

NEW U & HELSINKI

U12 is new in many ways. For a long time we have been thinking that the newsletter, which has been in existence for over 2 years, needs a change - a more reader-friendly appearance and content with a wider grasp. U12 is the first attempt at this new dream; it is available online, but also tangible if you decide to print it out. The **DIY mentality** of U, born from of self-organised initiative, has taught us that solutions grow from cooperation. Behind the new design and web layout is **Ptarmigan**, a trans-disciplinary arts and culture space situated on Toompea, who stand out in the cultural landscape of Estonia with an international group of people and a unique approach. One of their volunteer organisers, John W. Fail, writes in U about what the term 'urbanist' means to him and how it relates to their regular activities.

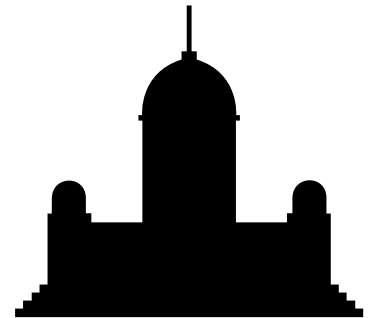
U has always wished to be a mediator for the local urbanist, and to find opportunities for international cooperation. Last time we talked about a city more thoroughly a year ago, when The New York issue was published. This time we focus on **Helsinki and the World Design Capital 2012**. Most of us cross borders virtually, but sometimes changes in real life urban space can start with an inspiring example from an idealistic book. Reading the book 'Helsinki Beyond Dreams' is therapeutic for a person interested in cities and this is warmly recommended by Teele Pehk. The statistic parameters of Finland and Helsinki have always made Estonians jealous - this **murky 'city of the sun'** is only a boat-ride away. Having role models is necessary, but making comparisons is a self-destructive activity. We should rather try to build bridges, cooperate and learn from each other. The reader of U12 will find proof that Helsinki is an innovative, happy and a liveable city, but also more critical voices will have their say. In several texts, locals and strangers mention the high-caliber order that characterises Helsinki and makes one walk on the tips of their toes in the city, **dreaming of a little chaos**. This topic of chaos and order is explored by an urban manager, Kadri Koppel.

Personal stories about Helsinki are told by expats, who may have a better eye for comparison - a twin-citizen of Helsinki Kristi Grišakov, Scottish artist Andrew Gryf Paterson and the programme leader of the Finnish Institute Jenni Kallionsivu. In addition, we introduce one of the exceptional solutions (Paviljonki), discuss the festival culture on the line Helsinki-Berlin, write about parking and think again about what it means to get to know a city and what our choices for doing that are.

What remains the same amongst the 'new' is that we keep an eye on the **everyday experience of the urbanist** - with continual reflections on events present and past. This time you will also find many valuable hints for further reading, from the new developments in Helsinki to the collection issued about the Vision Conference of Tallinn. This newsletter is also made colourful by an urban comic produced in a summer school in Vilnius.

Enjoy!

Yours truly,
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