



INSULA MUDUS

Paljassare beyond interesting

A lost dog, a prompt postponement, an initial amiability, engaging energy and mutual complement – a first impression of Andra and Keiti. Driven by curiosity, equipped with broad and precise knowledge, disposing of a natural intuition for needed support, required motivation and collective involvement, Andra and Keiti were the core energies during this studio. Thank you for your assistance, your very helpful inputs, for familiarizing us with what's outside of Tallinn's city borders and for your dedication to us individually and the whole studio. You both are very interesting!

IMPRESSUM

Urban Studies Urbanisation Studio 1 | 2020
Estonian Academy of Arts

Tutors:

Andra Aaloe and Keiti Kljavin

Students:

Daria Khrystych
Karlotta Sperling
Fernanda Ayala Torres
Dalma Pszota
Janosh Heydorn
Mira Samonig
Muhammad Ali Hussnain
Valeriia Mikhailova

Text editing:

Daria Khrystych
Dalma Pszota

Narration:

Mira Samonig
Karlotta Sperling

Layout:

Janosh Heydorn
Fernanda Ayala Torres

Images by members of the studio,
Mattias Malk and Egemen Mercanlioglu

Part 1:

Introduction 06

interesting

History 10

Public Ride 12

interesting

Diagonal Trip 20

beyond border

Expedition 26

Part 2:

Right to the social retreat 20

beyond border

ARCO-BAY/ECO-SANTI: 42
50 years of eco-cities

nature?
social

Out of control: Playing in the 54
cabinet of curiosities of Paljassaare

materiality
beyond border

Watching birds from above 66

social
nature?

the urban wild is 78
- everywhere to be felt
- nowhere to be noticed

inbetween
materiality

"We should do something here!" 90

interesting
inbetween

BY MIRA SAMONIG INTRODUCTION

The sound of hammers pounding on metal, few people on the streets, a trash dump in the grass, a concrete carcasse peeking through scrap, bird-songs, waves on gravel, a slight persistent, sweetish smell in the air, fences, hidden paths – a first grasp, a first impression of Paljassaare.

The area that was unexplored and widely unknown to us in the beginning of September became the center of our interest during the autumn semester of 2020. The first year's students of Urban Studies master programme were confronted with this northern part of Tallinn in their Urbanisation studio "Paljassaare: the cul-de-sac of being and nothingness", which seems to steadily move into the realm of public interest over the last years. For a long time hidden from the public view due to its past as a restricted border area, Paljassaare is now more and more seen as being an interesting area full of potential, and an exciting playground for urban

explorers today. Concurrently, it finds itself as an intermediate, in-between the tension between an unforgettable past and utopian transformations.

Drawing from our first perceptions and experiences of the site, we started to trace down the dimensions that conceal beyond the “interesting”. The first half of the studio encompassed becoming acquainted with the structural and social realities on-site, and broad theoretical convergence on topics that could help to open the context of Paljassaare. The main focus was put on the question concerning the border between the urban and the rural, the denomination of wasteland in the urban context as well as social aspects in regard to space and nature. This research was put forward by hosting a public bike tour “Paljassaare island hopping: cruising through barren and the bliss” that aimed to broaden the common knowledge of aspects and locations associated with the peninsula.

The second part was devoted to situating and understanding Paljassaare in a wider context from municipal and national borders to planetary or even universal dimensions. The “Estonia Diagonal” trip, going to the far east, travelling down to the very south and driving back up to Tallinn in the north of the country again, set the frame for this attempt. It allowed a reflection and re-evaluation about core curiosities and individual interests. Through intensive individual work and interchange with each other and our tutors, six individual projects evolved that dug deeper into the “bare island”. This led to another public event, this time in the format of an exhibition engaging with the variant locations of the peninsula. “INSULA NUDUS: Paljassaare beyond interesting” marked the ending of our engagement with Paljassaare and an ever-growing sense apart from merely an interest.

This booklet here represents all our doing, thinking, walking,

cycling and talking over the course of one semester. It displays the convergence of theory and reality, of unfamiliarity and cognition. The “bare island” as the subject of our studies appears to be far more than just a trending area next to the sea. Indeed, it still is very interesting; however, this interest transcends a mere sketchy tag.



BY KARLOTTA SPERLING HISTORY

Just one century ago the peninsula of Paljassaare was in fact two small islands in the Baltic Sea, the so-called Karli islands. It was in 1912, when construction works for the Peter the Great's Naval Fortress began in today's Paljassaare and the sea in-between the islands was filled up with gravel and stones from the construction site of the Mine Harbour. The work was completed in 1917.



The Karli islands and later Paljassaare show a long history of military usage that dates back to the 19th century and the fortification of Tallinn. The remnants of the White Tower, a cannon tower that was erected in the first half of the 19th century can still be seen today.

During the Soviet era, large parts of the Estonian shoreline, including Paljassaare, were part of the external border of the USSR and therefore restricted in use. Only three types of activity were allowed: fishing, mineral extraction and military presence. Two watchtowers, a series of batteries, administrative buildings and fences were erected and partly still exist today.

After Estonia's Reindpendence and after the removal of all explosive leftovers, the nature of coastline was discovered to be rich and diverse due to the decade long absence of human interventions. This leads to a lot of former military areas becoming protected nature reserves in the aftermath of the Soviet era. Parts of Paljassaare became

a Natura 2000 protection area and a paradise for birds or at least for ornithologists.

Paljassaare today is used as a production site for i.e. fish products, cooking oils, for services like car repairs but also for necessary infrastructure such as the sewage treatment plant. The northern part of the peninsula, including Pikakari beach and the nature protection area, has developed into a beloved site for recreational purposes. Today, one can stumble across military remnants nearly everywhere on the peninsula and only in recent years, through investments in the recreational part of Paljassaare, the public view on the area has changed for the better. But still large parts of the peninsula are described as wasteland or former industrial area in the media discourse.

PUBLIC RIDE

BY JANOSH HEYDORN

Under the title „Paljassaare Island Hopping: Cruising through the Barren and the Bliss“ the first year of Urban Studies master programme invited to an urban walk on the peninsula. The aim was not only to mediate the knowledge that was collected before the walk but to together with around 30 participants develop some kind of collective study of Paljassaare. Even though it took place on a cold October day, the group was



blessed with the right condition for a study, as tailwind and some sunbeams were present most of the time. On this bicycle tour, the different layers of the peculiar peninsula were explored, while moving through the archipelago of conceptual and physical, temporal and spatial, future and past islands forming the reality of Paljassaare today. The island as a self-contained object, that differs from its surroundings, functions as a metaphor for the more or less fenced off areas, concepts, or subjects which altogether make Paljassaare. The tour crossed the Paljassaare port, the locals told their stories, the “fields of gold” of Tallinn’s wastewater treatment holm were snuffled through, the historic Suur- and Väike-Paljassaare islands were entered for a bloodless hunt in the conservation area. The group got lost in the Bermuda triangle of the endless terrain vague, and the archipelago of dream-like prime real-estate enclaves and Tallinn’s own Palm Islands of the auspicious future

to come were discovered. As the individual stops differed in their performance at least as much as the island-landscape of Paljassaare itself, the tour was characterized by fragmentation. An advertisement of prospective real-estates of the port development, video-presentation of the Film Wonderland, live-interviews with residents of Laevastiku, atmospheric joy-ride through the „fields of gold“ to the same-titled song of Sting, interactive exploration of informal settlements or technical introductions to the cleaning processes of Tallinna Vesi – various forms of mediating and creating knowledge were carried out. This fragmentation didn’t draw easy-to-read-connections in-between the different islands and at the same time didn’t simplify the entanglement of the places, actors, and discourses that constitute Paljassaare. A final conclusion couldn’t be drawn but hopefully, people were introduced to unknown sides, new theoretical concepts, and deeper layers of

Paljassaare. In the end, there might be given more questions than answers, as the deeper you dive into Paljassaare's bay of islands the more insights and confusion you will find. What is sure is that Paljassaare is kept in the eye of many investors and will, either way, face a huge

change with perhaps 50.000 new residents. The islands, layers, insight, or whatever you want to call it are crucial to understanding the space of Paljassaare and the people who produce it and should in our opinion be considered before major changes will be done.













DIAGONAL TRIP

BY MIRA SAMONIG

Tallinn, the city. Paljassaare, the city part. Both with municipal borders that define beginning and end, entrance and exit. However, from the very beginning of the studio this one-dimensional containment has been questioned and issues about the “what” and the “where” of the urban as a dimension have been broached. Especially during the Estonian Diagonal Trip it was possible to reflect upon the city, Tallinn, that we were departing from as well



as its impacts and effects on the surrounding and vice versa. Driving to the very southern border of Estonia we got to see a fun park built on oil shell trash, villages shaped by demographic transformations, Stalinist remnants, and hills made of atomic waste. The easternmost city of Estonia, and the concurrently easternmost point of Europe, Narva, marked the first overnight spot. A city where the border question was broadened by another aspect, where we were presented with a border that could not be transgressed at the very moment. Then, travelling down, this time alongside the southern border, we stopped at the source of Tallinn's electricity, experienced a sanctuary seemingly far off from busy city-life and an abandoned kolkhoz as a relic from the past. We saw different attempts to lighten up public spaces as well as the collaborative societal life and spend a night in the woods with Sauna and Boršč. Once again, the border question came to the fore regarding the

differentiation between the urban and the rural. As most of Tallinn's electricity production is outsourced into the eastern expanses of the country, this part works as a facilitator for the city, yet it is commonly viewed as not being urban. This strengthens the cognition that the urban and the rural constitute one another while still exist as differing categories. However, due to their mutual interdependence the boundaries seem to be blurry and hard to define. Finally, the route took us through formerly neglected now slowly resurrecting villages, soviet cultural hot-spots, to a rye fortress and to the southmost city of the country, Valga. Again, the border question opened up another aspect, since Valga functions as a twin-city with Latvia. "You don't know Estonia if you are just staying in Tallinn.," a casual comment that stuck. The three-day trip through Estonia emphasized once more that a city, and consequently a part within a city, can just be understood and investigated when

viewed and located within its context. By just considering the municipal border the complexity, heterogeneity, and dynamic of the urban as a process cannot be grasped. Arriving back to Tallinn and redirecting our attention to Paljassaare, this experience and the gained dis-

tant view turned out to be very valuable. It not only helped to perceive borders in their diverse dimension, moreover it supported us in overcoming certain boundaries in our thoughts and condensing our interest for the individual projects on Paljassaare.









