

OLEG, NIKOLAI, LEILI, ALEXANDRE, LEA, VITA PICTURA, KAREL, GORŌ LANA, ELVE AND VLAD

Photos ANNIKA HAAS, text MARIA DERLÖŠ



***'This is the most beautiful place – just to look at the sunset
from the top of the tree! Oh, this is the most beautiful place on the planet!'***

Nikolai Avilov is a 72 year old inhabitant of Lasnamäe who was born in Siberia. He lives on a slate bank by Narva road on top of a mighty maple tree. For already 16 years Nikolai has lived in a hut built on top of the tree throughout the year, he cooks outside and keeps two sheepdogs under the tree. He protects himself against the cold with thick socks and a furry dog wool jumper.



'One very healthy advantage of Lasnamäe is its fresh air, as it's always windy here, even on the hottest summer days.'

Leili Mür moved to Lasnamäe in 1980 when her husband was given a flat and she started to work as the head architect for the district. Today Leili's tasks, as the architect of the district government of Lasnamäe, are developing the district's positions with regards to initiated detailed plans and building projects. She often also has to advise the residents and housing associations. She is most delighted by the continually improving maintenance and increasingly greener environment of Lasnamäe. Unfortunately the best results are slow in coming to life, as the slate surface is not good for plants to grow.



'It's like an illness, it's like keeping pigeons is in my blood, I couldn't imagine my life without that.'

On the edge of a wasteland in Tondiraba, right next to the construction site of the new ice rink, are two tiny buildings that at the first glance look like abandoned kiosks. Actually, these are pigeon houses built by Oleg from Lasnamäe. Already for 32 years Oleg has been collecting pigeons – starting from carrier pigeons to decorative pigeons. Oleg says, that once Lasnamäe was full of pigeon houses, but eventually keeping them became a hassle for many and by today this hobby has lost its popularity. In addition to the fact that Oleg has always loved Lasnamäe as a place to live, it's the best location for keeping pigeons. Oleg inherited the passion for pigeons from his dad, who also used to keep them.

Find out more about the pigeons and Oleg from Kadriann Kibus's documentary 'TUVID', 2012.



'My love for animals started when a friend of mine gave me a parrot as a gift hoping that taking care of it would motivate me to be more active and keep healthy. One parrot was followed by a second and a third and later came the chickens, roosters and other animals and birds.'

Between two giant landmarks, the police station and the gymnastics hall of Lasnamäe, next to the block houses, hides a small gable roof house with a picket fence. It's an office building, where Alexandre Alexeiev has, next to his business, been keeping chickens, rabbits, quails, pigeons, turkeys and a group of parrots for already five years.



'I have tried through shared activities to encourage the inhabitants of our building to value and take care of their neighbourhood.'

Lea Kiik moved to Lasnamäe from Mustamäe some 28 years ago. Lea has never regretted buying the flat, even though half of her friends tried to convince her not to move to Lasnamäe. From 1998, Lea has been an active member of two housing associations and since 2001 she has been responsible for 396 flats. She has taken part in communal workdays and other events organised by the city and encouraged other inhabitants to do the same. The housing association has done a lot to make the area around the houses greener and better maintained – they planted bushes, assimilated the yard between two houses and created a dashing playground, renewed the asphalt and the parking area.



'I write ELAST¹ and do that for various reasons. First of all of course for myself, so that 'my inner restlessness would not just disappear into thin air'².'

'Lasnamäe is my childhood fairy tale land. I've grown up in the end of Lasnamäe. Lasnamäe is my home. Graffiti is connected to Lasnamäe as it is to any other suburb. The deeper between the buildings and behind the corners you dive into, the thicker are the layers of paint around you. There is a strong sense of community here and a lot of love. There is a kind of yard mentality here: everything is shared with each other, both materially as well as mentally. The times when we used to fight over nationality have passed. The hip-hop scene in Lasnamäe is a close community, regardless of nationality we all stand for the same thing. We make music together, draw murals together, organise parties together, celebrate birthdays together and grieve for friends that have passed away. It's not just friendship. It's like our own little Zulu nation, L-style..:)'

1. ELAST is author's pseudonym, tag; 2. From DVPH's song 'Punased käed'.



'We are closely connected to Lasnamäe, as many of us have lived in Lasnamäe or grown up here together.'

'The space is not the only thing that unites us – starting from childhood we have shared a passion for cinematography. Finally, some of us decided to create our own company, so that we'd be able to do what we are really interested in and also make money with it. We decided to move our office to Lasnamäe, just to be closer to home and friends.' Vita Pictura is a well known video, after effects and production company. The core of the company is formed by the executive director Roman Pototski, camera men Maxim Kazimirevski and Aleksei Kulikov, designer and animator Oleg Rjumin and producer and PR director Vlad Kopõlkov.



'The main progress will happen when citizens take the responsibility for their everyday environment into their own hands.'

Vladislav Kopõlkov is a freelance journalist and a blogger from Lasnamäe. He is a young person with a wide range of interests who always tries to widen his horizons and not to stick with one idea. The main interest of Vlad is to write about the processes of socio-political integration taking place in Estonia and Russia, he believes that the developments taking place in Lasnamäe, where the Russian speaking population is bigger, will improve the living conditions of the minorities and create a basis for them to integrate into society.

You can read Vlad's blog from here: www.vkop.eu/est



'I don't know why people think that a chairwoman has nothing to do and she is a person you can be rude to. But I'm lucky, our house is full of nice people.'

Elve was surprised when she was elected to be the chairwoman of the housing association in 2006, but as there were so many supporters, adjusting to the new position went smoothly. Guided by Elve, the housing association continues to work on making the surroundings more beautiful. Elve is proud of what she has achieved so far – the large yard is bordered with a fence, in the centre of it is a colourful playground, which is surrounded by a beautiful hedge. Most of the inhabitants know how to value the hard work the housing association has done, but parking continues to be a problem.



'It's nice here in Lasnamäe. We have all gotten to know each other and started to collaborate in Lasnamäe. Our first recording session took place in a high-rise in this district. Until now, most of us live in Lasna, it can't get boring here.'

Gorõ Lana is the best known and most successful jazz-hop group from Lasnamäe. 'Rhymes, drums, horns and bass – this is what we are.' characterises Pavel, Gorõ Lana is a union: mc's and singers Lev (in black on the photo), Andrei, Igor and Pavel (in red on the photo), in addition to that beat master/dj Roman and sax player Ivan. In 2011 Gorõ Lana organised Lasnamäe Block Party – an open to all street party near Lindakivi cultural centre.

GORÕ LANA, a band active since 2002, just released their new album 'Mesi', it is available in music stores around Tallinn. Read more from here: www.facebook.com/gorqlana?fref=ts