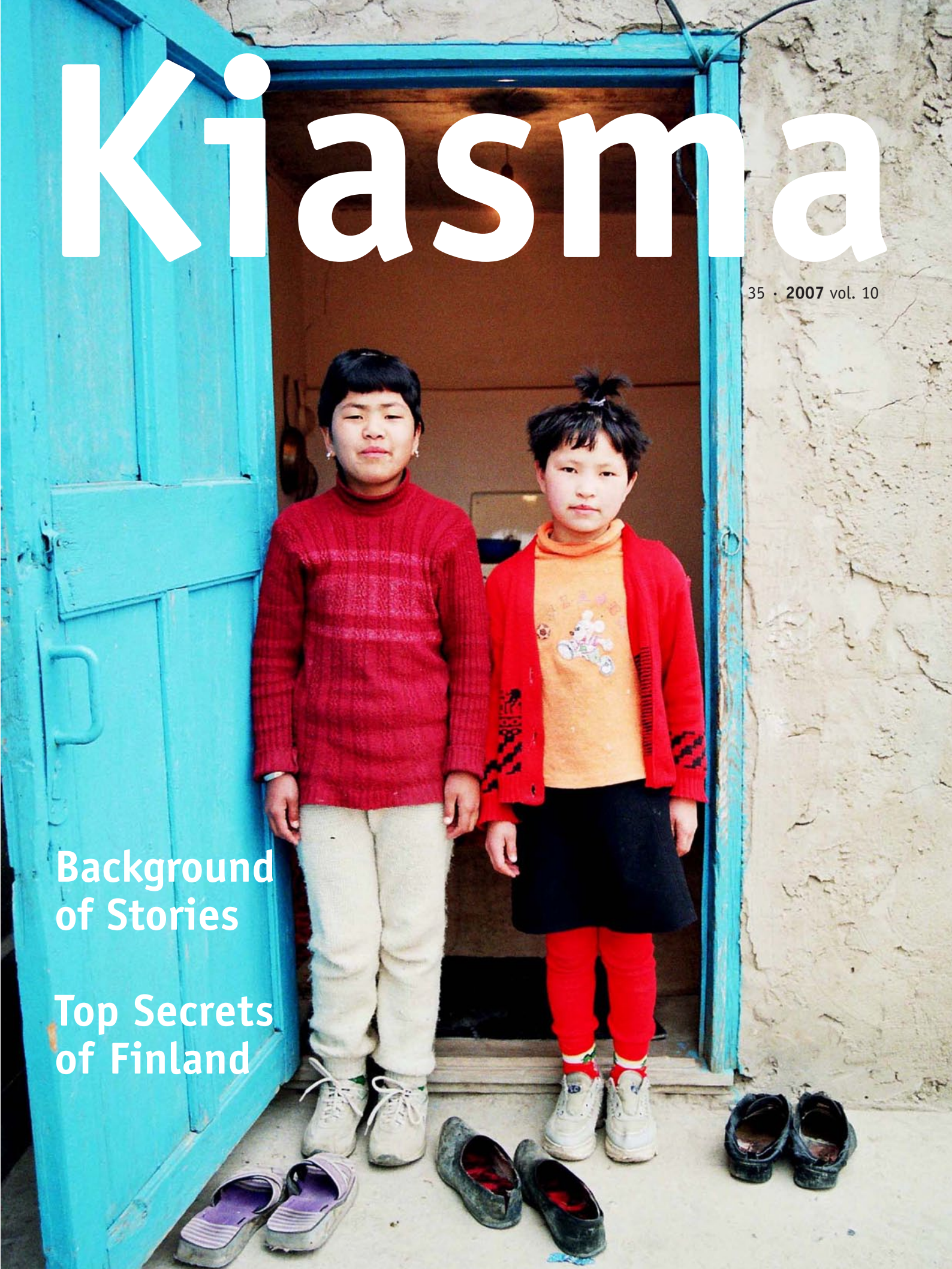


Kiasma

35 · 2007 vol. 10

Background
of Stories

Top Secrets
of Finland



Time of the Storytellers introduces contemporary art from the post-Soviet stretching from the European border all the way to Asia. The focus is on the contemporary art of Central Asia and specifically Kazakhstan. The works reveal panoramic views into an environment that appears almost unreal and where several eras, traditions and religions co-exist: prehistoric burial mounds, mosque domes and minarets, ruins and the contaminated environment left behind by the Soviet era, caravans of trucks and horsemen, crumbling concrete housing estates and utopian architectural projects. Moreover, the exhibition highlights ways to interpret the 'common past' of the Soviet era, its effects on the present and possible futures.

Background of Stories



Heroes Arrive on Horseback, Shamans by Foot

The artists examine this temporally multilayered and often paradoxical situation from distance, without actively taking part in the unfolding of events. However, the laconic and documentary approach always includes a subjective, often empathetic perspective and conscious decisions with regard to the subject matter. The thematic starting point of the exhibition, curated by **Viktor Misiano**, is to present a panoramic perspective on reality and the emphasis on narration and epic after the focus on reality of the 1990s.

CENTRAL ASIA TO THE MAP OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Viktor Misiano worked as the curator for the Central Asian pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2005. This marked the breakthrough of the region's contemporary art to international consciousness. The exhibition also toured Warsaw and Moscow in 2006. Other important exhibitions of contemporary Central Asian art include *No Mad's Land: Zeitgenössische Kunst aus Zentralasien*, Berlin 2002, *re-orientation: Kunst zu Mittelasien*, Weimar 2002, *Vom roten Stern zur blauen Kuppel: Kunst un Architektur aus Zentralasien*, Berlin 2004 and Stuttgart 2005, *Pueblos y sombras: Contemporary Art from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*, Mexico City 2004 and *The Tamerlane*

Syndrome: Art and Conflicts in Central Asia, Orvieto 2005 and Milwaukee 2007. In the Kiasma exhibition programme, the *Time of the Storytellers* continues in the vein of the 2004 *Faster than History* exhibition, the examination of the post-Soviet era through the eyes of contemporary artists.