EXPEDITION

BY DALMA PSZOTA

INSULA NUDUS: Paljassaare beyond interesting - introductory though. You are interesting, Paljassaare is interesting, everything there is so interesting - it's romantic, it's so natural, it's also hip and so unexplored and under cover; it takes you to the wild side, it takes you to a free and wild space; wow, it's just so interesting!

It's full of opportunities and potential, so interesting! "Interesting" seems to be a widely shared, dominating quality when it comes to the Paljassaare peninsula. Nature, wilderness, tranquillity, decay, an escape – and all of this located in the capital city itself. But what actually constitutes this "interesting"? What lies beyond that? With these questions, we cut to the beginning of the semester for the exploration of the peninsula, which was followed by numerous return trips, joint and individual excursions and research. "INSULA NUDUS: Paljassaare beyond interesting" was the final grading event and

exhibition of our class. During the semester we examined the real and mental boundaries of the peninsula, the question of power and property, the protection of nature and the human-created concepts of nature, wasteland, potential. The most markedly covered topics of the individual final projects were nature, social inequalities, materiality, the real or even unimaginable existence of future dreams.

The expedition featured six different projects at seven locations, giving the opportunity for individual discovery and roaming to everyone who participated. After the first guided public bike tour, we wanted to come up with a much more subjective program based on personal experiences and discoveries. The visitor of our exhibition had the opportunity to look up every venue in his or her own pace and according to individual interests, spending as much time as preferred. By that, the exhibition was much

more marked by an exploratory character exploring the island as such, as well as discovering own thoughts and ideas regarding the presented topics.

We wanted to illustrate what contributes to the „interestingness“ that characterizes the island, but moreover what exceeds beyond that: the many, various layers that are related and overlapping, deciphering what makes Paljassaare such an „interesting“ place. On the following pages, you will find detailed descriptions of each project, offering a more precise picture and understanding of Paljassaare.

NATUR





E?

Watching birds from above **66**

ARCO-BAY/ECO-SANTI:
50 years of eco-cities **42**

RIGHT TO THE SOCIAL RETREAT

BY DARIA KHRYSTYCH



Social houses and services are important facilities in providing support and assistance to people with financial limitations and in need. Paljassaare "social village" is an area with a high concentration of these services, that created the interest to discover why they are located there and how the system is shaped. Spatial segregation and social marginalization set the frameworks that are constantly being used to describe this topic. Contrary to this perspective, this project offers an attempt to look at the issue from another perspective: to see it as a space of a social retreat.. Through the participatory intervention, the idea of social retreat is uncovered, inviting the audience to reflect on the current conditions of social services in Tallinn.

Paljassaare "social village", stretching from Laevastiku quarter to the waste water treatment station, is an unique phenomena in Tallinn. Due to the high density of social services in one particular place it creates the core of Tallinn social services. Paljassaare Social House, Tallinn Resocialization Center, Social Welfare for people with special needs and Army of Salvation, functioning as a rehabilitation and social center mark the core facilities. As all of them are providing accomodation to their

clients they can be considered as social houses, which was the main focus of this research. Generally, Estonian housing policies fluctuated simultaneously with the changing of political regimes. In pre-war Estonia most of the housing was privately owned. During Soviet occupation almost all of the housing was nationalized and became public. After Soviet Union collapsed, the main agenda was to do an ownership reform, which substituted restitution and privatization processes. Consequently,

in 1994 the share of privately owned dwellings was 96%, opposite to 4% of public housing. Also in the 1990s the state withdrew completely from housing development: no new public rental housing was constructed in Tallinn between 1993–2000. But in the late 2000s there were a few social housing programs implemented in Tallinn: Residential Construction Program,

focused on tenants of restituted houses and RCP-2 (2008) - for workers of educational institutions, social welfare or health services. Criteria for choosing a potential location for this program implementation were: availability/ownership by municipality, and unattractiveness for private sector developments and incapability of regeneration without public

They were allocated here, as there is a big demand for housing from this group of people. Also, there were lots of complaints to the municipality from Tallinners. But, Paljassaare is a better place for them, they have a big garden, they can drink and smoke over there, they do not disturb anyone here.

Kille Alterman,
Tallinn Resocialisation Center

support (Kährik and Kõre 2013, p. 168). Only households with special needs are eligible for social housing: the elderly and disabled, released prisoners, orphans and low-income families in need of frequent social assistance including custody of their children. The peculiarity of Estonian social housing policy, contrary to most of European countries, is that poverty alone does not make a household eligible for municipal or social rental housing.

As Paljassaare is located in a Northern-Tallinn district, it was significant to discover precisely how socially and spatially this area has been developed during the last decades. Being considered as the neighborhood for industrial workers and low-educated people, Pohja-Tallinn is one of the high-concentrated social dwellings districts, with 24% of social dwellings in Tallinn and the lowest degree of private ones (12%) (Kährik and Kõre, 2013, p. 175).

Theoretically analyzing a

tremendous density of social services in Paljassaare, the research missed some empirical data, which seemed to be essential for the complexity of this project. Consequently, three interviews with social services representatives were conducted, and one-time participation in community activity was done. During the interviews representatives provided information about history, clients, facilities, services and conditions of renting in the above-mentioned social services. As well, they unfolded their vision of the services and its clients, which differentiates from one service to another. Service manager of Tallinn Resocialization Center said: "They were allocated here, as there is a big demand for housing from this group of people. Also, there were lots of complaints to the municipality from Tallinners. But, Paljassaare is a better place for them, they have a big garden, they can drink and smoke over there, they do not disturb anyone here". While the deputy director of Army of

Salvation, Yuriy Pyld, who is a former client of a rehabilitation center emphasized: «Alcohol and drug addicts are capable of doing everything. They are very handy, as soon as they are staying sober. We are providing all the conditions to keep their sobriety as long as possible, as they should be useful for the society and the country. If they take this chance, then they will definitely get back to normal life. But whatever happens, we are there to support them». Being pushed away by the «rest of society», marginalized, vulnerable groups are looking for escape. Seeking a place, where they can find some help and support. A roof, a meal, a piece of clothing, a person to talk to, a remote life. Being outsourced to the fringes, spatially and socially segregated and exclusive, we attempt to turn it over and look at it from another perspective. Surrounded by nature, they can be seen as the privileged ones, staying in a peaceful milieu and enjoying a meditative lifestyle. Most of us are dreaming

about an opportunity to go to a retreat, to reload ourselves, and experience the privileges of slow-lifestyle. Consequently, should we attempt to change the focus of the perception of this phenomena as an segregated area and community to the social retreat opportunity? The participatory intervention “Right to the social retreat” aimed to point out the topic of social housing and services in Paljassaare and offer a new perspective on it as a place for social retreat. The location for the intervention at an open area in the bushes, ten minutes walk from the Paljassaare “social village”, was chosen as the hypothetically popular space for clients to hang out - assuming so due to visual traces of bonfires. The meeting point was the Paljassaare Social House, where the map with a route to follow was given out. Walking past by all four social services, there was an opportunity to discover how real life is going on there. Reaching the final stop, “social retreat spot”, people were

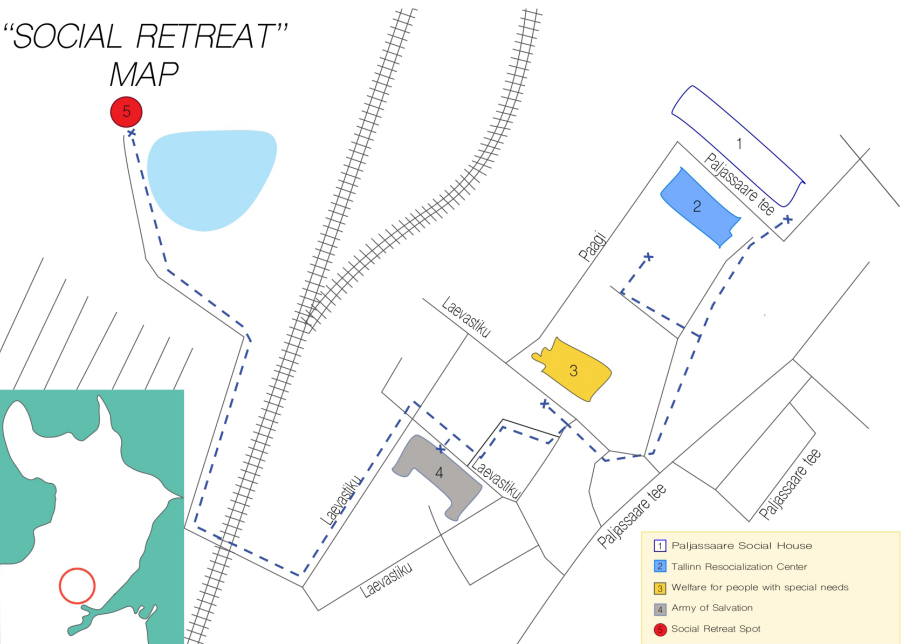
invited to interact with a space by choosing a postcard with a resort image on the front side and key facts from the research on the other side by speculating about their perception of the presented information. The power of the space was also sustained with a bonfire, which is connotated with gathering outside. Having interesting discussions, guests were elaborating not only a social services topic, but the urban redevelopment of post-Soviet Tallinn in general. A core outcome of the exhibition showed that there is still stigma surrounding this topic. For further research it is significantly important to look deeper into perceptions of the services by its clients, and to engage more people from the “outside” to interact with the local people by participating in the community’s activities and therefore lowering the level of social exclusion and segregation.

References:

Kährik A. and Jüri Kõre (2013). ‘Estonia: Residualization of Social Housing and the New Programs. In Social Housing in Transition Countries.’ in Jozsef Hegedus, Martin Lux, Nora Teller (eds.) Social Housing in Transition Countries. London: Routledge, pp. 163–179.



