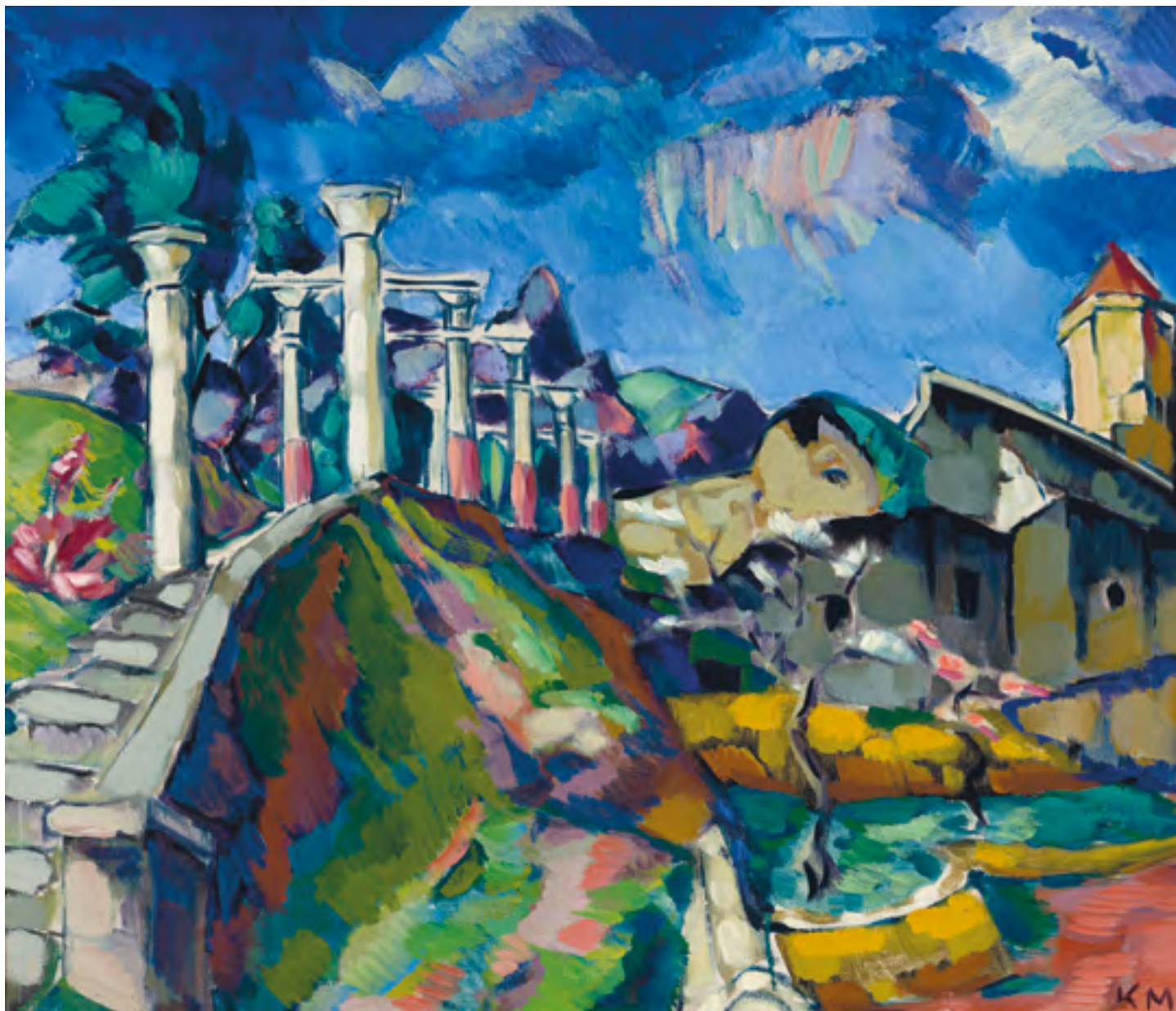
**Konrad Mägi** ei olnud Capril kaua.

a conference in that same year for the preservation of Capri's landscape. He kept the onslaught of modern life from reaching the island, fighting against the construction of hotels and apartment buildings. The island's inhabitants and their guests wanted (it is difficult to say who wanted it more) the island to be a little oasis of untouched nature and human liberties in the midst of modernising Europe. "We are not yet mature enough to grow up in the streets," wrote someone from Britain. True, the mayor was already dismissed from office in the following year.

Konrad Mägi  
Capri  
1922–1923  
Õli, lõuend  
57 × 66,5 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Capri  
1922–1923  
Oil, canvas  
57 × 66.5 cm

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Ta saabus siia 1922. aasta 2. märtsil ja kirjutas kohe sõpradele: „Õnnelikult Capri jõudnud. Saar on jumalik.“ Ometi lahkub Mägi Caprilt juba napp poolteist kuud hiljem. Saar vaimustab teda viibimise lõpuni, ta ei tüdine Caprist nende 45 päeva jooksul ilmselt kordagi, sest tema maalimishoog on Capril peaaegu pidurdamatu. Praeguseks on teada hulgaliselt Capri-ainelisi maale, lisaks veel visandeid, mis tähendab, et iga paari päeva kohta tuleb Mägil mõni maal. Ta ei ole sellist inspiratsioonipuhangut tundnud alates Saaremaal viibimisest ja veel hiljemgi, juba kodumaal olles ning ateljees maale lõpetades ei lase Capri temast lahti. Midagi on selles isegi üllatavat. Seni oli Mägi kujutanud peamiselt spartalikke maastikke, Ahvenamaa, Norra või Saaremaa lakoonilisus oli talle põhjamaalasena lähedane. Enamgi veel. Varem ei suutnud Mägi näha arhitektuuri, nüüd Capril kuhjab ta oma vaadettesse alati ehitisi: kirikuid, maju, treppe, müüre, torne, väravaid, sambaid. Mingil moel näib Mägi Capril maailmaga leppivat: taevas ei ripu enam apokalüptiline ähvardus, vaid rahulikult suuremate pindadena maalitud romantiline sina. Mägi näib kinnitavat oma maalidega seda, mida ta ütles oma kirjades: ta on õnnelik, maailmaga harmoonias, ta ei otsi paralleelmaailma, vaid soovib seekord tuua vaataja jaoks välja selle maailma ilu. See näib Mägi autoripositsiooni radikaalse muutumisena,

**Konrad Mägi** was not on Capri for long. He arrived there on 2 March 1922 and immediately wrote to friends: “Arrived on Capri safe and sound. The island is divine”. Nevertheless, Mägi already left Capri just a month and a half later. The island inspired him the whole time that he was there. He evidently did not get fed up with Capri even once during those 45 days because the momentum of his painting was practically unrestrained on Capri. By now, large numbers of paintings on Capri themes are known, in addition to sketches. This means that Mägi produced a painting every couple of days. He had not felt such a burst of inspiration since he was in Saaremaa. Even later on when he was already back in his homeland, Capri did not let go of him as he finished his paintings in his studio. There is even something surprising in this. Until then, Mägi had depicted mostly Spartan landscapes. The laconic nature of Åland, Norway or Saaremaa was close to his frame of mind as a northerner. Even more so, Mägi had not previously been capable of seeing architecture. Now on Capri, he always heaped buildings into his views: churches, houses, stairs, walls, towers, gates, columns. In some sense, Mägi appears to have come to grips with the world on Capri: apocalyptic menace no longer hangs in the sky. In its place is romantic blue calmly painted as larger surfaces. Mägi appears to affirm with his paintings

72 maailmaga protesteerivast kunstnikust on saanud maailmaga lepitust otsiv ja leidev autor. Capri maastikud on õnnelikud maastikud ning just nõnda tajub neid ka vaataja. Nad sisendavad inimestesse elurõõmu, sest on eksootilised, ilusad, romantilised. Ometi tundub, et neis on siiski veel mingi teine plaan. Me ei näe inimesi. Kuigi Capril käis vilgas elutegevus, kohalikud ja küllatunud sagisid, Mägi neid justkui ei märkagi. Ta maalib nad oma piltidelt välja ja jätab alles ainult hooned, mis ei mõju moodsate elukeskkondadena, vaid hüljatud kohtadena. Majad ning kirikud on küll terved, kuid nende inimtühjuse ja luitunud valge värv tekitab midagi metafüüsilise tühiku sarnast. Nagu oleksid kõik need hooned ja rajatised mälestusmärgid inimestele, kes nad kunagi ehitasid. Siinselgi maalil on näha vaid sambad, mis ei kannu enam midagi. Kõik on tühi. Jäänud on vaid loodus ja tühjad hooned mustavate akendega, mille kohal kumab kuuvalgus. Ja sinine taevas.

what he said in his letters: he was happy and in harmony with the world. He was not looking for a parallel world, rather, this time he wanted to highlight the beauty of this world for the viewer. This looks like a radical change in Mägi's position as an *auteur*. The artist protesting against the world has become an *auteur* who seeks and finds reconciliation with the world. All seems to be well. Capri's landscapes are happy landscapes and that is exactly how the viewer also perceives them. They instill the joy of life into people because they are exotic, beautiful and romantic. Yet it still seems that there is some kind of "other side" to them as well. We do not see people. Although Capri was full of lively activity, locals and visitors bustled about, it is as if Mägi does not notice them. He paints people out of his pictures and leaves only buildings, which do not come across as modern human environments, but rather as abandoned places. Houses and churches are admittedly in good repair, but their depopulation and faded white colour generates something resembling a metaphysical void. As if all these buildings and structures were memorials to the people who once built them. Even in this painting, only columns can be seen which no longer support anything. All is deserted. Only nature and vacant buildings with blackening windows remain, and moonlight glows above it all. And the blue sky.



Konrad Mägi  
Capri maastik  
1922–1923  
Õli, lõuend  
58,5 × 67,5 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Capri Landscape  
1922–1923  
Oil, canvas  
58.5 × 67.5 cm





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**Kuigi** Capri oli eesti autorite seas populaarne, ei tähenda see, et Konrad Mägi oleks alati maalinud Caprit. Ants Laikmaa teoste motiivid on äratuntavad, me võime nende järgi saarel ka praegu orienteeruda ning vaadata kergeid muudatusi, mida kunstnik on võrreldes tema ees olnud maastikuga teinud. Konrad Mägi kohta see aga ei kehti. Tema Capril loodud maalid irduvad tegelikkusest – maalil silmatavat punast torni pole kohalike sõnul näiteks kunagi nähtud. Mägi fantaasia nõudis pidevalt uute maailmade loomist – lõuend oli tema jaoks see tühjus, kuhu ta ei hakanud mitte kopeerima olemasolevat, vaid ehitama ühte uut universumit. Siinkohal ei maksa täielikult välistada ka esoteerikat: Mägi puhul oli tõmme müstilise, selgitamatu poole igapäevane. Oma elus joonistas ta nõiale tarokaarte, kutsus taldrikuga vaime välja, vahendas budistlikku kirjandust ning suhtles kõige erinevamate religioonide esindajatega – tema agendiks Venemaal oli näiteks eesti taarausuliste liider. Ka Capril on aimata romantilis-müstiline atmosfäär, mingisugune salapära, mille poole Mägi püüdleb.

**Although** Capri was popular among Estonian *auteurs*, this does not mean that Konrad Mägi always painted Capri. The motifs in Ants Laikmaa's works are recognisable. We can orient ourselves according to them on the island even nowadays and observe slight alterations that the artist has made compared to the landscape in front of him. Yet this does not apply to Konrad Mägi. His paintings created on Capri depart from reality – the red tower visible in the painting, for instance, has never been seen according to locals. Mägi's fantasy constantly demanded the creation of new worlds. For him, the canvas was that void where he started not to copy the existing, but rather to build a new universe. At this point, it is not advisable to rule out esoterica entirely: the attraction to the mystical and the unexplained was an everyday matter for Mägi. During his lifetime, he drew tarot cards for a witch, summoned spirits by way of plates, disseminated Buddhist literature, and interacted with representatives of the most varied religions – his agent in Russia, for instance, was the leader of Estonia's followers of the Taara faith. A romantic and mystical atmosphere can also be sensed on Capri, some sort of mystery towards which Mägi aspires.

Konrad Mägi  
Capri motiiv  
1922–1923  
Õli, lõuend  
50 × 54,5 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Capri Motif  
1922–1923  
Oil, canvas  
50 × 54.5 cm





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**Konrad Mägi** töömeetoditest on päris palju kõneldud. Nii meenutab näiteks Martin Taevere, et Mägi töötas iga päev ning võis ühe maalimisretke käigus luua vähemalt kolm etüüdi. Kiirele töölaadile viitab ka Norras maalitud teoste kogus, kus ta vähem kui kahe aastaga lõi vähemalt 75 maali (ehk kolm maali kuus). Nii on levinud arvamus Mägist kui impulsiivsest maalikunstnikust, kes tuli, nägi, maalis. Teiselt poolt on säilinud hulgaliselt Mägi visandeid, kus ta hariliku pliiatsiga joonistab üles esialgse kavandi, ning kui võrrelda hilisemat maali kavandiga, ei olegi eriti suuri muutusi märgata. Enamgi veel, mitmel kavandil on Mägi juba juurde kirjutanud ka värvi nime, mida ta soovib hiljem kasutada. See aga tähendab, et Mägi tegi aeg-ajalt ka eeltöid, konstrueeris maali valmis enne pintslit kättevõtmist ning esimese impulsi usaldamise asemel lähtus mingil moel kalkuleeritud plaanist. Restauraatorite sõnul oli Mägi kombinatsioon neist kahest: suurem osa tema maalist valmis sageli siiski äärmiselt kiiresti (kiiremini kui ühelgi teisel eesti kunstnikul), improvisatsiooni ja impulsside osakaal oli määrav, see dikteeris nii teema, meeleolu, kompositsiooni, pintslikirja kui ka koloriidi. Teiselt poolt on mikroskoobi all ja muude uurimismeetoditega olnud võimalik kindlaks teha, et Mägi naasis sageli juba valmisoleva maali juurde ja tegi sinna parandusi. Maal ei lõppenud

**Quite** a lot has been said about Konrad Mägi's methods of working. Thus Martin Taevere, for instance, recalls that Mägi worked every day and in the course of a single painting excursion, he could create at least three studies. The number of works painted in Norway also infers a rapid style of painting, where in less than two years he created at least 75 paintings (or three paintings per month). Thus the opinion is widespread of Mägi as an impulsive painter who came, saw and painted. On the other hand, large numbers of Mägi's sketches have survived where he has drawn an initial image using an ordinary pencil, and if we compare the later painting to the sketch, no particularly great changes are noticeable. Even more so, Mägi had already written on several sketches the names of the colours that he wanted to use later. This, however, means that Mägi also did preliminary work from time to time, constructed the completed painting before picking up the paintbrush, and instead of trusting his initial impulse, based his work to some degree on a calculated plan. According to restorers, Mägi was a combination of the two: the greater portion of his paintings nevertheless were often completed extremely quickly (quicker than any other Estonian artist). The relative proportion of improvisation and impulsion was decisive. This dictated the theme, mood, composition, the brushing

impulsi otsasaamisega, vaid oli pidevalt avatud ning sinna võis sisse viia ka hilisemaid korrekture. Kas Mägi maalis Itaalias oma teosed valmis või tegi ta seal ainult kavandid ja lõpetas teosed hiljem Eestis? Keeruline öelda. Üldiselt arvatakse, et ta lõpetas Tartus päris palju teoseid, kuid viimased uuringud tõestavad, et tegelikult lõpetas ta Itaalias seniarvatust rohkem teoseid ning naasis kodumaale juba valmis töödega. „Capri motiiv“ viitab küll pigem variandile, et Mägi võttis aega ja lõpetas teose hiljem Eestis: sellele viitab näiteks läbimaalitud ja vägagi tasakaalus kompositsioon, elemente pole siia kiiruga kuhjatud, jäetud on vaid olulisim, koloriidis on autor aga eelistanud üleminekuid väheste toonide seas, mitte improvisatsioonilist mängu.

style and the colouring. On the other hand, using microscopes and other investigative methods, it has been possible to ascertain that Mägi often returned to paintings that he had already completed and made corrections. The painting did not end when the impulse for painting it ended, rather it was constantly open, and later corrections could be made to it. Did Mägi complete his works in Italy or did he only draw the outlines there and finish the works later in Estonia? It is difficult to say. It is generally thought that he finished quite a few works in Tartu, but the latest analyses prove that he actually completed more works in Italy than had previously been thought, and that he returned to his homeland with already completed works. Yet *Capri Motif* is indicative of the version that Mägi took his time and finished the work later in Estonia: the carefully painted and very balanced composition, for instance, is one indication of this. Elements have not been piled up here in a hurry, rather only the most important elements have been retained. In terms of colouring, the *auteur* has preferred transitions between few tones, not improvisational play.

Konrad Mägi  
Itaalia linnavaade  
naisfiguuriga  
(Hispaania trepid Roomas)  
1922–1923  
Õli, lõuend  
70,7 × 57,3 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Italian Cityscape with the  
Figure of a Woman  
(Spanish Stairs in Rome)  
1922–1923  
Oil, canvas  
70.7 × 57.3 cm

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**Käesolev** teos on Konrad Mägi loomingus erandlik mitmel põhjusel. Nimelt näeme me siin harukordset ajaloolist täpsust: Hispaania treppe maalides ei ole autor libisenud fantaasiarännakutesse, vaid pidanud üpris truult kinni reaalsusest. Teiseks silmame siin inimfiguuri, kes ei mõju, tõsi küll, mitte niivõrd inimesena, kuivõrd värvilaikude kogumina. Inimese toomine linnavaatesse lõhub veidi metafüüsilist tühjust, mida Mägi ikka ja jälle oma teostel otsis, ent võib vaid ette kujutada, kui palju inimesi tegelikult toona neid treppe mööda käis. Mägi ei ole lisanud inimesi, vaid tegelikult välja jätnud, lubades neist ainult ühe maali pinnale kõndima. Võimalik muidugi, et Mägi viivitas maalimisega öö saabumiseni, mil kirjeldatud tühjus linnale laskus ning inimlik konkreetsus enam ei häirinud. Öisele ajale viitab ka tume taevas ja valgust heitvad laternad. Need laternad on kolmas haruldane motiiv Mägi loomingus. Märkame muidugi, et Mägi on nad maalinud veidi naiivsete või tontlikena: valgussõõri laterna ümber markeerivad pintsliga tõmmatud triibud. Ent samas on nad märk modernsusest ja tehnoloogiliste utopiate teostamisest urbanistlikus ruumis. Kuigi Mägi elas moodsuse ajajärgul, ei leia me tema maalidel kunstniku kaasajast peaaegu mitte ühtegi märki. Mägi ei elanud tagasitõmbunud arhailist elu, vaid püsis elu tuiksoonel: istus kohvikutes, kandis

**This** work is exceptional in Konrad Mägi's oeuvre for many reasons. Namely, here we see exceptional historical precision: in painting the Spanish Stairs, the *auteur* has not slipped into excursions of fantasy, rather he has adhered quite faithfully to reality. Secondly, here we see the human figure, which – admittedly – comes across not so much as a person, but more like a body of patches of colour. Including people in cityscapes somewhat violates the metaphysical emptiness that Mägi sought time and again in his works, but one can only imagine how many people were actually moving about on those stairs at that time. Mägi has not added people, but rather actually left some out, allowing only one of them to walk on the painting's surface. It is, of course, possible that Mägi postponed painting until nightfall, when the emptiness described above descended on the city and human concreteness no longer disturbed him. The dark sky and the lanterns casting light also refer to night-time. These lanterns are a third uncommon motif in Mägi's oeuvre. We naturally notice that Mägi has painted them in a somewhat naïve or spectral way: stripes drawn with a paintbrush mark the circle of light around the lantern. Yet at the same time, they are a sign of modernity and the realisation of technological utopias in urbanist space. Although Mägi lived in the era of modernity, we find almost not

80 moodsaid rõivaid, luges uusimat kirjandust, käis meelsasti metropolides. Tema kunstis see kõik aga puudub. Nii ongi antud teose tänavalaternad üks väheseid märke, et Mägi elas tõesti 1920. aastatel, mitte ühes irdses paralleelmaailmas.

a single sign of the artist's contemporary time in his paintings. Mägi did not live a withdrawn, archaic life, rather he was in the artery of life: he sat in cafés, wore modern clothing, read the latest literature, and gladly travelled to big cities. Yet all of this is missing from his art. Thus the streetlamps in this work are one of the few signs that Mägi really did live in the 1920s and not in a detached parallel world.



Konrad Mägi

Veneetsia

1922–1923

Õli, lõuend

56,1 × 63,3 cm

Konrad Mägi

Venice

1922–1923

Oil, canvas

56.1 × 63.3 cm





82 **Veneetsiassse** jõudis Konrad Mägi 1922. aasta juuni lõpul ja jäi linna vaid kuuks ajaks. Ometi maalits ta nii koha peal kui ka hiljem Eestis olles Veneetsia ainetel terve sarja pilte. See on ühtlasi viimane jõuline periood Mägi kunstis.

Torkab silma, et kuigi Mägi oli moodne mees nii eraelus kui ka kunstis, siis Veneetsias imetleb ta aja peatumist. Ka käesoleval maalil ei näe me ühtegi märki, mis viitaks 1922. aastale, vaid vaadet, mis võiks kuuluda ka 18. sajandisse: kirikutorn ning purjekamastidest moodustunud tihnik selle ees. Samal ajal kutsusid näiteks Itaalia futuristid Veneetsiat aga hävitama: „Me eitame antiikset Veneetsiat, me oleme väsinud ja lõpetanud selle sajandeid vana himurusega, mida isegi meie kunagi armastasime ja hoidsime kui suurt nostalgilist unelmat,“ kirjutasid nad ühes manifestis. „Põletagem gondlid, idiotide värisevad kiiktoolid!“

Veneetsiast saab ühtlasi esimene ja viimane linn, mida Mägi programmiselt maalib. Ükski teine maailma linn ei ärata temas sedavõrd suurt huvi kui Veneetsia.

Tõsi, teda ei huvitagi eriliselt linn. Veneetsia on linnana pigem dekoratsioon, tasapinnaline vaadeldav objekt, mitte aga elav ja dünaamiline organism. Kuigi

**Konrad Mägi** arrived in Venice at the end of June, 1922 and stayed in the city for only a month. Still, he painted a whole series of pictures on themes of Venice both on site and later in Estonia. This is also the final vigorous period in Mägi's art.

It stands out that although Mägi was a “modern man” in both his private life and his art, in Venice he admired the fact that time stood still. We do not see any sign whatsoever in this painting either that would be indicative of the year 1922, rather we see a view that could also be from the 18<sup>th</sup> century: the church tower and a thicket of sailboat masts in front of it. At the same time, for instance, Italian futurists called for the destruction of Venice: “We turn our backs on the ancient Venice, worn out and brought to ruin by centuries of pleasure-seeking, although once even we loved that city and took it to our hearts in a great nostalgic dream,” they wrote in a manifesto. “We'll set fire to the gondolas, rocking chairs for cretins!”

At the same time, Venice became the first and last city that Mägi painted programmatically. No other world city aroused such great interest in him as Venice.

Admittedly, the city in particular did not interest him. Venice is more of a decoration as a city,

Mägi maalib linna, keskendub ta hoopis pindadele, leides ettekäändeid eri värvikihtide sissetoomiseks.

a flat object that is observable, but not a living and dynamic organism. Although Mägi painted the city, he focused on surfaces instead, finding pretexts for including different layers of colour.

Konrad Mägi  
Veneetsia  
1922–1923  
Õli, papp  
66 × 51 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Venice  
1922–1923  
Oil, cardboard  
66 × 51 cm

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**Paneme** tähele Veneetsia taandumist sörmelaiuseks maaribaks, kuigi teame Veneetsiat kui vabaõhumuuseumi: iga hoone seal vääriks eraldi müüti. Tõsi, Mägi maalib Veneetsiast ka traditsioonilisi linnavaateid sillakeste ja majadega, kuid käesoleval näitusel olev maalisari näitab üht hoopis teistsugust perspektiivi. Mõneti võiks seda nimetada ka thomasmannilikuks vaateks Veneetsiale. Oma novellis „Surm Veneetsias“ kirjeldab Mann peategelast, kes elab keskusest kaugemal ühel saarel ning sõidab aeg-ajalt kiirpaadiga linna vahet. Saarelt üle mere Veneetsiat vaadates kohtub ta aga elu armastusega, kelle lahkumine toob kaasa morbiidsed mõtted. Nii võrdlebki Mann gondleid, keda me oleme harjunud nägema äärmiselt romantiliselt, hoopis kirstudena – ja eks torkab ka Mägi teostel silma gondlite mustav siluett ning tontlikud kujud nende peal. Enamgi veel: nii sel kui ka eelmisel leheküljel reprodutseeritud maalil märkame linna kohal kõrguvat hiigelsuurt musta risti. See kummaline rist, mis ei meenuta ühtegi reaalselt objekti, ei ole maalitud samas ka liiga fookusesse: tema kujutamiseks valitud joon on peenem kui ülejäänud jooned maalil ning mõjub pigem kunstniku improvisatsioonilise lisandusena kui hoolikalt kavandatud aktina. Ent risti kordumine viitab, et Mägi silmis ei olnud see päris niisama. Oli see märk Veneetsia mõjumisest

**We** notice that Venice is reduced to a strip of land the width of a finger, although we know Venice as an open-air museum: every building there deserves a separate myth. Admittedly, Mägi also painted traditional cityscapes of Venice with little bridges and houses, but the series of paintings at this exhibition reveals an altogether different kind of perspective. In some respects, it could also be referred to as a Thomas Mann-like view of Venice. In his novella *Death in Venice*, Mann namely describes his main character, who lives on an island some distance from the city centre and travels to the city from time to time with a speedboat. When looking from the island at Venice across the water, however, he meets the love of his life, whose departure brings morbid thoughts. Thus Mann compares gondolas, which we are used to seeing as being extremely romantic, to coffins instead – and no doubt in Mägi’s works as well, the black silhouettes of the gondolas and the spectral figures on them stand out. Yet even more so: we notice an enormous black cross towering over the city in both this painting and the painting reproduced on the previous page. This curious cross, which does not resemble any real object, is at the same time not painted in too sharp focus either: the line chosen for depicting it is thinner than the rest of the lines in the painting and comes across more as

86 linnana, millel on ajalugu ja igavik ning ka surm viibib pidevalt kohal? Või oli see diagnoos kunstniku pidevalt halvenevale tervisele? Või lisas ta ristid vahetult enne oma surma ateljees, mil ta asus maale hävitama ja võib-olla ka ümber maalima?

the artist's improvisational addition than a carefully planned act. Yet the repetition of the cross indicates that in Mägi's view, it was not for no particular reason. Was this a sign of Venice coming across as a city where history, eternity and yes, death as well are constantly present? Or was it a diagnosis of the artist's constantly worsening health? Or did he add the crosses in his studio just before his death, when he set about destroying paintings and perhaps also repainting some of them?

Konrad Mägi  
Veneetsia  
1922–1923  
Õli, papp  
45 × 53 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Venice  
1922–1923  
Oil, cardboard  
45 × 53 cm





88 **Käesoleval** maalil tõlgendab Mägi huvitaval kombel üht klassikalist maastikumaali motiivi, nn kulissiefekti. Antud efekt seisneb selles, et maali paremasse ja vasakusse serva on kunstnik maalinud näiteks kõrged puud, nende vahelt avaneb aga vaade pildi südamesse, kus näeme kaugemal asuvaid vaateid. Puud on omalaadne eesriie, mis on justkui eest tõmmatud, ning pildisügavuses asuv ruum nende puude vahel on omanäoline lava, millele on projitseeritud loodus- või linnavaade. Tegemist oli 17. sajandi kunstniku Claude Lorraini välja töötatud ideaalmaastiku süsteemiga, mis kehtestas sajanditeks maastikumaali ideaalse kompositsiooni reeglid. Mägi töö on puude asemel kaks sümmeetriliselt maali servadel paiknevat purjekat ning nende vahel avaneval „laval“ näeme Veneetsiat.

Kunstiteadlased on leidnud, et see pole ainult ruumiillusiooniga seotud efekt, vaid mõjub tegelikult vaatajale rahustavalt. Kulissid pakuvad vaatajale omalaadset võimalust varjuda, samas jääb neile aga alles võimalus pääseda ligi pildi tsentrumile. Me ei ole pildi „sees“, vaid piilume eesriide tagant – oleme justkui koerad, kes valivad ruumis alati kõige turvalisema paiga, kus nad ise oleks kaitstud, aga kõik ülejäänud peopesa

**In** this painting, Mägi interprets a classical landscape painting motif, the so-called coulisse effect, in an interesting way. This effect consists in that the artist paints tall trees, for instance, on the right and left sides of the painting. A view of the heart of the picture opens up between them, extending into the distance. The trees are a kind of stage curtain, which look as if they have been parted, and the space between the trees in the depths of the picture is a kind of stage, onto which a view of nature or a city view is projected. This is an ideal landscape system that the 17<sup>th</sup> century artist Claude Lorrain worked out, establishing the rules for the ideal composition of landscape painting for centuries. In Mägi's work, two sailboats situated symmetrically at the edges of the painting take the place of the trees, and we see Venice on the “stage” that opens up between them.

Art historians have found that this effect is not only associated with the illusion of space, rather it actually has a soothing effect on the viewer. The coulisses provide the viewer with a particular kind of opportunity to take cover, while at the same time they still have access to the centre of the picture. We are not “in” the picture, rather we peek from behind the curtain – we are like dogs,



peal. Eesti kunstis on antud efekti tõlgendanud mitmel korral Nikolai Triik, aga ka Konrad Mägi, luues nõnda siin-ja-seal-tunde: siinne maailm (eesriide taga) ja sealne maailm (kujuteldaval laval). See aga oli midagi väga konradmägilikku.

who always choose the safest place in the room where they themselves are protected, but they have a complete view of the rest of the space. In Estonian art, Nikolai Triik, but also Konrad Mägi, has interpreted this effect on many occasions, thus creating a feeling of “here” and “there”: the world here (behind the curtain) and the world over there (on the imaginary stage). This, however, was something very Konrad Mägi-like.

Konrad Mägi  
Naise portree  
1922–1924  
Õli, lõuend  
68,7 × 55,6 cm

Konrad Mägi  
Portrait of a Woman  
1922–1924  
Oil, canvas  
68.7 × 55.6 cm

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**Konrad Mägi** portreeloomingus annavad tooni naisterahvad. Mehi kujutas ta haruharva, naiste seas tõusevad omaette gruppidega esile Mägi sõbrad, tellimusportreed, aga ka naisõiguslased. Mägi tundis mitut neist isiklikult ja neid kujutades visualiseeris esmakordselt nn moodsa naisterahva tüpaaži. Tõsi, sellele väitele võib ka vastu vaielda, sest ka need naised nägid tema teostel välja nagu klassikalised meessilma kaudu kujutatud daamid: ohtralt ehteid ja aksessuaare, naiselikud riided ja nii edasi. Ometi oli seal potentsiaal kehtestada avalikus ruumis uuelaadne sotsiaalne suhe ning kuigi see jäi kasutamata, peegeldab see portreekunsti kui säärase võimalusi.