ON EXPEDITION

Kiasma is symbolically connected with Central Asia through the equestrian statue in front of the museum building; the monument to Marshal **Mannerheim**. The Marshal's colourful personal history included service in the army of Imperial Russia, during which time he made a military exploration and geographical expedition to Asia from Samarkand to Beijing on horseback. On this journey, he assembled a unique collection of ethnographic items and took many photographs. The centenary of this trip was in 2006 and to celebrate it numerous Finnish expeditions have followed in Mannerheim's footsteps.

However, the contacts and interest expressed in Central Asia by Finns have been rather limited and it seems that even the geography of this region is a white dot on the

map for many, not to say anything about its history or contemporary culture. Many know these phonetically same-sounding 'stans' – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan – from football news.

THE RETURN OF EQUESTRIAN STATUES

Recently, the film *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan* has in its own curious manner placed at least Kazakhstan on some kind of map in the minds of millions of cinema goers. Kazakhstan's official counteract to the grotesque image of the country presented by the pseudo-documentary is a film entitled *Nomad: The Warrior*, which utilises with epic sweep and a 40-million dollar budget the legendary time of heroic warriors. The film contains intentional metaphors to Kazakhstan's current situation lodged between powerful nations interested in its natural resources and shut off from neighbouring countries.

The aim is, like in the film, to create a common story to promote national and cultural unity by tinting history with fiction and consciously working the original to fit the desired form. The concrete manifestation of this kind of nostalgia for witnessing that the common past existed are the numerous equestrian statues erected for legendary nomad soldiers since the independence of Central Asian countries in the early 1990s.

DREAMS AND REALITY

Dream orientation and escape from reality are also more widely present in the global culture. In his book *The Dream Society* (2002), the researcher **Rolf Jensen** argues that humankind is moving into an era of storytellers, which in his theory is the fifth stage after hunter-gatherers, farmers, industrial workers and knowledge

workers. The fairy-tale-like images and stories taking place in an imagined past repeated in popular books and films of the early 2000s, such as *The Lord of the Rings* or the *Harry Potter* series as well as computer games and role playing can be placed in this context, as well as Goths and heavy metal music's monster fantasies of today.

FROM NUCLEAR TESTS TO OSTERNS

As part of the Soviet Union, the Caucasian and Central Asian republics lived in a curious role of the 'other', subject to many desires and needs. On the one hand, they were used as laboratories for nuclear weapons, testing grounds for radical agricultural projects and the relocation of masses of people as well as useful ground for polluting industrial plants and secret space stations. On the other hand, they were a living proof of the harmonic existence of various cultures and the 'friendship between nations' made possible by socialism.

In the late 1960s, the steppes and deserts served as a backdrop for 'Easterns' or 'Osterns' modelled on American Westerns, in which the area's oriental and exotic appeal was utilised. The most famous of them must be *White Sun of the Desert* (1969) directed by **Vladimir Motylin**, which has acquired cult following and is still part of the compulsory rituals for cosmonauts before embarking on space flights from the cosmodrome in Baikonur.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND PERIOD OF STAGNATION

Today the states of Caucasia and Central Asia are building their future amongst the heritage of the Soviet era and modern democratisation pressures. The region has become the focal point of interest for superpowers due to its ample natural resources and geopolitical

1 Moldova, 2 Georgia, 3 Armenia, 4 Azerbaijan, 5 Kazakhstan, 6 Turkmenistan, 7 Uzbekistan, 8 Tajikistan, 9 Kyrgyzstan



Hamlet Hovsepian: Untitled, 2006, video



Vahram Aghasyan: Bangladesh, 2003, video



Said Atabekov: Battle for the Square, 2007, video





Elena Vorobyeva & Viktor Vorobyev:
Kazakhstan. Blue Period., 2002–2005, series of C-prints



Gulnara Kasmalieva & Muratbek Djomaliev:
A New Silk Road: Algorithm for Survival and Hope, 2006, video installation

location. One of the most important objectives in these countries is the attempt to suppress the emergence of fundamentalist Islamic movements in order to ensure “trading peace”. In many of the Caucasian and Central Asian states, despite their independence and move to a market economy, societal development is in a state of stagnation, as the presidents chosen in the early 1990s are still ruling the countries autocratically.

In these circumstances, it is difficult for art that does not follow the official, state-subsidised national canon based on history and folklore to become a recognised and significant part of societal development and cultural capital of the country. For example, in Kazakhstan, the state makes cultural investments mainly in architecture, particularly in the giant construction projects of the capital Astana. With carefully thought-out symbolism, they speak of the wealth and modernisation of the nation as well as the peaceful co-existence of different religions; a good example is the pyramid-shaped Palace of Peace and Reconciliation designed by the British architect **Norman Foster** and completed in 2006.

NEW REGIONS OF CONTEMPORARY ART

However, the Caucasian and Central Asian states are already developing their own stages for contemporary art, the most prominent of which are, of course, the biennales, which are organised at least in Kyrgyzstan, the *Bishkek International Exhibition of Contemporary Art*, in Uzbekistan, the *Tashkent International Biennale* with its international photography biennale, and in Armenia, the *International Biennale of Contemporary Art Gyumri*.

In addition, the first Caucasian biennale to be opened in the autumn 2007 is being planned for Tbilisi, Georgia. These events, and likewise numerous artist-led projects, promote the infrastructure of the contemporary and create co-operation networks both in Europe and Asia.

Time of the Storytellers contributes to making the interesting contemporary art and artists of the former Soviet republics visible and their stories take on a human significance in an international context as well.

□ Jari-Pekka Vanhala

The majority of the works in the Time of the Storytellers exhibition are videos. It seems to be the most useful and expedient medium whenever art needs to move forward in time quickly, particularly in the midst of difficult and hostile circumstances. The moving image forms a joint neutral framework for the stories, which the storytellers all tell in their own languages.

