

Press release
Exhibitions
30.8.2004

What is Important?

3rd Ars Baltica Triennial of Photographic Art

Halli, Siipi 17.9. – 21.11.2004

Press preview on Friday, September 17th at 12 a.m. Curator Dorothee Bienert and artist Elsebeth Jørgensen will be present in the occasion. Welcome!

Opening on Friday, September 17th at 6 p.m.

Ars Baltica is a forum for the cross-border cultural exchange in the Baltic area. Working with the question and title *What is Important?*, the curatorial team of the 3rd Ars Baltic Triennial of Photographic Art aims to deepen the critical dialogue on art and photography between artists, curators and institutions in the region.

The structural content of the project begins by looking at what is important today for Baltic artists who use the photographic medium. Etymologically, “important” is that which is valuable enough to be “brought in”, in other words, that which the individual or a community searches out and selects for itself.

What is Important? is not a thematic exhibition, but the works chosen do relate a certain artistic attitude. While many artists were concerned with establishing *photography as art* in the 90s, today, *art with photography* is one of many artistic strategies. Artists avoid the single representative image or play with it, include the performative and the narrative in their work, and produce image kaleidoscopes or complexes. Photography is not singled out as a specific medium, but is used by the artist, as others use it. In other words, formal issues are less important than the artist’s attempt to extract segments of reality, import and appropriate them, and communicate these to others.

Paradoxically enough, the artists in this exhibition combine an interest in the apparently *unimportant* and the desire to evoke important narratives. The most different forms of narrative in today’s Baltic photographic art are established around the following points of crystallisation. On the one hand, there are the stories that deal with the self, or where the public colliding with the private becomes an issue, and in which subjective experience and playful narratives replace the focus on the body typical of the 80s and 90s. On the other hand are the stories in which locations around and beyond the self are a central issue, and where the subjective importance of places supersedes the detached viewpoint on sites, characteristic of the early 90s. Concentrating on the local, the private, and the personal point of view, the artists attribute particular importance to individual territories, not yet absorbed globally or medially.

artists in the exhibition

Knut Asdam (N), Bigert & Bergstrom (S), Agnieszka Brzezanska (PL), Aristarkh Chernyshev (RU), Oskar Dawicki (PL), Miklos Gal (FIN), Ilkka Halso (FIN), Isabell Heimerdinger (D), Elsebeth Jorgensen (DK), Anne Szefer Karlsen (N), Eve Kask (EE), Joachim Koester (DK), Tatyana Liberman (RU), Wiebke Loeper (D), Wolfgang Ploger (D), Arturas Raila (LT), Gatis Rozenfelds (LV), Johanna Rylander (S), Jari Silomaki (FIN), Florian Slotawa (D), Irma Stanaityte (LT)

curatorial team

Dorothee Bienert, Berlin; Lars Grambye, Copenhagen; Lolita Jablonskiene, Vilnius

catalogue

A catalogue with 160 pages and approx. 150 illustrations is available. The publication in English is conceived as a discussion forum on art and photography in the Baltic region, and encloses text contributions by the artists as well as by Dorothee Bienert, Ekaterina Degot, Helena Demakova, Lukasz Gorczyca, Lars Grambye, Jonas Ekeberg, Anders Härm & Hanno Soans, Mika Hannula, Lolita Jablonskiene, Lars Bang Larsen, John Peter Nilsson, Jonas Valatkevicius and Jan Verwoert.

further venues: Malmö Konsthall (SE)

realised venues: Stadtgalerie Kiel (D); Mecklenburg Kuenstlerhaus Schloss Plueschow (D); Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen (N); Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius; Former Building of the Riga City Council, Riga (LV); Tallinn Art Hall (EE)

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support

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