

SAY HELLO TO THE STREET CULTURE FESTIVALS!

The number of festivals in Estonia focused on enriching urban spaces through varied art practices during 2013 is noteworthy. MARIKA AGU investigates the conceptual aims of street art festivals *Stencibility* in Tartu and *Sõnum Seinal* in Pärnu, urban festival *UIT* in Tartu and street art festival *Prosessifestivaali* in SuviLahti, Helsinki, initiated by the former Estonian Institute in Finland.



STREET ART FESTIVAL STENCILIBILITY

Interview with Sirje Joala

What are the conceptual triggers of the Stencibility festival? On what type of experiences does the festival focus on?

The aim of Stencibility is to give recognition to street artists for their input into the enrichment of shared space, raising the community's attention and awareness about the art that surrounds us in public places and to fostering street art culture. For the first few years it was mostly about creating awareness, expressed through, for example, a photo competition and choosing the best street art piece. Now, I guess, this work has largely been done. This year we managed to successfully start inviting artists to Tartu from outside of Estonia, and we will definitely continue doing that in the up-coming years. We strongly encourage the engagement of people, those interested are invited to get involved with organising the festival – this year we had 3-4 volunteers. In addition to painting walls we have always tried to engage a larger audience, for example, to take part in the photo competition or pick their favourite street art piece, this year we made some excursions and a film program.

25th April - 12th of May 2013 in Tartu

Okeiko and Hypnoboster next to Struve street stairs



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**What is the role of the Stencibility street art festival in designing Tartu?
How do you see the festival's influence on the town?**

Like it became clear from the situation with cleaning the Vabaduse bridge, that we, the festival are the only official link between the city and the street artists. Maybe us being well organised made it clear to the city that street artists don't just flounder around randomly, but they can be taken seriously. If we can organise two new murals in Tartu every year then this physically changes the urban space quite a bit.

What kinds of activities and events have also come along with the festival?

In the first year, 2010, there was a gathering for Estonian stencil artists and a symbolic competition in Polymer, where actually the winner was not important, but doing things together and getting to know each other was. In the second year Multistab made a mural on Võru street, at the same time a mural was made on the outside wall based on a shared vision² and also public voting for the best street art piece took place. On the third year a mural was made by Satinka in Genklubi³ and on the small observatory on Toomemägi and a photo competition took place⁴. This year we had a photo exhibition on Kaarli bridge and Papergirl's exhibition⁵ in the cellar of Tartu City Library that culminated with giving out the art works on bikes, plus French artist Kashink made a mural⁶ on Võru street and Estonian artists Okeiko⁷ and Hypnoboster⁸ near the stairs on Struve street⁹. In addition to reflecting on the events of the festival, Stencibility's Facebook page mediates what is going on in street art of Estonia all year round.

1. www.tartupostimees.ee/1244980/soodapritsimehed-valivad-kunsti

2. stencibility.blogspot.com/2011/05/hallid-harrad-uhistoo-ja.html

3. stencibility.blogspot.com/2013/02/ouroborse-tegemine.html

4. <http://stencibility.blogspot.com/2012/06/fotokonkursi-tulemused.html>

5. suurjalutuskaik.blogspot.com/2013/05/papergirlinaituse-finaal.html

6. suurjalutuskaik.blogspot.com/2013/05/stencibility.html

7. www.facebook.com/PlanetOkeiko

8. hypnoboster.com

9. suurjalutuskaik.blogspot.com/2013/05/stencibility_7.html



Kashink making a mural on Võru street



Exhibition on Kaarsild



View of the exhibition Papergirl

ADDITIONAL INFO:

stencibility.blogspot.com,
[facebook.com/Stencibility](https://www.facebook.com/Stencibility)
stencibility@gmail.com



STREET ART FESTIVAL SÕNUM SEINAL¹

10th to 14th of August 2013 in Pärnu

Interview with Keiu Telve

What are the conceptual triggers of Sõnum Seinal festival? On what type of experiences does the festival focus on? How do you see the role of street artists in designing urban space?

Everything actually started when I had the chance to research street art as part of my BA thesis. Discussions with street artists and getting to know their outlook on life made me think of the different options of how to spread the experience and knowledge to those who don't have the opportunity and time to get to know the field better. It is possible to enhance the urban space with street art and from my communication with street artists it has turned out that they also share this ambition. Messages, colours, exciting compositions could be part of our everyday urban image. Street art does not require complicated technical solutions or a special effort to visit galleries or art museums.