SteppenBaroque in National Landscape



Almagul Menlibaeva: SteppenBaroque, 2003–2004, video

The setting of **Almagul Menlibaeva's** ritual-like video works is often open steppes – the archetypal ‘national landscape’ of the Central Asian nomad culture – where exact information about time and space becomes irrelevant. The female figures appear like mythical nature spirits clothed in flowing fabrics or completely nude holding animal skulls. In her work *SteppenBaroque* (2003), Menlibaeva uses the mirror effect to create complete symmetry and flawless beauty as well as the festive decorativeness of the Baroque. Influences from a variety of sources and traditions are intertwined in the works: in addition to shamanism, Menlibaeva is particularly interested in Buddhism and the mystic Islamic tradition of Sufism. She has been described a ‘punk shaman’, who revives the values of nature, spirituality and mysticism in today’s age of worshipping reason and technology. Menlibaeva’s works can also be seen as feministic polemics, which exceptionally audaciously make womanhood visible within a tradition swarming with warriors and other male heroes.

Read more about the artists at www.kiasma.fi

Looking for the Top Secrets of Finland

COMPANY Aamu Song & Johan Olin

Company is a design duo established by **Aamu Song** and **Johan Olin** in 2000. Covering a wide spectrum of art and design, Company designs clothes, shoes and various functional articles, as well as spaces, public furniture and interiors. Company will fill Kiasma's Studio K with the project *Top Secrets of Finland*. It will display products that were created by Song and Olin in co-operation with various producers around Finland. The shop that Company has constructed in Studio K reveals these "top secrets" as one possible approach to design.

IT STARTED FROM TANGO AND SAUSAGE

Johan Olin (s. 1974) We first met at Kipsari, the student-run café at Taik. At the beginning we took part in some competitions and noticed that it's fun to work together and we wanted also to work with other great people. That's why we took the name Company for our two-person design team. We have worked together about seven years now.

Aamu Song (s. 1974) When I first came to Finland from South Korea to study in Taik in 1998 I was introduced to the music of **Olavi Virta**. Johan asked me if I wanted to learn Finnish tango and I said "Why not!", and so we went to **Åke Blomqvist's** very tough and effective dancing school.

JO In a way we both found a fresh start in co-operation. My background is in graphic design. At that time I was not familiar with product design and was very impressed by Aamu's doings. And maybe for Aamu everything Finnish was fresh.



AS The aura of Scandinavian Design made me come to Finland in the first place. Now I live here, so design has really changed my life. **Vuokko Nurmesniemi's Iloinen mekko (Happy dress)** is my favourite. I like that I can afford it and wear it and see it worn by others, like some old ladies in Kallio.

ADD WATER TO FIRE AND MAKE STEAM

AS With us, the other sees the other's brilliant ideas better. From the beginning we have supported and inspired each other. When I see Johan working, I want to work too. To hear Johan say: "This is great", is all I need to forget my doubts.

JO We really play ping-pong with each other's ideas and get excited about them. Our work is intertwined, there is no clear division of labour even though we usually solve the practical solutions individually. We share the same kind of world and values, but as individuals and by our working methods we are quite different. Aamu is the boiling and I am the cooling.

AS Johan is like water and I am like fire, so together we can make coffee.

FOR USE, FOR EVERYBODY

JO We are very traditional designers in the sense that we really want to make things for use, not just to be admired or looked at. It is important for us that objects really suggest a use, that they make the users' lives better, happier, funnier, more enjoyable...

AS I can't hold all my ideas in my own head, it will explode unless I take the ideas and realise them into prototypes, drawings or products. I would like to design things that have not yet been done; to bring out new ideas, to make the world bigger with them.

JO I want to design meaningful things. Or things that make sense to me – especially if I can participate in the designing of the meaning itself.

AS My idea of beauty – the thing I see as the aim of my work – is to have my products displayed tidily on a shop shelf: multiple, usable, wearable, buyable products for affordable price in shops like K-Rauta, S-Market, Alepa, prize tags and all. Design is the tool that makes this multiplicity possible. Even though my ideas are not always immediately selling and may be too weird, too new...

JO All our designs are meant to be multiplied. If there is only one example of something it is because it is still a prototype. So far you cannot buy our designs anywhere, but soon... we are little by little preparing a mass production.

BRING OUT THE CHILD IN EVERYONE

JO Many of our projects are trying to cure loneliness. They are connecting people to each other. But for me one important thing is also to build up something by myself, to have it close to my body, to test and try things.

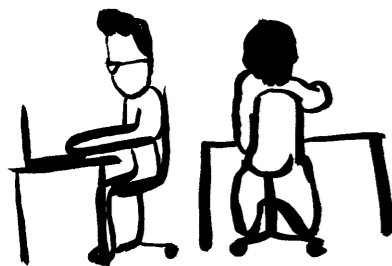
AS Johan is a typical boy: if he has an idea he has to make it, to break it, to see how it functions. He's not afraid of any kind of challenges or practical obstacles.

JO Maybe I also try to solve the problem during the making, not thinking beforehand (which would sometimes be good).

JO Playfulness is very important to us. Playfulness equals action. It allows for maximum amount of use: playful is usable. And if the designing process itself is fun and challenging it shows in the result. But just making fun or ironic comments is not what we do. That is a dead end.

AS Design is often so serious and money-oriented. I respect seriousness, but there is much to explore on the

COMPANY



other side of that. Take the example of children: they make playful things, are free in the spirit and filter the world in their own way. Why does the world stop encouraging the playfulness of children at some age? I was educated in the Korean school system which is very strict and competitive, and maybe I reacted the opposite way: I'm sometimes really childish mentally.

REVEALING THE TOP SECRETS OF FINLAND

JO The project "Top Secrets of Finland" was initiated during a trip to "mökki" (summer cottage) in the end of last year. Finnish summer cottage life is so functional and inspiring. Everything in the cottages is really well designed: the heating system, effective use of space, nature-made door handles and hangers – there is nothing extra in the interior or the daily life. We wanted to bring some of this in our everyday life. Finland has these great traditional products, and there must be great manufacturers still producing them. So we started looking.