„Naise portree“ on aga täiesti anonüümne. Me ei tea modelli nime, me ei näe ta nägu, tema keha on kaetud kasuka ja kübara alla ning raske on teha isegi oletusi tema vanuse kohta, rääkimata päritolust või sotsiaalsest rollist. Tegemist on inimesega üleüldse või – nagu Mägile tunnuslik – ühe teatud ideaaliga. Taas näeme Mägi naisportreedele nii iseloomulikku kahvatut nahka, suuri silmi, pikki sõrmi. Tema sulgemine äratundmise eest, kunstniku keeldumine oma modelli individualiseerida või psühholoogiseerida annab tunnistust Konrad Mägi huvist visuaalsuse vastu – see, mis talle pinget pakub, on teatud

**Women** set the tone in Konrad Mägi's portrait oeuvre. He depicted men very rarely. Among women, Mägi's friends and commissioned portraits stand out as separate groups, along with women's activists. Mägi knew many such activists personally, and in depicting them visualised for the first time the type of the so-called modern woman. Indeed, this claim can be argued against because in his works, these women also looked like classical ladies depicted through men's eyes: an abundance of jewellery and accessories, "feminine" clothing, and so on. Nevertheless there was the potential to establish a new type of social relationship in the public sphere, and although this opportunity was not taken advantage of, it reflects the possibilities of portrait art as such.

*Portrait of a Woman*, however, is utterly anonymous. We do not know the model's name, we do not see her face, her body is covered by a fur coat and a hat, and it is difficult even to guess how old she might have been, to say nothing of her origin or social role. This is a generalised person or – as is characteristic of Mägi – a certain ideal. Again we see the pale skin, big eyes and long fingers that are so typical of Mägi's female portraits. Shutting her off from recognition, the refusal of the artist to individualise or psychologise his model, or to undertake some

esteetilised või silmaga tajutavad detailid, milles on ehk vaid õrnalt aimata ka erootilist nüanssi. Kas muutus säärane lähenemine eesti kunsti jaoks tüüpiliseks? Pigem mitte. Edaspidiste portreede hulgas näeme enamasti äratuntavaid inimesi, kelle silmist võib lugeda maailmavaadet, hoiakust sotsiaalset rolli, poosist eneseteadlikkuse astet.

other similar action, bears witness to Konrad Mägi's interest in the visual: what fascinated him were certain aesthetic details or details that can be perceived by the eye, in which an erotic nuance can also perhaps be sensed only very slightly. Did such an approach become typical for Estonian art? Not really. In the subsequent body of portraits, as a rule we see recognisable people, from whose eyes we can read their view of the world, from whose attitude we can read their social role, and from whose pose we can read the degree of their self-awareness.

# ADO VABBE

*Ado Vabbe (1892–1961) lapsepõlv möödus Narvas, hiljem õppis ning töötas Münchenis, Itaalias, Moskvas ja mujal. Ta oli üks Kunstiühingu Pallas asutajaid ning kunstikooli Pallas esimeste õpetajate seas.*

*„Tõeste, on vähe kangelasi kunstis (sest kuidas võib neid nimetada, kes nälgides iludust – ilmutavad – ja siiski läbi paksu porise leeme-paksu, eluudu, siiski veel tähtesi näevad – taevast!!?) ja kui neidki veel armetuid kangelasi sõimuga üle tõmmatakse. Ka[s] tõeste muudkui valesi näevad kunstis kõik inimesed? Ja kas tõeste nad neid valesidki ei saa enesele äraseletada ja kas tõeste need valed (mis üleüldse vale kunstis tähendab – üks omadus mis kõrgem kui vale elus) sest ilutöö (kunst) on teine ilm ja sellepärast ka kõik vale temas mitte vale, vaid just tema kõrgendatud tingimata tõsidus. Kas tõeste ei suuda need valed inimesi läilast igapäevasusest välja tõsta?“*

*Kirjas sõbrale (1914)*

*Ado Vabbe (1892–1961) spent his childhood in Narva. He later studied and worked in Munich, Italy, Moscow and elsewhere. Vabbe was one of the founders of the Pallas Art Society and one of the first teachers at the Pallas Art School.*

*“Truly, there are few heroes in art (because how can they be called who reveal beauty while starving – and still through the thick, muddy slops of the broth, the fog of life, still see the stars – the sky!!?) and if even those few wretched heroes are showered with abuse. Do all people really see nothing but lies in art? And can’t they really explain those lies to themselves, and are they really lies (what does a lie in art mean in the first place – an attribute that is higher than lies in life) because the work of beauty (art) is another world and that’s why everything that’s false in it isn’t false, but instead is precisely its elevated, unconditional truth. Is it really so that these lies can’t lift people out of insipid everydayness?“*

*In a letter to a friend (1914)*

Ado Vabbe  
Jõemaastik  
paadisadamaga  
1934  
Õli, papp  
45 × 55,3 cm

Ado Vabbe  
River Landscape  
with Boat Harbour  
1934  
Oil, cardboard  
45 × 55.3 cm

94





**1930.** aastate alguses juhtus Ado Vabbeega midagi ootamatut: olles ise parimas loomeeas, energiast pakatav värske Pallase õppejõud, kelle looming oli leidnud igakülgset tähelepanu, otsustas ta korraga näitustel enam mitte osaleda. Kõik. Joon alla. Ta ei kommenteerinud ise kunagi pikemalt antud käigu põhjusi, kuid oletatakse, et ta võis olla tüdinenud nii kunstipoliitikast kui ka oma loomelaadist. Siiani oli ta töötanud moodsates suundades (kubism, ekspressionism, futurism), kuid need ei sulandunudki eesti kunsti peavoolu. Sama juhtus ka Euroopas laiemalt, kus avangardist väsiti ning pöörduti realismi poole – üheks põhjuseks ka poliitilised muutused, mis tõid 1930. aastatel kaasa riikliku ootuse „arusaadavale“ ning „kõigile mõeldud“ kunstile.

Vabbe isepäisus ei luba oletada üldise realisminõudega kaasaminekut, vaid pigem siiski eneseotsinguid. „See ei olnud enam sugugi mitte omaaegne Vabbe, kelle lõuendilt või paberilt virtuooslikult ja kiusavalt tõmmatud ning ristlevate joonte võrgust kujusid tuleb välja koorida, vaid nüüd käis ta käsi realistlikku rada, muutmata aga objekti loodusekoopiaks, ikka jäädes Vabbeks,“ on meenutanud Artur Adson. Oletusele, et Vabbe jaoks ei olnud tegemist sunnitud muutusega, vaid sisemise vabatahtliku otsinguga,

**Something** unexpected happened to Ado Vabbe at the outset of the 1930s: although, at the best age for productive work, he was a new teacher at the Pallas school and full of energy, whose work had attracted attention all-round, he suddenly decided not to participate in exhibitions anymore. That was all. No more. He himself never commented at length on the reasons for this move, but it is assumed that he may have been fed up with the political infighting in art, as well as with his own creative style. Until then he had worked in modern trends (Cubism, Expressionism, Futurism), but these had never blended in to the mainstream of Estonian art. The same thing happened in Europe in a broader sense, where people got tired of the avant garde and turned to Realism – one reason for this was also political changes, which in the 1930s brought an expectation on the part of the state for “comprehensible” art “meant for everyone”.

Vabbe's headstrong nature does not allow us to presume that he would have gone along with the general demand for Realism, but rather that he would continue his own personal quests. “This was no longer the former Vabbe at all, from whose canvas or paper one had to decipher figures out of the crisscrossing network of lines teasingly drawn with virtuosity. Now his hand moved along a

96 lisab vundamenti tõsiasi, et näitustel esines ta harva, kuid jätkas hoolega töötamist. „Sõprade, õpilaste ja poja mälestuste järgi maalis ta kogu selle aja, tema Tartu ateljees ja ka maamajas Mullaveres leidus hulgaliselt tollal valminud pilte,“ kirjutab kunstiteadlane Reet Varblane.

Maastik ei olnud varasemas Vabbe loomingus sage motiiv, kuigi oma kirjades Friedebert Tuglasele Pariisist väljendab ta igatsust looduse järele. Ometi muutusid loodusteemad hiljem Vabbe loomingus üsna sagedaseks. Töö motiiviks olev paadisadama asukoht on teadmata. Vabbe elas sel perioodil Tartus Narva tänaval, mis asub Emajõe vahetus läheduses, kuid maalil nähtav sadama ümbrus lubab oletada, et töö on valminud mõnel suvisel väljasõidul. Kuigi ka Mullavere maakodu lähedal asus veekogu (Saadjärv), ei sobi teost sinna paigutada dateeringu tõttu, kuna Mullaverre osteti maja alles 1935. aastal. 1934. aastast on teada ka üks Narva-Jõesuu motiiv, ning kuna Vabbel olid teatud sidemed Narvaga, siis võib töö olla valminud ka sealkandis. Samateemalisi maale on Vabbel veelgi: „Jõesadam“ (1938, Tartu Kunstimuuseum), „Maastikuetüüd paadiga“ (1940, Tartu Kunstimuuseum), „Emajõe kallas paatidega“ (1950), „Jõgi laevadega“ (1953) jt.

realistic path, yet without turning the object into a copy of nature, still remaining Vabbe,” Artur Adson has recalled. The fact that he rarely participated in exhibitions for the public, but continued to work a great deal adds weight to the assumption that Vabbe did not consider this a change that was forced on him, but that this was an internal voluntary quest. “According to recollections of friends, students and his son, he painted all that time. Large numbers of pictures completed at that time were found in his Tartu studio and also in his country house in Mullavere,” writes art historian Reet Varblane.

Landscape was not a frequent motif in Vabbe's early work, although in his letters from Paris to Friedebert Tuglas he expressed yearning for nature. Nevertheless, nature themes later became quite frequent in Vabbe's oeuvre. The location of the boat harbour that is the motif for this work is not known. Vabbe lived during that period in Tartu on Narva Street, which is relatively close to the Emajõgi River, but the surroundings of the harbour visible in the painting allow us to assume that this work was completed during some summertime excursion. Although there was also a body of water near his country home in Mullavere (Saadjärv Lake), placing the work there does not fit in with the date, since



he bought the house in Mullavere in 1935. A Narva-Jõesuu motif is also known from 1934 and since Vabbe had certain connections with Narva, then this work could also have been completed somewhere in that area. Vabbe has other works on the same theme as well, for instance *Jõesadam* (River Harbour, 1938, Tartu Art Museum), *Maastikuetüüd paadiga* (Landscape Study with a Boat, 1940, Tartu Art Museum), *Emajõe kallas paatidega* (Bank of the Emajõgi River with Boats, 1950), *Jõgi laevadega* (River with Ships, 1953), and others.

Ado Vabbe  
Sõjapõgenikud  
1944–1950  
Õli, paber  
53,8 × 68 cm

Ado Vabbe  
War Refugees  
1944–1950  
Oil, paper  
53.8 × 68 cm

98





**Eesti** kunstnike reaktsioon aastatel 1940–1945 juhtunule oli pigem napp. Seda võib ühelt poolt selgitada tsensuuriga: teatud teemade puudutamine oleks tähendanud koos oma karjääriga miinipõllule minekut, kus väiksemgi pintsliilöök valesse kohta tõi kaasa ärakeelamise, väljaviskamise, töötuks jäämise. Teiselt poolt oli ettevaatlik lähenemine ka ühe teatud traditsiooni jätkumine: poliitilised teemad ei olnud eesti kunstnike stiihia. Seda võiks laiendada ühele veelgi julgemale väitele: siinsete maalikunstnike looming ei sündinud mitte niivõrd sisemistest impulssidest või välistest oludest, vaid nende kahe kokkupuutepunktis. Hetkel, mil kunstnik kohtus maailmaga, oli suurem väärtus kui psühholoogilistel pingetel või sotsiaalsetel valupunktidel. Vähemalt kehtib see suuresti nende autorite kohta, kelle looming on käesoleval näitusel.

Ka „Sõjapõgenikud“ on isikliku ja üldise kohtumispinnal. Maali taustaks on Ado Vabbe elus toimunud sündmused: pärast abikaasa surma ning väikese pojaga kahekesi jäämist pidi ta maale varjuma, kus ta talus kurnatust ja nälga (olukorda tumestasid veelgi pommirünnakud, mille tagajärjel hävisid tema kodumaja ja ateljee koos maalidega). Sõja lõpuaastail pidi Vabbe koos lapsega pidevalt elukohta vahetama, nii et neist said samuti sõjapõgenikud. Olgu veel

**The** reaction of Estonian artists to what happened from 1940 to 1945 is more understated. This can be explained on the one hand by censorship: the treatment of certain themes would have meant entering a minefield together with one's career, where even the smallest brushstroke in the wrong place brought being banned, expulsion, and unemployment. On the other hand, the cautious approach was also the continuation of a certain tradition: political themes were not elements for Estonian artists. This could be expanded to an even bolder claim: as far as Estonian painters were concerned, art was not so much born from inner impulses or external conditions, but rather from the intersection of those two. The moment when the artist encountered the world had greater value than psychological tensions or social sore points. To a great extent, this applies at least to those *auteurs* whose works are at this exhibition.

*War Refugees* is also on the plane where the personal meets the universal. Events that took place in Ado Vabbe's life form the background for the painting: after the death of his wife and being left alone with their little son, he had to go into hiding in the countryside, where he endured fatigue and hunger (bombing raids where his

100 öeldud, et hoolimata keerukatest aegadest, ei lakanud Vabbe kunagi maalimast.

Kuid käesolev teos viitab ka väljapoole – nimelt on mehed Saksa mundris (ilmselt seetõttu on töö ka signeerimata ja seda ei eksponeeritud nõukogude ajal näitustel). Nii näeme ühelt poolt kunstniku isiklikke läbielamisi, teisalt aga olude täpset kirjeldust. Kõige täpsem nende kirjelduste seas on maali meeleolu: leina ja traagika asemel on siin nõutus, tühjus, ootamine. See on hetk, mil senine on hävinud ja uut veel ei ole – üks teatud paus.

home and studio were destroyed together with his paintings did not alleviate the situation). During the final years of the war, Vabbe had to constantly change his place of residence together with his child so that they became war refugees as well. Let it also be said that regardless of the difficult times, Vabbe never stopped painting.

On the other hand, an outward reference is born in this work. Namely, the men wear German uniforms (this is evidently the reason why this work is also unsigned and why it was not displayed at exhibitions during the Soviet era). Thus on the one hand we see the artist's personal experiences, while on the other hand we see a precise description of conditions. The most precise of these descriptions is the painting's mood: instead of drama, mourning and tragedy, here is perplexity, emptiness and waiting. This is a moment when the former has perished and the new does not exist yet – a certain pause.

Ado Vabbe  
Mannekeen  
1944–1950  
Õli, paber  
50,5 × 45,5 cm

Ado Vabbe  
Mannequin  
1944–1950  
Oil, paper  
50.5 × 45.5 cm





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**Ado Vabbe** tundis huvi teatraalsete olukordade vastu juba oma loometee alguses. Tema varastes töodes näeme arlekiine ja muusikuid, madonnasid ja lauljatare, meest mandoliiniga ja karnevali. Tegemist polnud üksnes Vabbe kiindumusega. Ka näiteks Johannes Greenberg kujutas meelsasti teatraalseid stseene, kuna neis oli niivõrd palju dünaamikat, aga ka argielus puuduv atmosfäär.

„Mannekeen“ ei kujuta küll teatristseeni, kuid on siiski teatraalne. Inimesed, keda Vabbe on maalinud, justkui esineksid meile: maali eesosas on peategelasteks kõveras kummalises poosis meesterahvas, kellele näib midagi selgitavat pikas seelikus daam, nende taustal sulgevad aga pildiruumi tummad figuurid, kelle seas märkame ka üht baleriini meenutavat, tantsuasendit sisse võtvat naisterahvast. Pildi südamesse on asetatud aga midagi peaaegu absurdset: mannekeen. Elavate inimeste erutus selle poolinimese suhtes, kel puuduvad käed ning kelle jalgadest on tehtud väljalõiked, paistab peaaegu koomiline – seda enam, et säärase erutuse põhjus jääb hämaraks, sest mannekeen on ühegi riideesemeta. Teda silmitsetakse nagu kummalist objekti: pingsa tähelepanuga, kuid ettevaatlikult ja distantsilt. Muide, 1944. aastal

**Ado Vabbe's** love for theatrical situations was obvious quite early on. We already see harlequins and musicians, madonnas and songstresses, a man with a mandolin, and carnivals in his early works. He was not alone in this love. Johannes Greenberg, for instance, also gladly depicted theatrical themes since there was so much dynamism in them, but also atmosphere that could not be found in ordinary everyday life.

*Mannequin* does not depict a scene from the theatre but it is theatrical. It is as if the people who Vabbe has painted are performing for us – in different parts of the painting, the main characters are a bent over man in a strange pose, to whom a lady in a long skirt appears to be explaining something. On their background, however, mute figures seal off the pictorial space. We notice that one of these figures is a woman who resembles a ballerina, and she is taking up a dance pose. Yet something almost absurd is placed at the heart of the picture: a mannequin. The excitement of the living people in the scene in regard to this semi-human, who has no hands and with cut-outs taken from its feet, is almost comical. This is even more so because it remains unclear what is causing such excitement, since not a single item of clothing has

maalib Vabbe teose „Mees hampelmannidega“, kus üks meesterahvas demonstreerib maali vaatajatele samuti inimest meenutavat nukku, samas kui teised temasugused taskus ootavad. Inimest ei ole enam, on ainult temasarnased objektid – võimalik, et kaugel kajana kuuldu siin inimese tähtsuse kadu, mis sõja ajal paratamatult juhtus.

Eraldi võiks tähelepanu juhtida alusmaterjalile. Sõja ajal olid maalimistarbed muidugi defitsiitsed, paber oli neist kõige kättesaadavam. Eesti kunsti kohta harjumatult improvisatsioonilise naturiga Vabbe on töötanud kiiresti, jättes ühtlasi nii mõnedki pinnad katmata, mistõttu paberi värv hakkab mõjuma üldise koloriidi osana.

been placed on the mannequin. It is looked at like curious objects are looked at: with intense attention but cautiously, from a distance. Incidentally, Vabbe painted a work named *Mees hampelmannidega* (Man with Jumping Jacks) in 1944, where a man similarly demonstrates to the viewers of the painting a puppet resembling a person while other puppets like it wait in the man's pocket. There is no longer a person, there are objects resembling him – it is possible that the nullification of the importance of human beings, which inevitably happened during the war, can be heard here as a distant echo.

Let us direct our attention to the base material separately. Painting supplies were naturally in short supply during the war, and paper was the most obtainable of them. Vabbe, with his improvisational nature that is unusual for Estonian art, has worked quickly, leaving quite a few surfaces uncovered, for which reason the colour of the paper starts to come across as part of the overall colouring.

Ado Vabbe  
Järve kaldal  
1945  
Õli, lõuend  
43,8 × 55,5 cm

Ado Vabbe  
On the Lakeshore  
1945  
Oil, canvas  
43.8 × 55.5 cm

104







**Ado Vabbe** esindab üht teatud kunstikutüüpi, kes jääbki eesti kunstiajaloo korduma: selleks on avangardist, kes ühel hetkel vahetab peaaegu kogu oma senise maalijaarsenali välja ning alustab uuesti, seekord tunduvalt realistlikumas laadis. Sarnast tüpaaži esindavad ka näiteks Olav Maran ja Jüri Arrak, kelle puhul hilisemas loomingus lisandus tugev eetilis-religioosne hoiak. Vabbel murrang piirdus aga esteetiliste väljendusvahenditega – tema hilisloomingus on vastupidiselt eelnimetatutele nii mõnigi maal, mis ironiseerib näiteks munkade vagaduse üle.

„Järve kaldal“ on ühtaegu osa säärasest murrangust, mille puhul varasemad oskused hüljatakse ning alustatakse peaaegu nullist uuesti. Tõsi, eriti maali esiosa ning seal kiirelt ja improvisatsiooniliselt liikunud pintsli töö mõjub soovi korral kajana kunagisest väga mängulisest Vabbest, kes eksperimenteeris enam-vähem kõigi maalikunstniku väljendusvahenditega: temaatika, motiivide, kompositsiooni, värvi, tähendusega. Teisalt võib teose „Järve kaldal“ asetada ka vägagi isiklikule ajajoonel ja vaadelda seda 1940. aastate Vabbe biograafia taustal, mis on täis hävingut, leina ja traumasid: naise surm, ateljee ning kodu hävimine, maalide põlemine, pagemine koos väikese lapsega

**Ado Vabbe** represents a certain type of artist that is continually repeated in Estonian art history: this is the avant garde artist who at some point replaces practically his entire former painting arsenal and starts over again, this time in a considerably more realistic style. Olav Maran and Jüri Arrak, for instance, also represent such a type and in their case, a strong ethical-religious attitude was also added in their later work. There was no such addition with Vabbe. His revolutionary change was limited to aesthetic means – even on the contrary, there are quite a few paintings in his later works that present an ironic take on the piety of monks, for instance.

*On the Lakeshore* is at the same time a part of this kind of revolutionary change, where previous skills are abandoned and the artist starts over again practically from zero. Admittedly, particularly the painting's foreground and the brushwork that quickly and improvisationally moved about there can, if one wishes, come across as an echo of the formerly very playful Vabbe, who experimented with more or less everything that a painter could experiment with: subject matter, motifs, composition, colour, fields of meaning. On the other hand, *On the Lakeshore* can also be placed in his very

<sup>106</sup> mööda Eestit. Sellele vastukaaluks loob Vabbe üdini idüllilise ja romantilise vaate, justkui koondades oma valu millessegi, mis seda kõige vähem meenutaks. Ka säärane lähenemine polnud eesti kunstile võõras, pigem isegi vastupidi: mida keerulisemad ajad, seda kirglikumalt püüdleb kunst paralleelmaailma poole.

personal history and be viewed on the background of Vabbe's biography of the 1940s, which is full of destruction, mourning and traumas: the death of his wife, the destruction of his studio and home, the burning of his paintings, fleeing around Estonia with his little child. Vabbe sets an utterly idyllic and romantic view to counterbalance this, as if concentrating his pain into something that would least remind him of that pain. This kind of approach to art was also not foreign to Estonian art, even quite the opposite is true: the more complicated and difficult the times are, the more passionately art aspires towards a parallel world.

# NIKOLAI TRIIK

Nikolai Triik (1884–1940) sündis ja kasvas Tallinnas, hiljem õppis Peterburis ning töötas veel Ahvenamaal, Pariisis, Norras, Saksamaal ja mujal. Alates 1920. aastatest töötas ta Pallasas õppejõuna.

„Ma läksin kodunt ära, et kodu tarvis ennast täiendada. Ma tunnen, et minu tööpõld võiks olla välismaal. Aga keegi ei usalda mind kodumaal. On õige kole niiviisi üksi olla ilmas. Sellest väljapääsematuse tunne on kui silmus kaelas.”

Postkaart sõbrale (1913)

*Nikolai Triik (1884–1940) was born and raised in Tallinn. He later studied in St. Petersburg and worked in Åland, Paris, Norway, Germany and elsewhere. Starting in the 1920s, he worked as a teacher at the Pallas Art School.*

*“I left home to educate myself for the benefit of home. I feel that my field of work could be abroad. But nobody in my homeland trusts me. It’s really dreadful to be alone in the world like this. The feeling of having no way out of this is like a noose around my neck.”*

*A postcard to a friend (1913)*

Nikolai Triik  
Ahvenamaa motiiv  
1906  
Õli, lõuend  
22,7 × 35 cm

Nikolai Triik  
Åland Motif  
1906  
Oil, canvas  
22.7 × 35 cm

108





**Ahvenamaa** on nagu Caprigi kummaliselt tähtis paik eesti kunstiajaloo topograafias: pealtnäha suvaline saarestik ilma igasuguse kunstilise infrastruktuurita, kuid on sellegipoolest kunsti- ja kirjandusloos olulise tähenduse omandanud. 1906. aastal Ahvenamaale saabunud Nikolai Triik polnud erand, koos temaga tulid siia teisedki, näiteks Konrad Mägi olevat just Triigi mõjutusel hakanud esmakordselt maalima. Samas pole Ahvenamaa kujunemine sedavõrd inspireerivaks paigaks siiski päris juhuslik – üks Põhjamaade kunstnike koloonia oli valinud selle enne eestlasi enda asupaigaks ning ilmselt levis sõnum üle Euroopa. Samas oli just sel hetkel muutunud „moodsaks“ Põhjamaade napp spartalik loodus ning just Norrast oli saanud mandri intellektuaalide uus ihalusobjekt.

Ahvenamaale tuleb Triik noore õnneliku mehena, käevangus pruut, kellega veel sama aasta sügisel abiellutakse. Triik on 22-aastane, eelmisel aastal on ta katkestanud õpingud Peterburis iganenud Stieglitzi kunstiakadeemias ning samas osalenud karikaturistina revolutsiooniliste väljaannete töös. Triik on hoolimata pealtnäha tagasihoidlikust ja peaaegu tummast natuurist väga otsinguline ja poliitiliselt aktiivne, kartmata eksperimente nii kunstis kui ka elus.

**Similarly** to Capri, Åland is a curiously important place in the topography of Estonian art history: a seemingly random archipelago without any artistic infrastructure whatsoever, yet it has nevertheless acquired an important meaning in the history of both Estonian art and Estonian literature. Nikolai Triik, who arrived here in 1906, was no exception. Others came here along with him, among them also Konrad Mägi, who supposedly started painting for the first time under the influence of Triik in particular. At the same time, it is nevertheless not completely by chance that Åland developed into such an inspirational place: a colony of Nordic artists had chosen it as their abode before the Estonians, and the message apparently spread throughout Europe. At the same time, the scanty Spartan natural settings of the Nordic countries had become “fashionable” at just that very time, and especially Norway had become the new object of desire for intellectuals on the European continent.

Triik came to Åland as a happy young man. He was arm in arm with his fiancée, whom he married in the autumn of that same year. Triik was 22 years old. He had discontinued his studies in St. Petersburg at the outdated Stieglitz art academy the previous year and at the same

<sup>110</sup> „Ahvenamaa motiiv“ on hoolimata oma etüüdilikkusest silmatorkav teos. Alles mõne aasta maalimisega tegelenud Triik, kes muide oli kasvanud üles – nagu kõik tema eakaaslased – suhteliselt pildivaeses ühiskonnas, teeb siin ühe väga julge ning riivamisi isegi modernistliku katsetuse. Nimelt on ta loobunud taotlusest olla täiesti realistlik: me tunneme küll ära tuuleveski ja mõned puud-põõsad, kuid neid pole kujutatud mitte konkreetselt, vaid üldistatult. See aga tähendab, et kunst ei ole Triigi jaoks enam vahend, kuidas edasi anda reaalsust, vaid kunst ise ongi uus reaalsus. Maal on iseseisev omaette tervik, kus kehtivad omad reeglid ning välismaailma nõuded talle enam ei kehti. See kujutab endast julget sammu – taotleda kunstile oma autonoomiat. Ent mõnes mõttes oli igasugune iseseisvuse nõudmine toona miski, mis oli Triigile väga südamelähedane.

time participated in the work of revolutionary publications as a caricaturist. Regardless of his seemingly modest and almost mute nature, Triik was very searching and politically active, and not afraid to experiment in both art and life.

Regardless of its resemblance to a study, *Åland Motif* is an outstanding work. Triik had only been painting for a few years. Incidentally, he had grown up – like all his other contemporaries – in a society with relatively few pictures. Here, however, he conducts a very bold and even a borderline Modernist experiment. Namely, he has abandoned the aspiration to be completely realistic: we admittedly recognise the windmill and a few trees and bushes, yet they are not depicted concretely, but rather in a generalised way. This, however, means that art is no longer a vehicle for Triik to convey reality, rather art itself is the new reality. The painting is a separate, independent whole where its own rules apply, and the requirements of the external world no longer apply to it. This is a bold step: to demand autonomy for art. Yet in some sense, any sort of demand for independence was something at that time that was very near to Triik's heart.

Nikolai Triik  
Väikelinna vaade  
1905–1909  
Õli, papp  
42,5 × 47 cm

Nikolai Triik  
View of a Small Town  
1905–1909  
Oil, cardboard  
42.5 × 47 cm





112 **Linnavaated** on eesti kunstis enne 1920. aastaid küllaltki vähelevinud žanr. 19. sajandil oli olukord teistsugune: siis kujutati Tallinna, Tartut ja teisi linnu arvukatel vaatemaalidel ning graafilistel lehtedel, kusjuures oldi ülimalt detailed, nii et sageli sai üle lugeda telliskivide arvu mõnes linnamüüris või teha peaaegu arheoloogilisi järeldusi omaaegsete linnakihistuste kohta. Linnad kuulusid toona baltisakslastele – see oli nende ruum ning endastmõistetavalt kujutasid nad oma keskkonda. Niisamuti näib loomulik, miks eestlastest autorid hakkasid maalima maastikke – see oli omakorda nende ruum, neile tuttav ja neid defineeriv. Kuigi näiteks Konrad Mägi elas suurema osa oma elust linnas, koguni maailma suurimates metropolides, ei näe me tema loomingus peaaegu mitte mingisuguseid jälgi urbanismist. Linnavaadete vähesus torkab silma ka Ants Laikmaa, Kristjan Raua ja teiste loomingus, kes ometi oma elu linnadega sidusid.

„Väikelinna vaade“ on seetõttu üks väheseid näiteid enne 1910. aastat maalitud linnavaadetest eesti kunstis. Ilmselt Norras mõnd alevit kujutav teos ei ole siiski kantud moodsale Euroopale iseloomulikust modernsusihalusest, mille jaoks linn oli korruga nii progressi kui ka pahelisuse sümbol. Selle asemel näeme vaikset inimtühja ja

**Cityscapes** were a rather uncommon genre in Estonian art prior to the 1920s. The situation was different in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: then Tallinn, Tartu and even other towns were depicted in numerous view paintings and graphic prints, whereat they were extremely detailed, so that we can in many cases count the number of bricks in a city wall or draw almost archaeological conclusions concerning the strata of the cities in those days. Towns belonged to the Baltic Germans back then. This was their space and for this reason, it is understandable why they depicted towns so much. It is also just as understandable why Estonian *auteurs* started painting rural areas, landscapes and nature instead: because this, in turn, was their space, which was familiar to them and defined them. Although Konrad Mägi, for instance, lived most of his life not only in the city, but in the world's largest metropolises altogether, we see almost no traces whatsoever of urbanism in his oeuvre. The paucity of cityscapes also stands out in the oeuvre of Ants Laikmaa, Kristjan Raud and others, who nevertheless had tied their life to cities.