The festival *Sõnum Seinal* focuses on demonstrating different opportunities street art has to offer by bringing, in addition to stencil art and graffiti, the interpretations of Estonian art classics, sculpture, painting, etc. to the streets. We have not excluded any form of art and drafts of every style are welcome in the competition. The final look of the festival becomes clear after choosing concrete works.

What role is represented by Sõnum Seinal in designing Pärnu? How do you see the effect the festival has on the city?

While searching for places for street art works we have foremost looked into urban spaces that lost their initial purpose and have been left to decay for a

1. *Message on the wall* - eds.

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period. With colours and messages we give the old surface a new value, which in turn should widely demonstrate the opportunities for using street art. Works made during the festival will stay up in the city for a longer period and ideally will become part of Pärnu. The aim of the festival is to show alternatives in the processes of designing a city and to push how it is possible to change an urban environment by one initiative and maybe even make it better. On one side the festival can be regarded as an action showcasing street art, but deeper is the wish to make people notice the urban environment they are surrounded by and the opportunities for improvement.

What kind of activities and events accompany the festival? Based on what are the concrete objects used for street art chosen in an urban space?

The centre of the festival will be the Pühavaimu 17 house that collects three separate projects. It is an old factory building, that has been left to fall apart and during the festival a street art themed exhibition will take place on its premises, the windows of the house will be for the project "A window to art" and the end wall will be a canvas for another artist group. In addition to the house on Pühavaimu street there will be an art classics alley in Pärnu's Brackmann park, that will gather interpretations of works by Estonia artists, in Steiner's garden it is possible to look at sculptors in action. Jasper Zoova's net-sculptures will be located in Rannapark and in addition to that there will be a couple more walls in the city centre that will be given for artists to use. The choice is a result of the team's vision and availability of buildings in the city centre area of Pärnu.

ADDITIONAL INFO:

www.facebook.com/sonumseinal

www.parnufringe.ee

The artistic director of "Sõnum seinal": keiu.telve@gmail.com





Photo: suurjalutuskaik.blogspot.com

URBAN FESTIVAL UIT¹

15th to 17th of August 2013 in Tartu

Interview with Marie Kliiman and Karmen Otu

What are the conceptual triggers for organising the UIT urban festival? On what type of experiences does the festival focus on? Could the purpose of the festival be constructing something new in a familiar, mundane town?

The idea was formed while out visiting foreign festivals. When we started working on the idea in Tartu, it appeared that there were many people thinking along the same lines. One is Eclectica², a festival that also introduced itself as interdisciplinary, and it stopped last year, so for this reason there is a situation in Tartu right now, where there is no event that would bring together artists working in interdisciplinary and space specific fields.

Even though it is foremost an urban space festival for Tartu, UIT also has an international aspect bringing artists together that deal with new points of views, techniques and disciplines for Tartu and local artists. And also so that people would look at Tartu in a new and exiting way. For example the graduates of the prestigious Norwegian Theatre Academy will be taking part in the festival. They will be using a method of engaging the public into a play via a blog – amongst other things the audience can choose who will be kissed in a *telenovela* style play and what will be the ending. You can also meet artists who do body mime from the performing arts centre MOVEO in Barcelona. Their performances are short compositions in unexpected places.

One of the main aims of the festival is to guide the inhabitants and visitors away from the everyday paths and bring unexpected happenings and bizarre surprises into the regular day, to invite people to wander down seldom used paths. So, we can say that one of our aims is definitely the construction of something new in an already known, routine town.

1. *Stroll* - eds.

2. www.facebook.com/pages/Eclectica-Festival/127701160043?fref=ts

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What kind of activities accompany the festival? What is the interdisciplinary aspect of the festival about?

The main program gathers artists from the fields of performance-, sound-, and video art, you can see several location specific installations in the town, there will be various literature and street art based tours taking place. There will also be several space related interactive games and you can also find activities directed at children on the program. This time artists from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain and Norway will be taking part in the festival. It is important that through co-production the festival encourages the works of artists from different fields, and we plan to emphasise this even more in the upcoming years. Performance- and installation art are expressions through which artists from different fields can through collaboration create a new quality. We wanted to break out from the slightly capsulated artistic production that as a rule expects the director, actor and scenographer to work together. We should be braver in addressing creative people with different backgrounds.