AS We also had the idea of collecting secrets and finding what is secret in the Finnish design field. What are the secret luxuries of Finland? Things you know but don't tell others.

JO We wrote to a selection of these manufacturers, and almost every one we contacted answered. Some answered even though they were just closing down or moving their production to China. Many were very pleased, open and excited and welcomed us to come and see their production lines. We usually spent one day with each company. So far we have visited 17 companies around Finland and proposed them our designs based on the spirit of their products. The process is still going on.

AS These companies are the true reality in design. The companies we visited are all different and make very good quality.

JO We have had great experiences meeting people in these proud and no-compromise family businesses. One common thing with all these factories was that the people running them were real characters, very charismatic people. Some of these people are so uncompromising that they are prepared to stop production if their children are not going to continue running the factory after them.

AS It was really a total lifestyle for these people. They are similar to their products, very honest and genuine and uncompromising in their vision. One of them said, "I could triple my production but I prefer to have time to play my guitar instead". The managing directors of these family companies played in the factories as children and now their children are playing in them. To me it seemed such a beautiful way of making a living and living your life – to have your own machines and produce your designs... I feel a temptation to do that myself, when some of the companies are looking for a buyer...

JO Earlier we have been working with individual specialized handworkers but only in very few cases with manufacturing companies. This is the first time that we have the possibility of production on a bigger scale for our designs, and what's more – this is not a commission, but a true co-operation.

AS This is a pilot project for us and definitely the direction we are going to develop in the future.

□ Taru Tappola

Kiasma Calendar

Gulnara Kasimajeva & Muratbek Donaliyev: A New Silk Road: Algorithm for Survival and Hope, 2006, video installation (detail)



EXHIBITIONS

Time of the Storytellers

21 June–30 Sep
4th and 5th floor

Time of the Storytellers introduces contemporary art from the former Soviet Union, stretching from the European border deep into Asia. The focus is on the contemporary art of Central Asia and specifically Kazakhstan. The exhibition highlights ways to interpret the 'common past' of the Soviet era, its effects on the present and possible futures.

The exhibition mostly comprises installations, and photographic and video works by 14 artists and artist couples. The works deal with political and social themes, distancing themselves from the exotic and oriental stereotypes. The exhibition expert is the Muscovite critic and curator Viktor Misiano.

Artists in the exhibition are Vahram Aghasyan (Armenia), Vyacheslav Akhunov (Uzbekistan), Said Atabekov (Kazakhstan), Pavel Braila (Moldova), Olga Chernysheva (Russia), Dmitry Gutov, (Russia), Hamlet Hovsepian (Armenia), Gulnara Kasmalieva (Kyrgyzstan), Muratbek Djomaliev (Kyrgyzstan), Vladimir Kuprianov (Russia), Erbossyn Meldibekov (Kazakhstan), Almagul Menlibayeva (Kazakhstan), Kote Sulaberidze (Georgia), Leonid Tishkov (Russia), Elena Vorobyeva and Viktor Vorobyev (Kazakhstan)

Landscape in Kiasma's Collections

Until 4 Nov
2nd and 3rd floor

The exhibition assembled from works in Kiasma's collections presents the uses of the landscape motif in contemporary art. Part of the Finnish National Gallery, the focus of Kiasma's art collection is on Finnish art from the 1960s to today. Works are selected from the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art according to the theme of each exhibition.

The Collections web service of the Finnish National Gallery provides basic information on works and artists in its collections. You can acquaint yourself with Kiasma's collections at www.kiasma.fi

Top Secrets of Finland Company

8 June – 16 Sep
Studio K, 2nd floor

Company is a design duo established by Aamu Song (b. 1974) and Johan Olin (b. 1974) in 2000. Covering a wide spectrum of art and design, Company designs clothes, shoes and various functional articles, as well as spaces, public furniture and interiors. Company will fill Kiasma's Studio K with the project "Top Secrets of Finland".

COMING IN AUTUMN

Carnegie Art Award

26 Oct–6 Jan
4th and 5th floor

The aim of the Carnegie Art Award is to promote and support contemporary Nordic art and artists. This year the exhibition tour starts off in Kiasma. The exhibition presents the work of the following artists: Thordis Aðalsteinsdóttir (IS), Torsten Andersson (SE), Nathalie Djurberg (SE), Gardar Eide Einarsson (NO), Anette H. Flensburg (DK), Jens Fänge (SE), Else Marie Hagen (NO), Ellen Hyllemose (DK), Jarl Ingvarsson (SE), Kristina Jansson (SE), Jesper Just (DK), Pertti Kekkarainen (FIN), Jukka Korkeila (FIN), Ferdinand Ahm Krag (DK), John Kørner (DK), Tor-Magnus Lundebj (NO), Jussi Niva (FIN), Fie Norsker (DK), Allan Otte (DK), Silja Rantanen (FIN), Vesa-Pekka Rannikko (FIN), Kirstine Roepstorff (DK), Thorbjørn Sørensen (NO), Anna Tuori (FIN), Thór Vigfússon (IS), Karin Wikström (SE).

PROJECT AT KIASMA

Hans Jürgen Syberberg Wagner Box

24 Aug–26 Sep, Mediatheque
The film retrospective of the renowned avant-garde film-maker, Hans Jürgen Syberberg, will be presented in the Finnish Film Archive cinema, the Orion, during the Helsinki Festival and at the same time Kiasma will present his Richard Wagner -themed video installation in the Mediatheque.

Babies play with colour

13 June–29 July, ground floor lobby exhibition space. Free admission.
The exhibition documents, by means of photographs and video, the meeting of babies and contemporary art in Kiasma. The first joint workshop of 3- to 12-month-old babies and their parents, comprising five meetings, began with awakening the babies' various senses. The activities centred on the babies, who got to feel and see the inviting world of different colours and materials with their own hands and eyes.