"SOCIAL RETREAT" MAP







estonia extends


40

Out of control: Playing in the cabinet
of curiosities of Paljassaare **54**

Diagonal Trip **20**

beyon

di



diagonal
diagonal

Right to the social retreat **30**

and borders

ARCO-BAY/ECO-SANTI: 50 YEARS OF ECO-CITIES

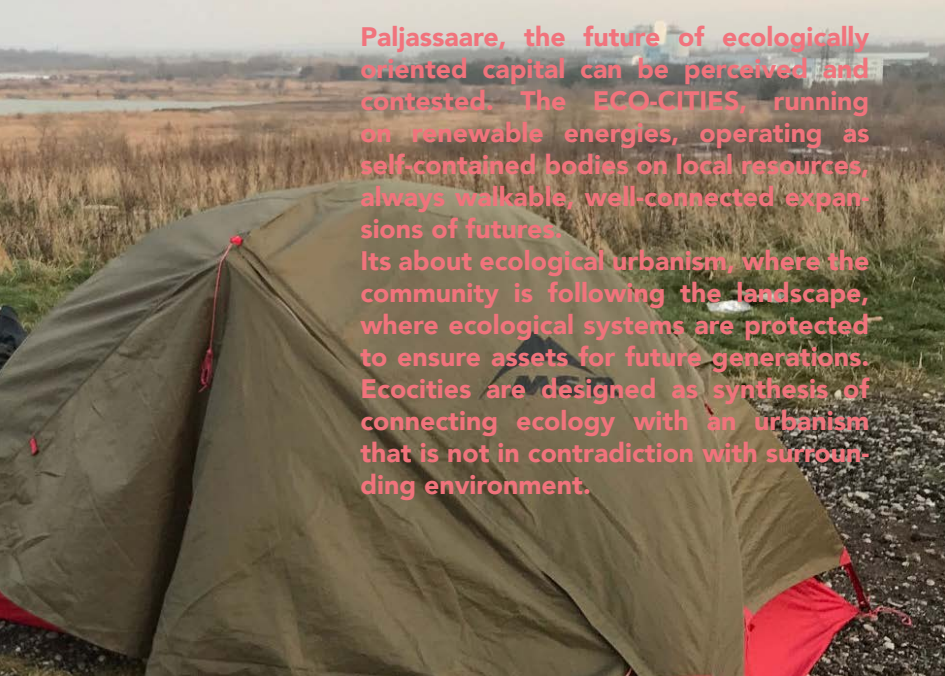
BY FERNANDA AYALA TORRES



The nature that surrounds you, that nature which has been present long before, the bay, the flora, fauna, which will nurture the idea of an ecological city.

By looking back to the visionary 1970, where ideas of building environmentally more healthier cities the prefix of the scope of ecology have expanded and began to acquire a more defined

implication through terms such as ecosystems, ecological zones, and thus, where the focus of ecology is being transformed into different forms, forms such as human ecology. The changes in the Earth by human activities have been bigger and diverse that a new geological epoch called Anthropocene has been proposed. The human ecological polis of human society, as it was



Paljassaare, the future of ecologically oriented capital can be perceived and contested. The ECO-CITIES, running on renewable energies, operating as self-contained bodies on local resources, always walkable, well-connected expansions of futures.

Its about ecological urbanism, where the community is following the landscape, where ecological systems are protected to ensure assets for future generations. Ecocities are designed as synthesis of connecting ecology with an urbanism that is not in contradiction with surrounding environment.

historically known, has created entirely new ecosystem arrangements as we turn matter into technology. Current emphasis of greening cities can vary from the manifestations of urban nature to the newly built, almost manufactured landscapes, where humans are in charge of re-capitalizing abandoned and unused sites. All of this produces a tension

between new forms of ecological design. The future cities are designed to be balanced, durable and diverse urban ecosystems that will be recognized and planned within political strategies.

And the question is how do we live and how are we going to live in the near future, in the coming days?

We could say that today's cities are not designed in coherence with nature, as potential places for human coexistence with other organisms (don't you think?). We could also say that originally the city was to liberate humans from the wilderness of nature or that in the urbanized world and in the face of all this madness and climate crisis, the way we are relegated to living now, in millions of little cubes separated only on roads and parking lots for cars is making us rethink the way we live and consume. I want to tell you about one idealist project initiated in 1970. Arcosanti, an urban laboratory that is located in a desert in Arizona, US. I was living there for some months. I was a volunteer in the construction department, where the group was in charge of continuing with the restoration of one of the apartments for volunteers who want to visit arcosanti for a few weeks. Besides that, arcosanti gave me the opportunity to experiment and develop different skills since it has a space

for metal, carpentry and concrete workshops. This experience also gave me the opportunity to meet people around the world and try to understand why arcosanti can be a space to propose ideas and think that if enough people can come to believe that cities and how they relate to the earth and all its various life forms are important, and begin to work on those beliefs, then Arcosanti may yet serve its purpose as a trigger for the growth of human consciousness and evolution. Arcosanti is the combination of architecture and ecology called ARCOLOGY, the concept was proposed by the Italian-American architect Paolo Soleri, who wanted to demonstrate how urban conditions can be improved by minimizing the destructive impact on the land. A kind of proto-eco-city, trying again to integrate the design of architecture with respect to ecology and living.

How have we designed our cities in recent years?, it is about patterns of how we are inha-

An Eco-city would be a city whose design and function conforms to how we understand Earth's ecology. It would place humans IN that ecology, not keep them separate from it. An eco-city would function as other organisms do, one that has a positive influence on the earth's ecology. Clearly, there are no eco-cities yet.

Jeff Stein

Former manager of Arcosanti

biting the earth, how we are building new cities. The challenge is how to minimise the impact, immerse ourselves in urban compassion but without get to confuse it with density. Arcosanti can be considered as a design for that ideal habitat. ARCOLOGY design promotes mixed land use, an efficient transport system, encourages cycling and walking, low energy consump-

tion and reduction of pollution. In the decade before the initial development of Arcosanti, it was imagined that people could improve, that something like a cultural awakening would happen. It was a time of psychoanalysis, of the self-help movement and Paolo Soleri built on it. He also thought that if we were better humans, we would need better architecture. So Arcosanti

was intended to embody the idea, that architecture could help us understand more about each other and our lives on earth, to be resilient actors in a designed and planned human ecology.

the direction that we will take now will be focused on envisioning green and sustainable habitat of this exact location Ecobay project is visualising a very compact city, grouping the buildings and leaving large areas free for natural growth. Being so close to the city of Tallinn this project will create a habitat for a community-based society, embedded in nature of Paljassaare. First let's see where we are. In the distance is Tallinna Vesi wastewater treatment plant – see the big blue barrels and different pools etc – and a little further away, the bushes and marshlands behind the plant, it is the Natura 2000 conservation area – its size is around 277.9 hectares. Ecobay, the green future of tomorrow, is placed between us, the gulf, wastewater plant and conservation area. It

is a large-scale development of 481,000 square meters, which should be completed within 15 to 20 years, 6,000 people could live and work in Ecobay (who would not want to be so close to nature and to the city at the same time? Just look around) It will be a modern multifunctional development. All its essential services for better life and well-being are included in the plan, to name just a few: carbon neutral? residential buildings, schools, commercial premises, yacht marina, beach and so on. Ecobay is divided into 3 areas, first one called Area A has the most attractive natural setting of the three neighbourhoods and also the most sensitive location in terms of impact on the Natura 2000 reserve. The building in area A will be built with simple materials that respond well to the natural setting close to Natura 2000 and the sea. Second one, Area B is a dense mix use city centre comprising of housing, office and cultural buildings, spa and hotel facilities as well as shopping

and market. Area B will provide high quality public space and services for the entire Ecobay plan and surrounding area. The building as the most urban and dense area of the development. And the last one, Area C will have a landscape with hills, pods and parks with clusters of dense residential housing, predominantly target at young families.

-The building materials in area C will be simple ones that respond well to the natural coastline setting. In a current political context, design on an urban scale has become an accessible but unregulated market in private investment, rather what urban design offers today are advertising campaigns of sophisticated brands used to take advantage of the popularity. Also Ecobay, which wants to sell a sophisticated, technological and sustainable design for the entire population, this project has been designed with certain environmental axes, for example the design of dunes that breaks the wind corridors and allows

people to move around comfortably, the design foresees to cover most of the building's heat consumption by using waste heat from the Tallinn water treatment plant to heat approximately 250 buildings that would be constructed. What is really behind these projects is market speculation and their goal is to facilitate growth. To the extent that they do not have the pretense of actually executing what they propose because in the end the base of these sustainable projects remains in a confusing context. And why not think that the images that these projects sell have little coherence with what can or cannot be built. Many times, the success of this production depends on the language of sustainability with which the target audience is approached.

Maybe eco-city is nothing more than the product of a liberal urban planning program whose novelty includes infrastructure strategies for the distribution and organisation of urban

nature, which more often have been regulated and curated by nature protection areas. The idea that nature can be reduced to a magnificent and glorious image of the infrastructure systems that govern the city, only reveals the great lack of participation of the design. Due to various political and economic transitions, the city has become an object of private investment. The emergence of sustainability and exposing capitalist urban development to a discourse full of salvation. Just when it became clear that the history of the modern city coincided with the history of ecological disaster, the figure of the city shifts to a redemptive technological structure, generating an urgency in large-scale development.

Ecobay so magnificent and glorious relegating the human figure and with its strange lack of figure. It is clear that, rather than approaching true ecological catastrophe, this project addresses an entirely different anxiety. Ecobay evidently

displays prominent and selling appeal to the public in their imagology, but conceals a clear reading of the actual content of the image. Because within the saturated environment that this project sells there is a feeling of melancholy, as if it were a snapshot of a life that apparently once was.