*View of a Small Town* is thus one of the few examples of cityscapes painted prior to 1910 in Estonian art. This work, which evidently depicts



kodust vaadet, kus madalad majad on asetatud puude ja põõsaste taha, jättes meile mulje, et hüljatud asula on vaikselt tihnikusse kasvamas. Taamal paistev järv ning majade vahelt avanev vaade kaugetele maastikele lisab teosele midagi igatsuslikku: minema, minema siit linnast.

a village in Norway, is nevertheless not borne of the craving for modernity characteristic of Europe, for which the city was simultaneously a symbol of both progress and depravity. Instead of this, we see a small, deserted and homelike view, where low houses are situated behind trees and bushes, leaving us with the impression that this settlement abandoned by people is slowly becoming overgrown with trees and underbrush. The lake visible in the distance and the view of distant landscapes opening up from between the houses adds an element of yearning to the work: to get away, away from this town.

Nikolai Triik  
Soome maastik  
1914  
Õli, lõuend  
37,2 × 45 cm

Nikolai Triik  
Finnish Landscape  
1914  
Oil, canvas  
37.2 × 45 cm

114





**Käesolev** maal on dokument mitmest üpris haruldasest nüansist eesti kujutavas kunstis, õigupoolest nende puudumisest. Esmalt tuleb Triiki nimetada üheks vähestest ekspressionistidest eesti kunstis – tema jaoks oli kunst viis, kuidas väljendada sisemisi (hingelisi, psühholoogilisi, intellektuaalseid) või väliseid (sotsiaalseid, poliitilisi) pingeid. Sääraseid autoreid leidus muidugi veel. Ekspressionism oli 1910. aastatel seoses Esimese maailmasõja puhkemise ning modernsuse pööraste arengutega tõusev lähenemine, kuid üldiselt ei kujunenud sellest eesti kunsti peavoolu. Käesoleva maali jõulised, peaaegu leegitsevad värvid, aga ka maastiku lakoonilisus ning ahtrus annavad märku, et kunstnikku ei ole huvitanud niivõrd „ilusa looduse“ kujutamine, vaid sisemiste impulsside väljendamine.

Teise huvitava detailina torkab silma maali topograafiline paigutus. Võiks ju arvata, et Soome kui Eestile kultuuriliselt, mentaalselt ja geograafiliselt lähedane riik oli siinse kunsti külge tihedate sidemetega kinnitatud. Ometi see nii polnud. Soome tähtsus eesti kirjanikele oli palju olulisem kui kunstnikele, kellest nii mõnigi küll viibis naaberriigis (Konrad Mägi, Aleksander Tassa jt), kuid ei kujutanud seda. Nikolai Triik polnud samuti fennofiil, ent Soome-ainelisi maale on teada tema loomingus mitmeid. Käesolev maal eelnes Triigi

**This** painting is a document of several rather uncommon nuances in Estonian figurative art, more properly of their absence. First of all, Triik has to be named as one of the few Expressionists in Estonian art, meaning that – for him, art was a way to express inner (spiritual, psychological, intellectual) or external (social, political) tensions. There were other such *auteurs* as well, of course. Expressionism was an ascendant approach in the 1910s in connection with the outbreak of the First World War and the exorbitant developments of modernity, but generally speaking, it did not emerge as the mainstream of Estonian art. The bold, almost blazing colours of this painting, but also the laconic nature and sterility of the landscape signal that the artist was not so much interested in depicting “beautiful nature” but rather in expressing inner impulses.

The painting's topographical placement stands out as another interesting detail. It could be presumed that Finland, as a country that was culturally, mentally and geographically close to Estonia, was closely tied to Estonian art. This was nevertheless not so. Finland's importance for Estonian writers, for instance, was much more essential than for artists, of whom quite a few admittedly lived for a time in that neighbouring country (including Konrad Mägi,

<sup>116</sup> ehk ühele kuulsamale teosele, mis kujutab samuti Soomet. On ometi mõtlemapanev, miks Soome lähedusest hoolimata pöördusid eesti kunstnikud inspiratsiooni leidmiseks pigem Capri saarele, Pariisi või Roomasse. Lisaks esimesena pähe turgatanud põhjendustele (Pariis oli kunstikeskus, Rooma täis ajalugu, Lõuna-Euroopa loodus maaliline ja inspireeriv) võiks välja käia ühe mõttekäigu – kuna maalikunst oli eesti kultuuri jaoks 1910. aastatel uus asi, siis otsiti ka uusi motiive. Üllatavalt vähe on 20. sajandi esimese kümnendi kunst täis Eesti loodust ning hämmastavalt palju võime sealt leida hoopis teisi paiku ning nende paikade inimesi.

Aleksander Tassa, and others) but did not depict it. Nikolai Triik was also not a Finnophile, but several paintings on Finnish themes are known of in his oeuvre. This painting preceded one of Triik's perhaps most famous works, which also depicts Finland. It is nevertheless thought-provoking why Estonian artists turned more towards the island of Capri, Paris or Rome to find inspiration, regardless of how close Finland was. In addition to the first justifications that come to mind (Paris was a centre of art, Rome was full of history, the natural settings of all of Southern Europe are picturesque and inspiring, etc.), we could offer as one speculation that since the art of painting was "something new" for Estonian art in the 1910s, then "new motifs" were also sought: art from the 1910s includes surprisingly few Estonian natural settings and we can find an astonishingly large number of other locations and people of those locations in Estonian art instead.

Nikolai Triik  
Aino Suitsu portree  
1914  
Õli, lõuend  
91 × 74 cm

Nikolai Triik  
Portrait of Aino Suits  
1914  
Oil, canvas  
91 × 74 cm





118 **Aino Suits** oli Nikolai Triigi hea sõbra, kirjanik Gustav Suitsu soomlannast abikaasa. Käesoleval maalil on teda kujutatud umbes pool aastat pärast rasket, kuid õnnelikult lõppenud sünnitust, mil Aino Suits tõi ilmale abielupaari esiklapse. Triik saabus nende koju Soomes 1914. aasta juulis. Gustav Suits oli sel hetkel taas kusagil Euroopas ringi rändamas, Triik aga asub tema abikaasat portreeterima. „Armas Gustavel!“ kirjutab juuli lõpus Aino oma abikaasale. „Minule kõige rahulikumateks hetkedeks mu seansid Triigi portree maalimisel: on huvitav temaga jutelda. Minu ilmesse on ta saanud minu mõtted, saadetud armastusega sinule mõeldes (et seda tead), mõtlesin meie kahe tulevikule. Triik maalis ja maalis, kulnud kortsus ja pilt muutus enam ja enam selliseks nii nagu isegi tunnen ennast. Tundsin end nagu teise inimesena seansi ajal, nagu teises maailmas olevat. Päril imelik oli, kui pildi maalimine sel päeval lõppes.“ Juba varem kirjutas Aino Helsingi lähedalt portree maalimisest aga nii: „Ta on sellega väga täpne, et minu isiksusest õieti aru saada. Võrdles mind isegi Mona Lisaga, võtan osa ümbruses juhtuvast, ilma et midagi mind tasakaalust välja viiks – tema arvamine. Seletasin, et meelsasti tahaksin ollagi see isiksus, nagu ta arvab, aga ei ole.“

**Aino Suits** was the Finnish wife of Nikolai Triik's good friend, the writer Gustav Suits. She is depicted in this painting about half a year after a difficult birth that nevertheless ended happily, when Aino Suits gave birth to the married couple's firstborn child. Triik arrived at their home in Finland in July of 1914. Gustav Suits was once again travelling about somewhere in Europe at that time, but Triik set about painting a portrait of his wife. “Dear Gustave!” wrote Aino at the end of July to her husband. “My sessions with Triik for painting the portrait are the most peaceful moments for me: it's interesting to converse with him. He has been able to put my thoughts into my appearance, sent with love thinking about you (so that you would know). I thought of the future of the two of us. Triik painted and painted with his brow furrowed, and the picture became more and more like I myself feel that I am. I felt like I was a different person during the session, as if I were in a different world. It felt quite strange when the painting of the picture ended for that day.” Yet Aino had already written earlier from near Helsinki about the painting of the portrait as follows: “He is very precise with this in order to properly understand my personality. He even compared me to Mona Lisa. I participate in what is happening around me

Aino Suitsu isiksuse ja toonase meeleseisundi kohta on raske üheseid järeldusi teha. Triigi portreel mõjub ta tõesti tasakaalukana, isegi melanhoolsena. Tema pikad juuksed on kinni pandud ja käed lebavad rahulikult süles, ta on ühtaegu veidi unelev ja veidi vanainimeselik – just sellisena kirjeldas teda Elo Tuglas paarkümmend aastat hiljem: „ikka rängad probleemid, targad jutud, kergel-lõbusal pole tema soosingut“.

Selsamal 1914. aasta suvel valmib Triigil ka sõejoonistus, kus on aga hoopis teistsugune Aino Suits. Tema suu on muigvel, pilk pole looritatud, vaid terav – noor ema viibis joonistuse valmimishetkel koos vastsündinuga oma sünnimaal tuttavate keskel. Tumedad silmaümbrused portreel võivad ju viidata ka magamata öödele, kuid enesekindel sõejoonistus ei pruugi tõest samuti kaugel olla. Peatselt saabub tagasi koju ka Gustav Suits. Silmitsedes maali, kirjutab ta inspireerununa luuletuse „Elu muulased“. Selle algusread on juubeldavad: „Sügissuvine veel silmiskelu: / kunstnik! naine! rahu! elu! / Lõuend pildijalale laotatud, / poolelijäänud naisportree.“

Maal oleks peaaegu kogu ülejäänud Gustav ja Aino Suitsu varaga hävinud Teise maailmasõja ajal, kui nende kodu sai pommitabamuse ning

without anything upsetting my equilibrium – his opinion. I explained that I'd gladly like to be the personality that he thinks I am, but I'm not.”

It is difficult to draw unambiguous conclusions concerning Aino Suits's personality and state of mind at that time. She does indeed come across as being level-headed, even wistful and melancholy in Triik's portrait. Her long hair is put up and her hands lie peacefully in her lap. She is simultaneously somewhat dreamy and a little bit like an old person. And precisely like Elo Tuglas describes her some twenty years later, as “still grievous problems, intelligent conversations, the light-hearted and jolly do not win her favour”.

At the same time, Triik also completed a charcoal drawing in the summer of that same year of 1914, which depicts an altogether different Aino Suits. Her mouth is smiling, her gaze is not veiled but rather keen – the young mother was in her native land with her newborn infant among friends at the time that the drawing was made. The dark circles around her eyes in the portrait may also refer to sleepless nights, but the self-confident charcoal drawing also need not necessarily be far from the truth. Soon Gustav Suits also arrived back home. Glancing over the painting, he was inspired to write a poem

120 süttis põlema. Ühena vähestest esemetest õnnestuski neil tulest päästa just antud portree, mille nad kolm aastat hiljem Eestist pagedes koos teiste asjadega kaasa võtsid.

entitled *Elu muulased* (Life's Foreigners). Its opening lines are jubilant: "Still seen in late summer: / artist! wife! peace! life! / Canvas spread out on the easel, / the unfinished portrait of my wife."

This painting almost perished along with the rest of the property of Gustav and Aino Suits during the Second World War, when their home was struck by a bomb and caught fire. Yet they managed to save precisely this portrait from the fire as one of the few objects that survived. Three years later, they were able to take it with them among other things when they fled from Estonia.



# ANTS LAIKMAA

*Ants Laikmaa (1866–1942) sündis ja kasvas Läänemaal, hiljem reisis aastaid Euroopas, kuni naasis Eestisse. Asutas muu hulgas oma ateljeekooli, kus said kunstihariduse väga paljud noored.*

*„Kui ma läinud aasta 1. märtsi hommiku ämaral Rooma olin jõudnud, ei olnud mul esimest, kui asjad vaksalis hoiu peale anda ja kohemaid sinna tötata, sealt alles ringi linna keskpaika ulualust otsima minna. Oo, kuidas me – olev aeg – kihutame! Üks ikka üllatavam kui eelmine leid ja edusamm ajab teist. Ei saa õieti enam imestamagi jääda. Juhtusin Wienis Stephanuse platsile, kui seal kohal, vana doome pilvi pillutava torni ümber õhusõitja oma tiivulist ratsu harjutas. Aga või see enam uudis või ime on... Edasi! Aga siin 2 tuhat ja enam aastat vanade ehituste juurest ei saa paigalt edasi. Siin on midagi „ees“, millest „üle“ ei saa – lennumasinatelt ja kõigest kirevatelt hoolimata. Siin on midagi imestamiseväärilist, suurt, valmit, tõtt – väljaselginud ilusaadusi, mis veel ikka*

*Ants Laikmaa (1866–1942) was born and raised in Lääne County. He later travelled for years in Europe until he returned to Estonia. He founded his own studio school among other things, where very many young people received education in art.*

*“When I had arrived in Rome in the dim morning of 1 March last year, the first thing to do was deposit my things at the railway station and to hurry there right away, and only from there to go round to the city centre to look for a place to stay. Oh, how we – in the present day – race! One invention more surprising than the previous one, and one stride of progress chases another. You can’t even stop to marvel anymore. I happened upon Stephen’s Square in Vienna when an aeronaut scattered clouds as he practiced up above with his winged steed around the old cathedral’s tower. But that’s no news or marvel anymore... Onward! But here you can’t move on from buildings that are 2 thousand and more years old. There’s something “in the way” here that you can’t get*

<sup>122</sup> **seovad ja valitsevad, ka meie „kõige uuematele” viisidele, (stiilidele ja moodidele) toeks ja talaks jätkudes.”**

**Reisikiri Itaaliast (1911)**

**“over” – regardless of flying machines and everything flamboyant. There’s something here that’s marvellous, great, complete, truth – ascertained products of beauty that still connect and rule, continuing as support and foundation for our “newest” approaches (styles and fashions).”**

**Travelogue from Italy (1911)**

Ants Laikmaa  
Vaade Capriilt  
1911–1912  
Pastell, paber  
48,2 × 61,1 cm

Ants Laikmaa  
View from Capri  
1911–1912  
Pastel, paper  
48.2 × 61.1 cm





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**Ants Laikmaa** saadeti 1907. aastal oma poliitilise tegevuse tõttu kodumaalt välja, ning kui ta esmalt peatus Soomes ja Peterburis, siis 1909. aastal reisis ta Lääne-Euroopasse, jõudes 1910. aastal Itaaliasse Rooma. Arvatavasti pani kunstnikku just sellist valikut langetama Itaalia-ihalus ja renessansihuvi, mida ta Soomes kunstiringkondades koges. 1910. aastal siirdus ta Capri saarele, kuhu oli plaaninud jääda paariks päevaks, ent jäi terveks aastaks.

Capril valmisid umbes sadakond tööd, mis on veerand Laikmaa teadaolevast loomingust. (Mitmed varased teosed olid hävinud tulekahjus ning suure osa Capril valminutest müüs ta juba välismaal.) Mitmed leiavad, et tegemist on Laikmaa tipp-perioodiga, näiteks Villem Raam kirjutab: „Laikmaa looming saavutab nüüd oma kõige meisterlikuma, värvijõulisema ja kompositsioonitihedama väljenduse“. Ta tõstab esile värvide erksuse, mis vahepealsetes töödes olid hakanud tuhmuma, samuti mägimaastiku kujutamisel saavutatud rütmilisuse. Maastikumaalidest tõstab Raam esile nn teisel Capri-perioodil (ehk pärast reisi Põhja-Aafrikasse) valminud tööd, sh selle töö teise, väiksema ja varem valminud variandi, Eesti Kunstimuuseumi kollektsioonis oleva „Bagni di Tiberio“ (1912), kus „võib märgata uut värvipindade

**Ants Laikmaa** was expelled from his homeland in 1907 for his political activity. While he initially stayed in Finland and St. Petersburg, in 1909 he travelled to Western Europe, arriving in Rome, Italy in 1910. The yearning for Italy and the interest in the Renaissance that he experienced among circles of artists in Finland presumably inspired him to make precisely this choice. He went to the island of Capri in 1910, where he planned to stay for a couple of days but where he ended up staying for a whole year.

About a hundred works were completed on Capri, which is a quarter of Laikmaa's known oeuvre. (Many early works had been destroyed in a fire, and while he was still abroad, he already sold a large portion of what he had completed on Capri.) Many find that this was Laikmaa's finest period. For instance, Villem Raam writes: "Laikmaa's creative work now achieves its most masterful, boldly colourful and compositionally developed expression." Raam highlights the vividness of the colours, which had started becoming duller in the works Laikmaa had completed in the meantime. Raam also points out the rhythm Laikmaa achieved in depicting mountain landscapes. Of Laikmaa's landscape paintings, Raam points out works completed during

tihenemist, kontuuride pehmenemist“, nii et „Vahemere ere päike nagu hajutaks kontuuride selguse vaevu märgatavaks äärjoonte virvenduseks“. Oma reisikirjades, mida Laikmaa peaaegu terve rännutee vältel koju saadab, arutleb ta ka Viinis ning Budapestis nähtud kunstielamuste ja uuemate suundumuste üle. Eriti näivadki tema kunstikäsitlesega haakuvat impressionismimeistrite tööd, mida ta hindab kui „värsked, lühikese aja sünnitusi“ ja rõhutab, et võib sündida „igast harjutustööstki või katsest geniaalne kunstitöö, mida teine kõige hoolsama töövaevaga kätte ei saa“.

Antud teos kujutab veepinnast kõrguvat Bagni di Tiberio kaljumassiivi, mille efektset käsitlust selgitab hästi ka Laikmaa kirjeldus: „Paradiis! Alati selge sinine taevast, ümber saart vesi, mille sarnast ma enne pole näinud: tumedam ja selle juures selgem azuursinine, mille sisse end hiigla kaljud peegeldavad.“ Kaljudega näibki Laikmaal olevat mingi eriline suhe, sest Tuglasele kirjutab ta Capris viibimise algul: „Soomes oli mul mitu „minu kaljut“ – siin veel ei ühtegi „oma“.“ Võimalik, et selleks „oma kaljuks“ saigi just antud kalju ja seda ümbritsev vesi, kuna kahte varianti Laikmaa harilikult ühestki tööst ei teinud.

Indrek Hirv on käesolevast teosest kirjutanud pikemalt:

his so-called second Capri period (in other words, after his trip to Northern Africa), including the second, smaller and less complete version of this work, *Bagni di Tiberio* (1912) in the Art Museum of Estonia collection, where “one can notice a new densification of colour surfaces, a softening of contours”, so that “the bright Mediterranean sunshine appears to dissipate the clarity of the contours into a barely noticeable flicker of outlines”. In his travelogues, which Laikmaa sent home throughout almost the entire route of his travels, he also discusses the artistic experiences and newer trends that he saw in Vienna and Budapest. Works by masters of Impressionism in particular appear to fit in with his understandings of art. He appreciates these works as “fresh products produced in a short time” and stresses that a “brilliant work of art” can be produced “even from any experiment or work done for practice, which someone else cannot achieve even from the most diligent toil”.

This work depicts the Bagni di Tiberio rock massif, the striking treatment of which is also explained well in Laikmaa’s description: “Paradise! The sky always clear blue, water around the island the likes of which I’ve never seen before: darker, and beside that clearer azure blue, into which the gigantic cliffs reflect”. Laikmaa appears to have had some sort

126 „Itaalia paadimehed laulavad. Kui tahate ümber saarenurga paadisõitu teha, minge Piccola Marinasse, sealt saab paadi odavamalt. Paadimees ümiseb ja laulab muudkui oma magusaid poognaid, kasseerib naeratades paarkümmend tuhat liiri ning tõmbab mootori käima.

Sõit võtab üllatavalt vähe aega – ja suure kaljumäe vari, kuhu te jõuate, on üllatavalt hele: mere marmorpõhi hiilgab siniselt ja sinetab nõnda viimasedki sopid. Ainult kuulsad Sinised grotid jäävad pimedaks. Aga nendeni on veel mõni kilomeeter. Üleval kaljumäe otsas on pilla-palla Tiberiuse villa marmorsambad (ajal, mil Kristus ristisurma suri, elas keiser parajasti Capril), eemal paistab maanina vaevueristatavate Sorrento katustega. Üheksakümne aastaga ei muutu siin midagi.“

of special relationship with cliffs because he wrote to Tuglas at the start of his stay on Capri: “I had many “my cliffs” in Finland – here I don’t have a single one yet that I can call “my own”.” It is possible that this cliff and the water around it became that “cliff of his own” since as a rule, Laikmaa did not make two versions of the same work.

Indrek Hirv has written at length about this work: “Italian boatmen sing. If you want to take a boat ride around the corner of the island, go to the Piccola Marina. You can get a cheaper boat there. The boatman keeps humming and singing his sweet tunes, smiles as he cashes in some twenty thousand lira, and starts the motor up.

The ride takes surprisingly little time – and the shadow of the big cliff that you arrive at is surprisingly light: the marble bottom of the sea shines blue and thus makes even the smallest loughs blue. Only the famous Blue Grottos remain dark. But they are still a few kilometres away. Up on top of the cliff are the pell-mell marble columns of Tiberius’s villa (the emperor happened to be living on Capri at the time when Christ died the death of crucifixion). In the distance, a cape can be seen with barely discernible Sorrento roofs. Nothing changes here in ninety years.”

Ants Laikmaa  
Männid mererannal  
1916  
Pastell, paber  
51,2 × 67 cm

Ants Laikmaa  
Pine Trees on the Seashore  
1916  
Pastel, paper  
51.2 × 67 cm





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## „Männid mererannal“

on teadaolevalt üks Laikmaa suuremõõtmelisemaid teoseid. Seda tähelepanuväärsem, et kunstnik on valinud motiiviks nabi kodumaa vaate – vaid mõni aasta varem Capri saarel elades ja töötades kujutas ta arvukalt lopsakat, dramaatilist ning ülevat lõunamaa loodust. Sellele foonile asetades mõjub maal esmalt üllatuslikuna, kuid lähemalt silmitsedes võime näha tervet rida sarnasusi Capri vaadetega: nii erinevad põhjaranniku määndide ja Capri piiniate puutüved vaid nüansi võrra, maastikku defineerib samasugune kumerjas kontuur ning valitseb romantiline atmosfäär sillerdava vee ja päikeseloojanguga. Säärane romantika ei olnud Laikmaale sugugi võõras: talle tähendas maastiku kujutamine sageli ka sinna teatud tunnete projitseerimist ning päikeseloojang, mis näiteks Konrad Mägi või Edvard Munchi maalidel omandas apokalüptilise tähenduse, on Laikmaal väga selgelt mõeldud selleks, et romantiseerida vaadet ning panna vaataja heldima.

Võimalik, et antud tundetooni põhjusi tasub otsida ka Laikmaa biograafiast. Enne teose „Männid mererannal“ loomist oli ta aastaid välismaal elanud. Lahkuma sundisid teda 1905. aasta revolutsiooni järelmõjud, mis ajas mitmed kultuuriinimesed poliitilisse pagulusse. Sellele

**Although** this painting is not enormous, it is one of the largest known works by Laikmaa. It is all the more remarkable that the artist has chosen a scant view of his Estonian homeland as his motif – only a few years earlier when he lived and worked on the island of Capri, the artist profusely depicted the exuberant, dramatic and noble natural settings of the lands of the South. If we consider the work on this background, *Pine Trees on the Seashore* initially comes across surprisingly, but if we take a closer look at it, we can see a whole series of similarities with his views of Capri: thus the tree trunks of the pine trees on the northern coast differ by only a nuance from the pines on Capri. The same kind of rounded contour defines the landscape and a romantic atmosphere prevails, with sparkling water and a sunset. Such romance was not at all foreign to Laikmaa: for him, the depiction of landscape often also meant the projection of certain feelings into the depiction, and the sunset, which acquired an apocalyptic meaning in the paintings of Konrad Mägi or Edvard Munch, for instance, is very clearly meant to romanticise the view in Laikmaa's works and to move the viewer.

It is possible that the reasons for these tones of feeling should be sought in Laikmaa's biography.



järgnesid rännuaastad mööda Euroopat ning alles mõni aasta enne käesoleva teose maalimist oli Laikmaal võimalik naasta kodumaale. Erinevalt näiteks Konrad Mägist või ka Eduard Wiiraltist oli Laikmaa välismaal elades vägagi Eesti-usku ning igatses siia pidevalt tagasi. Seetõttu tundub täiesti loogiline, miks kodust lahkuma sunnitud inimene pärast naasmist otsustab kujutada kodumaad õhtuse romantilise päikeseloojangu taustal. See on idüll, millega ei saa vaielda ning mis jätkab ajastule omast tunderikast suhtumist Eestisse.

Teos kuulus Laikmaa naabri, kirjanik Jakob Mändmetsa kollektsiooni.

He had lived abroad for years before creating *Pine Trees on the Seashore*. The aftereffects of the Revolution of 1905 forced him to leave, just as it sent many cultural figures into political exile. This was followed by years of travel around Europe and it was possible for Laikmaa to return to his homeland only a few years before this work was painted. Unlike Konrad Mägi, for instance, or also Eduard Wiiralt, Laikmaa was very much Estonian-oriented when he lived abroad, and he constantly yearned to return to Estonia. This is why it seems entirely logical that someone forced to leave his homeland decides to depict his homeland on the background of a romantic evening sunset after his return. This is an idyll that one cannot argue with and which continues the attitude towards Estonia that was filled with feelings, which was inherent to that era.

This work belonged to the collection of the writer Jakob Mändmets, who was Laikmaa's neighbour.

Ants Laikmaa  
Selma  
1922  
Pastell, paber  
82 × 55,5 cm

Ants Laikmaa  
Selma  
1922  
Pastel, paper  
82 × 55.5 cm

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**Ants Laikmaa** maalis kodukandist, Läänemaalt Vigalast pärit inimesi sageli ja võib öelda et programmiselt. Laikmaale polnud portreerimise juures esmatähtis mitte niivõrd inimese individuaalsus, kui võrd nende kuulumine ühte laiemasse projekti, mida võiks kirjeldada kui „rahvuse ehitamine“. Kuigi Laikmaa on portreedel alati osavalt balansseerinud portreemaalija suure dilemma piiril – kuidas tuua esile neutraalselt tema ees istuva inimese visuaalne vorm ja samas anda sellele juurde piisavalt mikrodramatismi, mis tooks välja inimese eripära –, on ta alati rõhutanud ka teiseseid aspekte. Nii näeme Selmagi puhul, et profiili pööratud naisterahvas mõjub nii noore tütarlapse kui ka rahvariiete mannekeenina. Rahvarõivaste ja muude rahvuslike lisandite – näiteks sõlgede rõhutamine oli Laikmaa Vigala portreede puhul tavaline: kunstnik soovis, et inimesed ei tajuks portreeritavaid mitte ainult lähtuvalt nende soost ja vanusest, vaid et sinna juurde lisanduks alati ka rahvuslik määratlus. Eelkõige 20. sajandi alguses oli tegemist selgelt poliitilise sammuga, kuna inimeste defineerimine nende rahvusliku kuuluvuse järgi oli alles päris uus mõte ning Vene impeeriumis ka mässuline idee. „Selma“ on maalitud aastaid hiljem juba pärast iseseisvuse väljakuulutamist ning seetõttu on tema mõju pigem lokaalsem ja etnograafilisem. Mustal

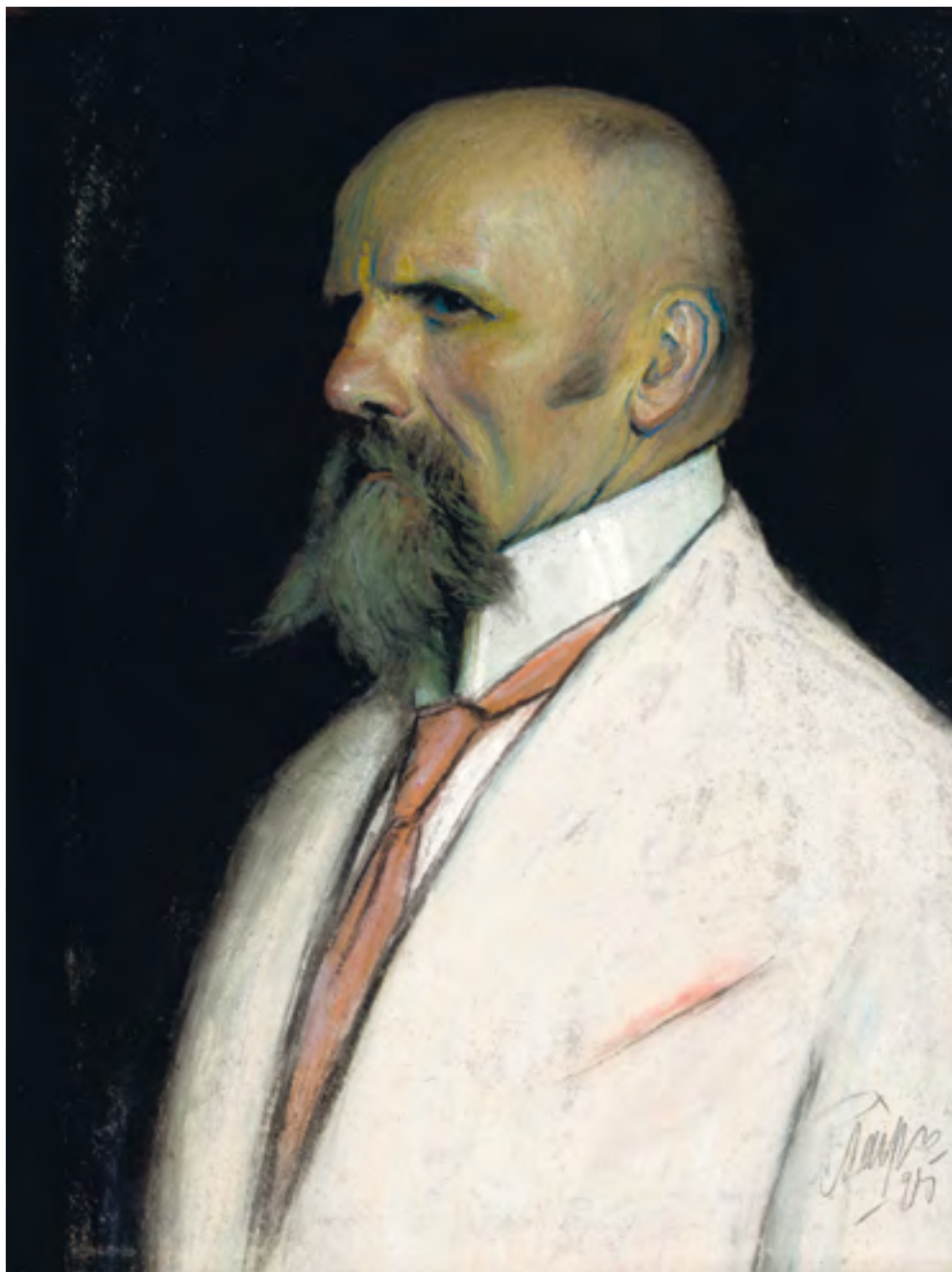
**Ants Laikmaa** often painted people from his home neighbourhood in Vigala, Lääne County and it can be said that he did so programmatically. This means that people's individuality was not of primary importance for Laikmaa in painting portraits of these people, but rather the fact that they belonged to a broader project that could be described as the “building of a people”. Although in his portraits, Laikmaa has always skilfully balanced between the portrait painter's great dilemma – how to accentuate the visual form of the person sitting neutrally in front of him and at the same time to add sufficient micro-dramatism to it that would bring out the person's distinctiveness – Laikmaa has always stressed secondary aspects, so to speak, as well. Thus we see in the case of *Selma* as well that the female turned to profile position comes across not only as a young girl, but also as a folk costume mannequin. Emphasising folk costumes and other accessories (for instance brooches) that defined nationality was usual in the case of Laikmaa's Vigala portraits: the artist wanted people to perceive the subjects of his portraits not only on the basis of their gender, age and other such aspects, but also that the determination of nationality would always be added to it as well. Particularly at the outset of

132 foonil joonistuvad efektselt välja riiete mustrid ning toonid, ent meie rahvarõivastega harjunud silm fikseerib Selma kantavad rõivad nüüd juba täpsemalt „Vigala rahvariietaena“. Laikmaa maal on ühe tütarlapse kaudu jäädvustanud meie jaoks tükikese ühe maanuka inimeste maailmapildist, mis peegeldub nende rahvarõivastes.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was clearly a political step, since the definition of people according to their nationality was still quite a new idea, and also a rebellious idea in the Russian Empire. *Selma* was painted years later after independence had already been declared and for this reason, its effect was more local and ethnographic. The patterns and tones of the folk costume come strikingly to the fore on the black background, but our eyes that are accustomed to seeing folk costumes now indentify the clothing worn by Selma more precisely as “Vigala folk costume” and send a signal to the brain that by way of a girl, Laikmaa’s painting has recorded for us a little piece of the entire world view of the people from one corner of the world that is reflected in this folk costume.