COMING IN AUTUMN

Kiasma's kid weeks

2–12 Oct
Programme and workshops for under 4-year-olds.

GUIDED TOURS

Guided tours

Guided tours to the Landscape collection exhibition are held on Fridays at 6 pm. Free admission. In Finnish.
Guided tours to the changing exhibitions are held on Wednesdays at 6 pm and Sundays at 3 pm. Museum admission. In Finnish.
Guided tours in Swedish are held on the first Sunday of each month at noon. Museum admission.

Tour bookings

Tours can be individually tailored to groups. Tour bookings Mon–Fri 9 am–12 noon tel. +358 9 1733 6509.
Prices on weekdays EUR 60, Sundays EUR 75. Tour languages available are English, Finnish, French, German, Russian and Swedish.

Landscape audio guide

The audio guide provides background information and interpretation assistance to the Landscape collection exhibition. Rental EUR 2, from the Info desk. You may download the audio guide to your MP3 player free of charge at www.kiasma.fi.
In Finnish, Swedish and English.

KIASMA THEATRE

Tarkovski by Docpoint

17–19 Aug
This series dedicated to the memory of Tarkovsky presents intimate films on the legendary film director Andrei Tarkovsky made by well-known documentary film-makers. The documents delve into the grammar of the poetry in Tarkovsky's films and shed light on the sacrifices the director had to make in his personal life when seeking cinematic truth. The series is a homage to Tarkovsky, who was born 75 years ago this year.

Oblivia

Everything You Say Will Become Dust Anyway

Premiere 23 Aug
The performance discusses the impossibility of destruction. The performers in the multi-national work group are Lucy Cash (UK), Anna Krzystek (UK), Magnus Logi Kristinsson (Iceland), Annika Tudeer and Timo Fredriksson. Sound: Janek Öller. Production: Johanna Fredriksson.
Founded in 2000, the Oblivia group deals with the structures of performance and power in its works. The form is as big a part of the content as the themes. Oblivia's style is unique, conceptual, minimalist and fun. The work combines the different artistic backgrounds of the performers (dance, performance, music and literature) as well as their different nationalities. Humour plays a significant part in their works. In English.
www.oblivia.fi
Other performances 25, 26, 29, and 30 Aug, and 1, 2 and 5 Sep.

Vyacheslav Akhunov: Corner, 2004, video



COMPANY Aamu Song & Johan Olin



Marko Vuokola: The Seventh Wave, 2002 (detail)



Babies play with colour



Hans Jürgen Syberberg: Wagner Box



Oblivia



URB

URB 07 – Urban festival Helsinki 1–12 Aug

The URB festival will present its eighth edition of makers of urban culture and art. The programme, which will be published, in June includes Finnish acts and international guests from, for example, France and the United States. As in previous years, the event will be surprising, rambling in many directions and challenging preconceptions. The festival declares the importance of young energy and critical perspectives.

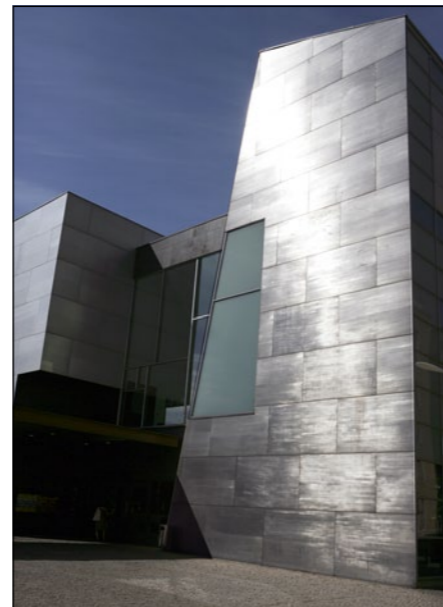
URB 07 examines the relationship between art and urban culture. It seeks new perspectives and suggestions on how to act in an urban space. Performances and events also take place outside the theatre, providing a dialogue between the audience and the environment. URB can be seen in the city streets, clubs and cinemas.

As previously, URB includes workshops aimed at young people. These include, for example, a URB video workshop arranged in collaboration with the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) and theoneminutesjr. In addition, URB 07 collaborates with Plan Finland's 'Turpa auki' ('Open up!') rap competition.

URB 07 takes place in Kiasma, Stoa and Andorra cinema.

URB on Tour in Hämeenlinna Workshops 6–8 June, the event 9 June

Inspired by the annual summer URB festival of the Kiasma Theatre, URB goes on tour. Offerings include events and courses in various fields of urban art. URB on Tour is a collaboration with the energy company Vattenfall. www.urb.fi



MILKA ARONOLA / CAA

INFO

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Kiasma is open
Tue 10 am–5 pm,
Wed–Sun 10 am–8.30 pm
Tickets EUR 6/4, free for under 18-year-olds. Fridays 5–8 pm free admission.

Kiasma is fully accessible. Guide dogs are welcome. The ticket office and the Theatre are equipped with tele/induction loop systems.

Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma is part of the Finnish National Gallery.

Kiasma Store is open
Tue 10 am–5 pm, Wed–Sun 11 am–7 pm,
tel. +358 (0)9 1733 6505.

Café Kiasma is open
Tue 10 am–5 pm, Wed–Sun 10 am–9 pm,
tel. +358 (0)9 1733 6661.

Friends of Kiasma
Further information about Friends of Kiasma activities tel. +358 (0)9 1733 6595.

Information subject to change.