References:

Matthew Gandy (2015) From Urban ecology to ecological urbanism an ambiguous trajectory, Department of Geography, University College London, pp. 150-154

Ross Adams. (2010) Longing for a greener present, neoliberalism and the eco-city, Radical Philosophy, pp. 1-7







life is interesting

I am interested

it is just so interesting...

interesting, you are interesting, she is interesting

everything is interesting

"We should do something here!" **90**

Public walk **12**

Introduction **06**



OUT OF CONTROL: PLAYING IN THE CABINET OF CURIOSITIES OF PALJASSAAR

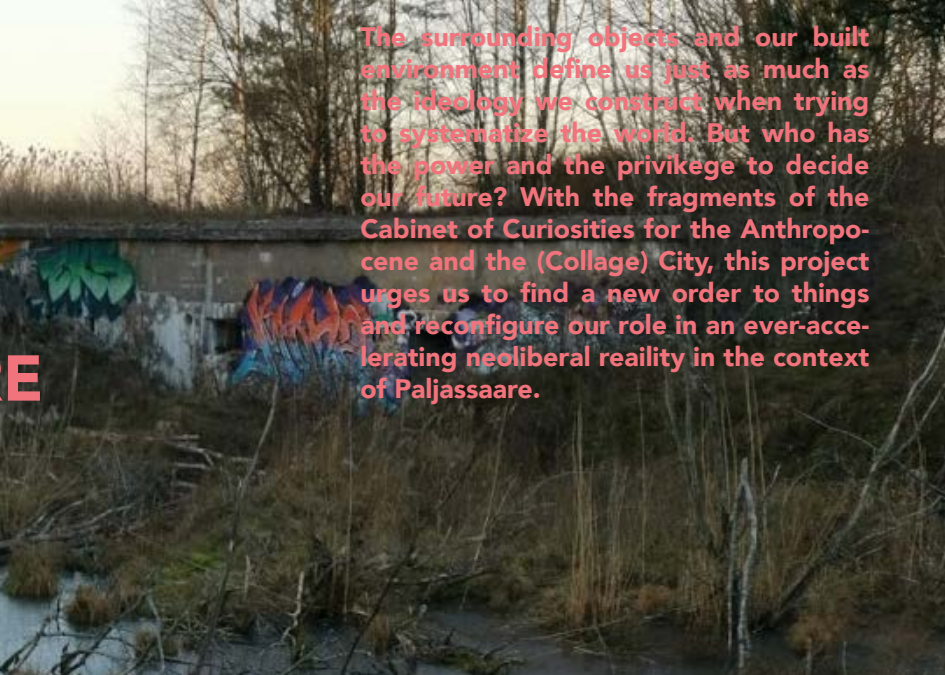
BY DALMA PSZOTA

What makes an abandoned bunker valuable? Beyond that, it's under protection and the one who walks on the coastal path, inevitably passes by, why should we deal with it?

The history of Paljassaare consists of many layers: a mixture of nature and man-made structures, potential, popular outing venue, recreation, and more...

In the last century, the peninsula was closed to the general public, its detailed history is not part of the common local knowledge, but at the same time, its existence and historical heritage are an integral part of the economic and social events of the past and present.

The Battery no.12, chosen as the site for my project, is a smaller part of a large defence system



The surrounding objects and our built environment define us just as much as the ideology we construct when trying to systematize the world. But who has the power and the privilege to decide our future? With the fragments of the Cabinet of Curiosities for the Anthropocene and the (Collage) City, this project urges us to find a new order to things and reconfigure our role in an ever-accelerating neoliberal reality in the context of Paljassaare.

for military purposes. The place has a strong atmosphere, but apart from those, interested in military history or adventurous hikers, not many come here to discover the massive concrete structures that have stood for more than a century.

The spirit of the place caught my attention and I wanted to provide an interpretive frame-

work for how to place this bunker complex on the mental map of Paljassaare. At first, I wanted to create my own cabinet of curiosities, using the object memories and symbols of the peninsula, as the bunker-chamber, cabinet parallel can be clearly discovered here. But during the work on the site and the further research, I realized that this approach is misleading

and unnecessary, as my role is not to present my own visions, but to critically frame and show the structure already given.

But how to show? Anything that is displayed, has always a narrative behind it.

The predecessor of the museums known today, the cabinet of curiosities, appeared during the Renaissance, in the palaces of aristocrats and wealthy people, gathering all the natural and man-made miracles that were deemed worth collecting.

During the conquests of the colonizing forces, more and more artefacts, treasures and curiosities came into the European Wunderkammern. In these collections, the personal microcosm of the collector was born by the rearranged objects, thus generating new systems and relationships between them.

Afterwards, all the objects on display in the emerging museum proclaimed and supported the intellectual authority of the co-

lonizing Western forces. Along with this tradition, we have still interpreted cultures through objects exhibited in the museum today. The tradition of the cabinet of curiosities also lived on, today it may be used as a free, more object-oriented, and less narrative-processing tool of the postcolonial past. There are no innocent position to see things, however, if we allow objects and their new juxtapositions to provoke us (even against the cultural canon) we will question our own position, adopt other perspectives to be able to revise our roles and point of views in this ever-accelerating and changing world.

Heritage protection points out what we consider to be worth preserving in the present from the past, and what we want to leave as a legacy for the future. Heritage sites can form our identity and tell us their story. Paljassaare itself can be seen as a cabinet of curiosities and the bunker as an object from it. We are invited to discover the site

Foregrounding artifacts as always being in states of transformation, some of which may be called “decay”, should not be positioned as a shock tactic to spur greater conservative efforts, but as a comment on culturally specific understanding of the nature of artifacts, time and being.

Sven Ouzman: The Beauty of Letting Go (2006: 270)

(and more) through an endless game with reflections on ourselves, on the way to change.

Dear Stranger,

I welcome you on the threshold of the cabinet of curiosities! You are in the former restricted border area of the capital, and these man made built structures here are under heritage protection.

The place where you are now was a part of the Russian Empire's fortification system. One of the most important sections of it was called Naval Fortress of Emperor Peter the Great and located between Tallinn and Porkkala, completed in 1915. Our venue, the Battery no.12 served military purposes in World War II and after the war the battery buildings were

used as warehouses for the border guarding system, until the Soviet forces left the area in 1994. The concrete structure is now under heritage protection, which means it is a memento from another time, valued, cared for and curated by institutions, and to be preserved for the future.

Have you ever heard of the Cabinet of Curiosities? Just as we do today, the people of the Renaissance sought for miracles, objects worth collecting. Out of this curiosity and collecting passion the Cabinet of Curiosities emerged, in which both natural (naturalia) and man-made objects (artificialia) were gathered. The practices of colonialism were embodied in this material, object-collecting form, by tearing and rearranging objects from their original environment. Through this process the owner/ beholder of the cabinet could control the microcosmos of miracles/objects through combining the experience of divine creation and collage making.

The cabinets of curiosities (or Wunderkammers) were predecessors for the modern museums we know today. Perhaps it is time now to rethink the museum, the curiosity cabinet and make them work in a way that they would lead us out from the institutionalized rule sets, out of controlled narratives. Because the mishmash and rearrangement of objects in the cabinet could critically interact with the (colonial) past and thus help us to revise our values, roles and traditions.

I invite you now for a play in the realm of lost and found objects. Be aware that your perceptions may be modified by the beliefs, customs and rules of our society/world. I believe that merely romanticizing the ruins is dangerous: this here is not just a compelling, interesting or creepy place.

In this exercise, I ask you to see Paljassaare itself as the cabinet of curiosities and this venue as merely one object of the cabinet.

The text you're reading now is your mediator in the game, and this space here will be a stage for your personal experience. But remember, the transmission of culture through texts is always finite and cannot be interpreted without knowledge of the language and the reading itself.

You can only see yourself clearly if you adopt other perspectives. For a moment be an outsider in your own life, in your own culture! Think about who you are rather than who the others are. Take the objects!

Grab a torch and observe the site! And have fun, as it is your journey: through this space, into yourself.

with love, your mediator,

Dalma

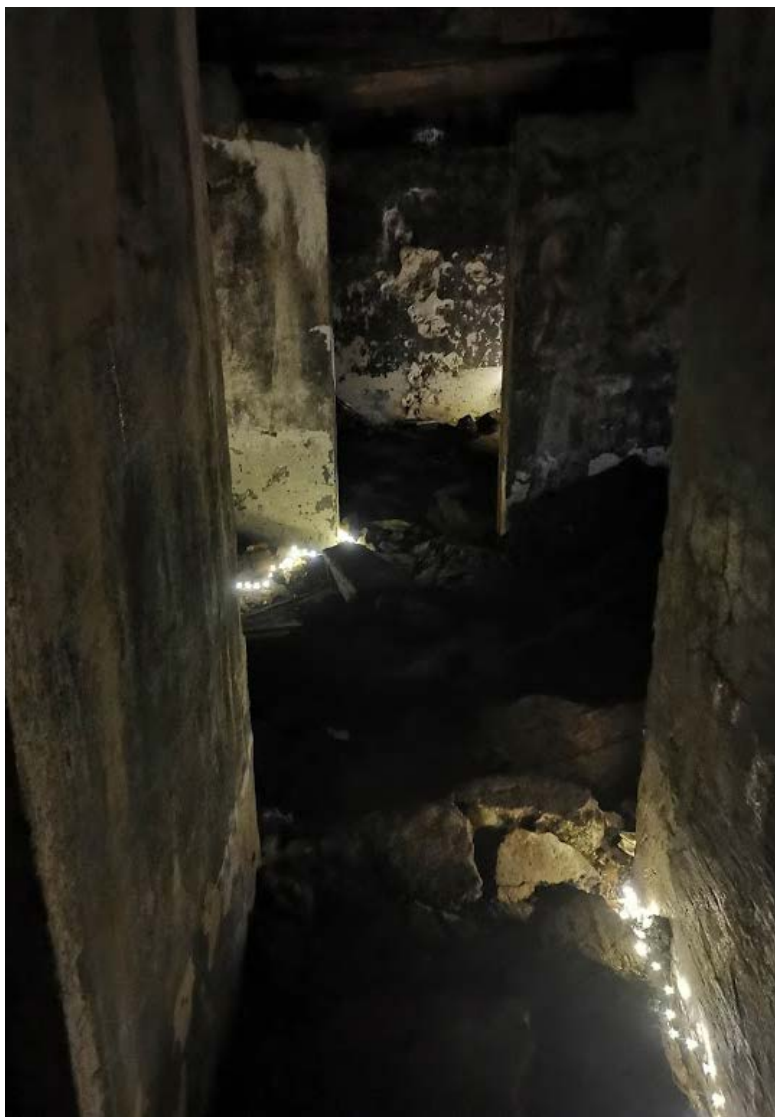
References:

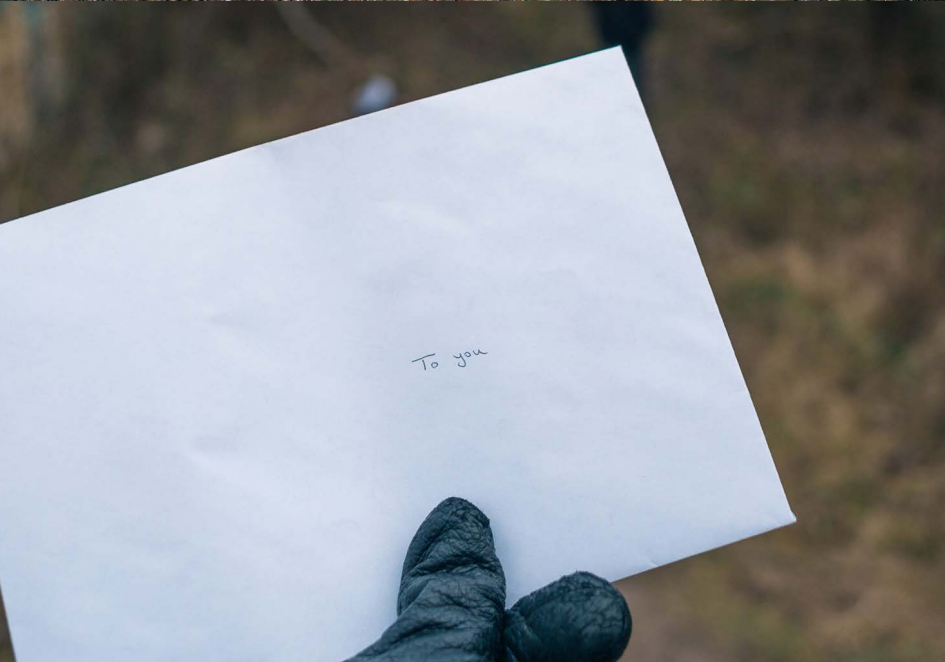
Mitman, Gregg, Armiero, Marco, and Emmett, Robert S. (eds.) (2018): *A Cabinet of Curiosities for the Anthropocene*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Ouzman, Sven (2006): *The Beauty of Letting Go: Fragmentary Museums and Archeologies of Archive*, IN Gosden C., Edwards E., and Phillips R. B. eds. *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 269-301.

Pétursdóttir, Þóra (2012) 'Concrete matters: Ruins of modernity and the things called heritage', *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 13, pp. 31-53.

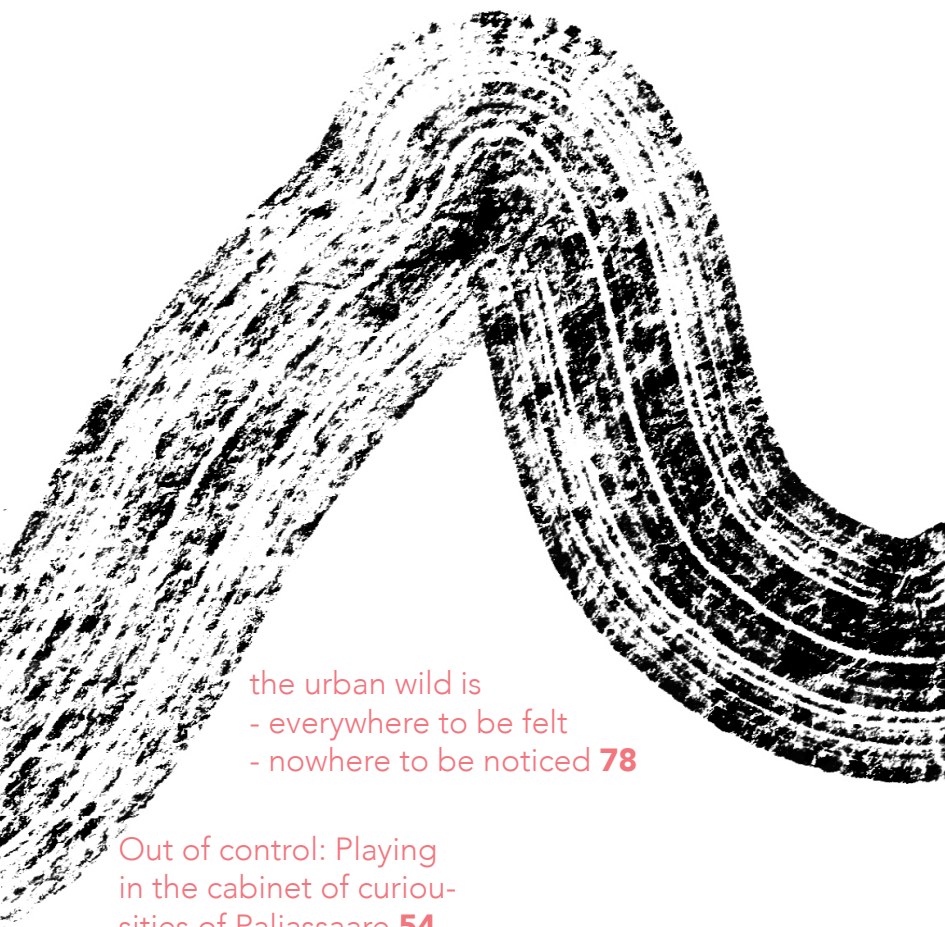








/metier/



the urban wild is
- everywhere to be felt
- nowhere to be noticed **78**

Out of control: Playing
in the cabinet of curiosities of Paljassaare **54**



WATCHING BIRDS FROM ABOVE

BY JANOSH HEYDORN

Conservation areas such as the Paljassaare hoiuala are humanity's desperate attempts to slow down the extermination of bird species, powered by the exploitation of natural resources and so-called planetary urbanisation. Inspired by Donna Haraway's thoughts about natureculture, the installation in the bird watchtower questions the precarious understanding of nature and culture as separate entities. By extending bodily senses through the perspective of a drone the work invites us to reflect on our position on Earth somewhere between being an animal and a machine.

The conservation area at the top of the Paljassaare peninsula is a popular place for both humans who seek recreation in the natural environment not too far from the city and wild animals as a peaceful place to rest, feed, and breed. Especially for birds from around 230 different species, which visit the area every year, the Paljassaare hoiuala seems to serve its purpose as a bird protection area. Paljassaare hoiuala is part of the city's strategy of nature conservation, which in total covers more than 3000 ha, around 20 percent of the surface of Tallinn. It is also part of the European conservation network Natura 2000, which rather than excluding human activity from nature reserves, attempts to be centered on people working with nature by managing the sites both ecologically and economically. The Natura 2000 conservation area was established in 2005 and along with it two bird towers were constructed in Paljassaare: a wooden structure 500 m down the road and one existing tower made

out of bricks was renovated. This brickwork structure served in Soviet times for monitoring the wetlands and coastal border of Soviet Union for illegal border crossing from the rooftop by large-scaled spotlights, powered by local generators.

Creating conservation areas have since the mid 19th century been the way to curb humans' effect on the habitat of other organisms and is now an attempt to slow down mass extinctions and exterminations, including the genocides of birds and other critters. The *exploitation* of the "cheap" nature happens with greed and insatiability at the same time as the *exploration* of nature happens with affection and curiosity. Conservation areas embed a strange juxtaposition of human care and violence, which reflects the conflicting dichotomy of nature and culture (van Dooren 2014). To overcome this dichotomy, how can nature and culture be thought of as a synthesis that recognizes their entanglement

Holding open space might—or might not—delay extinction in ways that make possible composing or recomposing flourishing naturalcultural assemblages. [...] Extinction is a protracted slow death that unravels great tissues of ways of going on in the world for many species, including historically situated people.

Donna Haraway 2016: 38

in ecological relationships – as what Donna Haraway (2003) calls natureculture?

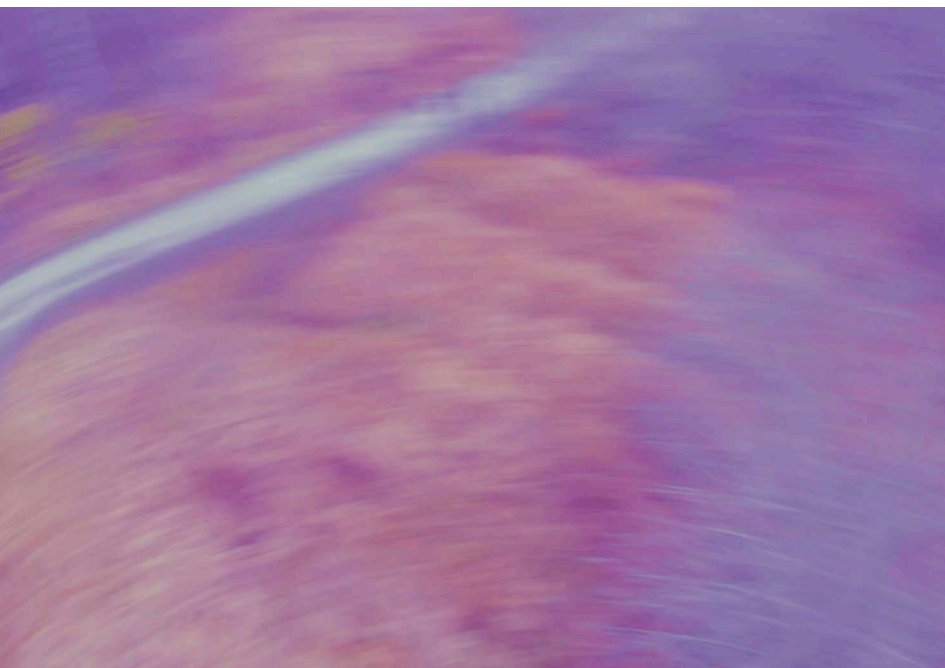
Natura 2000 is part of a change of thinking about nature conservation, as the old conservation movement was devoted to preserving the remote, unpeopled „wilderness“ rather than including humans into nature as actors themselves. Originally, the idea of wilderness is an

illusion created by European colonizers to describe whatever is not civilized in accordance to their own ideas of civilization (Meine 2014). It is commonly claimed nowadays that in the era of Anthropocene there are no „wild“ or „untouched“ areas left – the whole planet is urbanised and the human has crept into the deepest bottom of the oceans and highest layers of the

atmosphere (Brenner & Schmid 2011). But what is the point of Paljassaare hoiuala when taking this into account? Could all the city of Tallinn instead be thought as next-level Natura/Cultura(2.1) where nature and culture are part of the city and city considering as naturecultural assemblage?