Ants Laikmaa  
Autoportree  
1925  
Pastell, papp  
35,5 × 54 cm

Ants Laikmaa  
Self-Portrait  
1925  
Pastel, cardboard  
35.5 × 54 cm





134 **1925.** aastal sai Ants Laikmaa 59-aastaseks. Ta oli üle kahekümne aasta olnud üks eesti kunsti käilakujusid, tema ateljeekoolis oli saanud hariduse terve rida noori talente, tema suhtlusringkond oli lai ning joviaalse stiiliga Laikmaa oli seltskonna hing. Ometi heidab Laikmaa sel autoportreeel vaatajale altkulmu pilgu. Midagi oli temas tõesti muutunud, saabunud oli tõsinemise ja võib-olla ka väikese kibestumise periood, mis algas viis-kuus aastat varem. Toona esines Laikmaa veel näitustel, kuid uus kriitikapõlvkond liigitas ta vananenuks ning algas Laikmaa aktiivsest kunstielust eemaldumine. Ta ei olnud ainus. Ka Nikolai Triik sai hävitavate hinnangute osaliseks ning tema reaktsioon oli veel valulisem, lõppedes järjekindla enesehävitamisega. Laikmaa ei varisenud kokku, tema natuur poleks allaandmist lubanud, kuid olles üks Eesti kunstielu rajajaid, ei mõjunud sealt kõrvalejäämine kindlasti hästi.

Autoportree oli Laikmaa loomingus tähtsal kohal, ta maalib end korduvalt. Sealjuures torkab silma, et Laikmaa ei ürita dokumenteerida enese vananemist, vaid programmiline enesekujutiste loomine näib teenivat üht teist eesmärki: soovi talletada ajalukku kuvand endast kui tõsisest ja väarikast mehest. Laikmaa ei naerata portreedel kunagi, kasutab pigem tumedat fooni, riietub rangelt, tema näoilme ulatub sügavamõttelisest torssis olekuni. See on

**Ants Laikmaa** turned 59 in 1925. He had been one of the figureheads of Estonian art for over twenty years. A whole series of young talents had been educated at his studio school. His social network was broad and with his jovial style, Laikmaa was a landmark of society. Still, Laikmaa glares at the viewer here in this self-portrait. Something really had changed in him. A period of turning more serious, and perhaps of also becoming somewhat embittered, had arrived, which had begun some five or six years previously. Laikmaa still continued to participate in exhibitions at that time, but the new critical generation categorised him as being outdated, and Laikmaa began to withdraw from active participation in the art scene. He was not the only one. Nikolai Triik was also subjected to withering criticism and his reaction was even more painful, ending with consistent self-destruction. Laikmaa did not collapse. His disposition would not have permitted surrender, but as one of the founders of the Estonian art scene, being left out of it certainly did not have a positive effect.

Self-portraits occupied an important place in Laikmaa's oeuvre. He painted himself repeatedly. It stands out thereat that Laikmaa does not try to document his ageing, rather his programmatic

kummalises vastuolus mälestustega Laikmaast. Autoportreede põhjal võiksime järeldada, et Laikmaa oli range ja tusane, samas kui inimesed meenutavad teda peaaegu arlekiinina, kelle rõõmsameelsus, energia, lahkus ja mängulisus saatsid teda ärkamisest uinumiseni. Hämmastav vastuolu mälestuste loodud pildi ja tema enese maalitud kujutise vahel kõneleb meile ilmselt ka kunstniku usust, et erinevalt heast naljast ja lõbusast olukorrast säilib maal igavesti. Laikmaa ei maalinud ennast mitte olevikku, vaid igavikku silmas pidades.

depiction of himself appears to serve another objective: the wish to preserve the image of himself in history as a serious and dignified man. Laikmaa never smiles in his portraits. He more often uses a dark background, dresses austerely, and his facial expression ranges from sapiential to pouting. This is in curious contradiction to memories of Laikmaa. We could infer from his self-portraits that Laikmaa was stern and grouchy, while at the same time people remember him as being almost a harlequin, whose joyfulness, energy, geniality and playfulness accompanied him from when he awoke to when he went to sleep. The astonishing contradiction between the picture created by memories and his own painted image apparently also tells us about the artist's belief that unlike a good joke and a cheerful situation, paintings last forever. Laikmaa painted himself keeping eternity in mind, and not the present.

Ants Laikmaa  
Taebla maastik  
1936  
Pastell, paber  
37 × 50,5 cm

Ants Laikmaa  
Taebla Landscape  
1936  
Pastel, paper  
37 × 50.5 cm

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**1936.** aastaks oli Ants Laikmaa 70-aastane ning seljataga oli 40-aastane aktiivne loometegevus. Mõni aasta enne „Taebla maastiku“ valmimist sulges Laikmaa aga oma ateljeekooli Tallinnas ning siirdus tagasi kodukanti Taeblasse. Alfred Vaga sõnul teostas Laikmaa selle kaudu „oma ammuse igatsuse maaelu järele“.

Kuigi Laikmaa reisis sajandi esimesel tosinal aastal sageli, kumab juba tema Capriilt saadetud kirjadest soov leida sobiv paik, kuhu ehitada endale talu ja sinna elama jääda. Kunstniku biograafi Endel Nirgi sõnul pärines see tahtmine juba Soome-aegadest (1907–1909) ning Laikmaa olevat juba ringi vaadanud Leetse rannas, Haapsalu ümbruses, Pirita jõekaldal, Sõrves ja Nõval, kuid kord olevat koht liialt kallis olnud, siis aga Tallinnast liiga kaugel. 1913. aasta suvel kõndis Laikmaa aga Paliverest Haapsallu ning kunstnik on meenutanud esimest kohtumist tulevase kodupaigaga: „Vaatasin: just kui „kodu“ – mitte see viljalopsakas Vigala – ei, aga see kaugem, vana muistne, kehv orjane Eesti, kurv ja kangelaselik. Raskelt „ilus“ ja kehvalt „kaunis“.“

1915. aastal õnnestuski Laikmaal sõbra toel osta Taeblas Tammiku talu pool krunti. Juba siis püstitas ta ajutise peavarju, kuid 1920. aastate algul algas pikk, kulukas ja pidevalt katkenud

**Ants Laikmaa** was 70 years old by 1936 and 40 years of active creative work were behind him by then. A few years before the completion of *Taebla Landscape*, Laikmaa closed down his studio school in Tallinn and moved back to his home neighbourhood in Taebla. According to Alfred Vaga, Laikmaa thereby brought to fruition “his long-standing yearning for rural life”.

Although Laikmaa travelled a great deal during the first dozen years of the century, the wish to find a suitable place where he could build a farmhouse for himself and go to live there is already expressed in letters he sent from Capri. According to the artist’s biographer Endel Nirk, this wish already originated from Laikmaa’s Finnish period (1907–1909). Laikmaa is said to have already looked around on Leetse Beach, in the Haapsalu area, along the banks of Pirita River, in Sõrve and Nõva, but in one case he had considered the place to be too expensive, another was too far from Tallinn, and so on. Yet in the summer of 1913, Laikmaa walked from Palivere to Haapsalu, and the artist has recalled his first encounter with his future home: “I looked: just like “home” – not that Vigala, so abundant in grain – no, but that more distant, old ancient, poor enslaved Estonia, sad and heroic. Heavily “beautiful” and poorly “lovely”.”

138 projekteerimisprotsess. Laikmaa plaanid Taebлага olid suured, ta soovis sinna ehitada eesti rahvusliku taluarhitektuuri mõjutustega hoone, mis nägi muu hulgas ette ruumi teiste kunstnike suvekodudele. Lisaks hakkas Laikmaa tegelema ka vōsastunud karjamaa ümberkujundamisega pargiks, lastes seda harvendada ja istutades juurde uusi puid, sealhulgas noori kuuski (näha ka käesoleval tööil), kuid kohalikud olid need jõulupuudeks maha raiunud. „Kui teenija ümberkaudu taludesse toidukraami ostmise ettekäändel luurele saadeti, leiti mõni puuke küll üles, aga ega keegi neid enam uuesti kasvama saanud panna,“ kirjutab Nirk.

Päriselt elama siirdus Laikmaa Taeblasse 1932. aasta kevadel. Seal oli selleks hetkeks valminud aga vaid üks tuba, samuti halvenes tervis ning uusi maale peaaegu ei sünnigi. 1934. aasta hilissügisel tabas kunstnikku vasaku kehapoole osaline halvatus, pärast paranemist Haapsalus sai ta käia vaid kepiga. 1936. aasta varakevadel – ajal, mil ilmselt valminud käesolev töö – liikusid edasi tööd tema maja kallal ning töömehed asusid ateljeeosa püstitama. Ometi kummitasid Laikmaad edasi rahamured. Ilmselt on ka käesolev töö üks neist, mille Laikmaa kiiresti realiseerida püüdis, et leida mingeidki vahendeid oma võlgade tasumiseks.

In 1915, Laikmaa succeeded with the support of a friend in purchasing half of the lot of the Tammiku farm in Taebła. He already built a temporary shelter then, but the long, costly and constantly interrupted design process began at the outset of the 1920s. Laikmaa had big plans for Taebła. He wanted to build a building there influenced by Estonian folk farm architecture, but he also envisaged space for the summer homes of other artists, and other such projects. Among other things, Laikmaa also started redesigning overgrown pasture into a park, having the trees thinned out there and planting additional new trees. Among other things, he planted young spruce trees (these are also visible in this work), but the locals had cut them down for use as Christmas trees. “When a servant was sent out on reconnaissance to the surrounding farms under the pretext of buying foodstuffs, a couple of the little trees were admittedly found, but nobody could get them to start growing again,” writes Nirk.

Laikmaa moved to live permanently in Taebła in the spring of 1932. By that time, however, only one room had been completed there. His health worsened at the same time, and almost no new paintings were completed. Partial paralysis of the left side

Maale minekust alates lõi Laikmaa äärmiselt vähe uusi maale, kokku on teada umbes 40 teost – varem sündis neid tema käe all sama palju ühe aastaga. Enamjaolt loob Laikmaa nüüd portreid tuttavatest ja sugulastest, maastikuvaateid on teadaolevalt vaid kümmekond.

of his body struck the artist in the late autumn of 1934 and although he recovered in Haapsalu, he could thereafter only walk with the aid of a cane.

In the early summer of 1936 – at the time when this work was evidently completed – work proceeded on his house and workmen started erecting the studio part of the house. Yet financial worries still continued to haunt Laikmaa. This work is also probably one of the works that Laikmaa tried to sell off quickly in order to obtain even some means for paying off his debts.

Starting from the time that he moved to the countryside, Laikmaa created extremely few new paintings. A total of about 40 paintings is known, which is a total that he had previously typically created in the space of one year. From that point onward, Laikmaa created portraits of friends and relatives, and only some ten landscape views are known of.

# PAUL BURMAN

<sup>140</sup> *Paul Burman (1888–1934) oli baltisaksa päritolu kunstnik, kes sündis Ukrainas ja kasvas üles Tallinnas. Ta õppis Ants Laikmaa juures, aga lühiajaliselt ka Peterburis, Moskvas, Riias ja Pariisis. Alates 1918. aastast elas ta haiglas.*

*Paul Burman (1888–1934) was an artist of Baltic German origin who was born in Ukraine and grew up in Tallinn. He studied under the instruction of Ants Laikmaa, but also for a short time in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Riga and Paris. Starting in 1918, he lived in a hospital.*

Paul Burman  
Raekoja plats  
1916  
Õli, lõuend  
60 × 72 cm

Paul Burman  
Town Hall Square  
1916  
Oil, canvas  
60 × 72 cm





142 **Paul Burmani** naturis oli olla kirglik, peaaegu obsessiivne maalikunstnik. Maalimine ei olnud talle mitte hobi, töö või kutsumus, vaid eksistentsiaalne tegu: ilma maalimiseta polnuks ka Burmani. Juba lapsena olevat ta paberi puudusel akna peale hingeauru puhunud ja siis näpuga sinna kiiresti loomi joonistanud. Säärane kirglikkus, pidev maalimine, üha uute teoste loomine ka elu kõige raskematel hetkedel määras mõneti ära ka Burmani loomislaadi: improvisatsiooniline, kiire, reageeriv. Eesti kunsti traditsioonis näeme pigem teistsuguseid arenguliine: töörohkeid, detailseid, põhjalikult läbimaalivaid. Burmani kergust ja impulsiivsust saab ehk võrrelda Konrad Mägi lähenemisega – temagi ei pööranud liialt tähelepanu nüanssidele, tervik sündis ennekõike värvide pealtnäha isetekkelisest harmooniast.

„Raekoja plats“ oli aastaid kadunuks peetud töö, ainult Tartu Kunstimuseumi arhiivis oli hoiul üks mustvalge foto. Hiljuti leitud maal kujutab huvitaval kombel talve, mida eesti autorid on pigem eiranud: ehkki talv ja suvi on meil enam-vähem võrdse pikkusega, leidub suvemaastikke kümneid või isegi sadu kordi rohkem kui talvevaateid. Siiski näeme ka Burmani teoses õhku, avarust ja majade akendes peegelduvat päikest – hoolimata eluraskustest võib Burmani maalid lugeda

**It** was in Paul Burman's nature to be a passionate, almost obsessive painter. Painting was not a hobby, a job or a calling for him, but rather an existential act: without painting, Burman would not have existed either. Even as a child, since he did not have paper he is said to have exhaled on the window in order to draw with his finger quickly disappearing drawings of animals. Such passion, constant painting, the creation of more and more new works even in the most difficult moments of his life also determined Burman's creative style in some respects: improvisational, quick, reactive. We see rather different lines of development in Estonian art tradition: labour-intensive, detailed, thoroughly painted. Burman's lightness and impulsiveness is comparable perhaps to Konrad Mägi's approach. He did not pay too much attention to nuances either and the whole was born first and foremost out of the seemingly self-generating harmony of colours

*Town Hall Square* is a work that for years had been thought to be lost. There was only one black and white photograph of it hidden in the archive of the Tartu Art Museum. Interestingly, this recently emerged painting depicts winter, which Estonian *auteurs* have tended to disregard: although both winter and summer are of more or less equal length in Estonia, there are tens, if not hundreds, of times

elujaatavateks. Sealjuures tähendab „elu“ Burmanile hoogsust, mööduvust, dünaamikat – me näeme, kuidas inimesi ja hobuseid kujutades liigub tema pintsel kiiresti, süvenemata modellide olemusse ja isegi mitte välimusse. Ent kuigi elusolendid moodustavad maali pindalalt vaid kaduvväikese osa, on nad seal ometi olemas ning loovad arhitektuurilisele linnavaatele hoopis ühe teise atmosfääri, teatud mõttes linnalt tema anonüümsust võttes ja seda inimlikustamisega asendades.

more summer landscapes than views of winter. We nevertheless also see air, openness and the sun reflected in the windows of the houses in Burman's work: regardless of the difficulties of life, Burman's paintings can be considered life-affirming. Thereat "life" means impetuosity, transience, dynamics for Burman – we see how his paintbrush moves rapidly in depicting people and horses. He does not delve into the psychology or even the physiology of his models. Yet although living beings account for only a miniscule part of the painting's surface area, they are nevertheless there and they create an altogether different atmosphere for this architectural cityscape, in a certain sense taking the city's anonymity away from it and replacing it with humanisation.

Paul Burman  
Pirita klooster  
Dateerimata  
Õli, vineer  
51 × 71 cm

Paul Burman  
Pirita Abbey  
Undated  
Oil, plywood  
51 × 71 cm

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**Nagu** öeldud, oli kunst Paul Burmanile lahutamatu osa eksistentsist – väljaspool maalimist polnudki tal elu. Ometi ei tähenda see, et Burmani elulised kogemused oleksid vahetult üle kandunud tema kunsti. Pigem isegi vastupidi: Burmani kunsti põhjal ei saa teha järeldusi tema elu kohta. Nii võiks ka „Pirita klooster“ kõnelda ju autori traagilisest eluperioodist, mil ta viibis ravil vaimuhaiglas, kuid siin puuduvad sellest igasugused märgid.

Burman viibis püsiravil vaimuhaiglas alates 1918. aastast, mil ta oli 30-aastane. On meenutatud, et Burman tundis huvi vaid maalimise vastu, kuid näiteks raamatud ja kaaspatsiendid jätsid teda ükskõikseks. Burman töötas endiselt väga kiiresti, mis tähendas ühtlasi hoogsat pintslikirja, jõulisi värvikombinatsioone, aga ka teatavat etüüdilikkust. Algusest peale maalis ta meelsasti loomi, samuti maastikke, linnavaateid ja natüürmorte (eriti lilli) ning nende motiividega jätkas ta ka haiglas viibides.

Arvatakse, et Burman ei mõistnud täielikult oma olukorda ning seetõttu on tema haiglas valminud tööd sageli ka mahedates toonides, millele lisandus tumeroheline. Tema loojanatuuriga sobis kiirete maastikuvaadete maalimine jalutuskäikudel – haigla ümber oli looduslik park, veidi kaugemal viljapõllud ja heinamaad, taamal mets. „Burman läks kodunt

**As** has already been stated – art was an inseparable part of existence for Paul Burman. He had no life outside of painting. This still does not mean that Burman’s life experiences were directly transferred to his art. Even the opposite is more likely: inferences concerning his life cannot be drawn on the basis of Burman’s art. Thus *Pirita Abbey* could also speak of the tragic period of Burman’s life when he was undergoing treatment at a mental hospital, but there are no signs whatsoever of this here.

Burman received continuous treatment at a mental hospital from 1918 onward, when he was 30 years old. It has been recalled that Burman had not the slightest interest in books or fellow patients, for instance. He was only interested in painting. Burman continued to work very quickly, which also meant a dynamic brushing style, bold colour combinations, but also certain similarities to the study genre. His favourite theme had been animals from the very beginning, but also landscapes, cityscapes and still-lives (especially flowers), and he continued with these motifs while he was in the hospital as well.

It has been presumed that Burman did not fully understand his situation and for this reason, his works completed at the hospital are also often in

146 välja, maalimiskast ja vineerid või papid kaasas, ning leidnud sobiva istumispaiga kas kivil või kännul, hakkas tööle," kirjutab Burmani uurija Aino Kartna. Jaan Koorti lesk Mari Koort on meenutanud, et kui ta viibis Pariisis koos Paul Burmaniga, siis piisas viimasel veerand tunnist kuni tunnist, et maal valmis saada. Niimoodi otse looduses või linnas kujutatavat vaadates oli ta pidevalt töötanud. Kuna Burman oli nn vabakäiguhaige, siis lubas haigla peaarst, Burmani lähedane toetaja, kunstnikul kaugemaidki retki ette võtta. Nii on teada mitu vanalinna- ja Pirita kloostri vaadet – viimane võlus ilmselt oma arhitektuurilise eripära ja romantilise atmosfääriga, mis sobis Burmani emotsionaalse närvikavaga. Üldiselt dateeris Burman oma töid väga harva ning nende ajalise määratlemisega on hiljem tekkinud raskusi, mis viitab veel kord sellele, et olulisi ja suuri murranguid Burmani loomingus ei olnud. Käesoleva töö puhul võib oletada, et see on valminud 1920. aastatel. 1920–1922 Burman vastavalt oma raviarsti ettekirjutustele peaaegu ei töötanudki, kuid seejärel olevat temas taas tärganud loomisrõõm, mis peegeldus ka värvide kirkamaks muutumises. Ta maalis taas palju, suur osa neist töödest koondus raviarsti dr von Kugelgeni kollektsiooni, paljud õnnestus ka müüa.

mellow tones, to which dark green was also added while he was in the hospital. He had continued painting constantly, since painting quick landscape views on his walks suited his creative nature. The hospital was surrounded by a natural park, followed by fields of grain and hayfields, with woods farther on. Burman frequently painted the woods, and also painted in the woods. "Burman went out of his home with his easel box and plywood or cardboard bases, and once he found a suitable place to sit down on either a rock or a stump, he set to work," writes Aino Kartna, who researches Burman. Jaan Koort's widow Mari Koort has recalled that when she was with Paul Burman in Paris, then a quarter of an hour to an hour was enough for him to complete a painting. He had constantly worked in that way, looking at what he was depicting directly in nature or in the city. Since Burman was a patient who was allowed to come and go as he pleased, the hospital's chief physician, Burman's close supporter, allowed the artist to undertake more distant excursions as well. Thus several views of the Old Town are known, for instance, and Burman also made it to Pirita on his painting excursions. Many other views of Pirita Abbey are known of, which evidently charmed him with its distinct architectural features, but also with its romantic atmosphere, which suited Burman's emotional nervous system.

Generally speaking, Burman very rarely dated his works and there have later been great difficulties in dating them. This refers once more to the fact that there were no great and important turning points in Burman's oeuvre. The dating of this work is unspecified, but it can be presumed that it was completed in the 1920s. According to the observations of his attending physician, Burman practically did not work all in 1920-1922, but thereafter the joy of creation reportedly reappeared in him, which was also reflected in his use of brighter colours. Once again he painted a great deal. A large number of these works were gathered into the collection of his attending physician Dr. von Kügelgen. He also succeeded in selling many of his works.

# HERBERT LUKK

<sup>148</sup> *Herbert Lukk (1892–1919) oli ühtaegu sõjaväelane ja maalikunstnik, kes oli pärit Tallinna lähedalt. Ta õppis Ants Laikmaa juures ja Helsingis. Lukk langes Vabadussõjas.*

*Herbert Lukk (1892–1919) was a soldier and a painter simultaneously who came from the vicinity of Tallinn. He studied under the instruction of Ants Laikmaa and in Helsinki. Lukk died in action in the Estonian War of Independence.*

Herbert Lukk  
Sügismaastik kaevuga  
1918  
Segatehnika, lõuend  
39,4 × 34,8 cm

Herbert Lukk  
Autumn Landscape with Well  
1918  
Mixed media, canvas  
39.4 × 34.8 cm





150 **Esmajoones** professionaalne sõdur olnud Herbert Lukk maalis oma elus vähe, pühendades suure osa ajast teenimisele erinevates armeedes ning langedes noorelt Vabadussõjas. Käesolev motiiv on maalitud Lukile väga tüüpiliselt erksate, peaaegu segamata värvidega, ning sel moel, et motiiv on peaaegu äratundmatu. Kui me seda maali vaatame, siis ennekõike värve, mitte niivõrd nende üleminekuid, sulandumisi, kattumisi, vaid puhast värvi kui niisugust. Tavaliselt seostatakse sääraseid erksaid sooje toone „optimismi“ ja „elujaatamisega“, värvidele antakse emotsionaalne väärtus, kuigi kunstnikku võib huvitada mitte emotsioon, vaid hoopis pigment ja tema visuaalne mõju. Isegi kunstis ei pea kõik alati tunnetega seostuma.

Teisest küljest mõjub motiiv kummastavana. Võimalik, et kunstnik on maalinud sügispuhkusel olles mõnda kodust vaadet. Niisugusel juhul on tegemist nostalgilise katsega haarata stabiilse, kindla järele ning konstrueerida või taaskinnitada selle kaudu endale identiteet. Sõdur kodu maalimas kannab endas tervet rida ihasid, sest kujutatakse midagi, mis pole kättesaadav (sõdur ei saa elada kodus) ja mis samas ilmselt ei rahuldaks, kui kunagi kättesaadavaks osutub (sõduripsühholoogias tuntud igatsus adrenaliini järele). Inimtühi vaade

**Herbert Lukk**, who was primarily a professional soldier, painted little in his life, devoting a large proportion of his time to serving in different armies, and dying young in the Estonian War of Independence. This scene is painted using vivid, almost unmixed colours that are very typical of Lukk, and in such a manner that the motif is almost unrecognisable. When we look at this painting, we look primarily at colours and not so much at their transitions, blendings and overlaps, but rather pure colour as such. Such sharp, warm tones are ordinarily associated with “optimism” and “affirmation of life”. Colours are given emotional value, although the artist may be interested not in emotion but rather in pigment and its visual effect. Even in art, everything does not always have to be associated with feelings.

On the other hand, the scene appears strange. It is possible that the artist has painted a view from around his home while on autumn leave. In such a case, this is a nostalgic attempt to grab at something stable and certain, and thereby to construct or reaffirm his identity for himself. In the world of the soldier, home contains a whole series of desires within it because something is depicted that is not attainable (the soldier cannot live at home) and at the same time would evidently not

koduõuele on seetõttu vastuoluliste tunnete ja igatsuste lahinguväli: ühelt poolt peab autor seda kahtlemata ilusaks – ta poetiseerib motiivi, kallab üle erksate värvidega, teisalt näib motiiv aga tühjaks jooksnuna – kunstnikku suudab tõeliselt vaimustada ainult värv, mitte koduõue mahajäetus.

Muide, kui vaadata teose dateeringut ning pealkirja – 1918. aasta sügis –, siis võib see olla üks Herbert Luki viimaseid teoseid, sest veel samal aastal siirdub ta Vabadussõtta ning langeb 1919. aasta alguses Narva lähedal.

satisfy the soldier if it ever proved to be attainable (the yearning for adrenaline that is familiar in soldier psychology). The view of the deserted yard of home is thus a battlefield of contradictory feelings and yearnings: on the one hand, the *auteur* surely considers it beautiful. He poeticises the scene and drenches it with vivid colours. On the other hand, however, the scene proves to run dry – only colour is capable of truly inspiring the artist, not the emptiness of the yard of his home. Incidentally, considering the dating and title of the work – the autumn of 1918 – this may be one of Herbert Lukk's last works, since in that same year he headed off to the War of Independence and was killed in early 1919 near Narva.

Herbert Lukk  
Tänav, plangud ja majad  
1918  
Segatehnika, lõuend  
22,5 × 34,5 cm

Herbert Lukk  
Street, Board Fences and Houses  
1918  
Mixed media, canvas  
22.5 × 34.5 cm

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**Linnamotiivid** ei ole eesti kunstis haruldased ja kummalisel moel on päris levinud ka säärased katusemaastikud. Terve 20. sajandi jooksul maalitakse ikka ja jälle merena kaugusesse ulatuvaid katusepõlde. Eriti levinud on muidugi vaated Tallinna vanalinna katustele, mille üheks põhjuseks olmelised tingimused: kunstnike ateljeedeks rajatud Tallinna Kunstihoonest avanesid vaated just nimelt vanalinna nn pealiskihile. Tõmmet katuste järele on raske selgitada tähenduslike põhjustega, katused on pigem tähendustest vabad ja puhtad, kuna katused ei ole üldjuhul mõeldud vaatamiseks. Linnamotiivid keskenduvadki majadele ja miljöödele, arhitektuurile ja hoonetele, atmosfäärile ja meeleolule, ent katused seda kõike ei paku. Katuse on n-ö mittepaik: tühi ja tähendusteta koht, millel on olemas ainult funktsioon – katta maja.

Võib-olla ongi just see kunstnikele inspireerivana mõjunud, sest kui sinu ees on teatud visuaalsed rütmid või struktuurid, mis pole koormatud kõikvõimalike tähendustega ja poeetiliste kõrvalliinidega, siis võib kunstniku silmis avaneda mingisugune korrapära, mille kujutamise kaudu on võimalik lähemale saada ka jahedale matemaatilisele tõele. Herbert Lukk on küll siingi tähelepanu pööranud ennekõike värvidele, kuid nende range korrastatus ja siiludeks jaotatud rütmid

**Cityscapes** are not rare in Estonian art and in a strange way, such landscapes of roofs are also quite common. Time and again throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fields of roofs are painted as a sea stretching into the distance. Views of the roofs of Tallinn's Old Town are especially common, of course, and one of the reasons for this is the conditions of everyday life: Tallinn Art Hall, established to house the studios of artists, afforded views precisely of the so-called top layer of the Old Town. It is difficult to explain the attraction to roofs with meaningful reasons. Instead, roofs are generally clear and free of meanings since as a rule, roofs are not meant to be viewed. Cityscapes therefore focus on houses and milieus, architecture and buildings, atmosphere and mood, but roofs do not offer all this. The roof is a non-place, so to speak: an empty place without meaning that has only one function – to cover a house.

Perhaps this is just what has had an inspiring effect on artists, however, because if certain visual rhythms or structures lie before you that are not burdened with all manner of meanings and poetic subplots, then some kind of order can open up for the artist, and by depicting this order, it is possible to also get closer to cool mathematical truth. Herbert Lukk has admittedly paid attention primarily to

154 jätavad mulje, et autor pole püüelnud vaatajaga flirtimise poole. Tema sooviks ei ole manipuleerida vaataja tunnetega, vaid pigem väljendada maailma sisemisi struktuure, tajutavaid kordusi ja üleminekuid, see kõik geomeetriliste maastike kaudu nähtavaks muuta. Selle kaudu läheneb maal ühekorruga abstraktsionismile ja kubismile, olles üpris ligidal mitte millegi kujutamisele. Ainsad selgelt äratuntavad motiivid on korstnad ja väike ärklikorruse aken, kõik ülejäänud on matemaatika.

colours here as well, yet their strict orderliness and rhythms divided up into narrow strips create the impression that the *auteur* has not aspired towards flirting with the viewer. His wish is not to manipulate the viewer's feelings, but rather to express the world's inner structures, perceptible repetitions and transitions, to make all of this visible by way of geometrical landscapes. The painting thereby simultaneously approaches Abstractionism and Cubism, being quite close to depicting nothing. The only clearly recognisable motifs are chimneys and a little attic window. All the rest is mathematics.