KAI ANSIO

KAI ANSIO

Kiasma
for You



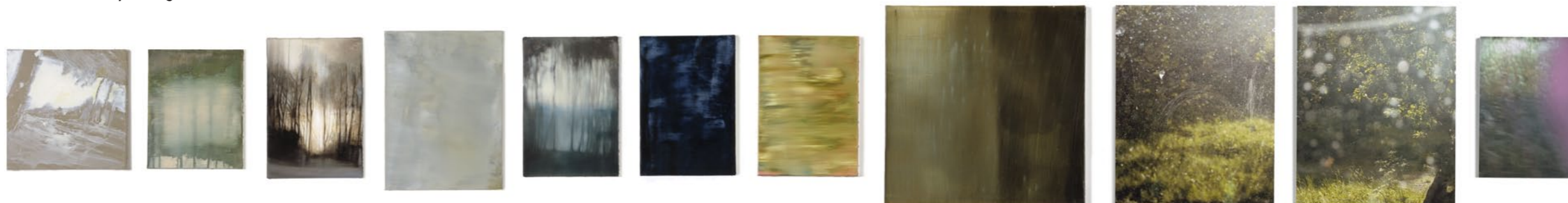
Literature on Contemporary Art

All the Kiasma exhibition catalogues and more
www.kiasma.fi/shop

PERI VIRANEN / CAA



Kiasma is a popular stop for tourists visiting Finland. We asked what kinds of thoughts the Landscape in Kiasma's collections exhibition raises about Finland and contemporary Finnish art.



Tourists in the Landscape of Contemporary Art

Heli Hiltunen: Peas in Front of the Eyes, 2002–2003

DIVING INTO FINNISHNESS

"Typical!" exclaims **Jean-Jaques Gabas** when he sees Taneli Eskola's photographic work *Lusikkaniemi during the Polar Night*. In Gabas's view, the Aulanko Park photograph represents Finnish nature photography as a Frenchman visiting Finland expects to see it.

Mrs Gabas agrees; after all, the photograph represents an icy lake view bathing in grey light. The thick layer of snow on the branches of pine trees creates a cold but beautiful atmosphere. "It's just like a postcard!"

Mr and Mrs Gabas came to Helsinki to take part in the seminar of the European co-operation and development network. In between lectures and meetings there is time to acquaint oneself with local cultural offerings. Kiasma was their first stop because they enjoy visiting art museums on their trips. Moreover, the Gabas, who were visiting a museum of contemporary art for the first time, found Kiasma's architecture delightful. "We have an impression that you are very self-sufficient here in Finland. You have a very unique style that is particularly evident in design and art. It's very good," say the Gabas in the beginning of their tour.

There are several works in the exhibition that examine environmental issues and pollution. **Tuula Närhinen's** work *Senne* follows the pollution load in a Belgian river. The closer the river flows to Brussels the more interesting the small watercolours painted by Närhinen from the water samples become because there is more to represent in impurities. "Here in Finland you have less pollution than there is in Continental Europe. Mind you, when we were here the last time, 30 years ago, there was air pollution. Now there isn't, or at least not as much. You also have fewer people living here, so maybe that is the reason. We visited the Suomenlinna fortress yesterday and noticed how many rubbish bins there were. People use them and do not discard their rubbish. Finland also emphasises sustainable development, isn't that right?" say the French guests.

CHANGING SEASONS

Larissa Cox from Australia has also paid attention to the purity of Finnish nature. The white and grey shades of **Jukka Mäkelä's** large-scale paintings speak of the long winter, whereas the glimmer of blue is reminiscent of the clear and clean sky. Cox is visiting for the third time her mother, who lives in Finland.

Previously, she has been in Finland in the winter, when the snow and darkness left a lasting impression. "The greatest difference to Australian nature must be that the four distinct seasons mean that nature varies more in Finland. When you're flying over Finland and you see all the frozen water and only some trees that are green, they must be pines, whereas there are no leaves on birches. I've seen pictures taken in summer, and nature looks very different in them."

Santeri Tuori's work *Waterfall* reminds Larissa Cox of northern winter's darkness and snow. What did Cox expect of the Finnish winter? "I was here just before Christmas, and I knew that the winter was at its harshest and that the days were very short. Even though my mother had told me about this, the brevity of the day was quite a shock. I'd come from the sunny Australian summer where the sun sets at nine. Here it was pitch black at seven in the morning and the sun sets again at around four in the afternoon. Luckily there is snow here reflecting the winter light. And then the summer nights here are bright," Cox reminisces. The flowing waterfall in Tuori's work is present also in the form of a low soundscape. "The sound in this work is menacing. Isn't there a lot of

alcoholism in Finland? This darkness must make people's lives difficult. That's the image I get from this work."

"This is great!" exclaims Cox at **Heli Hiltunen's** nine-part work *Peas in Front of the Eyes* "This is like a transition from summer to winter ... and this part reminds me of a visit to **Sibelius's** home in Järvenpää. There was a lake there around which other artists lived as well, if I'm not mistaken. We stopped by the lake to look at the sunset, leafless trees reflected on the surface of the lake and the colours were a gorgeous purple. It was very beautiful."

A TOURIST ENCOUNTERING CONTEMPORARY ART

Is there something in the Landscape exhibition's works that makes them recognisable as contemporary Finnish art? "I think, I would have to see more works in order to recognise them as Finnish. Four years ago I visited the Ateneum Art Museum to look at older Finnish art and I'm returning there tomorrow. Maybe I should have gone there before I came here!" Cox laughs. "Contemporary art can be so many things ... but yesterday I bought some Marimekko fabric for a bedspread and to me it looks very

Finnish. There are birches in it; black, white and shades of blue that remind me of Finland."

Two film students from St Petersburg, **Ekaterina Potekhina** and **Anna Kudnyavtseva**, are contemplating the special characteristics of contemporary Finnish art as well. They took part in a short film festival held in Helsinki. Potekhina thinks contemporary art differs from older art. "There is a lot of thinking about problems and words, the work of art is not merely there to be looked at. It is very urban."

"We have seen many short films by Finnish students and their subject matter tends to be very depressing. They only represent problems but now we can see that Finns think a lot with their hearts. That is very nice," the girls say while viewing Tuula Närhinen's work *Windtracers*. In the work, Närhinen has attached pencils onto tree branches that draw the movement of the wind on paper and record the movements of a lamp swaying in the wind in photographs with a long exposure time. "We often have the same problem, how to represent the movement of the wind in animation. This is a very good idea. The pictures are strange but beautiful!"