What type of practices utilising the city are encouraged by the festival? What parts of the city do you wish to bring attention to?

We want to take the cultural life of Tartu now focused in the city centre to the suburbs and the so called Tartu periphery. So that the bedroom suburbs would not be only for sleeping and, in addition to the trucks, it would be wandering pedestrians and cyclists that would explore the industrial areas. It is a kind of a know-your-hometown project – you can find beauty and excitement everywhere – art does not only belong in the galleries, culture clubs and theatre houses, but also on the streets and amongst people. We want to bring colours and excitement into the urban space, making people take a look at what surrounds them with fresh eyes.

From the program of UIT you can find an installation by Eike Eplik in mysterious China town and a play “Real space“, that is made in collaboration between young choreographer Liis Vares, jewellery artist Anna-Maria Saare and performance artist Taavet Jansen in Vana-Peetri cemetery. There will be several other performance art projects in similar unorthodox places.

Does the festival approach the city as a background system of inter-human participation or is the city a research object in itself where the origins of different elements of the city, such as history, authorship, etc. will be brought out?

We rather see the city as a research object in itself, growing and developing, to some extent a self-regulatory organism, if I can say it like that. It is a romantic point of view, but despite that (or maybe because of that) also charming. The city, entailing a certain kind of collective anonymity, can do very cool things. We deal a little bit with researching into this anonymity and creating certain shifts in it. A good example of this is an action with Pikk street 86 house in Annelinn, where we managed to agree with the inhabitants from the block house, who without knowing each other (or us), on the creation of a light installation. There is something very beautiful and powerful in this.