# ALEKSANDER VARDI

*Aleksander Vardi (1901–1983) oli Tartust pärit maalikunstnik, kes oli üks esimesi Pallase õpilasi. Hiljem täiendas ta end veel Pariisis.*

*„Olen võinud oma loomingu jooksul tegelda vabalt ja sõltmatult värviprobleemidega, lähtuda vägagi erinevatelt seisukohtadelt ning jõuda ikka looduslähedase maali juurde välja. Teravalt tunnetasin seda alles kümnekond aastat tagasi, kui katsetasin abstraktsete, ainest vabade värvilahendustega. Mäng meeldis, oli isegi vajalik, vabastas teatud rutiinist, kuid ei saanud kaua kesta. Sisemised kahtlused muutusid ülepeäsmatuks. Ja tulebki välja paradoks: see, mis mind on vabastanud, see mind ka seob ja distsiplineerib.“*

*Portreeloost (1976–1977)*

*Aleksander Vardi (1901–1983) was a painter from Tartu who was one of the first students of the Pallas Art School. He later studied in Paris as well.*

*“Over the course of my creative work, I have had the chance to freely and independently work on problems of colouring, to base my work on very different points of view and still to arrive at paintings close to nature. I pointedly recognised this only some ten years ago when I experimented with abstract colour solutions free of any subject. I liked that game. It was even necessary since it liberated me from a certain routine, but it could not last for long. Inner doubts became insurmountable. And a paradox emerges here: what has liberated me is also what ties me down and disciplines me.“*

*From a portrait biography (1976–1977)*

Aleksander Vardi  
Lõuna-Eesti maastik  
1945  
Õli, paber  
46 × 63 cm

Aleksander Vardi  
Southern Estonian Landscape  
1945  
Oil, paper  
46 × 63 cm

156





**Lõuna-Eesti** ruum on muutunud eesti kunstiajaloos peaaegu mütoloogiliseks, kuna seda on tõesti maalitud nii- ja naamoodi. Ainuüksi teoseid pealkirjaga „Lõuna-Eesti maastik“ on Eesti muuseumide ühendava andmebaasi sõnul vähemalt 80 (pealkirjaga „Kesk-Eesti maastik“ pole ühtki teost, „Põhja-Eesti maastik“ on kaksteist, „Ida-Eesti maastik“ pole ühtki, „Lääne-Eesti maastik“ on kaks). Vardi silmis ei olnud tegemist müütilise ruumiga, vaid vägagi koduse paigaga. Ühes raadiosaates oma mälestustest kõneldes meenutab ta, et noorukina oli tal mitu võimalust siirduda hoopis Tallinna, kuid ta ei kaalunudki seda tõsiselt – teda tõmbas just nimelt Tartu, Lõuna-Eesti keskus. Linna ümbrus oli talle läbi ja lõhki tuttav ning see on näha ka käesoleval maalil. Vardi ei ole läinud seda avastama, samuti ei loo ta siia panoraamseid ning pidulikke vaateid nagu põhjarannikult pärit Richard Uutmaa, kellele Lõuna-Eesti mõjus lausa pilkupüüdvana. Vardi maastik on vägagi kodune, pigem isegi napp ja motiivide poolest vaene, kuid kunstnik näib siin lähtuvat printsibist, mille oma haigeveodil sõnastas Elmar Kits: liikuda võimalikult tavalisse kohta, kus esmapilgul pole midagi maalimisväärset, ning muuta see siis maalija käsutuses olevate vahenditega millekski, mis tõuseks lihtlabasest kõrgemale. Esmatähtis pole mitte motiiv, vaid käsitlusviis: pintslikirj, värv, kompositsioon, aga ka vaatenurk,

**The** space of Southern Estonia has become almost mythological in Estonian art history, since it really has been painted this way and that. Counting only works with the title *Southern Estonian Landscape*, there are at least 80 such works according to the database connecting Estonian museums (there are zero works with the title *Central Estonian Landscape*, twelve with the title *Northern Estonian Landscape*, zero with the title *Eastern Estonian Landscape*, and two with the title *Western Estonian Landscape*). This was no mythical space for Vardi, but rather very much a home-like place. He recalls when speaking of his memories in a radio broadcast that as a youth, he had several opportunities to move to Tallinn, but this was not really an option for him – it was Tartu that attracted him, the centre of Southern Estonia. The city's surroundings were familiar to him through and through, and that can also be seen in this painting. Vardi has not gone to discover it. At the same time, he does not create grand, panoramic views here like Richard Uutmaa, who came from the northern coast and for whom Southern Estonia seemed almost glamorous. Vardi's landscape is very home-like, furthermore it is even scanty and lacking in motifs. Yet here Vardi appears to proceed from the principle that Elmar Kits put into words when Kits was in his sickbed: to go to a place that

158 tähendused ja põhjus, miks üldse maalida. Vardi töö ei ole seetõttu sugugi kaugel abstraksionismist, mis on imekspandav kahel põhjusel: 1945. aastal võis juba aimata, et uus kord soosib ainult realismi, ning Pallase kunstikool, mille üks esimesi õpilasi Vardi oli, jagas õpetust, mis tema enese sõnul sealsamas raadiosaates oli „puhtal kujul realistlik“.

is as ordinary as possible, even banal, where at first glance there is nothing worth painting, and then to turn it into something that rises above banality using the means at the disposal of the painter. It is not the motif, but rather the way it is used that is important: brushing style, colour, composition, but also angle of view, meanings and the reason why one should paint in the first place. For this reason, Vardi's work is not at all far removed from Abstractionism, which is astonishing for two reasons: it could already be anticipated in 1945 that the new order would favour Realism exclusively, and the Pallas Art School, where Vardi was one of the first students, shared teachings that were "purely realistic", according to Vardi himself in that very same radio broadcast.

Aleksander Vardi  
Seisev naisakt  
roheluses  
1946  
Õli, papp  
71,5 × 49 cm

Aleksander Vardi  
Female Nude Standing  
in Greenery  
1946  
Oil, cardboard  
71.5 × 49 cm





160 **Aleksander Vardi** oli 1946. aastaks läbi teinud juba üle 20 aasta kestnud loomingulise karjääri ja nii mõnedki pöörded oma käekirjas. Ta oli äratanud laialdast tähelepanu, kriitika suhtus temasse positiivselt. Teise maailmasõja lõpus muutus aga tema käekiri tõsisemaks ning peatselt algas ka umbes kümmekond aastat kestnud ja poliitilistest põhjustest tekkinud sunnitud eemalejäämine kunstielust ning aktiivsemast maalimisest, mis tähendas muidugi ka kunstiliste otsingute katkemist.

Stiililiselt on Vardit nimetatud üheks järjekindlamaks ning põhjalikumaks impressionistiks eesti kunstis. Krista Piirimäe sõnul oli Vardi maalide suurimaks omapäraks 1930. aastatel kolm põhivärvi, millest ta tuletas kõik ülejäänud. Sellest tulenevalt olid maalid õhu- ja valgusküllased, värvide abil anti edasi ka elamusi ning loodusmuljeid, mistõttu nimetati teda nii poeediks kui ka romantikuks. 1940. aastatel muutus tema koloriit tumedamaks ja nukramaks (seda on Kaia Haamer seostanud sõjaajaga). Juba enne 1946. aastat oli Vardi pikalt kunstielust tagasi tõmbunud ega osalenud ühelgi näitusel, kuid Mart Lepa andmetel töötas Vardi hoogsalt ja planeeris 1944. aastaks suurt isikunäitust. Sellele plaanile tõmbas

**By** 1946, Aleksander Vardi had gone through a creative career that had already lasted over 20 years, which included quite a few turning points in his style. He had attracted widespread attention and critics related positively to him. At the end of the Second World War, however, his style turned more serious. Soon his forced absence from the art scene and from painting actively began, which was caused by political reasons and was to last about twenty years. This, of course, also meant the discontinuation of his artistic quests.

Stylistically speaking, Vardi is considered one of the most consistent and thorough Impressionists in Estonian art. According to Krista Piirimäe, the most distinctive feature of Vardi's paintings in the 1930s was three basic colours, from which he derived all the rest of the colours. By virtue of this, his paintings were airy and luminous. Experiences and impressions of nature were also conveyed by way of colours, for which reason he was called both a poet and a romantic. His colouring turned darker and more sombre in the 1940s (Kaisia Haamer has associated this with the war years). Even before 1946, Vardi had been withdrawn from the art scene for a long time. He did not participate in any exhibitions, but according to Mart Lepp, Vardi worked energetically and planned a major



kriipsu peale tulekahju, mis hävitas Vardi ateljee koos seal olnud maalidega, mistõttu on tema 1940. aastate töid säilinud vähe.

Aktide kujutamine keset loodust oli Vardi varases loomingus sage motiiv (nt „Suplejad“, 1939; „Suplevad naised“, 1939; „Akt looduses“, 1939 jt). Eesmärgiks ei olnud erootilis-sensuaalsete aktide loomine, vaid figuuride ja looduse ühtesulatamine ning – nagu kirjutab Piirimäe – „värvinüansside ja valgusreflekside edasiandmine“.

Siiski pöördub Vardi veel 1946. aastal tagasi ka aktide juurde, kuna lisaks käesolevale tööle on teada veel üks samal aastal valminud samateemaline maal. Kuna järgnevate aastate kohta andmed puuduvad, siis seetõttu on käesolev töö ilmselt üks viimaseid näiteid Vardi aktiloomingust.

solo exhibition for 1944. A fire that destroyed Vardi's studio together with the paintings that were there scuttled this plan and for this reason, few of his works from the 1940s have survived.

The depiction of nudes in the midst of nature was a frequent motif in Vardi's early work (for instance, *Suplejad* (Bathers, 1939), *Suplevad naised* (Bathing Women, 1939), *Akt looduses* (Nude in Nature, 1939), and others). His aim was not to create erotic-sensual nudes, but rather to blend figures and nature into one and – as Piirimäe describes – “to convey nuances of colour and reflections of light”.

Vardi nevertheless returned once again to nudes in 1946, since in addition to this work, another painting on the same theme completed in the same year is known to exist. Yet thereafter, no further nudes are really known of in Vardi's oeuvre, and thus this work is probably one of the last examples of Vardi's nude oeuvre.

# VILLEM ORMISSON

<sup>162</sup> *Villem Ormisson (1892–1941) oli pärit Viljandist, kunsti õppis ta ennekõike Riias, aga ka Berliinis ja Dresdenis. Hiljem töötas Ormisson Pallasel õppejõuna.*

*Villem Ormisson (1892–1941) was from Viljandi. He studied art primarily in Riga, but also in Berlin and Dresden. Later, Ormisson worked as a teacher at the Pallas Art School.*

Villem Ormisson  
Mehe portree.  
Karl Ormisson  
1924–1926  
Õli, lõuend  
82 × 91,8 cm

Villem Ormisson  
Portrait of a Man.  
Karl Ormisson  
1924–1926  
Oil, canvas  
82 × 91.8 cm





164 **Lähisugulaste** portreed on üks allharu portreekunstis: ikka ja jälle pöörduvad kunstnikud oma ema ja isa, veidi harvem ka õdede-vendade juurde. Oma venda on lisaks Villem Ormissonile kujutanud ka näiteks Johann Köler ja Eduard Wiiralt. Miks lähisugulased? Ilmselt on siin nii praktilisi kui ka poeetilisi põhjusi: sageli on sugulased lähimad ja ka kõige sõbralikumad, keda portreeterida, kuna jääb ära kogu vaevaline organiseerimistöö ning modell suhtub sinusse juba ette sõbralikult. See aga tähendab, et sul on võimalus jõuda talle mõnes mõttes „lähemale“. Ka Karl Ormisson, Villemi noorem vend, on siin maalil mitte paraadlikus või ametlikus rollis, vaid lõdvas poosis, nõjatudes mugavalt toolile ning lastes käe elegantselt rippu. On keeruline ette kujutada, et mõni kindralkuberner oleks Ormissonile poseerinud samasuguse vahetusega.

Ormisson maalis oma sugulasi veel, näiteks on teada tädi portree. Karl Ormissoni kujutamine jääb hoolimata sugulussidemetest aga siiski ka teatud määral mõistatuseks, kuna suhted kahe venna vahel olid olnud problemaatilised. Karl Ormissoni hiilgav mõistus oli ühenduses tema laia stiili ja rahutu naturiga, mistõttu tema pidevalt vahetuvad õpingupaigad ning kasvavad hariduskulud viisid jõuka Ormissonide perekonna pankrotti, nii et maha

**Portraits** of close relatives is a sub-branch of portrait art: time and again, artists turn to their mother and father, somewhat less frequently to their sisters and brothers as well. In addition to Villem Ormisson, Johann Köler and Eduard Wiiralt, for example, have also depicted their brother. Why close relatives? There are evidently both practical and poetic reasons here: relatives are often the closest at hand and also the friendliest for making portraits, since all the toilsome organisational work is not necessary and the model already relates to you in a friendly way in advance. Yet this means that you have the chance to get closer to your model in a certain sense. Karl Ormisson, Villem's younger brother, is also not in a showy or official role in this painting. Instead, he is in a relaxed pose, leaning comfortably in a chair and letting his hand hang elegantly. It is difficult to imagine that some governor general would have posed for Ormisson with the same kind of immediacy.

Ormisson painted other relatives of his as well, for instance a portrait of his aunt is known to exist. Yet regardless of ties of relationship, the depiction of Karl Ormisson nevertheless remains something of a mystery since relations between the two brothers had been problematical. Karl Ormisson's splendid intellect was connected to his extravagant lifestyle

tuli müüa ka Viljandis nende omandis olnud uhke hotell. Vanematega väga lähedane olnud Villem ei suhtunud sellesse ilmselt neutraalselt – maalil näeme viiteid venna bravuurile: peen ülikond ja justkui värvitud huuled viitamas tema snobismile ning laual olevad raamatud märkimas tema intelligentsi. Jääb vaid üle mõistatada, miks on ühe käe asemele maalitud kollane kolmnurk – on see maaliline võte või hoopis viide vabamüürlastele? Ja miks valge kipskuju? Kas teatud uue värvitooni sissetoomiseks või keeruka poosi kujutamissoov? Huvitav on ka märgata, et Villem pole maalile lisanud ühtegi märki Karli sõjaväelisest minevikust, kuigi vend osales Vabadussõjas, organiseeris sinna teisigi, sai sõjas haavata ning just maali valmimisaastail pälvis Vabadusristi. Ilmselt ei pidanud kunstnik oma venda mitte niivõrd kangelaseks, kuivõrd lihaseks vennaks, kes ta oligi.

and restless nature, for which reason his constantly changing places of study and growing costs of education plunged the wealthy Ormisson family into bankruptcy, so that they even had to sell off the fancy hotel that they had owned in Viljandi. Villem was very close to his parents and evidently did not relate neutrally to such a turn of events. We also see several references in the painting to his brother's bravado: a fine suit and lips that appear to be coloured with lipstick allude to his snobbism, and the books on the table mark his intelligence. We are left to guess at why a yellow triangle is painted in place of one hand – is it a painterly device or altogether a reference to freemasons, for instance? And why is there a white plaster figure? Is it for introducing a certain new colour tone, or the wish to depict a complicated pose? It is also interesting to note that Villem has not added to the painting any indication whatsoever of Karl's military past, although his brother participated in the Estonian War of Independence, convinced others to sign up for it as well, was wounded in the war, and was decorated with the Cross of Liberty in the very same year that the painting was completed. The artist evidently did not consider his brother to be so much of a hero, but rather, he saw him for who he was – his brother.

Villem Ormisson  
Natüürmort lilledega  
aknal  
1924  
Õli, lõuend  
125 × 102 cm

Villem Ormisson  
Still-Life with Flowers  
at the Window  
1924  
Oil, canvas  
125 × 102 cm

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**Natüürmort** võib esmapilgul tunduda üpriski staatiline žanr, mille sees on esemed, taimed ja muu säärane vaikselt, liikumatult. Ometi on ühtlasi tegemist žanriga, mis pakub kunstnikule teatud vabadusi, mida ta mujalt ei saa. Kui võrrelda natüürmorti näiteks maastiku- või portreemaaliga, siis kummalgi juhul ei ole kujutatav kunstniku kontrolli all. Maastik on see, mis ta on, ning inimene niisamuti. Tõsi, Konrad Mägi maalis ka loodust sel moel, et väga raske on olnud leida tema töodes ajaloolist tõepära – Mägi Capri vaateid ei ole caprilaste sõnul näiteks kunagi olemas olnud, kunstnik mõtles nad välja, kuigi maalib justkui otse ja natuurist. Ent üldjuhul maalib kunstnik maastiku või portree puhul seda, mis tema ees on. Natüürmort kuulub aga täielikult autori kontrolli alla.

Siin pole kohta juhusele, või kui juhus ka eksisteerib, siis on see tekkinud terve rea teadlike otsuste ja ümberpaigutamiste tagajärjel. Natüürmordi puhul sätib kunstnik kõik objektid enda ees täpselt nii, nagu ta neid näha tahab. Seega on vaikelu maalimine mõnes mõttes kaheetapiline: esiteks loob kunstnik ruumilise installatsiooni esemetest, asetab need omavahelistesse suhetesse ja kompositsiooni, ning seejärel maalib selle üles, lisades maalides veel ka näiteks värviga seotud lahendusi.

**At** first glance, still-life can appear to be a rather static genre, in which objects, plants and other such items stand motionless. Nevertheless it is also a genre that provides the artist with certain liberties that he cannot find anywhere else. If we compare still-life to landscape or portrait painting, for instance, then what is depicted is not under the control of the artist in either case. The landscape is what it is, and so is a person. Admittedly, Konrad Mägi also painted nature in a way that has made it very difficult to identify historical truth in his works – Mägi's views of Capri, for instance, have never existed according to residents of Capri. Mägi made them up, although he seemingly painted directly and according to nature. Yet as a rule, the artist paints what is in front of him in the case of a landscape or a portrait. A still-life, however, is completely under the control of the *auteur*.

There is no place here for randomness, or if there is anything random, then it has been generated as the consequence of a whole series of conscious decisions and rearrangements. In the case of still-lives, the artist arranges all of the objects in front of him exactly the way he wants to see them. Thus in a certain sense, painting a still-life is a two-stage process: first the artist creates a spatial installation out of objects, places them in relation to one another and in composition, and

168 Villem Ormissoni harukordselt suuremõõtmeline natüürmort kuulub minižanri. Näeme, et kunstnik on avanud akna, soovides meie tähelepanu juhtida just avatud aknast tulvavale valgusele, mitte taamal paistvatele majakatustele. Nagu Vardi töölgil, ei ole siin eriti palju varje, kontuure ja tumedaid siluette, fookuses on hoopis heledad pinnad: valged lilled ja kipskuju, mida ümbritseb üleval toataimede džungellik raam. Kipskuju on siinkohal huvitav Ormissoni maalide rändmotiiv, mida näeme veel mõnel tema teosel. Tähenduslikult moodustab kuju kummalise ja veidi morbiidse vastandi ülilopsakale ning pidurdamatust elujõust kõnelevale lillede, toataime ja valguse ühendusele, olles tardunud ning vaid meenutus inimesest, mitte aga inimene ise.

thereafter paints the scene, adding further features associated with colour, for instance, as he paints.

Villem Ormisson's uncommonly large-format still-life belongs to the mini-genre of "still-life on the windowsill". We see that the artist has opened the window, and this is important not only so that we can see the roof of the house far off in the distance, but also because light enters through the open window. Just as in Vardi's work, there are not very many shadows, contours and dark silhouettes here. We focus on light-coloured surfaces instead: white flowers and a plaster figure surrounded above by a jungle-like frame of house plants. The plaster figure here is an interesting travelling motif typical of Ormisson that we see in some of his other paintings as well. Significantly, it forms a curious and somewhat morbid contrast to the extremely exuberant combination of flowers, house plant and light that speaks of unbridled vitality, since the figure is stagnant and only a recollection of a person, not the person itself.



# ENDEL KÕKS

*Endel Kõks (1912–1983) oli pärit Tartust, kunsti õppis ta Pallase kunstikoolis. Teise maailmasõja ajal oli Kõks sunnitud Rootsi emigreeruma.*

*„Peaksid kord nägema Wassily Kandinskyt, siis vahest mõistaksid, et kalligraafiliselt viimistletud joon ja plekk võivad omada väärtusi, mille ees seisad, nagu kohutava sügavuse ees. Ka usun ma, et intellekt kuulub inimese juurde ja miks mitte katsuda sellele rajada kunstiloomingut, ega tunne selleks ainuüksi võimalusi ei anna.”*

*Kirjast sõbrale (1952)*

*Endel Kõks (1912–1983) was from Tartu. He studied art at the Pallas Art School. Kõks was forced to depart to Sweden during the Second World War.*

*“You should see Wassily Kandinsky for once, then you might understand that a calligraphically crafted line and smudge can have values that you stand in front of, as if facing a dreadful abyss. I also believe that the intellect is part of a person, and why not try to establish creative work in art on that intellect. It is not only feelings that provide opportunities for this.”*

*From a letter to a friend (1952)*

Endel Kõks  
Tartu vaade  
1938  
Õli, lõuend  
90 × 100 cm

Endel Kõks  
View of Tartu  
1938  
Oil, canvas  
90 × 100 cm

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**26-aastase** Endel Kõksi „Tartu vaate“ tähendus on ajas muutunud: kunagisest ülemlaulust sai esmalt mälestusmärk katastroofile ja seejärel emotsionaalne dokument ühest ammuolnud linnast. Kõks on Tartu kujutamiseks valinud rakursi, mida tegelikult olemas ei ole: säärase nurga alt pole Tartule kunagi sellist vaadet avanenud.

Kummalise rakursivaliku põhjusi on kaks. Esiteks soov koondada maalile Tartu olulisemad sümbolehitised: Kivisild, ülikooli peahoone, Jaani ja Peetri kirik, viltune hoone, Vanemuise vana maja. Sealjuures torkab silma, et enamik hooneid on vanad: uusim hoone on natuke rohkem kui 30 aastat töö valmimisest varem avatud teatrihoone, kuid ülejäänud hooned pärinevad põhiliselt 19. sajandist või veel varasemast. Ainus märk ajastust on paremal pildiservas paistev kiri „Maret“, mis märkis moodsa naisteajakirja toimetuse asupaika.

Teine põhjus antud rakursiks on maali püramiidi meenutav kompositsioon. Tartu kerkib siin mäena taeva poole ning selle mäe tipus on punased kirikutornid, mille punane värv koos tumesinise taevaga moodustab dramaatilise ning peaaegu et religioosse mõõtme. Kunstnik, kes oli Tartus sündinud ja kasvanud, loob endale tuttavast linnast midagi hümnitaolist.

**The** meaning of the 26-year-old Endel Kõks's *View of Tartu* has changed over time: this one-time Song of Songs initially became a memorial to a catastrophe and thereafter an emotional document of a city that existed long ago. Kõks has chosen an angle for depicting Tartu that does not actually exist: such a view of Tartu has never opened up from such an angle.

There are two reasons for this curious choice of angle. First of all, the wish to bring together all of Tartu's important symbolic structures in the painting: the Stone Bridge, the university's main building, the churches of St. John and St. Peter, a lop-sided building, the old Vanemuine Theatre building – and so on. Thereat it leaps to the eye that most of the buildings are old: the newest building is the theatre building that was opened a little over 30 years previously. Yet as a rule, the remainder of the buildings date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century or even earlier. The only sign of the era in which the painting was created is the word “Maret” visible on the right-hand edge of the picture, which denoted the location of the editorial offices of that modern women's magazine.

The other reason for this angle is the painting's composition resembling a pyramid. Here Tartu rises up towards the heavens as a mountain and

172 Kõigest kümmekond aastat hiljem seisis peaaegu kõik varemetes ning maalil kujutatust oli säilinud vaid mõni hoone. See oli korduvalt katastroofe üle elanud Tartu järjekordne trauma ning hümn muutus üleöö leinalauluks. Nüüdseks on maalist saanud endiselt ülev ja paatoslik, kuid ühtlasi melanhoolne ja nostalgiline meenutus millestki, mida enam ei ole.

there are red church towers at the top of this mountain. Together with the dark blue sky, their red colour forms a dramatic, and almost even a religious, dimension. The artist, who was born and raised in Tartu, creates something like a hymn out of this city that was so familiar to him.

Only some ten years later, almost everything was in ruins and just a few buildings of what was depicted in the painting had survived. This was yet another trauma for Tartu, which has repeatedly suffered through traumas, and the hymn turned into a lament overnight. By now, this painting has once again become a lofty and pathetic, but at the same time a melancholy and nostalgic recollection of something that no longer exists.

Endel Kõks

Maalijad

1939

Õli, lõuend

89,5 × 99,5 cm

Endel Kõks

Painters

1939

Oil, canvas

89.5 × 99.5 cm





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## Figuraalkompositsioone

ehk maale, kus oleks koos palju inimesi, ei ole eesti vanemas kunstis eriti palju. Õigupoolest on neid isegi üllatavalt vähe, arvestades selle žanri pikki traditsioone Euroopa kunstis: mõelgem kas või kõikvõimalike ajaloolis-mütoloogiliste teoste peale, kus hulk inimesi dramaatilisel kombel võitleb, mõrvab, kisendab, kuhugi pürgib. Kui vaadata sääraseid maalide sisemist dünaamikat eesti ennesõjaaegses kunstis, siis üldstatult võib märgata, et neis on palju vähem draamatikat ning rohkem vaikelu. Samuti torkab käesoleva teose puhul silma inimese endassesulgunud olek. Viibitakse küll mitmekesi koos ühes keskkonnas, kuid suhtlus puudub: näod on pööratud eri suundadesse või langetatud, kehapoosid ei reeda mingit huvi teise inimese vastu ning kunstnik on otsustanud nägusid mitte välja maalidagi. Endel Kõks on tundnud huvi selles prantsuse kunstist eeskujuna saanud idüllilises motiivis üldise pastoraalse atmosfääri vastu, ennekõike aga kasutanud inimeste riideid uute värvinäansside toomiseks loodusesse, kus sääraseid värve parajasti ei leidu.

Huvitaval moel võib aga just niisuguses looduse keskel toimivas stseenis märgata teatud linlikke jooni. Eesti vanem maalikunst on vägagi looduskeskne ning ajastu arengutest vaadatakse

**There** are not very many figurative paintings, or paintings where there are many people together, in older Estonian art. As a matter of fact, there are even surprisingly few such paintings, considering this genre's long-standing traditions in European art: consider, for instance, the wide variety of historical-mythological works, where a number of people struggle, murder, scream, strive towards something, and so on, all in dramatic fashion. If we consider the internal dynamics of such paintings in pre-war Estonian art, then in general, it is noticeable that there is much less drama and more still-life in them. The non-communicativeness of the people also stands out in the case of this work. They are admittedly together in a group in a single environment, but there is no communication: their faces are turned in different directions or lowered. The poses of their bodies do not betray any interest in the other people around them and the artist has chosen not to paint their faces in detail. In this idyllic scene based on examples from French art, Endel Kõks was interested in the pastoral atmosphere as such, but primarily, he has used the people's clothing to introduce new nuances of colour into nature, where such colours do not happen to be found at that given time.

Interestingly, however, certain urban features can be observed in precisely this kind of scene taking place in nature. Older Estonian paintings are very

pigem mööda. Endel Kõks on aga inimesed noobliit riietanud: tegemist pole enam ajatute talupoegadega, vaid 1930. aastate inimestega. Nende otsus mitte tööd teha, vaid täisriides istudes loodust nautida (maalida, silmitseda), tähendab ühtlasi, et nad on loodusest juba eemaldunud: nende silmis on loodus objekt, mida distantsilt vaadata, mitte loomulik keskkond, kus iga päev viibida. Alasti aktid, mis võiksid viidata inimese naturaalsele olekule ja seeläbi loodusega ühtesulamisele, on aga muudetud kunstniku uurimis- ja vaataja nautimisobjektideks. Autentsus on muutunud probleemiks.

much nature-centred and more often than not, they look past the developments of their era, but Endel Kõks has dressed these people elegantly: these are no longer timeless peasants, but rather people from the 1930s. Their decision not to work, but rather to enjoy nature by sitting fully dressed (to sit, to paint, to look around) also means that they have already withdrawn from nature: for them, nature is an object to be observed from a distance, not a natural environment in which to be on a daily basis. Nudes that could refer to people's natural state and thereby to blend into one with nature, however, are transformed into the artist's objects of study and the viewer's objects of enjoyment.

Endel Kõks  
Ateljees  
1939  
Õli, lõuend  
90 × 99,5 cm

Endel Kõks  
In the Studio  
1939  
Oil, canvas  
90 × 99.5 cm

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**Eesti** maalikunsti traditsioonidest kõneldes ei saa muidugi mööda minna „välistest“ mõjutajatest. Iga kunstikultuur on pidevas dialoogis teiste kunstikultuuridega ja nagu eluski, nii ei ole ka säärase dialoogi eesmärgiks kellegi järeleaimamine, vaid inspiratsiooni ammutamine. Endel Kõksi teost „Ateljees“ võiks vaadata manifestmaalina, kus nimetatakse üpris otsesõnu üht eesti maalikunsti mõjutanud olulisemaid suundi – prantsuse impressionismi ja selle järellaineid. Kõks ei pea säärast dialoogi sugugi häbiväärseks, rahulikult kirjutab ta ateljees lebavale raamatule peale „Cézanne“, mis on seda tähelepanuväärsem, et mujal maalipinnal me säärast konkreetsest ei näe: piirjooned ja kontuurid hägustuvad, näod on ähmased laialivalgunud värvilaigud, ent üks nimi on korruga muudetud konkreetseks ja äratuntavaks. Huvitav on märgata ka ruumis valitsevat meeleolu: kuigi siinsamas lebab inspiratsiooni pakkunud kunstniku kataloog, seisavad või istuvad kunstnikud osavõtmatult, suutmata tööle asuda ning jätkamata poolelioleva maaliga. Võimalik, et neid on tabanud miski, mida nimetatakse „mõjuängiks“: kellegi eeskuju on sedavõrd domineeriv ja võimas, et inimesi tabab nagu halvatus. Tahtmata kopeerida senitehtut, ei taheta teha ka midagi nõrgemat – eeskuju lähmatab, inimene muutub apaatseks. See pole kunstis haruldane olukord, ilmselt on

**When** speaking about the traditions of Estonian painting, we naturally cannot ignore “external” influences. Every art culture is in constant dialogue with other art cultures, and as in life, so the aim of such dialogue is also not to imitate someone, but rather to draw inspiration. *In the Studio* by Endel Kõks could be viewed as a manifesto painting, where one of the more important trends that influenced Estonian painting is named quite directly – French Impressionism and its aftereffects. Kõks does not consider such dialogue to be disgraceful at all. He calmly writes “Cézanne” on a book lying in the studio, which is all the more remarkable when we consider that we do not see such concreteness elsewhere on the surface of this painting: boundaries and contours are blurred, faces are indistinct smeared patches of colour, but one name is suddenly made concrete and recognisable. It is interesting to also note the prevailing mood in the room: although the artist’s catalogue that provided inspiration lies right there, the artists stand or sit disinterestedly, unable to set to work and to continue with their unfinished painting. It is possible that they are under the effect of something that is known as “influence anxiety”: someone’s example is so dominant and mighty that something resembling paralysis takes hold of people. Without wanting to copy what has already been done, they also do

178 kõik autorid seda mõnel hetkel tajunud, kuid Kõks sai sellest üle. Õeldu tunnistuseks on maal ise: see on valmis maalitud, autor ei ole jäänud pidama, vaid proovinud leida uusi teid, kuidas tekkinud dialoogist kantud inspiratsioon kannaks võimalikult kiiresti maksimaalselt kaugele.

not want to make something of lesser quality – the model smothers them, and they become apathetic. This is not an uncommon situation in art. All *auteurs* have probably perceived this at some point, but Kõks got over it. The witness to that is this painting itself: it has been completed. The *auteur* did not stop, rather he has tried to find new paths for how the inspiration borne from the generated dialogue could carry as far and as quickly as possible.