"Why are there two copies of the same picture here?" Kudnyavtseva asks while looking at **Marko Vuokola's** work *The Seventh Wave* and soon notices that in fact the pictures are not identical after all. "The location is the same but the pictures have been taken at different times ... nature changes all the time." "You have to think about the work ... I never knew Finnish art was this serious!" Ekaterina Potekhina laughs but remarks then: "Russians also like to escape the big city in the pure air of nature."

Teuri Haarla's works hanging on the adjacent wall get Potekhina and Kudnyavtseva excited. The artist has photographed seasonal changes in the field he has made behind his house. There are plants growing in the field but also colourful fabrics and rocks. "A really interesting idea. Finnish people have a very free imagination. People in touch with nature create beautiful images!" Potekhina reiterates her ideas on the Landscape exhibition.

□ Päivi Matala

CARNEGIE ART AWARD

Nuggets of Contemporary Nordic Painting

The Carnegie Art Award is both an exhibition and an art award. Its aim is to promote and support contemporary Nordic art and artists. This year the exhibition tour starts off in Kiasma in October. Artists will be awarded a total of 2 100 000 Swedish krona, that is 227 600 euro, in the award ceremony on 25 October 2007.

The Carnegie Art Award was established in 1998 as Carnegie Investment Bank's contribution to the promotion of contemporary Nordic painting. Until 2002, the Nordic exhibition tour was organised and the prizes awarded annually. In 2004, the event was reformed into a biennale, while the award money was also doubled.

In 2006, the first prize, one million Swedish krona, was awarded to Swedish **Karin Mamma Andersson** and in 2004 to Finnish **Nina Roos**. The second prize is worth 600,000, the third 400,000 krona, in addition to which a 100,000 krona young artist's scholarship is awarded. Other awarded Finnish artists are **Petra Lindholm** (3rd Prize in 2006), **Elina Brotherus** (Young artist's scholarship in 2004), **Carolus Enckell** (2nd Prize in 2001), **Johan Scott** (3rd Prize in 2001), **Petri Hytönen** (3rd Prize in 2000), **Silja Rantanen** (2nd Prize in 1999) and **Jussi Niva** (Young artist's scholarship in 1998).

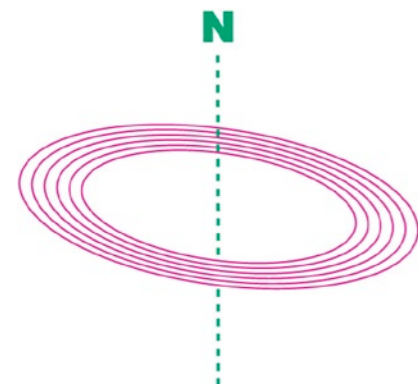
The compilation of the exhibition is a two-stage process. First, approximately 30 experts in Nordic art chose five personal favourites. All in all 143 Nordic artists were nominated for the 2008 Carnegie Art Award. From these a six-member jury chose 26 artists to participate in the exhibition. The invited artists are **Thordis Aðalsteinsdóttir** (IS), **Torsten Andersson** (SE), **Nathalie Djurberg** (SE), **Gardar Eide Einarsson** (NO), **Anette H. Flensburg** (DK), **Jens Fänge** (SE),

Else Marie Hagen (NO), **Ellen Hyllemose** (DK), **Jarl Ingvarsson** (SE), **Kristina Jansson** (SE), **Jesper Just** (DK), **Pertti Kekarainen** (FIN), **Jukka Korkeila** (FIN), **Ferdinand Ahm Krag** (DK), **John Kørner** (DK), **Tor-Magnus Lundeby** (NO), **Jussi Niva** (FIN), **Fie Norsker** (DK), **Allan Otte** (DK), **Silja Rantanen** (FIN), **Vesa-Pekka Rannikko** (FIN), **Kirstine Roepstorff** (DK), **Thorbjørn Sørensen** (NO), **Anna Tuori** (FIN), **Thór Vigfússon** (IS), **Karin Wikström** (SE).

The Carnegie Art Award focuses on painting but defines its limits very openly, crossing the boundaries of technique. Participating works can be photography, videos or installations that in some way deal with questions relating to painterliness and pictorial representation, such as light, colour, surface, depth and form.

The jury, which is selected for three-year periods, includes Senior Curator **Maaretta Jaukkuri** from Kiasma and taking the chair of the jury this year is **Tuula Arkio**. Works chosen for the exhibition may not be older than two years. Thus, it is ensured that the exhibition and the accompanying book as well as the video introducing the artists give, as far as possible, an up-to-date representation of the current state of Nordic painting.

□ Taru Tappola



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LÖNNBERG TÄHÄN
JÄTTÄKÄÄ KEHYKSET



URB Festival Challenges Institutions

How do you reach beyond an institution? How can you break the rigidity and self-satisfaction associated with it? One answer is to create partnerships and operating methods that challenge truisms.

Kiasma is literally a crossroads. Obligated by its name, it has positioned itself in the field of art and culture as a place that enables various encounters and the flow of things and ideas. Kiasma is a complex entity of values and actions, which repeatedly reclaims its position in the field, which moves, changes and at times either consciously or unconsciously escapes definition. The field of contemporary art is wide and rough at the edges as you would expect from contemporary artistic expression.

URB, or the festival of urban art, is a project that has reshuffled values and ideas about culture production in Kiasma. URB has not changed its basic idea but it has "broadened the significance of operations to include new audiences. By persistent co-operation in the eastern suburbs of Helsinki – by offering courses, summer jobs and festival programmes – it has inserted itself in a

positive, even effortless, way into the cultural diversity of the city. Viewed from the Kontula suburb, Kiasma looks different than from the city centre quarter of Kruununhaka. The URB on Tour has taken us around Finland, and Kiasma does not look the same when viewed from the town of Heinola either. Movement creates knowledge that for its part guides the choices of a cultural institution.