For such investigations, an alternative epistemology is crucial, which not only takes ways of understanding nature and

culture as one into account but also the human's or the subject's or the researcher's position in natureculture. The concept of psychogeophysics is introduced as a complementary term to that of psychogeography, which was particularly shaped by the Situationists in the mid 20th century. While psychogeography is a way of investigating specific effects of the urban environment on our senses and affective orientation, psychogeology extends the focus on the urban





sphere to a planetary dimension. Psychogeophysics is a way of approaching the fundamental understanding of the subject, which is situated between ecologies of capitalism and those of the earth – in the naturalcultural assemblages so to say (Parikka 2015). While geophysics, as natural science, mainly draws on quantitative methods and the measurement of current and historic developments, psychogeophysics seems to be grounded in qualitative and empirical research (Parikka 2015). A way of approaching Paljassaare hoiuala in a psychogeophysical manner is through walking similar as it is put forward in psychogeography as *dérive* by drifting, fusing fiction with the places one visits, frequents, or just passes by (Parikka 2015). To get closer to an understanding of the naturalcultural assemblages of Paljassaare hoiuala approached my surroundings by extending my perceptions by the view of a drone. Not only does the use of a drone give me a perspective on the physical

landscape, which I impossibly can achieve by my bodily senses, it also provides the possibility to experiment and reflect on my very own position situated in the naturalcultural assemblages of Paljassaare. Where are we as human species located in the world between being organisms as human animals and machines through the abilities of technology? Considering the organic and non-organic realms of perceptions, what differentiates humans from machines, in terms of posthuman thinking? As organic beings it is not possible to convincingly define what separates us from other non-human organisms and nature itself. Equally hard to answer is the question of where the distinction between human animals and machines, between natural and artificial goes. Considering ourselves as cyborgs (Haraway 1991), we have extended our organic senses through technological means, which helps us to better perceive how our actions affect the world as an ecosystem, and thus ask us to

take responsibility and make a change.

For a final exhibition of the drone *dérive*, the bird watchtower in Paljassaare seemed very suitable. The Soviet past of Paljassaare as a restricted area for humans other than guards is the reason that animals could unfold in the first place and that the side was turned into a conservation area later on. The tower has preserved the function as a watchtower, only the perspective has changed from observing humans' movements to observing birds. Thus the watchtower can act as a perfect platform to reflect on our position in natureculture as human beings.

References:

Brenner, Neil & Schmid, Christian (2011): Planetary Urbanisation, IN *Urban Constellations* by Matthew Gandy. pp. 10-13

Haraway, Donna J. (2003): *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Ot-*

herness. Vol. 1. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.

Haraway, Donna J. (1991) *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist- Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*, IN *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991), pp.149-181

Meine, Curt (2014): What's So New about the "New Conservation"?, IN *Keeping the Wild Against the Domestication of Earth* by George Wuerthner, Eileen Crist, and Tom Butler. pp. 45-54

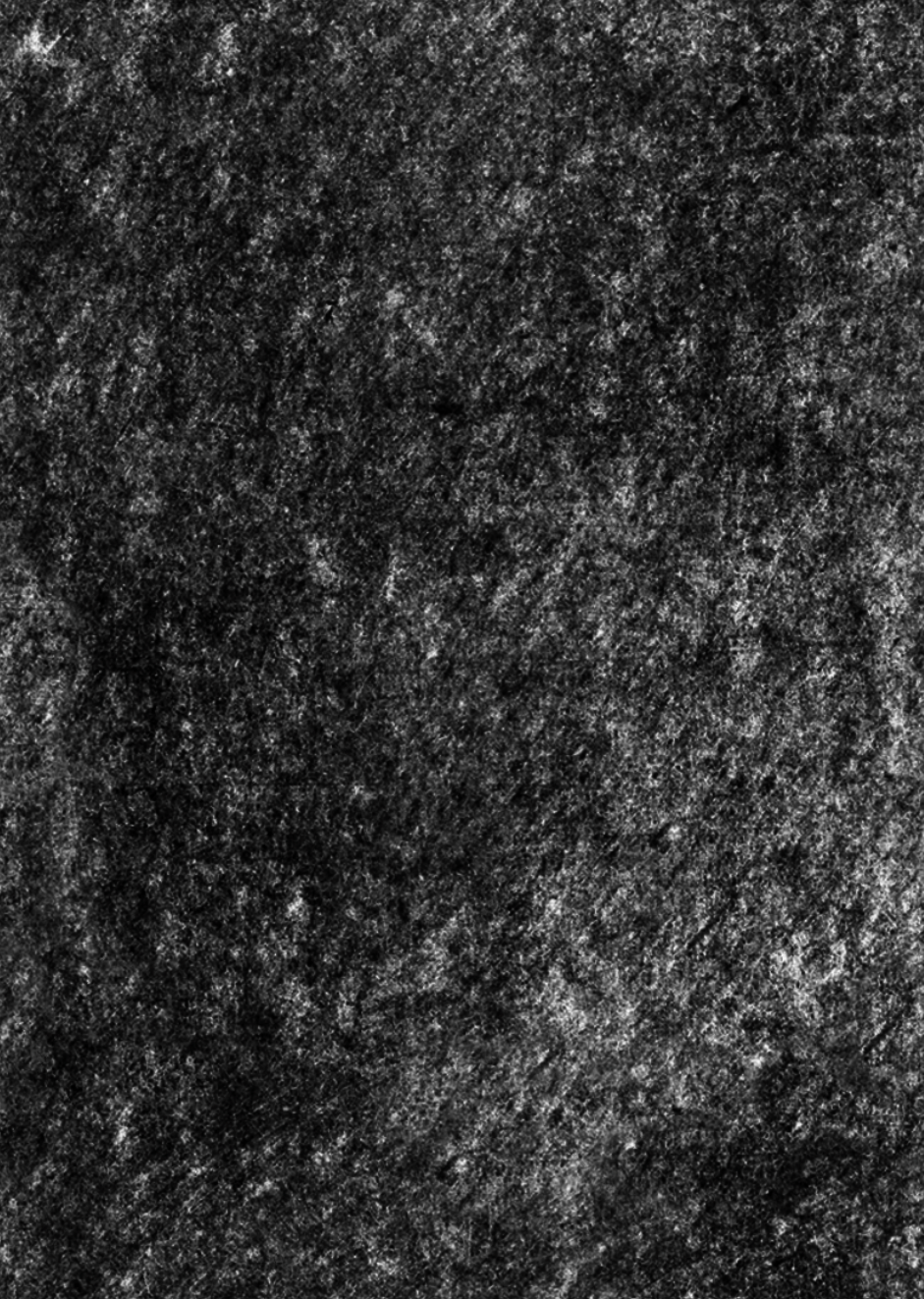
Parikka, Jussi (2015) *A Geology of Media*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

van Dooren, Thom (2014): *Introduction: Telling Lively Stories at the Edge of Extinction*, IN *Flight Ways Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction* (Columbia University Press).