Endel Kõks  
Aias  
1943  
Õli, papp  
29 × 29 cm

Endel Kõks  
In the Garden  
1943  
Oil, cardboard  
29 × 29 cm





180 **Endel Kõks** lõpetas pärast kuueaastaseid õpinguid kunstikooli Pallas 1940. aastal. Hoolimata puhkenud sõjast ja okupatsioonidest, oli ta järgnevatel aastatel loominguliselt väga viljakas: teadaolevalt maalis ta järgmise nelja aasta jooksul vähemalt sadakond maali. 1943. aastal korraldas ta ka ühes Tartu antikvariaadis kahepäevase väiksemõõduliste teoste müüginäituse, millel võis osaleda ka käesolev maal. Näituse teates 27. novembril ajalehes *Postimees* kirjutatakse muu hulgas: „Raekojaväljakul asetsevas antikvariaadis „Kunst ja Raamat“ avati 18. novembril maalikunstnik Endel Kõksi teoste müüginäitus. /.../ Käesolevale 30. novembrini kestvale Kõksi teoste müüginäitusele on välja pandud umbes 60 teost kunstniku viimaste aastate loomingust. Kaupluse kitsamad ruumid on lubanud esitada küll peamiselt väiksemaid õlimaale ja etüüde kunstniku mitmest, tehniliselt varieeruvast loomingulaadist, kus maastike kõrval domineerivad figuraalsed stseenid, aga ka lilled esinevad mitmes seadelduses. /.../ Kogu see näitus aga osutab Kõksi püsivalt uute otsingute pinges küpsevale ja kujunevale intellektuaalsele maalija-loomusele ja töökusele, mille paremaid vilju imetleme või arvustame meie üldistel kunstinäitustel.“

Kõks maalis pargi- ja aiadülle sageli. Üldjuhul sulatab ta inimesed ümbritsevasse loodusesse: ka

**Endel Kõks** graduated from the Pallas Art School in 1940 after six years of study. Creatively speaking, he was very productive over the subsequent years, regardless of the war that had broken out and the occupations by foreign powers: he is known to have painted at least around a hundred paintings over the following four years. In 1943, he held a two-week sales exhibition of small-format works at a second-hand bookshop in Tartu, which this painting may also have been a part of. The following is written among other things in the exhibition announcement in the *Postimees* newspaper on 27 November: “A sales exhibition of the works of the painter Endel Kõks was opened on 18 November at the Kunst ja Raamat [Art and Book] second-hand bookshop in Town Hall Square. /.../ About 60 works from the artist's oeuvre of the last few years are on display at the sales exhibition of Kõks's works, which remains open until 30 November of this year. The fact that the shop's rooms are small means that primarily smaller format oil paintings and studies have been accommodated here from among the artist's many works in technically varied creative style, where figurative scenes dominate alongside landscapes, but flowers are also featured in many varied arrangements. /.../ Yet this entire exhibition points to Kõks's diligence and intellectual nature as a painter that

käesoleval maalil hajuvad inimeste piirjooned, nende kehaosade värv harmoneerub ümbrusega ning nägusid ja seeläbi individuaalsust ei ole rõhutatud. Kuigi Kõks maaliski nii, loob teose maalimisaasta veel ühe tõlgendusvõimaluse: tegemist on pagemisega sõjaaja koledustest, kunstniku taktikaline otsus eemalduda närvilisest ja traagilisest keskkonnast ning sukelduda päikesest ülevalatud aiamotiivi, kus on endiselt alles koht „naudingutele“. Ainult motiivi taustale maalitud katkematu kõrge tara tekitab küsimuse, kas need inimesed on selles aias vabatahtlikult või sinna mõistetud.

continues to mature and develop in the constant tension of new quests, the best fruits of which we admire or review at our general art exhibitions.”

Kõks often painted park and garden idylls. As a rule, he blends people into the surrounding nature: the contour lines of the people in this painting are blurred as well. The colours of their body parts harmonise with the surroundings, and faces, and thereby also individuality, are not emphasised. Although this is how Kõks painted anyway, the year in which this painting was painted creates another possibility for interpretation: this is an escape from the horrors of wartime, the artist's tactical decision to withdraw from a nervous and tragic environment, and to delve into a garden scene bathed in sunshine where there is still a place for “pleasures”. Only the continuous tall fence painted on the background of the scene generates questions. Are these people here in the garden voluntarily – or have they been sentenced to be here?

# JOHANNES VÕERAHANSU

<sup>182</sup> *Johannes Võerahansu (1902–1980) oli pärit Raplamaalt, kunsti õppis ta Pallase kunstikoolis. Hiljem töötas aastaid õppejõuna.*

*„Muusika on mind väga palju aidanud maalimisel. Laikmaa ütles mulle ka: teil on sama suur muusikakalduvus kui teil on maalimiskalduvus. Maalida tahan veel. Niipea kui maale sõidan, teen veel.“*

*Raadiosaates (1976)*

*Johannes Võerahansu (1902–1980) was from Rapla County. He studied art at the Pallas Art School. Later he worked for years as a teacher.*

*“Music has helped me a great deal in painting. Laikmaa also told me: you have just as great an inclination toward music as you do towards art. I want to keep painting. As soon as I go to the countryside, I’ll paint more.”*

*In a radio broadcast (1976)*

Johannes Võerahansu  
Külaeided vestlemas  
1941  
Õli, lõuend  
109,8 × 99,7 cm

Johannes Võerahansu  
Village Women Gossiping  
1941  
Oil, canvas  
109.8 × 99.7 cm





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## Johannes Võerahansu

maal esindab veel üht traditsiooni – tava kujutada Eestit arhailise moodsast elust puutumatu oaasina, mille parimaks sümbolkujundiks on mere taga ilmakärast eemal asuv saar. Saaremaa avastas eesti kunsti jaoks Konrad Mägi, kes 1913. ja 1914. aastal käis Kihelkonna kandis mudaravil, tema aga tõlgendas Saaremaad värvi- ja valgusküllase paigana (Saaremaa ongi statistiliselt Eesti kõige päikesepaistelisem paik). Hilisemad Saaremaa vaated on pigem summutatuma koloriidiga ning panevad palju rõhku Saaremaa arhailisuse ning spartalikult napi, kuid vintske looduse rõhutamisele. Mingil kaudsel moel muutus see kiiresti Eesti ja eestlaste pildiliseks võrdkujuks – maalides Saaremaad, maaliti justkui ka eestlast, luues nõnda üht stereotüüpi eestlaste sõnaahtrast ja lakoonilisest loomusest, mis hoolimata armetutest oludest ilmutab silmapaistvat jonnakust ja elutahet.

Ka käesoleval maalil moodustab fooni Saaremaa arhailine (teistel andmetel lihtsalt vaene) talumaastik: rohmakatest põllukividest laotud aiad, madalad pruunikad taluhooned, vabalt liikuvad kariloomad ning põllul askeldav veidi küürus mees koos veisega. Konrad Mägi aegsest värvipillerkaarist siin märki ei ole, Võerahansu on keeranud nupu

## Johannes Võerahansu's

painting represents one further tradition – the custom of depicting Estonia as an archaic oasis untouched by modern life, the best symbolic image of which is the island beyond the sea located away from the “clamour of the world”. Konrad Mägi discovered Saaremaa for Estonian art. He went to the Kihelkonna area for mud treatments in 1913 and 1914, yet he interpreted Saaremaa as a place that was rich in colours and light (Saaremaa actually is statistically the sunniest place in Estonia). Later views of Saaremaa have more of a muted colouring and place a great deal of emphasis on stressing Saaremaa's archaicness and spartanly scanty yet tough nature. In some indirect way, this quickly became a pictorial metaphor not only for Estonia, but also for Estonians – by painting Saaremaa, it was as if one was also painting Estonians, thus creating a stereotype of the uncommunicative and laconic nature of Estonians, which regardless of paltry conditions manifests remarkable stubbornness and will to live.

Saaremaa's archaic (according to other sources simply poor) farm landscape forms the background in this painting as well: fences made of rough fieldstones, low, brownish farm buildings, livestock moving about freely, and a slightly hunched man



miinimumi ja usaldab vähem pilkupüüdvaid toone, nagu hall, tumeroheline ja pruun.

Pildi keskmes on aga omavahel aktiivselt suhtlev inimgrupp, kelle paljasjalgsus jätab ühtaegu arhailise ja anekdootlikku mulje. On üpris haruldane, et eesti kunstnik on kujutanud dialoogi, inimrühmas toimuvat kommunikatsiooni, ning ülestõstetud rusikas ja pingsalt kuulavad näod reedavad, et see pole niisama loba, vaid kriisikoosolek. Igavesti muutumatusse maastikku on korruga sisenenud pinge, ärevus, midagi näib hetkeks mõranevat, kuid Võerahansu käekiri, mis rõhutab igal sammul nii looduse, hoonete kui ka inimeste kujutamisel soliidust, stabiilsust, tugevat vundamenti, ei jäta meile siiski tunnet, et miski võiks lõplikult puruneda. Ja see on 1941. aastal kahtlemata sõnum, mida taheti kuulda.

together with an ox bustling in a field. There is no sign here of the riot of colour from the time of Konrad Mägi. Võerahansu has turned the dial to the minimum and trusts tones with little glamour such as grey, dark green and brown.

There is, however, a group of people in the centre of the picture in lively conversation with one another. Their barefootedness simultaneously leaves an archaic and an anecdotal impression. It is quite rare that an Estonian artist has depicted dialogue, communication taking place among a group of people. A raised fist and intently listening faces betray that this is no idle gabfest, but rather a crisis meeting. Tension and anxiety have suddenly entered the eternally unchanging landscape. For a moment, something appears to be cracking, yet Võerahansu's style, which stresses dignity, stability, and a strong foundation every step of the way in depicting nature, buildings and people, nevertheless does not leave us with the feeling that something could fall to pieces once and for all. And this is undoubtedly a message that people wanted to hear in 1941.

# KARL PÄRSIMÄGI

<sup>186</sup> *Karl Pärsimägi (1902–1942) oli pärit Võrumaalt, kunsti õppis ta Pallase kunstikoolis. Elu lõpul sõitis Pariisi, kus ta ka suri.*

*Karl Pärsimägi (1902–1942) was from Võru County. He studied art at the Pallas Art School. He went to Paris towards the end of his life, where he also died.*

Karl Pärsimägi  
Naine elutoas  
1920.–1930. aastad  
Õli, papp  
42,7 × 52,2 cm

Karl Pärsimägi  
Woman in the Living Room  
1920–1930s  
Oil, cardboard  
42.7 × 52.2 cm





188 **Karl Pärsimägi** kunsti suur võlu on argisuse käsitlemine, valgustades seda mingi sisemise säruga. Sageli näeme tema maalidel inimesi tubastes hubastes miljöödes: inimesed koduseinte vahel, nõjatumas klaverile või soojamüürile, keegi raamatut lugemas, keegi nõjatumas, auto sõitmas avatud akna tagant mööda, tüdruk kõlgutamas jalgu aknalaua, pea kohal täiskuu. Ka käesolev teos loob modelli ümber turvalise konteksti – ta on oma elutoas ning ümbritsetud meie igapäevase banaalsuse iluga: tuttavad esemed, veidi poollohakil riided, kusagil küdemas ahi. Teiselt poolt oli Pärsimägi aga kunstnik, kes kasutas alati väga julgeid, selgeid, kirkaid värve. Ta ei ole laskunud detailidesse, nüansside ja konkretiseerimiste asemel on tema käsi liikunud hoogsalt lõuendi kohal, nagu puhuks tuul üle vee. Veidi on Pärsimägi kunstis alati midagi jaapanlikku (või seda, mida me sääraseks peame): keskendumine ühele hetkele, mis ei ole täis euroopalikku draamat, vaid on mõneti tähendustest puhas, teatud vaheetapp eelmise ja järgmise tegevuse vahel – mõtlus, seisak, tardumine, fikseerimine. Tähelepanu pööramine näiliselt tähtsusetule, kuid ometi just sellest tähtsusetust üldistuse loomine. Võiks eeldada, et säärasel tardhetkel valib kunstnik koloriidiks midagi tuhmimat, kulunumat, värvitumat, kuid

**The** great charm of Karl Pärsimägi's art is his treatment of everyday matters, illuminating them with some sort of inner radiance. In his paintings, we often see people in cosy indoor scenes: people at home, leaning on the piano or against the hot wall of the stove, somebody reading a book, a car driving past an open window, a girl sitting on the windowsill swinging her legs with the full moon above her head. This work also creates a secure context around the model. She is in her living room and is surrounded by our everyday beauty of banality: familiar objects, clothing lying about a little carelessly, the fire burning in the stove. On the other hand, however, Pärsimägi was an artist who always used very bold, clear, vivid colours. He has not gone into details and nuances, and instead of making things concrete, his hand has swiftly moved about the canvas like wind blowing over water. There is always something somewhat Japanese (or that which we consider to be Japanese) in Pärsimägi's art: focusing on a moment that is not full of European drama, but rather is in some respects almost free of meanings, a certain intermediate stage between the preceding and the following activity – meditation, a standstill, motionlessness, fixation. Paying attention to what is seemingly unimportant, yet it is from just such unimportant things that we create generalisations. We might presume that at such a moment of

Pärsimägi erakordselt kirgas värvikasutus lisab argisele momendile midagi äärmiselt võluvast. See pole paraadlikkus, toretsemine, võltsglamuur, mida Pärsimägi otsib, vaid mingi seesmine jõud, sõnastamatu ja päriselt nimetamatu, kuid ometi miski, mis annab me igapäevasele elule veendumuse, et seda ei elata asjata.

motionlessness, the artist would choose something more worn, colourless and dull as his colouring, yet Pärsimägi's exceptionally vivid use of colour adds something extremely charming to an everyday moment. It is not showiness, luxuriation, or false glamour that Pärsimägi is looking for. Instead it is some kind of inner strength, not put into words and actually not named, but nevertheless something that adds conviction to our everyday life that it is not being lived for no reason.

Karl Pärsimägi  
Naise portree  
1936  
Õli, lõuend  
41,2 × 32,7 cm

Karl Pärsimägi  
Portrait of a Woman  
1936  
Oil, canvas  
41.2 × 32.7 cm

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**34-aastase** Karl Pärsimägi „Naise portree“ oli määratud olema üks viimaseid Eestis valminud Pärsimägi maale, sest juba järgmisel aastal sõitis kunstnik Pariisi, kust ta enam ei naasnud. Kuigi esialgne plaan nägi ette vaid 30-päevast külastust, jäi Võrumaalt pärit Pärsimägi sinna mitmeks aastaks, kuni arreteerimiseni Saksa okupatsioonivõimude poolt ja jäljetu kadumiseni.

Kunsti võimeks loetakse sageli oskust anda hääli hääletutele – see tähendab, kujutada inimesi (aga ka olukordi, psühholoogilisi pingeid või sotsiaalseid suhteid), kes ilma kunstniku sekkumiseta jääksid varjatuks. Nii on muutunud populaarseks ka kõikvõimalike vähemuste ning tõrjutute kujutamine, sest kui muuta nad nähtavaks, on seeläbi muudetud keerulisemaks ka nende eiramine, unustamine, kõrvalelükkamine. Pärsimägi „Naise portree“ on anonüümne: me ei tea, keda kunstnik täpselt on kujutanud ega saagi seda kunagi teada. See näib olevat olnud kunstniku eesmärk, sest ka psühholoogilised eripärad, tunnuslikud välised tundemärgid ja muu säärane on jäetud kujutamata – inimese asemel märkame esmalt hoopis mõtlikku meeleolu ja kirkaid värve. Huvitav on käesolev portree asetada aga ajastu taustale. 1930. aastatel levis Euroopa kunstis hoopis üks teine žanr: paraadlikud portreed,

**The** 34-year-old Karl Pärsimägi's *Portrait of a Woman* was destined to be one of the last Pärsimägi paintings completed in Estonia because the artist already went to Paris the following year. He never returned from there – although his initial plan was for only a 30-day visit. Pärsimägi, who was from Võru County, stayed there for several years until he was arrested by the German occupation authorities. Thereafter he disappeared without a trace. The power of art is often considered to be the ability to give a voice to those who have no voice – this means to depict people (but also situations, psychological tensions or social relationships) who would remain hidden without the intervention of the artist. Thus the depiction of all manner of minorities and ostracised persons or groups has become popular because if they are made visible, it thereby becomes more difficult and complicated to ignore and forget them, and to brush them aside. Pärsimägi's *Portrait of a Woman* is anonymous: we do not know exactly whom the artist has depicted and we will never find out. This appears to have been the artist's aim because the subject's distinctive psychological traits, characteristic external distinguishing attributes, and other such features have been left undepicted – instead of a person, we first of all notice a reflective mood and bright colours. Yet it is interesting to place this

192 mille eesmärgiks oli kehtestada visuaalse rituaali kaudu teatud meeste võim. Pärsimägi elegantne, intiimne, mõtlik ja ennekõike argine portree naisest kehtestab aga hoopis ühe teise režiimi, avades meile inimeste maailma, kelle eesmärgiks ei ole domineerimine, vaid vaikne kooskõla eluga. Portreekunsti sajanditepikkune traditsioon oli säärased inimesed unustanud, ikka ja jälle pidi kellegi portreerimine kindlustama või looma võimu. Portreekunst ja kellegi erilisuse rõhutamine käisid käsikäes, teisiti oli see võimatu, kuid Pärsimägi võtab klassikalise žanri ja täidab selle uue sisuga: ühtäkki ei ole fookuses enam võim, vaid inimene.

portrait on the background of its time. An altogether different genre spread throughout European art in the 1930s: showy portraits, the aim of which was to establish the power of certain men through visual ritual. Pärsimägi's elegant, intimate, reflective and above all everyday portrait of a woman, however, establishes an altogether different regimen, revealing to us the world of people, whose objective is not domination but rather quiet harmony with life. The centuries-long tradition of portrait art had forgotten such people. Time and again, the painting of someone's portrait was meant to fortify or create power. Portrait art and the emphasis of somebody's singularity went hand in hand. It was impossible for it to be any other way, but Pärsimägi takes a classical genre and fills it with new content: suddenly it is no longer power, but a person that is in focus.



# KAAREL LIIMAND

*Kaarel Liimand (1906–1941) oli pärit Kesk-Eestist, kunsti õppis Pallase kunstikoolis, kus ta hiljem ka töötas. Hukkus Teises maailmasõjas.*

*Kaarel Liimand (1906–1941) was from Central Estonia. He studied art at the Pallas Art School, where he later also worked. He was killed in the Second World War.*

Kaarel Liimand  
Tartu motiiv  
1939  
Õli, lõuend  
59 × 73 cm

Kaarel Liimand  
Tartu Motif  
1939  
Oil, canvas  
59 × 73 cm

194





**Kaarel Liimandi** maale pole teada just liiga palju, sest varane surm ei lubanud temagi andel lõplikult teostuda. 20-aastaselt Tartusse tulnud Liimand maalis uut kodulinna 1930. aastatel sageli ning ikka ja jälle on neis kummaline vastuolu. Tema maalide atmosfäär on pidevalt kusagil unenäo ja reaalsuse vahepeal: me tunneme küll ära linna ja isegi üksikud hooned, kuid nende piirjooned hajuvad pidevalt määramatusse, mida lisab käesoleval maalil veelgi taeva ja vee muutumine juba täiesti ebarealistlikuks. Kui me vaatame Liimandi taevast, siis näib see pärinevat pigem mõnest fantaasiafilmist, olles ühtaegu pilvitu, ent ometi pilves, ja värvitu, ent ometi oma koloriidiga. Eriti kummaliseks muudab Liimandi maali aga valgus: see langeb peaaegu kiriklikult, valgustades linna mingisuguse totaalse, mitte lokaalse heledusega, kuid tema allikas on arusaamatu, sest taevast näib olevat kaetud ühtlase hallikassinise kaanega. Niivõrd tugeva anonüümse prožektori käes löövad ka värvid eriliselt särama, aga vaid mõni toon, millest enim tõuseb esile kollane – unenägede värv.

Kuigi atmosfäärilt kummastav ja salapärane, toob Liimand maalile ka inimesed. Nii teeb ta oma Tartu vaadetel sageli. Ikka ja jälle näeme justkui puhast linnavaadet, kuid kusagil seal majade ees ja ümber askeldavad pöidlasuured inimesed

**Kaarel Liimand's** paintings are not too well known since his early death did not allow his talent to be fully realised. Liimand, who moved to Tartu at the age of 20, often painted his new home town in the 1930s, and time and again there was a curious contradiction in them. The atmosphere of his paintings is consistently somewhere between dreams and reality: we admittedly recognise the city and even particular buildings, but their contours are constantly blurred into vagueness, which is heightened even further in this painting by the sky and the water becoming completely unrealistic. When we look at Liimand's sky, then it appears to originate more from some fantasy film, since it is simultaneously cloudless, yet still cloudy, and colourless, yet still with its own colouring. Yet its lighting makes Liimand's painting especially strange: it falls almost ecclesiastically, lighting the city with some kind of total, not local, radiance, though its source is incomprehensible because the sky appears to be covered with a uniform greyish-blue lid. Colours shine especially brightly under such a strong anonymous spotlight, though this is the case with only a few tones, of which yellow – the colour of dreams – stands out the most.

196 (ühel maalil on inimeste asemel teri nokkivad kanad, samamoodi usinalt tegutsemas). Keegi ei puhka ega naudi elu, kõik töötavad – justkui oleks maalt pärit Liimand paigutanud kodukandi inimesed uude urbanistlikku keskkonda, ja see mõjub silmatorkavalt, kuna linnavaadete-inimesed enamasti ei tööta, vaid promeneerivad, jalutavad, liiguvad sihitult ja elunautlevalt. Liimandi soov kujutada töötavaid ja madalamatest sotsiaalsetest klassidest inimesi ei mõjugi väga romantiliselt – märgakem kas või küüru naise seljas ja väikesi lapsi, kelle eest veetassijad samuti hoolitsema peavad. Nii on see maal korruga poliitiline ja poeetiline, kõneleb linnast ja tema inimestest, näitab ülevat valgust ja neid, kes sellest valgusvihust kõrvale jäävad, kuid kes ometi on – kõige kiuste on.

Although it is mysterious and appears strange regarding its atmosphere, Liimand brings almost specific people to the painting as well. He does so often in his Tartu views. Time and again we see as if a pure cityscape, but somewhere there in front of and around the houses, thumb-sized people bustle about (in one painting, instead of people, there are chickens pecking at grains, but diligently bustling about in the same way). Nobody rests or enjoys life, instead everyone works – as if Liimand, who is from the countryside, had placed people from his home neighbourhood in a new urbanist environment. This has a striking effect, since people in cityscapes often do not work, but rather promenade, stroll, move aimlessly and epicureanly. Liimand's wish to depict working people from lower social classes really does not come across very romantically – observe the hunch in the woman's back and the little children, whom the water bearers also have to look after. Thus this painting is simultaneously political and poetic. It speaks about the city and its people. It shows sublime light and people who are left out of this shaft of light, but who nevertheless exist – exist in spite of everything.

# LEPO MIKKO

*Lepo Mikko (1911–1978) oli pärit Viljandimaalt, kunsti õppis ta Pallase kunstikoolis ning samuti Tallinnas. Hiljem töötas õppejõuna Eesti Riiklikus Kunstiinstituudis.*

*„Esimesi kunstiteoseid nägin alles siis, kui „Taluperenaine“ hakkas kaanel värvilisi reproduksioone avaldama. Kunstikooli minek tookord tundub mulle aga praegugi julgustükina... Nojah, nagu vist iga karjapoiss armastasin ka mina seal Tuhalaanes täevast ja pilvi vahtida, fantaseerisin puud ja kivid olenditeks...*

*Minu missioon on vajadus maalida. Valmis maal mind eriti ei huvita. Oluline on loomisprotsess, see väev, see põnev küsimus: kas tuleb välja?”*

*Portreeloost (1975–1977)*

*Lepo Mikko (1911–1978) was from Viljandi County. He studied art at the Pallas Art School and also in Tallinn. He later worked as a teacher at the Estonian State Institute of Art.*

*“I saw my first works of art when the Taluperenaine (Farm Housewife) magazine started publishing colour reproductions on its front cover. Even now, enrolling at the art school back then seems to me to have been a bold enterprise... So, probably like every herd boy, I also loved to watch the sky and the clouds there in Tuhalaane. I fantasised that the trees and rocks were living beings...*

*My mission is the need to paint. A completed painting doesn't particularly interest me. It's the creative process that's important, the effort you put into it, that fascinating question: will this turn out well?”*

*From a portrait biography (1975–1977)*

Lepo Mikko  
Mees ja naine  
hobuvankri juures  
1942  
Õli, lõuend  
41 × 52 cm

Lepo Mikko  
Man and Woman  
beside a Horse Cart  
1942  
Oil, canvas  
41 × 52 cm

198





**Argiste** töemotiivide temaatika ei olnud eesti kunstis muidugi sugugi haruldane. Ikka ja jälle pöördusid siinsed kunstnikud motiivide juurde, mis kujutasid inimesi töötamas. Sealjuures andsid tooni kõikvõimalikud maaeluga seotud tööd: kalapüük, kartulivõtt, heinategu, viljalõikus, põlluküünd, isegi adrukogumine, haovedu ja kasvavatelt puudelt vaigu kogumine. Sääraste arhailiste ja rustikaalsete maaeluga seotud teemade silmatorkavalt sage esinemine kõneleb ilmselt ennekõike kunstnike taustast, kes olid enamasti pärit maalt ning tundsid sealset elu vahetult. Kerge on ette kujutada ka Eerik Haamerit kalavõrguga, Richard Uutmaad vikatiga või Lepo Mikkot loorehaga. Seetõttu erineb antud motiivide käsitus mõneti Lääne-Euroopa analoogidest, kus maaelu kujutamine oli sageli kantud igatsusest idealiseeritud pastoraalse idüllilise järele. Eesti kunstnikele oli maaelu normaalsus, eurooplastele aga juba ekstravagantsus. Samas torkab silma, et Lääne-Euroopa kunst oli küll 1930. aastatel naasnud realismi juurde, kuid seal andsid juba aastakümneid tooni modernistlikud urbanismiga seotud motiivid. Eesti kunstis on säärased teemad aga pigem haruldased ning ka linlikud või tehnoloogia arenguga seotud tööžanrid jõuavad siinsesse maalikunsti pigem hiljem kui varem. Heinategu või kartulivõtt domineeris, veidi kujutati ka käsitöölisi, kuid tehasetöölised ja

**The** subject matter of everyday work motifs naturally was not at all uncommon in Estonian art. Time and again, Estonian artists turned to motifs that depicted people working. Thereat, all manner of work connected to rural life set the tone: fishing, harvesting potatoes, haymaking, harvesting grain, ploughing the fields, even raking up seaweed, hauling brushwood, and gathering resin from living trees. The strikingly frequent occurrence of such themes associated with archaic and rustic rural life evidently speaks first and foremost of the background of the artists, who as a rule were from the countryside and were intimately familiar with what they were depicting. It is easy to imagine Eerik Haamer with a fishing net, Richard Uutmaa with a scythe, or Lepo Mikko with a hayrake. For this reason, the treatment of these motifs differs somewhat from their Western European analogues, where the depiction of rural life was frequently borne of a yearning for an idealised pastoral idyll. Rural life was normality for Estonian artists, but for Europeans it was already an extravagance. At the same time, it also stands out that Western European art had admittedly returned to Realism in the 1930s, but Modernist motifs connected to urbanism had already set the tone there for decades. Such themes, however, are uncommon in Estonian art, and urban genres or those associated

200 kaevurid pidid oma hetke ootama suuresti 1940. aastate keskpaigani, mil nõukogude suunised juhtisid kunstnikud nende juurde. Eesti maalikunsti traditsioon konstrueeris seega meile ka arusaama „õigest“ tööst, milleks on maalähedane, veidi idülliline ja arhailine ning mis polnud tehnikaga seotud. Lepo Mikko teos on selle väite tõestuseks. Mikkolt on teada terve rida sarnase värvilahenduse ja motiivistikuga (mees, naine, hobune või hobuvanker) maale, mis kujutavad maaelu ja -töid, sidudes ühte inimese ja looduse (sageli on lisaks loodusele kujutatud koduloomi, nt hobust). Figuurid on ilma konkreetseta ning üldistatud. „Talupoeglik eksistents omandab neis kaunite maastike foonil arkaadialiku meeleolukäigu; seda nähakse läbi inimese ja looduse täieliku harmoonia, võõrandamatuna suvise eesti looduse leebest ilust,“ kirjutab kunstiteadlane Eha Komissarov.

with the development of technology find their way into Estonian paintings later rather than sooner. Haymaking or harvesting potatoes dominated, craftsmen were also depicted to a small extent, but factory workers and miners had to await their moment largely until the mid-1940s, when Soviet guidelines directed artists to them. Thus the tradition of Estonian painting also constructed for us the understanding of “proper” work, which was rustic, somewhat idyllic, archaic and not connected to technology. Lepo Mikko's work is proof of this claim.