URB has changed over the years. It has striven to maintain its connection with the artistic movement created by the hip hop culture but other phenomena of urban culture have been raised by its side. URB has never really been a sub-culture festival even though its aim has been to preserve the diversity and tolerance expressed by subcultures.

The obligation of presenting their own time is tangible for those working in the field of contemporary art but answers to the challenges posed by it are partly based on guesswork and risk taking. Contemporary art is a part of the present, which demands an active dialogue with the surrounding reality from an institution like Kiasma.

The conceptions of new reality are formed only with time. Therefore, an art institution that co-exists in this time with the citizens must join them where the changes are already forming the future.

□ Virve Sutinen
URB festival director



On the Road from URB to URB

In the past year the collaboration between Kiasma and Vattenfall, URB on Tour, has visited provincial capitals around Finland, including Jyväskylä, Tampere and Hämeenlinna. Urban art has also been taken to places not usually considered very urban, such as Heinola and Oulainen. Some have even humorously suggested that the towns' urbanity does not extend to concrete, let alone traffic lights.

The five-stop concept of the URB tour has alternated from the regional entity of Tampere to the URB event in Heinola. Doubts about the 'urbanity' of smaller locations are possibly well founded when it comes to the size of their infrastructure but are incorrect when it comes to the enthusiasm expressed by the young participants. Many of the young people who participated in the workshops said that for once they had the opportunity to do things they normally do not get to do in their home town.



KAI ANSIO, NEA HELSTO, HANNA MAUNUKSELA, photoshop TIMO VARTAINEN

PERFORMERS AS SEEN ON THE NET

The various contacts from all around Finland are behind the concept and planning of the URB on Tour. Young people have asked why the URB festival and its workshops are arranged only in Helsinki. Young people of today are proficient in the use of the Internet, and Helsinki is no longer the 'big world' in the sense that it was a few decades ago. In the 2000s, young people pick and choose their influences from urban cultures around the world. Strong communal subcultures function and keep in touch through the Net, regardless of the places of residence of their members.

The stars in their fields are known through video clips and websites. For example, the instructor of the break dance course arranged in Kangasala, **Jussi "Focus" Sirviö**, was familiar to the participants of the beginner course, and no introductions were necessary. Of course everyone knew Focus.

However, the information flow from the Net and television may cause misunderstandings that the workshops have helped rectify. For many, break dance has meant only Music TV-type 'wiggling the butt', which has nothing to do with break dance itself. This has been discussed particularly when the group has consisted only of girls.

VJ IS A VIDEO MIXER

In the Jyväskylä and Tampere regions the original idea was to organise the workshops outside the regional centre to show the young people that they do not necessarily have to seek hobbies in the regional centres; however, no one signed for the first video-mixing workshop in Muurame in October 2006, so it was moved to Jyväskylä. The same thing happened to the video-mixing workshop in the Tampere region. The workshop was originally meant to be organised in Pirkkala but it was moved to Tampere where the workshop was fully booked in a matter of days. On the basis of the experiences (and tribulations) of the workshop, it became evident that the concept of video mixing and its abbreviation VJ (video jockey) was completely unknown to 15- to 19-year-olds. The work had to be started from the very beginning. In Pirkkala, **Petri Ruikka**, one of the two instructors of the workshop, visited the lower and upper secondary schools to explain the meaning of the VJ concept to the young people.

FROM MURALS TO RAP

The workshop programme has varied according to the locality and the size of the area. The idea was not to replicate the workshop and events from one locality to the next.

The contents of the workshops were always negotiated with local co-operation partners. Views on what kind of content would best suit each locality, and what things are not otherwise available, were discussed in these meetings

The most popular workshop was the mural workshop and it was arranged in each of the five stops of the tour. Murals were painted in local youth centres using spray paint and latex. The easy approachability contributed to the popularity of the workshop, particularly in the smaller localities.

In the rap workshop, the participants put themselves on the line by rapping in front of others. The rap workshop's marginal nature is, of course, further increased by the fact that the participants have to be interested in the means of expression of rap and hip hop cultures. A lecture on the history of murals and graffiti from cave paintings to New York's street culture was given in connection with the mural workshop. The lecture aimed at correcting prejudices about 'smudges on the wall' and the subject was approached rather from the perspective of art.

PERFORMANCES IN THE EVENTS

An URB on Tour event was organised on each of the stops on the tour, in which the workshop instructors took to the stage.

In addition, these events presented performing opportunities to local groups and artists. The Tampere URB event in the Hällä stage was sold out, whereas the atmosphere in Heinola was more homely. When **Beatboxer Felix Zenger** stepped onto the Youth Centre Pleissi's stage in Heinola an autograph hunter marvelled aloud about how amazing it was to see Felix live when he had just been performing on Voice TV.

WAITING FOR CONTINUATION

The co-operation with local partners was flexible. The programme for the tour was planned in collaboration and the aim was to find the right target groups. Hopefully, workshops will be organised in the future as well. For example, in Hankasalmi, Nokia and Kangasala actors in youth and culture work asked for tips and ideas on how they could organise similar courses by themselves when there was an apparent demand and enthusiasm for them among the young people.

□ Riku Lievonon



- 2 The works in the exhibition Time of the Storytellers reveal panoramic views into an environment that appears almost unreal and where several eras, traditions and religions co-exist: prehistoric burial mounds, mosque domes and minarets, ruins and the contaminated environment left behind by the Soviet era.
- 7 Top Secrets of Finland by Aamu Song and Johan Olin
- 11 Calender
- 16 Tourists in the Landscape of Contemporary Art
- 18 The URB festival will present its eighth edition of makers of urban culture and art. As in previous years, the event will be surprising, rambling in many directions and challenging preconceptions. The festival declares the importance of young energy and critical perspectives.

COVER: Elena Vorobyeva & Viktor Vorobyev: Kazakhstan. Blue Period, 2002–2005, series of C-prints

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