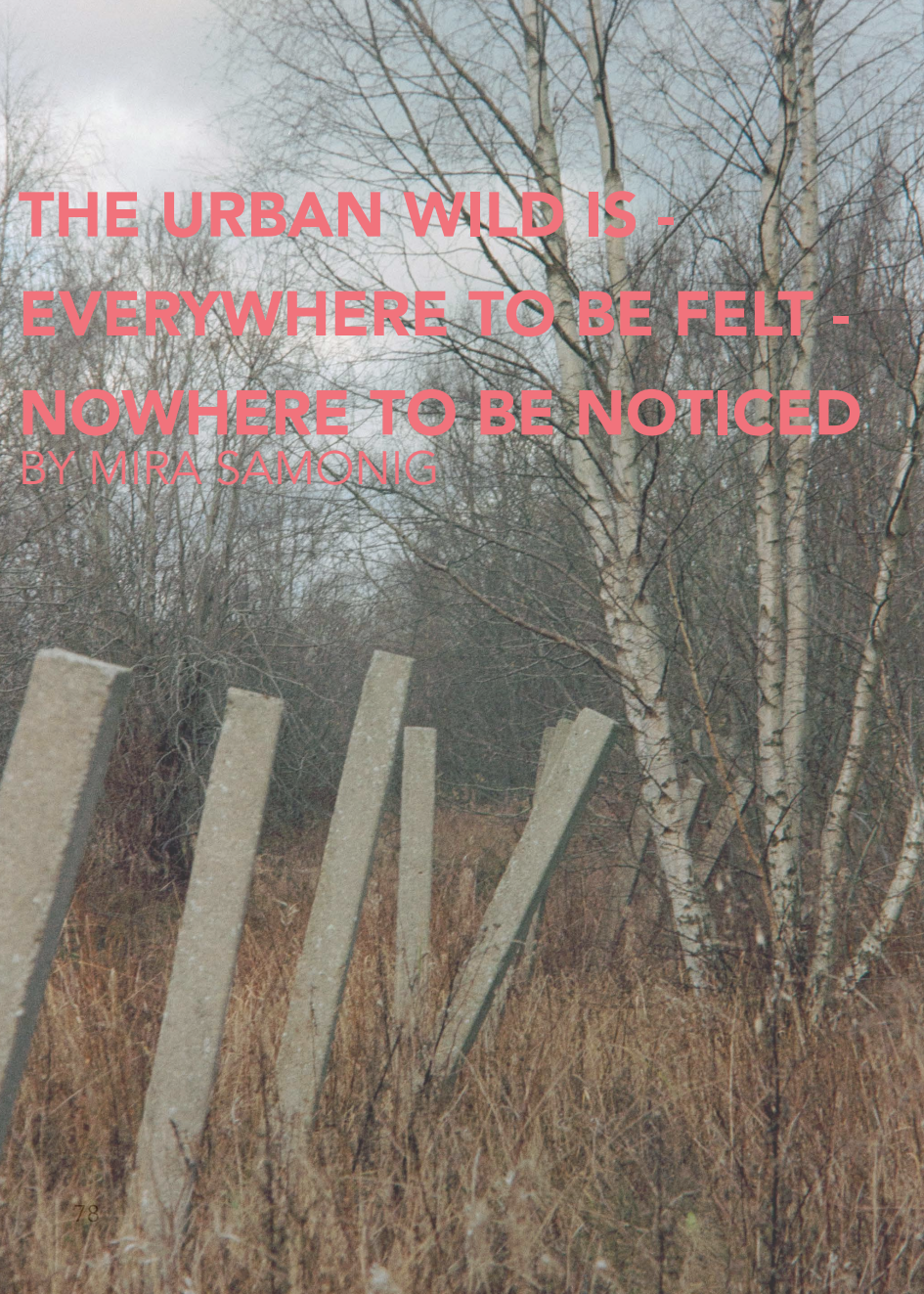


TWENTY

IN TWENTY

"We should do something here!" 90

the urban wild is
- everywhere to be felt
- nowhere to be noticed 78



**THE URBAN WILD IS -
EVERYWHERE TO BE FELT -
NOWHERE TO BE NOTICED**
BY MIRA SAMONIG

A continuously flowing magnitude; from departed to intended, from not-anymore to not-yet, from memory to anticipation, from past to future. The conceptualized doctrine of time drags one back and forth, so much that the real present existence seems to fade away in space. This project broaches the question of the matter of concrete materiality. The terrain vague as an intermediate in-between the tension of unsettled meanings and undefined shapes constitutes an exploratory space to research theory with one's own matter, the body.

“Our being is being in time.” We live, think, act in the conceptual fabrication of past, present and future – we exist according to this order of time (Rovelli, 2019, 2f.). An order that predominantly constrains us to orientate our being towards the future; to generate perceptions in the now, match them with experiences from the past and situate them in the realm of future anticipations. What evolves from this practice is a progressive, unidimensional, continuously flowing time that aims to arrange events

on a linear line. (Bryant and Knight, 2019, 7ff.)

When looking at the city this linear time conception seems to mark an important dimension in its logics. As well as the evolvement of a city is conceptualized via a string of happenings that are set in a causal connection to each other (Benjamin, 1986, 263), also the future in the urban context is coined by targeting visions from a present perspective, situating them in the near or remote

future. Hence, the future resides in the present, where temporal orientations towards a yet-to-come are being made that are characterized by constantly actualizing potentiality and the various ends we strive. (Bryant and Knight, 2019, 192ff.)

This can be well experienced in the urban context and particularly in Paljassaare. A past that is spanned from an existence of two islands, to a military enclave and economic harbour usage echoes over today's peninsula. Concurrently, a visionary future is already pictured and partly manifested in plans, thus pulled into the present. If the past acts upon the present and the future inhabits it, what is the present then? The now of Paljassaare is manifold; however, there is a strong sense of informality, of vagueness existing in the tension of past and future. A temporal interspace comes into being, that exists "outside of the city's effective circuits and productive structures", designated as the *terrain vague* (de Solà-Morales,

2016, 26). If our time conception is merely a measurement of change and events (Rovelli, 2019, 4; Benjamin, 1986, 262) and past and future overrule the present (Bryant and Knight, 2019) is there then something such as time in the very present of a space that is left vague?

Following the commonly shared linear time doctrine the *terrain vague* subsists as an intermediate, signified by a present of unsettled meanings and undefined shapes that cannot be arranged in order. The evolving seemingly timelessness finds expression in these spaces and therefore spawns the notion of the *terrain vague* as a timehole.

The *terrain vague* implies spaces that are internal to the city but still external to its construct (de Solà-Morales, 2016, 26). With their unclear guidelines, the absence of the normative system of the city, their abandoned spaces, ruins and decay they create a counterspace to the city within the city itself (de

Vague descends from *vacuus*, giving us 'vacant' and 'vacuum' in English, which is to say 'empty, unoccupied', yet also 'free, available, unengaged'. The relationship between the absence of use, of activity, and the sense of freedom, of expectancy, is fundamental to understanding the evocative potential of the city's terrains vagues. Void, absence, yet also promise, the space of the possible, of expectation.

Ignasi de Solà-Morales, 2013, 26

Solà-Morales, 2016; Minkjan, 2016; Rosa, 2015; Nikezić and Janković, 2016). What arises from this is an ambiguous view upon the terrain vague as a part of the city. For one thing they open up a space for otherness (Minkjan, 2016) and offer a projection space for imagining alternative ways of urban living (Nikezić and Janković, 2016, 25f.). By that the landscape acts as a metaphorical "stand-in", a site of inscription that always

represents something else (Olsen, 2010, 3). This romanticising then often accumulates in fetishizing the images of ruins by perceiving and photographically depicting them as aesthetic remnants. This process is subsumed in the term "ruin porn" (Lyons, 2018, 2).

Apart from this, ruins are also viewed as breaking down and decomposing valueless, by that they hamper "the trajectory of economic and industrial

progress" of the city (Laviolette, 2014, 246f.). This marks the terrain vague ripe for redevelopment from a planning perspective and consequently makes it a valuable asset for urban sprawl (Rosa, 2015, 182). What resonates with this outlook is a distinctly clash with the before discussed conception of time. The terrain vague seems to exist in its own frame of rules that impedes the urban understanding of progress and consequently does not fit into a linear, progressive timeline. It then is viewed in a state that has to be overcome by reincorporating it into the planned-out city by the means of controlling it.

The terrain vague of Paljassaare echos itself confronted with these perspectives. It displays a space romanticised for its great realm of possibility, a transgressive space that offers the opportunity to imagine alternative ways of urbanity. It is experienced as the urban wild, a playground for urban explorers where due to unclear guidelines

the restrictive common rules of the city's normative system do not matter. And it is viewed as an asset to expand the city. A potential, that is merely waiting for its turn to be reintegrated to the controlled, clearly functional, planned-out city.

It is a space with time as a continuously flowing magnitude from departed to intended, from not-anymore to not-yet, from memory to anticipation, from past to future. A ruin, a residue, a leftover, a wasteland. The conceptualized line of time drags one back and forth, so much that the real present existence seems to fade away in space. The material significancies are left to be neglected. The solid melts into the air and time, its presence diffuses into a mere abstraction. This emerging feeling of timelessness stresses an abandoned approach to turn to the material existence and perceive the terrain vague in a present moment. Perceived in the now, the solid matter exceeds a mere intangibility due to its weight and

durability (Pétursdóttir, 2012, 33). It constitutes the space that the body can relate to, blend in, engage with and sense.

Building on this theoretical research and discussion the performative part of this project constituted a pursuing and extending of the study. It was an attempt to investigate and experience theory with the very own matter, the body.
:everywhere to be felt: was an experiment to relocate oneself

in the now and let a present moment emerge. A room, dark, one dependant on the remaining four senses, joined into a precise engagement with the material by an audio in the vestibule. Arrived in the very scope of action of the present, what impact and effect does our being and doing have in the terrain vague? :the urban wild is: was questioning the matter of the matter. Due to the absence of guidelines the terrain vague conveys a feeling of “it does not



matter”, the associated worthlessness seemingly mitigates a violation. I take down a wall, I shatter bricks. I can build a wall up again, because it does not matter. But I am doing it with matter.

:nowhere to be noticed: passed on the thought about violating in the terrain vague, but tried to illuminate the violation coming from another direction. The future is already pulled into the present, therefore the thoughts projected onto abandoned spaces are not being noticed. The terrain vague is not perceived in its present presence, it is rendered devoid of value and not appertaining to the notion of the contemporary city. This displays a violently overruling, disregarding and neglecting of the terrain vague as such and the inherent thoughts. I over-paint, I wash it white, I don't want to see the dirt, I polish. The peculiar chosen ruin as the scope of action constituted an exploratory set-up and in that sense created a space of

experience that simultaneously opened up space of thought: negotiating one's own position in relation to the vagueness of the terrain vague; opening up a dialogue between me and the audience as well as me and the space.

References:

- Benjamin, W. (1986). *Illuminations* (Vol. 241, No. 2). Random House Digital, Inc..
- Bryant, R., & Knight, D. M. (2019). *The anthropology of the future*. Cambridge University Press.
- de Solà-Morales, I. (2013). Terrain vague. In *Terrain Vague* (24-30). Routledge.
- Laviolette, P. (2014). The neo-flâneur amongst irresistible decay. In *Playgrounds and Battlegrounds. Critical Perspectives of social engagement* (243-270).
- Lyons, S. (Ed.). (2018). *Ruin porn and the obsession with decay*. Palgrave Macmillan.



Minkjan, M. (2016). Spaces of Otherness. Ruins through a feminist lens. <https://failedarchitecture.com/spaces-of-otherness/>

Nikezić, A., & Janković, N. (2016). Rethinking spontaneous transformation: the case of Belgrade abandoned places. In *Int J Cult Heritage*, 1, (25-32).

Olsen, B. (2010). In Defense of Things. *Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*. AltaMira Press.

Pétursdóttir, Þ. (2012). Concrete

matters: Ruins of modernity and the things called heritage. In *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 13(1), (31-53).

ROSA, B. (2015). Waste and value in urban transformation: reflections on a post-industrial 'wasteland' in Manchester. In *Global Garbage* (193-218). Routledge.

Rovelli, C. (2019). The order of time. Riverhead books.

Locating myself in the present happened quicker and easier than I would have anticipated. Wandering through the ruin, engaging by turns with its materiality and people stopping by, provided me with a sense of timelessness. The time flew by, evolved into a negligible dimension, I could have stayed there for another two hours without consciously realising it. The terrain vague unfolds in its present state into a timehole, if the present moment can emerge. Smashing the hammer on a brick wall, it is loud, it makes dirt, it feels violent. But it is easy, the hammer strikes, and the bricks fall, the space lets me do it without strong resistance. Painting over the ruin wall, it splashes, plaster crumbles towards me, it takes multiple layers to cover the graffiti underneath. It is not easy, it takes time, it takes effort, it is tiring. It feels way less violent, but the space makes it harder, makes me work for it.