A whole series of paintings by Mikko are known with similar colourings and motifs (a man, a woman, a horse or a horse cart) that depict rural life and work, tying man and nature into one (domestic animals, for instance horses, are also depicted frequently in addition to nature). The figures have no concreteness and are generalised. “Rustic existence acquires an Arcadian process of disposition on the background of these beautiful landscapes; this is seen through the perfect harmony between man and nature, as inalienable from the gentle beauty of summertime Estonian nature,” writes art historian Eha Komissarov.



Lepo Mikko  
Natüürmort  
1942  
Õli, lõuend  
61,3 × 50 cm

Lepo Mikko  
Still-Life  
1942  
Oil, canvas  
61.3 × 50 cm





202 **Lepo Mikko** oli keegi, kelle kohta öeldaks ilmselt „maapoiss“. Ta oli pärit Viljandimaalt, kunstnik Juhan Muksi naabertalust, kelle eeskujul hakkas ka ise pürgima kunstnikuks saamise poole. Rada näis olevat üllatavalt sirge, kuni rahapuudus sundis katkestama õpingud Pallase kunstikoolis ning seetõttu töötas Mikko vahepeal kõige muu hulgas ka põllutöölisena. Ent ka pärast õpingute jätku ja kunstikooli lõpetamist ei katkestanud Mikko emotsionaalseid sidemeid oma juurtega ning tema toonastelt maalidelt võime sageli silmata inimrühmi, kes sulanduvad loodusesse, võttes kartulit või niites heina.

„Natüürmort“ asub kahe huvitava telje vahepeal. Ühelt poolt näeme looduse ja inimese vahelist distantsi: loodus ei ole enam keskkond, kus viibida, vaid kaunis objekt, mida noppida ja vaasi panna ning seejärel imetleda. Pangem tähele lillekimbu mitmehäälsust ja hoolikat sätitust, mis viitab veelgi enam inimkäe korrastavale sekkumisele loodusesse: selleks, et *natura*'t nautida, peab mängu astuma *cultura*. Teisalt aga näeme vaasi taga üht nurka Mikko enda maalist ning kuigi teosest on näha vaid mõni sentimeeter, kujutab see muu hulgas käe silmadele tõstnud naisterahvast. See motiiv on aga Mikko maaliloomingust tuttav: veel vähemalt kahel maalil näeme tütarlast, kes vaatab midagi ootavalt

**Lepo Mikko** was somebody who was evidently referred to as a “country boy”. He was from Viljandi County, from the neighbouring farm of the artist Juhan Muks. Muks was an example for Mikko in aspiring to become an artist himself. His path appeared to be surprisingly direct until his shortage of money forced him to discontinue his studies at the Pallas Art School. For this reason, among other jobs, Mikko worked in the meantime as a farm hand as well. Yet even after continuing his studies and completing art school, Mikko did not sever his emotional ties to his roots. We can frequently see groups of people in his paintings from that time who blend in with nature as they harvest potatoes or mow hay.

*Still-Life* is situated between two interesting axes. On the one hand we see distance between nature and man: nature is no longer an environment in which one lives from day to day, but rather a lovely object to pick and place in a vase, and thereafter to admire. Take note of the polyphony of the flower bouquet and how carefully it has been arranged, which refers even more to the ordering intervention of the human hand in nature: in order to enjoy *natura*, *cultura* has to come into play. On the other hand, however, we see a corner of Mikko's own painting behind the vase and although only a few square centimetres of it are visible, it depicts among

kuhugi kaugustesse, käsi päikese kaitseks silmade kohal. Mõlemad maalid kujutavad heinatöölisi (ühel teosel on tütarlapse üks käsi päikesevarjuks, teisega hoiab ta aga looreha) – inimesi keset loodust, kelle jaoks loodus ei ole objekt, mida distantstilt nautida, vaid orgaaniline keskkond. Seeläbi näeme, kuidas ühe maali pinnal kujutab Mikko korraga nii inimese eemaldumist loodusest kui ka sellesse naasmist.

other things a woman shielding her eyes with her hand. Yet this motif is familiar from Mikko's oeuvre of paintings: in at least another two paintings, we see a girl who is expectantly looking at something somewhere in the distance, shielding her eyes from the sun with her hand. Both paintings depict haymakers (in one work, one of the girl's hands shields her eyes from the sun while the other holds a hayrake), meaning – people in the midst of nature, for whom nature is not an object to be enjoyed from a distance, but rather an organic environment. Thereby we see how Mikko simultaneously depicts on the surface of one painting both the distancing of man from nature as well as man's return to nature.

Lepo Mikko  
Natüürmort  
1943  
Õli, lõuend  
51 × 35,5 cm

Lepo Mikko  
Still-Life  
1943  
Oil, canvas  
51 × 35.5 cm

204





**Natüürmortides** kujuneb omalaadne lepomikkolik lakmuspaber või platvorm, millel Mikko katsetas kõiki oma maalijakäekirjas läbiviidud muutusi. Mikko laad teiseses aja jooksul hämmastavalt palju: 1930. aastate lõpu neoimpressionistist saab 1960. aastate kohandatud kubist. Natüürmordid teevad läbi kõik muutused ning ka nende vaheetapid.

1940. aastad olid Mikkole ühtaegu õnnelik ja traagiline aeg. Abiellumine, viie lapse sünd ja stabiilne töö õppejõuna ühelt poolt, kodu hävimine koos varase loominguga, rääkimata kõiki puudutanud ajastu meeleoludest teiselt poolt. „Natüürmort“ ei kõnele ühest ega teisest, vaid hoopis süvenemisest. Mikko on siin liikumas juba ühte suunda, mis saab suurema tõuke 1950. aastate teisel poolel – eemale realismist, konkreetsuse asemel üldistus. Ilmselt oleks ta samal teel liikunud meelsasti kohe ka 1940. aastatel, kuid sovetlikud reeglid lõikasid mõneks ajaks selle arengutee ära. Ometi on silmatorkav, kuidas Mikko, aga tegelikult paljud teisedki kunstnikud kasutasid antud kümnendit, proovimaks leida uusi nurki oma loomingus, tegelda lähenemistega, millega seni polnud tegeldud. Ilmselt on see üks „raskete aegade“ omapärasid: süvenemine millessegi pealtnäha täiesti ebaratsionaalsesse (nagu kunst)

**Still-lifes** developed into a kind of Lepo Mikko-like litmus test or platform, where Mikko tested all the changes implemented in his painting style. Mikko's style changed to an astonishingly great extent over time: the Neo-Impressionist from the end of the 1930s becomes the adapted Cubist of the 1960s. His still-lifes go through all those changes and also their intermediate stages.

The 1940s were simultaneously a happy and a tragic time for Mikko. Marriage, the birth of five children and a stable job as a teacher on the one hand, the destruction of his home together with his early works, to say nothing of all the frames of mind in that period on the other hand. *Still-Life* does not speak of one or the other, but rather of delving into something. Here Mikko is already moving in a direction that receives greater impetus in the latter half of the 1950s – away from Realism, generalisation in place of concreteness. He evidently would have gladly followed that same path immediately in the 1940s as well, but Soviet rules cut such a path of development off for a while. It is nevertheless striking how Mikko, and actually many other artists as well, used the 1940s to try to find new angles in their creative work, to deal with approaches that they had not hitherto used. This is apparently one of the distinctive features of

206 on miski, mis moodustab piisava tasakaalu künismini muutunud ratsionaalsuse ajajärgul. Keskendumine ka kõige keerulisemates oludes kunstile ei kõnele meile heroismist või sangarlikkusest, aga see ei ole ka märk eskapismist ja argpüksusest, vaid pigem vahend inimlikkuse alleshoidmiseks. Kel oli selleks maatöö, kel kingade parandamine, kel laste kasvatamine, kel natüürmordid.

“difficult times”: delving into something seemingly completely irrational (like art) is something that provides sufficient equilibrium in a period of rationality that has turned into cynicism. Focusing on art even in the most complicated conditions does not speak to us of heroism, but it is also not a sign of escapism or cowardice. Rather it is a means for preserving humaneness. Some focused on agricultural work, some on repairing footwear, others on raising children, and still others on still-lives.

Lepo Mikko  
Suvi  
1946  
Õli, lõuend  
60 × 70 cm

Lepo Mikko  
Summer  
1946  
Oil, canvas  
60 × 70 cm





208 „**Suvi**“ asub Lepo Mikko loomingu kõige dramaatilisemal üleminekuhetkel. Enne seda maali ja selle maali pinnal viibib Mikko veel mitmes mõttes ajaloos: tema maalikeeles on näha 19. sajandi prantsuse kunsti jälgi, temaatika viitab tagasi 1930. aastate lõpu idüllilisele taluelule, atmosfääris on aga midagi lõppematu optimismi sarnast, mis töö valmimisaastat vaadates mõjub fantaasia, mitte reaalsusena. Nimelt hakkas Mikko käekiri pärast selle maali loomist muutuma. Okupatsioonivõimud sätestasid kiiresti uued nõuded kunstile, millega ka Mikko proovis kohaneda, hakates abstraktsete suvepastoraalide asemel maalima kangelasid, gaasitrasside rajamist, kraanadest vaimustunud sonisid ja muud säärast. Mõne aasta pärast vahetas ta oma senise käekirja aga täielikult välja ega lähtunud edaspidi enam värvist, vaid kompositsioonist, ammutades siitpeale inspiratsiooni kubismist ja selle harudest.

„Suvi“ seevastu on eskapismi maastik. Siin eitatakse täielikult ja lõpuni ajastut ning minnakse veel korraks tagasi õnnelikku hetke, mil maastik oli poliitiliselt neutraalne ning katastroofidest puutumata. Vaid üksik sihitult hulkuv inimfiguur ning metsa veerde unustatud heinakuhi näivad kõnelevat ühe maailma kadumisest, kui teine pole veel päralt jõudnud. Kogu stseen näib olevat

**Summer** is situated at the most dramatic transitional moment in Lepo Mikko's oeuvre. Prior to this painting, and on its surface, Mikko was in many ways still in history: vestiges of 19<sup>th</sup> century French art can be seen in the language of his painting, while the subject matter refers back to the idyllic farm life of the end of the 1930s. Yet there is something resembling endless optimism in the atmosphere that when looking at the year in which the painting was completed comes across as fantasy, not reality. Because from this painting onward, Mikko's style started changing. The occupying authorities quickly prescribed new requirements for art, and Mikko tried to adapt to them. Instead of abstract summer pastorals, he started painting heroic workers, the construction of gas pipelines, wanderings enraptured with cranes, and other such works. After a while, however, he completely replaced his former style, henceforth no longer taking his impetus from colour, but rather from composition, drawing inspiration from Cubism and its branches.

*Summer*, on the contrary, is a landscape of escapism. Here the era is completely denied to the end and for a while, a happy moment is once again returned to, when the landscape was politically neutral and untouched by catastrophes. Only a lone human figure aimlessly wandering about and a haystack that somebody has forgotten at



äraootav – millegagi justkui hüvasti jätnud, kuid midagi uut veel mitte tervitav. See on pausihetk, viivuks ideoloogiatest vaba hingetõmme, mille ainuke mõeldav toimumispaik on Mikko silmis loodus.

the edge of the woods appear to speak of the passing of one world and another world that has not yet arrived. The entire scene appears to be expectant: it is as if something has been bid farewell to, but nothing new is being greeted yet. This is a moment of pause, a breath that is momentarily free of ideologies. For Mikko, the only conceivable location where this could take place is nature.

# EERIK HAAMER

210 *Eerik Haamer (1908–1994) oli pärit Saaremaalt, kunsti õppis Pallase kunstikoolis. Teise maailmasõja ajal oli ta sunnitud Rootsi emigreeruma.*

*„Pallas oli üks selline töökool, kus joonistati ja maaliti palju modelli järgi. Modellid aga istusid, seisid või lamasiid.*

*Kui nüüd jälgisin mehi, kuidas nad meres töötavad või kuidas Ruhnu rahvas tantsib, oli sellest töökoolis õpitud joonistamisest vähe kasu. Ma vaatasin, et muidu ei saa üldse ja hakkasin siis tegelema niisuguste asjadega nagu liigutus. Ja peagi tuli välja, et kui ikka tahad joonistada üht figuuri, siis pead täitsa oma kehaga tundma, mida sa tahad öelda selle asja kohta, pead joonistama nii, et enda püksitagumik on juures.”*

*Kirjast sõbrale*

*Eerik Haamer (1908–1994) was from Saaremaa. He studied art at the Pallas Art School. He was forced to leave Estonia for Sweden during the Second World War.*

*“Pallas was the kind of practical school where the students drew and painted a great deal according to models. The models sat, stood or lay down.*

*When I now watched how men work in the sea or how the people of Ruhnu dance, the drawing that I learned at that practical school was of little use. I saw that I couldn't proceed at all otherwise, and then I started working on things like movement. And soon it turned out that if you want to draw a figure, you have to completely feel with your own body what you want to say about it. You have to draw so that you can feel the seat of your own trousers.”*

*From a letter to a friend*

Eerik Haamer  
Lambapesijad  
1944–1945  
Õli, lõuend  
54 × 65 cm

Eerik Haamer  
Sheep Washers  
1944–1945  
Oil, canvas  
54 × 65 cm





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**Teise** maailmasõja ajal ei jäänud kunstielu seisma. Kunstnikud maalisid, toimusid näitused ja riik isegi toetas kunstielu – muidugi teatud eelistustega. Näiteks olid soositud tööteemad ja realistlik kujutamislaad. Nii kuulutas Haridusdirektoorium 1943. aastal, Saksa okupatsiooni ajal välja ideekavandite konkursi, mille maalikategoorias võitis tööga „Lambapesijad“ Eerik Haamer. Antud eskiis on üks selle maali kavandeid. Töö kujutab Saaremaa lambapesijaid – Saaremaa oli Haameri loomingus sage teema nii enne kui ka pärast kodumaalt lahkumist.

Esmapilgul on see kõik ehk liigagi loogiline, kuid maalipinnale laskudes näeme ebakõlasid. Nii on keset realistlikku lambapesemisstseeni korraga mõned aktid, tegemas kaasa seda tsentrifuugina keerlevat maali sisemist dünaamikat, kus kõik näib pöörlevat mingisuguses eksistentsiaalses eluringis, mille keskme moodustab töö – lammaste pesemine.

Ent eraldi tähelepanu tasuks pöörata veel kaduvväikesele motiivirakukesele pildi südames: tüdrukuke, kes mõjub kaitsetu ja abituna kogu selle möllu keskel. Samasugust motiivi – seelikusaba üles tõstnud väike tüdruk – on Haamer kasutanud ka mõne teise töö puhul, mille temaatiliseks südamikuks on inimeste kannatused

**The** art scene did not stop functioning during the Second World War. Artists painted, exhibitions were held, and the art scene was even abundantly subsidised – of course with certain preferences. For instance, labour themes and a realistic style of depiction were favoured. Thus the Directorate of Education announced a conceptual design competition in 1943 during the German occupation. Eerik Haamer won the painting category with his work *Sheep Washers*. This sketch is one of the design outlines for this painting. The work depicts sheep washers in Saaremaa – Saaremaa was a frequently occurring theme in Haamer's oeuvre both before and after he left his homeland.

At first sight, this is all perhaps even too logical, but when we descend to the surface of the painting, we see inconsistencies. Thus in the midst of a realistic scene where sheep are being washed, there are suddenly some nudes participating in the inner dynamics of this painting that spins like a centrifuge, where everything seems to revolve in some kind of existential life cycle, the centre of which consists of work – the washing of sheep.

Yet it is a good idea to pay particular attention to a tiny cell of a motif at the heart of the picture: a little girl who comes across as being defenceless and

ajalooliselt turbulentsete sündmuste ajal. Just säärase inimlike ja rohujuure-tasandil loodud detailide abil toob Haamer neisse eepilistesse teemadesse sisse emotsionaalse mõõtme, millega vaatajal on võimalik samastuda – stseenid ei jää meile kaugeteks ja „liiga tähtsateks“, vaid toimuksid justkui siinsamas, meie endiga.

helpless in the midst of all this tumult. Haamer has used the same kind of motif – a little girl who has lifted up the hem of her skirt – in some other works as well where the thematic core is the sufferings of people during historically turbulent events. Haamer adds an emotional dimension to these epic themes precisely by using such human details created at the grassroots level. The viewer can identify with this emotional dimension: these scenes are not distant and “too important” for us, instead it is as if they were taking place right here and involving ourselves.

Eerik Haamer  
Ehitustöölised  
1942  
Õli, vineer  
78,5 × 63 cm

Eerik Haamer  
Construction Workers  
1942  
Oil, plywood  
78.5 × 63 cm

214





**Eerik Haameri** koloriit on miski, millesarnast eesti kunstis enne teda ei olnud. Ilma signatuuri või motiivi märkamatagi võib Haameri varase loominguga ära tunda tema väga spetsiifilise värvikasutuse järgi: rasked pruunid, rohelised ja hallid toonid, maalitud pastoosselt ja paksult, ent nende vahelt alati kumamas ka mingi valgus või mälestus valgusest, mis paneb maalid seesmiselt hõõguma. Haamer ei flirdi kunagi vaatajaga, ta ei paku sentimentaalseid või liiglihtsaid romantilisi lahendusi, vaid juhib vaataja tähelepanu neile hetkedele, mil elu meenutab pigem väljaväänatud käterätti kui otsatut päikesekera. See on omalaadne raskuse, sihikindluse, tahtejõu ja vintskuse poeesia, mis tuleb välja nii Haameri tööde teemades kui ka vormilistes lahendustes.

Ehitustöölised ei ole siin konkreetsete karakterid, vaid töölised üleüldse: inimesed tööga. Erinevalt 1930. aastate teisel poolel esile kerkinud kriitilisest maalist ei näe Haamer ehitustöölisi mitte sotsiaalsete suhete käes kannatajatena, vaid pigem teatud eksistentsiaalsete pingete kehastajatena. Inimene, elu ja töö on Haameri silmis lahutamatu kolmik ja seetõttu kujutab ta oma loomingus sageli töötavaid inimesi: ennekõike kalureid, aga ka näiteks viljakoristajaid. Niipea kui inimeselt on võetud aga tema töö, muutuvad nad Haameri

**Eerik Haamer's** colouring is something the likes of which did not exist in Estonian art before him. Even without noticing the signature or motif, Haamer's early works can be recognised according to his very specific use of colour: heavy brown, green and grey tones painted thickly in impasto, yet also some sort of light or memory of light always gleaming through them, making the paintings glow inwardly. Haamer never flirts with the viewer. He does not offer sentimental or too simple romantic solutions, rather he directs the attention of the viewer to those moments when life resembles more a wrung-out towel than the infinite sphere of the sun. It is a distinctive poetry of heaviness, perseverance, willpower and toughness that emerges in both the themes and formal solutions of Haamer's works.

The construction workers here are not specific characters, rather they are workers in general: people with a job. Unlike critical painting that emerged in the latter half of the 1930s, Haamer does not see construction workers as suffering at the hands of social relations, but rather as the embodiments of certain existential tensions. Man, life and work are an inseparable threesome for Haamer and for this reason, he often depicts working people in his works: first and foremost

216 maalidel eksistentsiaalselt abituks – nad on pimedad, väetid, kodutud. Ka ehitustöölise näo on vaataja eest peidetud, nende pead on langetatud, kuid nad pole jõuetud, nende käed hoiavad kindlalt kirvest ja kastirihma, ning kusagilt sealt koloriidi seest kumab siiski ka midagi, mis meenutab mõne sümfoonia lähenevat kulminatsiooni.

fishermen, but also for instance grain harvesters. Yet as soon as people are deprived of their jobs, they become existentially helpless in Haamer's paintings: they are blind, weak and homeless. The faces of the construction workers are also hidden from the viewer. Their heads are bowed but they are not powerless. Their hands firmly hold the axe and the strap of the crate, and from somewhere there in the colouring, something nevertheless glows that brings to mind the approaching culmination of a symphony.



Eerik Haamer  
Vaika maastik  
1945  
Õli, papp  
60 × 73 cm

Eerik Haamer  
Vaika Landscape  
1945  
Oil, cardboard  
60 × 73 cm





218 **Raske** on leida teist niisugust teost, mis oleks täidetud sedavõrd arvukate pingetega nagu käesolev maal. Haamerile tähendasid Vaika saared Lääne-Saaremaal mitmesuguseid ja kohati vastandlikke meeleolusid. Need olid korraka kodu- ja paopaik, ühtaegu ruum, mis kutsus esile meeldivaid mälestusi kodus olemisest ja traagilist ilmajäetust. Haamer oli sündinud ja kasvanud Saaremaal, see oli tema kant, mida ta tundis suurepäraselt. Saarlaseks olemine andis tooni ka tema kunstis, milles näeme ikka ja jälle motive, mis on seotud saarel (näiteks Ruhnu) elamisega, ning karaktereid ja atmosfääri, mis on kasvanud välja mere ääres ja merega ühes hingamisest – raske on nimetada Haameri varaseid töid millekski muuks kui eepilisteks. Teiselt poolt saab just siit Vaika saartelt alguse Haameri elu ilmselt kõige traagilisem peatükk.

1944. aasta augustis saabub Haamer koos Valdemar Väliga Vaika saartele ja Vilsandile, kus ajalehe teatel jäädvustavad lõuendile „sealset omapärast loodust“. Ent umbes kuu aega hiljem tuleb Haamer siia tagasi ja seekord hoopis teise eesmärgiga – pageda Rootsi. 1944. aasta kevadel olid Nõukogude lennukid Haamerite kodu puruks pommitanud ja abikaasa oli lastega juba Soome sõitnud. Eerik Haamer hulkus aga koos Eduard Wiiraltiga veel mööda

**It** is difficult to find another work that is filled with such abundant tensions as this painting. The Vaika islands in Western Saaremaa meant numerous and at times contradictory moods for Haamer. They were home and a place of refuge simultaneously, at the same time a space that evoked pleasant memories of being at home, and tragic deprivation. Haamer was born and raised in Saaremaa. This was his area, which he knew like the back of his hand. Being an inhabitant of Saaremaa also set the tone for his art, where we see motifs time and again that are tied to living on an island (for instance Ruhnu), along with characters and atmosphere that have grown out of living on the seashore and together with the sea. It is difficult to refer to Haamer's early works as anything other than epic. On the other hand, evidently the most tragic chapter of Haamer's life begins right here on Vaika Island.

In August of 1944, Haamer arrived on Vaika Island and Vilsandi together with Valdemar Väli, where according to the newspaper, they recorded on canvas the “distinctive natural settings there”. Yet about a month later, Haamer returned there and this time with an entirely different objective – to flee to Sweden. In the spring of 1944, the Haamer family home had been destroyed in bombing by Soviet planes, and Haamer's wife had already gone to

purustatud Tallinna, ööbides Kunstihoone keldris ja mujal juhuslikes paikades. Ent peagi Vilsandile suundununa jääb tema viimaseks peatuspaigaks kodumaal sealne tuletorn, kus ta ennast mobilisatsioonikäsu eest varjab. Siit, Eesti kõige läänepoolsemast tipust alustatakse 24. septembril kolmeteistkümnekesi reisi Rootsi ranniku suunas.

„Vaika maastik“ on maalitud juba Rootsis, olles meenutuspilt kodumaast ning viimasest paigast, kus Haameri jalg veel koduradadel astus. Märkame rõõmsaid värve, mis meenutavad meile isegi Konrad Mägi Saaremaa-vaateid, ning miski siin maalikeeles ei reeda meile Haameri leina. Võimalik, et kunstnik pidas sel hetkel naasmist veel võimalikuks. Motiiv muutub talle aga omalaadseks kinnisideeks ning hilisemate aastakümnete (!) vältel pöördub ta ikka ja jälle antud vaate juurde tagasi, maalides oma Rootsi kodus igatsuslikke, siis aga melanhoolseid ning nelikümmend aastat pärast lahkumist juba ka traagilistes toonides Vaika saari. Kuigi Haamer hoidis seda peatükki pidevalt avatuna, oli talle saanud selgeks, et õnnelikku lõppu ei tule.

Finland with the children. Eerik Haamer, however, wandered about for a while longer with Eduard Wiiralt among the ruins of Tallinn, spending the nights in the cellar of the Art Hall and elsewhere in random locations. Yet soon Haamer travelled to Vilsandi and Vilsandi's lighthouse, where he was in hiding from the mobilisation order, became his last stop in his homeland. From here, Estonia's westernmost tip, thirteen people set out on 24 September on the journey in the direction of Sweden's coast.

*Vaika Landscape* was painted when Haamer was already in Sweden, as a recollection picture of his homeland and the last corner of the country where Haamer still stood in his home space. We notice cheerful colours that even remind us of Konrad Mägi's views of Saaremaa, and nothing in the language of the painting here betrays Haamer's mourning. It is possible that at that moment, the artist still thought it was possible to return. This scene, however, becomes a kind of *idée fixe* for him and he returns time and again to this view over the following decades (!), painting the Vaika islands in his Swedish home in tones filled with yearning, but then melancholy tones, and forty years after leaving, in tragic tones as well. Although Haamer constantly kept this chapter open, it had become clear to him that there would be no happy ending.

Eerik Haamer  
Sadam  
1945  
Õli, papp  
41 × 33 cm

Eerik Haamer  
Harbour  
1945  
Oil, cardboard  
41 × 33 cm

220





**On** mõned paigad, *loci* mida me argielus ehk peaaegu tähelegi ei pane, kuid mis ikka ja jälle kunstnikke tõmbavad. Nii on näiteks sadam argine töökoht, tavaliselt üpris ilmetu betoonkaide ja tagasihoidlike abihoonetega koht, milles on keeruline näha midagi võluvast. Ometi on Eesti maalikunstis sadamaid ikka ja jälle kujutatud. Kord on kunstnikud olnud haaratud inimestest ja paiga dünaamikast: merelt lahkuvad ja sealt tulevad kalurid, kalakastide laadimine, võrkude lappimine, lendavad kajakad. Teinekord huvituvad nad mitte sadamast, vaid inimestest – kaluriteemaatika kordub Haameri, Uutmaa, aga ka Evald Okase, Richard Sagritsa, Vive Tolli jpt loomingus. Ilmselt köidab neid inimese ja looduse dialoog, nende võitlus ja harmoonia, mis kalurite puhul joonistub eriti selgelt ja reljeefselt välja. Eerik Haameri silmis on (ilmselt Göteborgi) sadam käesoleval maalil aga ennekõike igatsuslik paik. Väljumisvalmis purjekate mastitihnik jätab meile tunde, et kõik teed on avatud, kõikjale on võimalik kohe minna – kuid purjekate liikumatus, purjede puudumine mastidest ning maali tume koloriit tühistavad tekkinud ootuse: minek on võimatu. Rootsi saabunud Eerik Haameri jaoks ei olnud igatsus abstraktne soov maailma vallutada – ilmselt olid tema silme ees konkreetsed sadamad, kuhu ta oleks sel hetkel tahtnud sõita, kui oleks saanud.

**There** are some places, *loci*, that we perhaps almost do not even notice in everyday life, but which attract artists time and again. Thus, for instance, the harbour is an everyday workplace, usually a rather bland location with concrete quays and modest outbuildings, in which it is difficult to see anything charming. Nevertheless, harbours have been depicted time and again in Estonian paintings. Sometimes artists have been caught up in the people and dynamics of the place: fishermen departing for and returning from the sea, the loading of fish crates, the repairing of nets, sea gulls flying about. At other times they are not interested in the harbour but in people – the subject matter of fishermen repeats in works by Haamer, Uutmaa, but also Evald Okas, Richard Sagrits, Vive Tolli, and many others. They are evidently fascinated by the dialogue between man and nature, the struggle between them, and the harmony that is especially clearly outlined in relief in the case of fishermen. The harbour (probably in Göteborg), however, is first and foremost a place of yearning for Eerik Haamer in this painting. The thicket of masts of sailboats ready to depart leaves us with the feeling that all routes are open. It is possible to go anywhere at a moment's notice. Yet the motionlessness of the sailboats, their masts without sails, and the painting's dark

colouring nullify the generated anticipation: it is impossible to depart. For Eerik Haamer, this yearning was not an abstract wish to conquer the world. Instead, particular harbours that he would have wanted to set sail for at that moment – if he could have – were probably before his eyes.

# RICHARD UUTMAA

*Richard Uutmaa (1905–1977) oli pärit Põhja-Eestist, kunsti õppis Pallase kunstikoolis. Pärast Teist maailmasõda oli vabakutseline.*

*„Olen vahel tagasi vaadanud, mõtelnud ja imestanudki, kui paljud otsad on merele antud. Teinekord teeb sisemaal viibimine mind nagu rahutuks, kuigi olen Lõuna-Eestist küllaltki head ainet leidnud. Ometi... isegi nooruses loetud raamatutest mäletan paremini just neid, mis jutustasid rannaelust.*

*Miks igal kunstnikul taevas ja meri meeleolult kokku ei sobi? Kui taevas ja meri kokku ei sobi, siis puudub tunne, armastusest rääkimata. Ma ei mõtle, et see peaks olema niisugune poolpime kiindumus nagu minul. Ei maksaks vist üldse loodust maalida, kui ta sinus ilusaid tundeid ei ärata – oma vägevusega ei haara ega õrnusega liiguta.”*

*Portreeloost (1975–1977)*

*Richard Uutmaa (1905–1977) was from Northern Estonia. He studied art at the Pallas Art School. He was a freelancer after the Second World War.*

*“I have sometimes looked back, thought and even wondered at how many years I’ve devoted to the sea. Sometimes being inland makes me kind of restless, although I’ve found pretty good subject matter in Southern Estonia. Still...even if you take the books I read in my youth, I remember those that were about coastal life better.*

*Why don’t the sky and the sea suit every artist in terms of their frame of mind? If the sky and the sea don’t suit them, then they have no feeling, to say nothing about love. I don’t think it has to be the kind of half-blind affection as it is for me. There probably is no point in painting nature at all if it doesn’t arouse beautiful feelings in you – if it doesn’t grip you with its mightiness or move you with its tenderness.”*

*From a portrait biography (1975–1977)*

Richard Uutmaa  
Altja rand  
1939  
Õli, lõuend  
81 × 104 cm

Richard Uutmaa  
Altja Beach  
1939  
Oil, canvas  
81 × 104 cm

224







**Kunstnik** on kujutanud oma koduküla (võib-olla ka kodutalu) Altjas Põhja-Eesti rannikul. Säärane sentimentaalne vaade kodule on üks Teise maailmasõja eel mitut autorit iseloomustanud hoiakuid: Nikolai Triik maalis näiteks ohtralt kodurandu, Ants Laikmaa kodukanti ja selle inimesi, käesoleval näituselgi esindatud autoritest on kodu maalinud ka Endel Kõks („Tartu vaade“) ja Eerik Haamer („Vaika maastik“). Uutmaa on aga üks kirglikumaid kodumaalijaid eesti kunstis: juba oma varases loomingu kujutas ta siinseid randu ja rannarahvast veel enne Teise maailmasõja lõppemist umbkaudu kolmekümnel korral. „Isa oli väga kodulembene inimene,“ on tema tütar meenutanud. Uutmaa leidis inspiratsiooni just nimelt koduse, tuttava, läbikäidu kujutamisest (Konrad Mägi jaoks oleks see olnud mõeldamatu). Pärast sõda kujutas Uutmaa Altjat märksa harvemini, sest tema kodutalu oli hävinud (ainult hobusetall jäi alles) – selle asemel näeme kunstniku loomingu nüüd vaateid Saaremaalt, Lõuna-Eestist ja mujalt. Seetõttu on käesolev maal ühtaegu soojade värvidega valgus- ja õhuküllane vaade kodukandile, ent ühtlasi samasugune tunnistus tühimikust nagu Endel Kõksi „Tartu vaade“ – seda, mis kunagi oli, enam ei ole.