**ADDITIONAL INFO:**

www.uit.ee

facebook.com/LinnafestivalUIT

uit@uit.ee



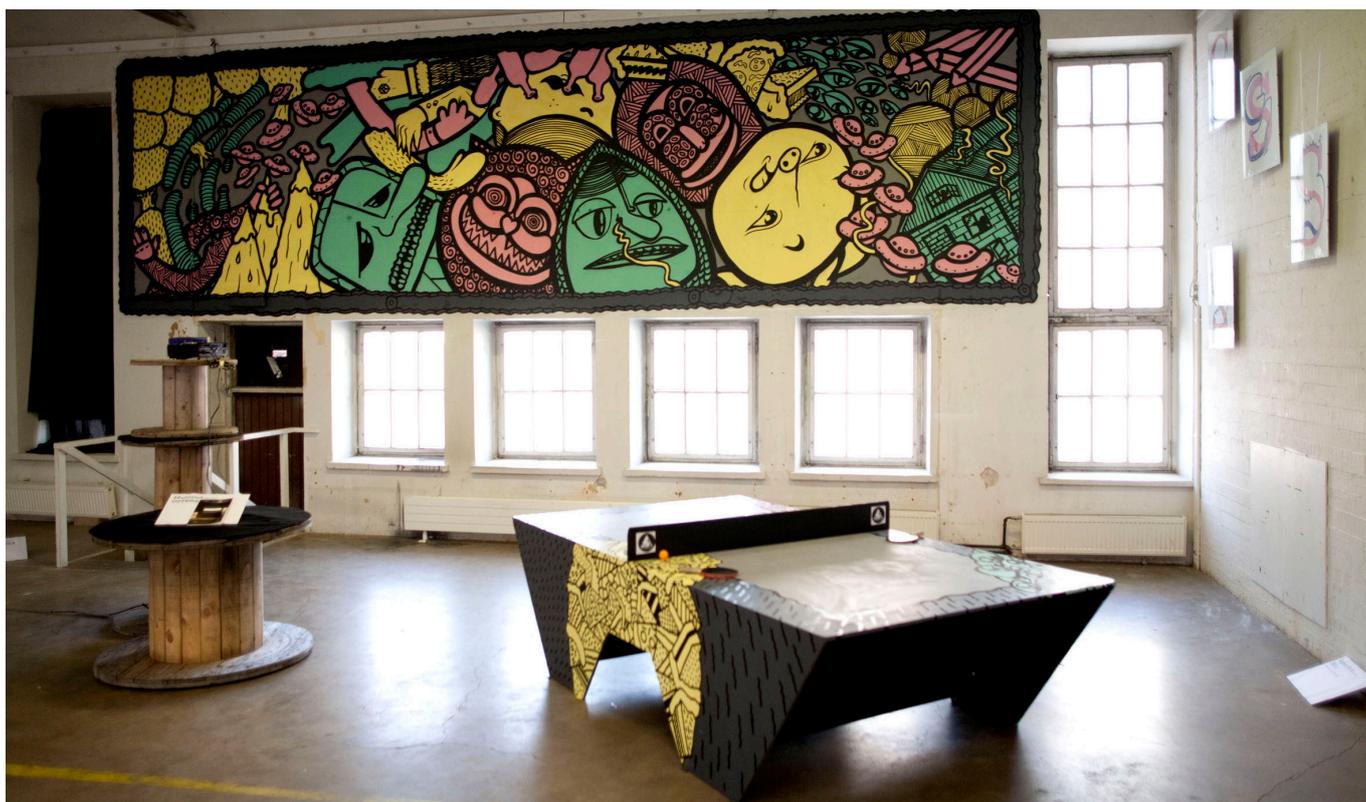


Photo: Lauri Täht

URBAN SPACE AND STREET ART FESTIVAL *PROSESSIFESTIVAALI*

12th of June 2013 in Helsinki, Finland

Interview with the organiser of the festival and the curator of the street art exhibition Viktor Gurov

What was the conceptual aim and main focus of Prosessifestivaali?

Prosessifestivaali focuses on side phenomena and processes taking place in the city and public space. This time more attention was given on street art. There were different workshops where the inhabitants could try different techniques used in street art, we showed short films, there were musical performances and lectures focused on street art. We opened street photo, comic and street art exhibitions. The idea was to open up and learn to understand the creative phenomena taking place in the city through different activities, discussions and observation practices.

How did your choice of artists taking part evolve?

While putting together the exhibition "*Prosessi*" I focused on artists who have a certain role in designing the urban space, who by being inspired by events taking place in their surroundings have started changing the urban space on their own initiative. The aim of the exhibition was through the works of the artists to show their creative process. The choice of the artists was based on their previous works. The organiser of the festival was the Estonian Institute in Finland, therefore it was in our interests to invite as many artists as possible from Estonia. An important condition for making the choice was how



Photos: Lauri Täht

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active they had been in recent years and their input into street culture.

Estonian artists taking part in the exhibition were **Multistab**¹, **Le 60 collective**², **Uku Sepsivart**³ and **MinaJaLydia**⁴. From **Finland Poe**, **Egs**, **Frank & Japhy**, **JussyTwoSeven**⁵ and **Pallo**. In addition to street artists from Helsinki there was **Nug** from Sweden, **Petro** from England, **2Shy**⁶ from France and **Flying-Fotress**⁷ from Germany.

How did you decide to present the street art works in the exhibition?

When it became clear that I can organise an exhibition in the Tiivistämo building, I divided the plan into 11 areas. I sent the concept description to the artists, the plan with the divided areas and photos of the space. The general idea was that when you enter the exhibition space you will first see works by artists who are influenced by common graffiti, thereafter artists who use an iconic language, for example in their characters and installations, and thereafter artists who represent the stencil technique. As several artists had collaborated previously then I put them close together in the exhibition. Many of the murals and installations were made especially for this exhibition and were finished when the exhibition was put up, this required quick decisions and good collaboration with the artists.

How do you see the role of street artists in urban design? It is a common belief that graffiti carries the subconscious of the inhabitants, but how do you see the relationship between city and street art.

The city influences people in different ways. A reflection of ideas and the thoughts of individuals in an urban space is a natural phenomenon. A street artist creates additional value with their work, but at the same time it can have the opposite effect, because a lot of things cannot be considered as art. It seems to me that only when the inhabitants are interested and able to understand street art is it possible to understand street art in a public space.

1. viro-instituutti.fi/prosessi/artists.html

2. le60collective.planet.ee

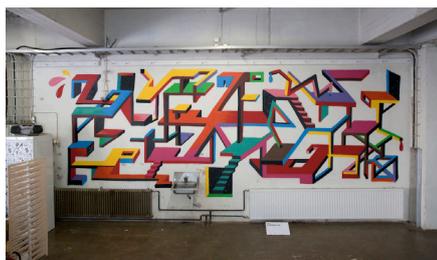
3. ukusep.blogspot.com

4. minajalydia.tumblr.com

5. jussitwoseven.com

6. 2shywashere.com

7. flying-fortress.blogspot.com



ADDITIONAL INFO:

www.viro-instituutti.fi/prosessi/