It feels easier to smash than to paint.
It feels easier to deconstruct than to
construct. Is it easier to dispose of
the past than to process it? Is it ea-
sier to build an entirely new future
than to carefully restore and build on
the past? I thought, I talked, I sensed.
From the psychical to the physical and
now back to the psychical again.





Watching birds from above **66**

Right to the social retreat **30**



social

ARCO-BAY/ECO-SANTI:
50 years of eco-cities **42**



„WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING HERE!” VOL.1 & 2

BY KARLOTTA SPERLING

It is Saturday, December 12th. I am standing on a grassy traffic island between three dirt roads in the middle of a so-called wasteland. I laid out bright yellow sticky arrows so other people who also do not belong there, would be able to find me. Around the grassy island, 20 men pursuing their business, repairing cars, carrying wood from left to right, sorting trash

with an excavator and effortlessly ignoring my presence, while I start cutting some of the inconspicuous plants growing left and right of the dirt roads and decorating the power pole on my island. On that day, all my research about Paljassaare, came to a provisional end. People came and listened and moved through the space while

WE should DO
VOL. 1 HERE
something

Paljassaare, 12.12.2020

Thanks to: Abraham Kenny, Tõu Kivimägi,
Simona Medelago & Miro Samolaj

Change is ahead and the future of Paljassaare seems to be mapped out and already fixed in a seemingly endless number of high-polished detail plans and real estate fantasies. But how does culture influence the anticipated change and what do I have to do with it? And finally, can a plan predict the future?



listening. Apart from one old rheumatic shepherd dog, no one took notice of our activities. For me, the notion of the Paljassaare that finds itself in between times has been the strongest throughout the research and with it the interest in the anticipated change and the contrast to the present. My initial question was simply whether gentrification will happen in Paljassaa-

re. From the very beginning, my aspiration was never to look for definite answers, I was rather interested in the different sides of the story. During the research I got more and more interested in my position, what influence does my being there and doing things have on the change, as well as the role of art and culture in gentrification.

In the research, gentrification is understood as „[t]he planned or unplanned process by which wealthy or affluent individuals in the middle class displace poorer individuals in traditionally working class or poor neighborhoods by purchasing property and upgrading it through renovation and modernization.“ (<https://sociologydictionary.org/gentrification/>) Gentrification is therefore understood as a process, either planned or unplanned. The reason, why gentrification is anticipated in Paljassaare is because of the numerous ratified detail plans that indicate the change of the area, mostly by yet location-unfamiliar high-class apartment blocks. Currently, the site is inhabited and used by mostly marginalized groups. Around 500 people live in Paljassaare, the majority in the social service houses. But the vast part of these plans are still hypothetic and there is no sign indicating that they will be built in the next two years. Bound changes that will happen in the next two years are

foremost two new cultural institutions: the art production center Naked Island and the film production site Tallinn Film Wonderland. What is particularly interesting in that regard is that culture places have been repeatedly found closely connected to gentrification, predominantly in the phase of pioneers, the kick-off for revaluation (cf. Holm, Martinez). The process of gentrification can be described in three steps (Holm 2010:74).

1. symbolic change: people with low income but high cultural capital, such as artists and students, move to a cheap, rather neglected neighbourhood, they see possibilities for self-actualization. Creative places develop, the neighbourhood will advance to be a special place. To speak with Bourdieu: a spatial charging with cultural capital is taking place.
2. material change: because the neighbourhood has advanced to a special place, the real estate industry claims higher prices. Owners and renters will be willing to invest in their properties



now, thus renovations follow.

3. social-structural change: from the perspective of the existing residents the conversion of the space leads to the impression of sociocultural alienation. (Holm 2010:74)

At this point my question was, what influence the cultural institutions have on the (anticipated) change in Paljassaare?

Firstly, I had to understand the role of culture in the postindustrial city and the notion of culture itself. Since Richard Florida, culture and creativity have been understood as a motor for innovation and creation of economic value (Florida 2002). „Today’s global economy is increasingly knowledge-based and innovation is more and more central to competitiveness. Thus, competi-

tiveness relies on appropriately skilled ‚human capital‘, that can contribute creatively to innovation.“ (Bodirsky 2012:456) Thereby, culture in urban planning is understood in different notions: on one hand as the axiological understanding of culture as an ideal or a difference, something that has to be pursued, tracing back to Ciceros understanding of culture as „cultivation of the social mind.“ (Krivy 2013:1736) „[T]he employment of ‚culture‘ in regenerating obsolete industrial space is grounded in an emphasis on culture-as-difference and in the belief that ‚culture‘ is capable of generating doivial, economic and spatial difference.“ (Krivy 2013:1736) On the other hand, culture is understood in the anthropological sense as a certain way of living (Krivy 2013:1736). Creativity is thereby viewed as an instrument to mobilize a population towards production of economic values (Krivy 2013:1730). This particular process of the implement of culture and art to revalue the land

has been documented in Tallinn before, in the case of Culture Mile (Martinez 2018). But could something similar happen in Paljassaare?

The focus of my research was on four different projects. Two of them cultural institutions, Naked Island and Film Wonderland, one project with mixed usages, artificial islands connected to the shoreline of Paljassaare, known as Kasiinosaar (casino islands), and the individual project of an artist. To understand the artificial islands, a research about the 1990s in Estonia and the ideas how to become a capitalistic nation brought more understanding of the origins of a project that in my opinion seems from another epoch (Ruudi). The casino islands are strongly connected to Märt Sults, a former headmaster and now local politician in the city government. His original idea was to put all casinos from the Old Town on one island, getting rid of everything „evil“ from the city

center and creating a business hub separated from the city. The revenue from that island was then supposed to be spend on public schools in Tallinn.

Today, there have been some alterations to the initial idea, there are three islands with different, separate functions plus one bird island, but the idea of creating separated hubs that will generate tax income and workplaces for the city, still survived.

Tallinn Film Wonderland will be a film production site in Paljassaare, the biggest in the Baltic countries and it is supposed to open its doors in 2022. Naked Island, which is situated right next to the future film production site, is a public art production house, founded by four Estonian artists, and it will already open in winter 2021. The fourth project is the former living room of Abraham Kenny, an Australian musician, who lived in Tallinn for the last ten years, that is used as a concert venue from time to time. It is the only informal cultural place in

Paljassaare.

I contacted leading heads of all projects, but only two got back to me, with whom I then conducted interviews to find out about their view of the matter.

Both interview partners, Flo Kasearu and Abraham Kenny, were reflective about the role of culture and art in gentrification, concurrently, both did not really see it connected to their projects. This question of being part of a process that one does not want to support, while simultaneously, one is also dependent on the possibility of the space, soon became very important for the reflection of my own controversial position in the process. All four projects are very different in size and impact and the beforehand mentioned phase of symbolic change does not seem to happen in Paljassaare. The material change however is the one that manifests the change in space and that is also visible in the context of Naked Island. The sign alone brought contemporary graphic design to a place where something alike has not



been seen before. Presumably, there will be a totally different dynamic once the Film Wonderland has opened. Social-structural change has not happened yet, but already the planned number of new people living in Paljassaare outnumbers the few that are currently living there by 5000%. So, it does not need much fantasy to imagine that the current inhabitants might feel alienated.

For the exhibition, I created two site-specific audios that could be listened to at the spot for the future Film Wonderland and the area, where Abraham has his room. The pieces are composed through five different parts. One voice actor improvised about the discovery of the two areas, what one finds there now, sites full of „trash“ and possibilities, also incorporating on my discovery of the places and my enthusiasm that I share with many urbanites. The other

voice was mirroring the media discourse, how Paljassaare is described as a former industrial site and currently a wasteland, empty and unused, waiting for the glorious future of the real estate developments to arrive. The word clouds consisted of terms that are repeatedly used to describe Paljassaare, mostly in the media, such as trash or wasteland. These words were repeated over and over again in different ways, until they sounded weird and ridiculous and were empty of meaning. In between are the interviews with the two artists, explaining their position and what they do, what they change, how they interact with their surroundings. The sounds really turned the pieces into absurd, reflecting on the feeling of disbelief when one is in these areas, hearing about the plans while seeing the current state. The directions gave permission to the listener to enter the area, where one is not aware of the social codes. But the listener had to find that the voice was not reliable, the directory

was fictional and not related to the sites. They accelerated through the piece and made no sense at all, confusing the listener. The voice is also not part of the place, it is an intruder as well as the listener and is creating non-existing spaces. That experience made the listener more aware of the space around him and how to move there. The audio pieces often created further interest for the sites and also made people laugh, sometimes in disbelief.

It is Saturday, December 12th. I am standing on a grassy traffic island between three dirt roads in the middle of a so-called wasteland. Around the grassy island, 20 men pursuing their business, repairing cars, carrying wood from left to right, sorting trash with an excavator and effortlessly ignoring my presence, while I start cutting some of the inconspicuous plants growing left and right of the dirt roads and decorating the power pole on my island, materializing the possible impact I have on the change in Paljassaare.

References:

Bodirsky, Katharina (2012): Culture for competitiveness: valuing diversity in EU-Europe and the 'creative city' of Berlin. International Journal of Cultural Policy
Vol. 18, No. 4, September 2012, 455-473

Krivy, Maros (2013): Don't Plan! The Use of the Notion of 'Culture' in Transforming Obsolete Industrial Space. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Volume 37.5 September 2013, 1724 - 1746.

Holm, Andrej (2010): Gentrifizierung und Kultur: Zur Logik kulturell vermittelter Aufwertungsprozesse. Jahrbuch StadtRegion, 1-2010, S. 64-82.

Martinez Sanchez, Francisco (2018). "This Place Has Potential". Waste talk, culture and urban regeneration in Tallinn. Suomen antropologi, 42(3), 4-22.

Naked Island (2020): Uudised. <https://nakedisland.eu/uudised/>. (accessed 11.November).

<https://sociologydictionary.org/gentrification/>

Florida, Richard (2002): The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life. New York, NY: Basic Books.



Daria Khrystych
Karlotta Sperling
Fernanda Ayala Torres
Dalma Pszota
Janosh Heydorn
Mira Samonig
Muhammad Ali Hussnain
Valeriia Mikhailova