Oma kodu kujutamine maalil kasvab aga tähenduselt laiemaks. Nimelt konstrueerib Uutmaa

**The** artist has depicted his home hamlet (perhaps also his home farm) in Altja on the coast of Northern Estonia. This kind of sentimental view of home is one of the attitudes that characterised many *auteurs* prior to the Second World War: Nikolai Triik, for instance, painted the seashores near his home abundantly, and Ants Laikmaa painted his home neighbourhood and its people. Of the *auteurs* on display at this exhibition, Endel Kõks (*View of Tartu*) and Eerik Haamer (*Vaika Landscape*) have also painted their homes. Uutmaa, however, is one of the more passionate painters of home in Estonian art: in his early works he already depicted the seashores around home and their people on around thirty occasions, even before the end of the Second World War. “Father was the kind of person who was very fond of home,” his daughter has recalled – Uutmaa found inspiration precisely from depicting what was homelike, familiar and had already been traversed (this would have been unthinkable for Konrad Mägi). The depiction of Altja, however, decreased drastically later on after the war because Uutmaa’s home farm was destroyed (only the horse stable survived), and instead we thereafter see views of Saaremaa, Southern Estonia and elsewhere in this artist’s oeuvre. Thus this painting is simultaneously a view of his home neighbourhood depicted in warm colours and

226 kodu mõiste kui niisuguse: me ei vaata tema maali ainult kui kunstniku isiklikku kodukanti, vaid suudame ka ennast sinna projitseerida. Jah, säärane meie kodu ongi, ütleb miski meis – meiegi kodu peaks olema samasugune nagu maalil, mitte liiga uhkeldav, keset loodust ja ümbrusega kooskõlas. Seeläbi muutub teos üldistuseks: ta hakkab kujutama, tähendama ning ka looma seda arusaama, mis tema vaatajatel on kodust kui sellisest.

with abundant light and air, yet by today also the same kind of witness to a void as Endel Kõks's *View of Tartu*: that which once was is no longer.

Yet the meaning of Uutmaa's painting grows somewhat broader than depicting his home. Namely, Uutmaa constructs a concept of "home" as such: we do not look at his painting only as the artist's own personal home neighbourhood, rather we can also project ourselves there. Yes, this is what our home is like, something within us says – our home should also be archaic, in the midst of nature, not too pretentious, but rather built of simple materials. Thereby the work becomes a generalisation: it starts depicting, meaning and also creating that understanding that its viewers have of "home" as such.

Richard Uutmaa  
Võrguparandajad  
1941  
Õli, lõuend  
104,5 × 118 cm

Richard Uutmaa  
Fishing Net Repairers  
1941  
Oil, canvas  
104.5 × 118 cm





228 **Richard Uutmaa** teost võib pidada märkimisväärseks mitmel põhjusel ja nii mõneski mõttes kukub antud töö välja traditsioonist, mida käesoleval näitusel on kirjeldatud. Esiteks maksab tähele panna sellist esmapilgul banaalset mõõdikut nagu maali suurus. Varases eesti maalikunstis ei saanud mõõtudega eriti uhkeldada – tõsi, aja jooksul olukord paranes ning intiimsete ja etüüdilikumate maalide kõrval tekkis järjepidevus ka suuremate maalide loomisel. Ometi ei kujunenud toonane kunst kunagi kuigivõrd „suureks“, eriti kui võrrelda seda Lääne-Euroopa analoogidega, mille puhul polnud haruldased ka kümnete ruutmeetrite suurused teosed. Maali mõõdud pole siinkohal tähtsad mitte vormi, vaid sisu poolest – nii mõnigi kord dikteerivad välised olud ka sisemised. Nii tähendab suurem maal võimalust ja ühtlasi kohustust valida temaatikat teistmoodi kui miniatuurse maali puhul. Seeläbi polegi ehk imestada, et varases eesti kunstis ei ole figuraalkompositsioon just kõige levinum žanr. Ent Uutmaa maal loob ometi olukorra, kus rühm inimesi midagi teevad. Eesti kunstile iseloomulikult pole tegevus eriti dramaatiline ning pingest laetud, vaid argine ja elu korrapärast rütmi järgiv: inimesed teevad seda, mida nad iga päev on teinud.

**Richard Uutmaa's** work is very remarkable for several reasons, and in many respects, this work does not fit in with the tradition that has been described at this exhibition. First of all, it is worthwhile to take note of such a seemingly banal gauge as the size of the painting. In early Estonian paintings, artists could not particularly show off in terms of the dimensions of their work. Admittedly, the situation improved over time and alongside more intimate and study-like paintings, artists were able to start creating larger paintings as well more regularly. Nevertheless, the art of that time never evolved into particularly “large format” art, especially compared to Western European analogues, where works tens of square metres in size were not rare. The dimensions of the painting are not important here in terms of its form, but rather of its content: yes, external conditions quite often also dictate inner conditions. Thus a larger painting means the opportunity, but at the same time also the obligation to choose subject matter differently than for a miniature painting. Thereby it is perhaps no wonder that figurative paintings, in other words several people together, is not exactly the most widespread genre in early Estonian art, but Uutmaa's painting nevertheless creates a situation where a group of people are doing something. As is characteristic

Ometi on maalil veel mõned lisakihid, ning needki on pigem erandlikud. Esiteks on kunstnik siin kujutanud ennast, kuid mitte autoportreena, vaid sulatanud end teiste karakterite ritta pikimaks. Teiseks leiab teoselt terve rea poliitilisi viiteid ajastule. Pangem tähele, et „Võrguparandajad“ on maalitud 1941. aastal. Kui nüüd maali uue pilguga vaadata, siis märkame, et tegemist on sama kodukandiga, mida Uutmaa on kujutanud „Altja rannal“. Ainult et sealse õhurikkuse asemel on taevas tume ja äikeseline, sattudes isegi vastuollu inimeste rahulikkusega – nad nagu ei aimakski, mis neid ees ootab. Samuti on argise tegevuse rõhutamine oluline samm: Uutmaa näitas antud maali esmakordselt koos kahe paariktööga, kus ühel lõigatakse vilja ja teisel niidetakse lambaid, ning traditsioonilist eluviisi kujutavad maalid 1941. aasta näitusel kõnelevad endise jätkumisest, proovides luua sidet sellega, mis kohe-kohe ähvardas katkeda. Ja veel üks nüanss. Maalil on sinimustvalge kombinatsioon, mis algab pildi südames sinist särki kandva naisterahvaga, kelle must seelik läheb üle valgeks võrguks. Samasugune kombinatsioon oli ka rukkilõikust kujutaval maalil (lambaniitjatega teos on teadmata kadunud). Niisiis maalis Uutmaa ühelt poolt seda, mida enamikul oma teostel – kodukanti, tuttavat tegevust ja tuttavaid inimesi –,

of Estonian art, the activity is not particularly dramatic and charged with tension, rather it is commonplace and repeats the regular rhythm of life: people do what they have done every day.

The painting nevertheless has some further additional layers and even these are exceptional. First of all, the artist has depicted himself here but not as a self-portrait, rather he has blended himself in as the tallest among a whole host of characters. Secondly, the work has a whole series of political references to its era. Note that *Fishing Net Repairers* was painted in 1941 and turning your attention to this, let us look at the painting again. This is the same home neighbourhood that Uutmaa has also depicted in his *Altja Beach*, only that instead of the abundance of air in that painting, here the sky is dark and thundery, even in contradiction to the calmness of the people – as if they had no inkling of what was coming. At the same time, stressing everyday activity is an important step: Uutmaa displayed this painting for the first time together with two counterpart works, where grain is being harvested in one, and sheep are being sheared in the other. These paintings depicting a traditional way of life, which were on display at the exhibition in 1941, speak of the continuation of the “former”. They try to make contact with what was in immediate

230 teisalt aga on siin juba kohal murdumise ähvardus, senise lõppemine, katastroofi eelaimdus. Veel viimane hetk enne kõige kadumist.

danger of being severed. And one further nuance. There is a blue, black and white colour combination in the painting that begins at the heart of the picture with a woman wearing a blue blouse, whose black skirt transitions into a white net. The same kind of combination was also in the painting depicting the rye harvest (the work depicting the sheep shearers is lost without a trace). On the one hand, Uutmaa thus painted what was in most of his works – his home neighbourhood, familiar activity and familiar people – yet on the other hand the threat of fracture, the end of what has hitherto existed. A presentiment of catastrophe is already present here. One final moment before all is lost, the very last second – this is what *Fishing Net Repairers* is about.

Richard Uutmaa  
Lõuna-Eesti maastik  
1944  
Õli, lõuend  
60 × 92 cm

Richard Uutmaa  
Southern Estonian Landscape  
1944  
Oil, canvas  
60 × 92 cm





232 **Lõuna-Eesti** ei olnud Richard Uutmaale samasugune koduruum nagu Konrad Mägile, Karl Pärsimägile, Villem Ormissoni või Endel Kõksile. Tema oli pärit põhjarannikult ning Lõuna-Eestisse sattus ta ilmselt esmakordselt seoses õpingutega Pallasel, kuid ometi kujunes siinsest kandist pärast Teist maailmasõda üks tema maalimisretkede sihtkohti. Samamoodi nagu Lepo Mikko oma maalil „Suvi“, on ka Uutmaa kujutanud lopsakat rohelist, mille südamesse on ta asetanud värvilistes riietes inimesed, uurimaks tekkinud kombinatoorikat. Teisalt torkab silma varasemas eesti maalikunstis küllaltki levinud võtte, mida võiks nimetada ka lõunaeeestilikuks perspektiiviks: me näeme panoraamset vaadet, kingul seisva kunstniku ette on nagu vöönditena laotunud loodus. Mujal Eestis maalides oli säärast perspektiivi keeruline leida, kuid siin võis seda päris tavaliseks pidada ning see võlus nii mõndagi kunstnikku (võrreldgem käesolevat tööd kas või Konrad Mägi teostega). Säärane kaugustesse ulatuv maastik lubab lahendada ka puhtalt maalilisi ülesandeid: kaugemad piirkonnad hägustuvad, nende värv muutub hajusamaks ja kontuurid sulanduvad. Samuti teiseneb maaliruum – see on tunduvalt sügavam, vaatenurki ei löika ära silme ette kerkivad puud, vaataja pilk eksleb kaugustesse, andes nõnda maalile ka veidi

**Southern** Estonia was not the same kind of home space for Richard Uutmaa as it was for Konrad Mägi, Karl Pärsimägi, Villem Ormisson or Endel Kõks. He was from the northern coast and found himself in Southern Estonia evidently for the first time in connection with his studies at the Pallas school, yet this area nevertheless became one of the destinations of his painting expeditions after the Second World War. Similarly to Lepo Mikko's painting *Summer*, Uutmaa has also depicted exuberant greenery, at the heart of which he has set people in colourful clothing in order to study the combinatorics that have thus been generated. On the other hand, another device stands out that was quite common in earlier Estonian painting, which could also be referred to as Southern Estonian perspective: we see a panoramic view where nature spread out before the artist standing on a hillock is revealed by zones. It was difficult to find this kind of perspective when painting elsewhere in Estonia, but here it was quite usual, and it charmed many artists (compare this work with Konrad Mägi's works, for instance). Such a landscape that extends into the distance allows purely painterly tasks to be resolved: more distant areas become hazier, their colour becomes more diffuse, and contours blend into one another. At the same time, the depth of the space of the painting increases considerably.



melanhoolse atmosfääri. Eraldi tasuks tähelepanu pöörata pilvedele: Uutmaa ei ole jätnud taevast tühjaks, vaid loonud sinna pilvedest arabeski, mis meenutab metsade mustrit veidi allpool. Kunstnik kujutab siin kohta, millega tal puudub otsene emotsionaalne side ning seetõttu on „Lõuna-Eesti maastik“ „Altja rannaga“ võrreldes anonüümsem ja distantseeritum, värvid veidi külmemad, õhku veidi vähem ning hoolega väljamaalitud detaile napilt. Ent siingi püüdleb Uutmaa teatud ülevuse poole: tema maalid on omalaadsed sümfooniad, mille südamikus paikneb tuttav ja kodune.

Trees that appear before the eyes do not cut off angles of view, rather the viewer's gaze strays into the distance, thus also providing the painting with a somewhat melancholy atmosphere. It is a good idea to pay special attention to the clouds: Uutmaa has not left the sky empty, rather he has created an arabesque of clouds there that naturally resembles the pattern of the forests slightly below. Unlike *Altja Beach*, here Uutmaa moves to a place that is not tied to him by any sentimental connection whatsoever. Thereby *Southern Estonian Landscape* is more anonymous and distanced. Its colours are somewhat colder, there is a little less air, and few carefully painted details. Yet Uutmaa aspires towards a certain loftiness here as well in exactly the same way: his paintings are symphonies of a kind, at the heart of which is the familiar, the homelike, and the sedentary.

Richard Uutmaa  
Põhjarannik  
1945  
Õli, vineer  
64 × 81,3 cm

Richard Uutmaa  
Northern Coast  
1945  
Oil, plywood  
64 × 81.3 cm

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**Richard Uutmaa** teos on ühtaegu loogiline ja ebaloogiline. Näeme Uutmaa kodukanti, ilmselt talle tuttavaid inimesi ning Uutmaa teostele täiesti tüüpilist olustikku, tegevust, karaktereid. Samal ajal on Uutmaa valinud aga mõneti ootamatu perspektiivi: ta on taganenud merre ning maalib sealt. Võimalik, et selle põhjuseks on soov luua teatav ülevaatlik panoraamvaade nii inimestest kui ka nende keskkonnast: merest ja väikestest kalurieluga seotud majakestest. Seeläbi moodustub omalaadne mikrokosmos: terviklik ja lõpetatud maailm, millel ei tundu olevat erilist pistmist ümbritsevaga. Kujutatut võib vaadata minevikku suunatud pilguna või näha siin ka ühe teatud sotsiaalse utopia kehastust. Säärane utopia – iseseisev, ajas justkui tardunud ning omaenese reeglite järgi tegutsev veidi arhailine kogukond – meenutab veidi teisi samasuguseid kogukondi ja utopiaid. Meenutagem kas või mennoniite, amišeid, Arto Paasilinna romaani „Maailma parim küla“ või M. Night Shyamalani filmi „Küla“. Säärane lähenemine saab veelgi lisatoone, kui me vaatame töö dateeringut – 1945. Jällegi võime ühe töö pinnal rääkida korraka loogilisusest ja ebaloogilisusest. On tavapärase, et tol ajastul loodi rohkem või vähem realistlikke vaateid töötavatele inimestele, sest uus ajastu soosis just säärast kunsti. Uutmaale oli aga

**Richard Uutmaa's** work is simultaneously logical and illogical. We see Uutmaa's home neighbourhood, people familiar to him, and activity, characters and an atmosphere that are utterly typical of Uutmaa's works. On the other hand, however, Uutmaa has chosen a somewhat unexpected perspective: he has retreated into the sea and paints from there. It is possible that the reason for this is the wish to create a certain comprehensive panoramic view of people and their environment: of the sea and little houses connected to the life of a fisherman. A particular kind of micro-cosmos is thereby formed: a complete and finished world that does not appear to have any particular connection to its surroundings. We can look at it as a view into the past, yet we can also see the embodiment here of a certain social utopia. Such a utopia – an independent, archaic community, as if frozen in time and functioning according to its own rules – somewhat resembles other similar communities and utopias. Recall, for example, the Mennonites, the Amish, Arto Paasilinna's novel *The Best Village in the World*, or M. Night Shyamalan's film *The Village*. Such categorisation acquires a few additional tones if we consider the dating of the work: 1945. We can once again speak of logicalness and illogicalness simultaneously in a single work. It is normal that

236 säärane lähenemine niikuinii südamelähedane, ta ei ole siin teinud järsku pööret. Samas mõjub teos ka viipena ühe kadunud aja suunas, proovides justkui säilitada kohe kaduvat elukorraldust. Paraku osutub ka see püüe üheks utoopiaks.

more or less realistic views of working people were created in that period since the new era favoured precisely such art. Yet for Uutmaa, this kind of approach was near to his heart anyway. He has not suddenly changed direction here. At the same time, the work comes across as a gesture directed at a lost era, as if trying to preserve two disappearing ways of life. Unfortunately, this aspiration also proves to be a utopia.

# AMANDUS ADAMSON

*Amandus Adamson (1855–1929) oli esimesi eesti skulptoreid, kes sai hariduse Peterburis ning töötas Peterburis ja Pariisis, hiljem Eestis.*

*„Pole olemas noort ega vana, moodsat ega ebamoodsat, isegi mitte õieti realismi ja klassitsismi kunsti alal. On olemas vaid ilus kunst, sest isegi inetus muudetakse iluks, niipea kui ta astub suure kunsti templirahusse.”*

*Adamsoni abikaasa tsiteerib Adamsoni (1929)*

*Amandus Adamson (1855–1929) was one of the first Estonian sculptors who was educated in St. Petersburg, and worked in St. Petersburg and Paris, later in Estonia.*

*“Young or old, modern or non-modern do not exist, and in fact not even Realism and Classicism in art. All that exists is beautiful art because even ugliness is turned into beauty as soon as it steps into the peace of the temple of great art.”*

*Adamson’s wife quotes Adamson (1929)*

Amandus Adamson  
Tšempion  
(Georg Lurich)  
1903  
Pronks  
103 × 36 × 37 cm

Amandus Adamson  
Champion  
(Georg Lurich)  
1903  
Bronze  
103 × 36 × 37 cm





**Georg Lurich** oli – nagu sportlased sageli – midagi enamat oma sportlassaavutustest. Legendaarse maadlejana jäljendasid teda paljud (muide, isegi väike Konrad Mägi olevat Lurichi matše vaatamas käinud ning temast inspiratsiooni saanud), kuid ühtlasi oli ta üks esimesi rahvusvahelise läbilöögi teinud eestlasi, mistõttu hakati talle projitseerima kõikvõimalikke rahvuslikke ootusi. Enamgi veel: kuna mõiste „rahvus“ oli üha rohkem täitumas poliitiliste detailidega, siis võib öelda, et Lurich aitas rahvust ja tema ootusi ka defineerida.

Amandus Adamsoni skulptuur Lurichist täitis seetõttu mitut funktsiooni. Ühelt poolt oli see muidugi juba antiiktraditsioonist alguse saanud inimkeha kujutamise jätk: alasti meesterahvas, tema plastilised sooned ja kõõlused. „Ka oli ta oma lihased sedavõrd välja arendanud, et ta nendega võis kas valsi või marsi taktis mängida, milline demonstratsioon alati publikus suured ovatsioonid esile kutsus,“ kirjutati ajalehes Lurichi kohta. Ent teiselt poolt oli Lurichi portreeterimine ka ühiskondlik akt.

Skulptuur valmis 1903. aastal. Lurich tellis Peterburis kaks pronksvalandit, millest üks asub Tartu Kunstimuuseumist mõnesaja meetri kaugusel Eesti Spordimuuseumis. Teise valandi saatus oli rohkem kui sada aastat teadmata – viimane

**As** athletes often are – Georg Lurich was “something more” than his achievements in sports. As a legendary wrestler, many people imitated him (incidentally, even little Konrad Mägi had allegedly gone to watch Lurich’s matches and had been inspired by him). At the same time, he was one of the first Estonians to achieve a breakthrough internationally, for which reason all manner of nationalist expectations started being projected onto him. Even more so: since the concept of “nationality” was being filled with more and more political details, then it can be said that Lurich also helped to define his nationality and its expectations.

Amandus Adamson’s sculpture of Lurich thus fulfilled several functions. On the one hand, of course, it was the continuation of the depiction of the human body that already began in the tradition of antiquity: a nude man, his plastic veins and tendons. “He had also trained his muscles to the point where he could play with them to the rhythm of a waltz or a march, the demonstration of which always drew huge ovations from the public,” the papers wrote about Lurich. Yet on the other hand, creating a portrait of Lurich was also a social act.

The sculpture was completed in 1903. Lurich ordered two bronze castings in St. Petersburg,

240 jälg oli selle saatmine 1904. aastal USA-sse maailmanäitusele, kus see ilmselt maha müüdi. Skulptuur jõudis tagasi Eestisse alles 2017. aastal.

one of which is deposited at the Estonian Sports Museum, a few hundred metres from the Tartu Art Museum. The fate of the other casting was unknown for over a hundred years – the last trace of it was when it was sent to the World Exposition in the USA in 1904, where it was evidently sold off. The sculpture finally found its way back to Estonia in 2017.



# ANTON STARKOPF

*Anton Starkopf (1889–1966) oli pärit Põhja-Eestist, kunsti õppis ta Münchenis ja Pariisis, töötas mitu aastat välismaal, kuid alates Pallase asutamisest oli selle skulptuuriõppejõud ning hiljem ka direktor.*

*„Vaimusuurustel on inimestele maagiline jõud. Neid võib võrrelda kärestikega või isegi hauakohtadega. Skulptorigi pöördub nende poole ikka ja jälle. Ta ei saa targaks üksnes piltide vaatamisest ja muuseumides käimisest. Kunstnik ei tohiks vähem lugeda kui kirjanik. Paljude keskpäraste kunstnike keskpärasus seisab selles, et geeniuustelt ei õpita, vaid peetakse iseennast geniuseks.*

*Kui kivi on jäik ja kõva, siis ei tähenda see veel, et kivisse ei saaks raiuda naeru soojust ja helgust. Kivi võib olla naljakalt lapselik, koomiliselt püüdlik. Võib. Sest see kõik tuleb kivisse raiuda. Selleks aga peab ise naerust lugu pidama, ise naljast aru saama ning ise soojust kiirgama.*

*Anton Starkopf (1889–1966) was from Northern Estonia. He studied art in Munich and Paris, and worked abroad for several years, but starting from the foundation of the Pallas Art School, he was its sculpture teacher, and later also the school's director.*

*“Great minds have magical power over people. They can be compared to rapids or even gravesites. Even sculptors turn to them time and again. The sculptor does not become wise by only looking at pictures and going to museums. An artist should not read any less than a writer. The mediocrity of many mediocre artists lies in the fact that they do not learn from geniuses but rather they consider themselves geniuses.*

*If a stone is rigid and hard, that does not yet mean that the warmth and brightness of a smile cannot be hewn into that stone. A stone can be humorously childish, comically painstaking. It can be. Because all of this has to be hewn into stone. In order*

242 **Öeldakse, et graniiti või marmorisse  
raiutud kujud on mõjuvad oma  
suurejoonelisuses, eepilises võimsuses.  
Aga seegi antakse kivile üksnes  
südame ja ajude sunnil."**

**Portreeloost (1964)**

***to do so, however, you yourself have to  
hold laughter in esteem, you yourself  
have to have a sense of humour and  
you yourself have to radiate warmth.***

***It is said that statues hewn into granite  
or marble are compelling in their  
splendour, their epic potency. But even  
this is given to the stone only through the  
heart and the brain."***

***From a portrait biography (1964)***

Anton Starkopf  
Siiami tantsijatar  
1925  
Pronks  
65 × 26 × 12,5 cm

Anton Starkopf  
Siamese Dancer  
1925  
Bronze  
65 × 26 × 12.5 cm





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**Anton Starkopfi** köitis tantsiv inimkeha pikema aja jooksul. Nii on näiteks teada kuus aastat enne käesoleva skulptuuri valmimist loodud joonistus „Tantsijad“, aga veelgi varem on Starkopf kujutanud pidutsevaid bakhante, kelle alasti kehad väänlevad ebamäärases pöörases tantsuhoos, 35 aastat pärast „Siiami tantsijatari“ loob Starkopf aga skulptuuri nimega „Tantsijanna“. Säärane huvi võib olla tingitud mitmest aspektist, kuid skulptorina paelus Starkopfi ilmselt tantsiva inimkeha plastilisus ja samas problemaatilisus, kuna seda ei ole kõige kergem kujutada, lisaks peab arvesse võtma kõige erinevamaid kontekste: füüsilisi, erootilisi jne.

Eraldi tasuks aga tähelepanu pöörata geograafilisele kontekstile. Siiam viitab Taimaale, kus Starkopf teadaolevalt kunagi küll ei käinud – võimalik, et ta nägi eksootilist tantsu Münchenis või Pariisis, või ei olnudki ta seda näinud ning lähtus fotodest, teistest skulptuuridest või joonistustest. Samas tuleb öelda, et eesti modernism oli üldjuhul äärmiselt Euroopa-keskne: väljapoole maailmajagu ei sõidetud peaaegu kunagi ning seetõttu ei olnud eesti kunstis ka impulsse näiteks aafrika kunstist, mis samas Euroopa modernismi vägagi mõjutasid. Starkopfi viide Kagu-Aasiale ei lähtu samuti eriti kohalikust vormikeelest ja maailma nägemise viisist, vaid käsitleb võõrapärast

**Anton Starkopf** was captivated by the dancing human body over a long period of time. Thus for instance, a drawing entitled *Tantsijad* (Dancers) is known that was created six years before the completion of this sculpture. Yet even earlier, Starkopf had depicted revelling Bacchantes, whose naked bodies writhed in the frenzied, ambiguous whirl of the dance. Thirty-five years after *Siamese Dancer*, however, Starkopf created a sculpture entitled *Tantsijanna* (Dancer). This kind of interest can be conditioned by numerous aspects, but the plasticity of the dancing human body evidently fascinated Starkopf as a sculptor. He was also interested in its problematical nature, since the dancing body is not the easiest to depict. Additionally, the most varied contexts have to be taken into consideration: physical, erotic, and so on.

Separate attention should be paid to the geographical context. Siam refers to Thailand, which Starkopf is not known to have ever visited – it is possible that he saw exotic dancing in Munich or Paris, or that he had not seen it and based his work on photographs, other sculptures or drawings. At the same time, it must be mentioned that as a rule, Estonian Modernism was extremely European-oriented: people almost never travelled beyond that continent and for this reason, there

Euroopa modernismi vaimus, muudab ta omaseks või koloniseerib. Ometi võib leida siiski ka ühe kokkupuutepunkti. Siiami tantsijatar ei tantsi seltskonnatantsu, vaid see on rituaal, millel on oma kindel reeglistik ja eesmärgid. Starkopfi skulptuur muudab rituaali aga peaaegu et fetišiks, fikseerides ühe teatud poosi ja seda võimendades.

were also no impulses in Estonian art from African art, for instance, which at the same time influenced European Modernism very much. Starkopf's reference to Southeast Asia similarly is not particularly based on the local Southeast Asian language of form and a local way of seeing the world, rather it treats the foreign in the spirit of European Modernism, makes it "his own" or colonises it. Nevertheless, one point of contact can still be found. The Siamese dancer does not dance a "social dance", rather it is a ritual that has its definite objectives and set of rules. Starkopf's sculpture, however, almost turns ritual into a fetish, fixating a certain pose and amplifying it.

Anton Starkopf  
Kahekesi  
1920. aastate lõpp –  
1930. aastate algus  
Kunstkivi  
29 × 57 × 23,5 cm

Anton Starkopf  
Two Together  
End of 1920s –  
outset of 1930s  
Artificial stone  
29 × 57 × 23.5 cm





**Intiimse** läheduse jäädvustamine skulptuuris mõjub alati korraga nii romantiliselt kui ka veidi morbiidselt. Ühelt poolt on võimalik skulptuuri kaudu kujutada kahe inimese ühtesulamist ning samas eraldi inimesteks jäämist: me näeme figuure, kes naalduvad teineteise külge, kuid nende enda piirjooned ei haju. Ühtlasi on fookus ainult kõige olulisemal: skulptor ei pea tegelema taustade, keskkonna, atmosfääri, ruumi jms küsimustega sel määral nagu maalikunstnik. Soovides keskenduda inimestevahelisele lähedusele, võib autor piirdudagi kahe inimese ning nendevahelise poeesiaga, mis tavaliselt peegeldub poosis ja ilmes. Sellest piisab. Natuurilt on skulptuur minimalistlik kunstivorm ning seetõttu pole ehk ka imestada, et Starkopfi lemmikkirjanikuks oli Ernest Hemingway, kes oli tuntud oma äärmiselt lakoonilise stiili poolest. Samas on armastuse jäädvustamine skulptuuri alati ka veidi nukker. Jääb mulje, nagu poleksid inimesed tabatud mitte konkreetsel ajahetkel, vaid teatud igavikulises olukorras: nad on kivistunud ning jäävad säärastena meiega igavesti, sest millal ja kus see kõik täpselt juhtus, ei ole võimalik kujutada – ega pole ka tähtis.

**Recording** close intimacy in sculpture always comes across romantically and simultaneously also slightly morbidly. On the one hand, it is possible by way of sculpture to depict two people fusing into one while remaining separate people at the same time: we see figures who lean on each other, yet their own contours do not dissipate. At the same time, the focus is only on what is most important: a sculptor does not have to deal with questions of backgrounds, environment, atmosphere, space, and other such matters to the extent that a painter has to. If he wishes to focus on intimacy between people, the *auteur* can restrict himself to two people and the poetry between them, which is ordinarily reflected in poses and expressions. That is enough. Sculpture is a minimalist art form by its nature and for this reason, it is perhaps no wonder either that Starkopf's favourite writer was Ernest Hemingway, who was known for his extremely laconic style. At the same time, recording love in sculpture is always somewhat doleful. It leaves the impression as if the people are captured not at a specific moment in time, but rather in a certain everlasting situation: they are petrified and will remain with us that way forever, because precisely when and where it all happened is not possible to depict – nor is it important.





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Õnn ei ole meie jaoks,  
vaeste maa poegade jaoks.  
Meie jaoks on kunst ainuke  
pääsetee, kuna hetkel,  
kui hing on täis elu igavest  
kannatust, avab kunst meile  
selle, mida elu anda ei suuda.  
Seal, kunstis, omaenese  
loomingus, võib leida rahu.

**Konrad Mägi**

Happiness is not for us poor  
sons of the earth. For us, art is  
the only way out, since at the  
moment when the soul is filled  
with the eternal suffering of  
life, art opens up to us what  
life is not capable of. There,  
in art, in one's own creative  
work, one can find peace.

**Konrad Mägi**