ESTONIAN URBANISTS' REVIEW

 \rightarrow Former building of Estonian Academy of Arts on Tartu road 1 (2009). Photo: Jarmo Kauge.

↓ Winning entry for EKA's new building on Tartu road: Art Plaza by SEA+EFEKT (2008). Image: SEA+EFFEKT.





Winning entry for EKA's new new building on Kotzebue Street 1/Põhja Boulevard 7: *Linea* by KUU Architects (2014). Image: KUU.







The bus stop remembers: from 1919-2010, the only public university providing higher education in arts in Estonia stood here. Photo: Andra Aaloe.

LET US REMIND YOU

WHERE IS THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS?

ANDRA AALOE, KEITI KLJAVIN, editors of U

A decade of real estate deals by the Estonian Academy of Arts have led the school to a situation where its departments are scattered across the city, the historical plot where the academy was situated from 1917 to 2010 has been sold, and the state has yet to decide definitively whether it will support the construction of a new building.

For about ten years now, the Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA) – the only public university offering higher education in architecture, design, art and art culture - has been searching for an answer to their perpetual problem – a lack of space. In 2006, the suggested potential locations (including the Patarei sea fortress and the Suva hosiery factory) were discarded and a decision was made to build a completely new building on the academy's historic plot at Tartu Road 1. An international architecture competition was announced and the winning entry, Art Plaza, with its open plan and spiral atrium, was supposed to provide the school with the latest designs in learning environments and to 'ethereally tower above the old building'.1 EKA was so ready for its new future that it moved its departments out of the building in 2010 and dispersed them across the city, demolishing the old building. However, construction on the new building did not begin; obstacles that at first seemed small led to a situation where brakes were being put on the process on a state – and political – level, which, in turn, led to a loss of major funding schemes. In 2012, the new 'plaza' in the city centre was covered with gravel and the Europark banners were erected. Another parking lot in the middle of the city had been born.

In terms of space, everything is the same today – the departments of the academy are located at six different addresses across the city² and the plot at Tartu Road 1 is full of parked cars. However, the legal processes are actually underway: in the autumn of 2015, the Estonian Academy of Arts sold its historical plot in the city centre and the buildings at Nunne Street, and bought the premises of the Suva hosiery factory in Kalamaja, at Kotzebue Street 1/ Põhja Boulevard 7. An architectural design for the former industrial building has been found via a competition and the planning process is in its final stage. According to current plans, the new Rauaniidi (Iron Thread) building of the Estonian Academy of Arts is supposed to be completed by 2017.

Last August, a report was published by a working group led by Gunnar Okk, a prominent business figure, executive and board member of the Research and Development Council of the Government Office. According to this report, the local higher education and research activities need a thorough reform, including merging universities. This led to a postponement of a call for applications that was crucial for the Academy because it hoped to receive aid for financing the construction of its new building. Yet, last December, Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas reiterated³ the government's political will to complete the new building of the Academy of Arts at Kotzebue Street: 'Actually, we have already agreed in the government that this is an important site for us. I don't know if there are some specialists who are supposed to assess its eligibility and I hope I am not influencing them in some illegal way by voicing my support. But I hope I am not doing that when I say that I think the building of the Academy of Arts definitely deserves to be built.'

Great! But. Actually, we are again brandishing, and hopefully for the last time, our EKA-0 'newspaper'*, which marks the beginning of the transitional period of the school that is still underway and reminds us of the circumstances that were strange, yet utterly characteristic of our (still) transitional society, which led to the disappearance of the historical EKA building and why no imposing art plaza was erected in the city centre. (For instance, one can also recall in the paper how former Prime Minister Ansip wholeheartedly supported the completion of Art Plaza, but eventually it was not included in the strategy of the Ministry of Education).

The Academy of Arts is in the air – towering 'ethereally' somewhere between the old and the new building. Having been legally unbound from the Tartu Road plot in the city centre, it is now bound to the pink hosiery factory building in Kalamaja district. In reality, the Academy of Arts is renting a building on Estonia Boulevard, and agreements allow it to stay in the buildings at Nunne Street until 2017. After 6 years the Faculty of Fine Arts was made to move from the Estonian Knighthood House in Toompea Hill for the beginning of this year and is now operating on Lembitu street in Kesklinn. Apparently, EKA finding its true place in the world again is above all up to luck. Good luck, Academy!

1. Ants Juske. Kunstiakadeemia uus õppehoone kõrgub õhuliselt vana maja kohale. Eesti Päevaleht, 9.04.2008.

2. The current locations of EKA faculties: www.artun.ee/en/contacts/facilities-and-locations

3. An excerpt from the Riigikogu sitting of 15 December 2015, where Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas outlined the state of research and development activities and the government's policy in the field.



* EKA-O or EKA-Zero was a project where we outlined from the media frenzy the entire journey of EKA's new building, how it moved from a grand vision of the future to zero, an empty demolished field. The outlet of EKA-O was a 'newspaper' that consisted of newspaper headlines and article excerpts from the press about EKA's new building in the six years before 2012. Selected from media archives and chronologically aligned, it becomes quite clear why the school went from a building of its own to an empty lot back then. At first we distributed the newspaper during the coffee break of the Tallinn conference of the international urban activists and researchers network INURA in 2012, when we hijacked the parking lot. However, it seems the issue is still relevant today, so it is time to give this curated media archive a digital dimension by posting it on the U website.





City Government will fund the competition for a new Art Academy building

Academy's new building

THE ART

MILLION

- Delfs, 8 April 2008

"The A

new b

ethere above

Ecoi Părculei tă April 2008

The division of EU financing is creating rivalry between higher education institutions.

RT STUDENTS WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT FOR THE NEW BUILDING

THE QUARREL BETWEEN LINE
CAN END WITH BOTH LINE
HAVING NO HOUSE
— East Pliesalehs,
25 October 2008



Construction prices of the Estonian Academy of Arts' new building decreased in

STATE AUDIT OFFICE EXCESSIVE

LOANING

Academy of Arts!

The Academy of Arts is

going to be demolished.

Long live the new

CITY OFFICIALS BEGIN PLANNING REGULATIONS FOR THE NEW BUILDING

The site's community protest against the proposed planning

too big for the school

The construction of the new building can be funded by the contractor - Diffies 9 November 2009

The Academy of Arts will move temporarily to Estonia St. premises

Students of

Academy in

university

building

fight for better

The Art

Construction of EKA new building is being postponed due to replanning

The neighbours are against the light blocking high building of the Art Academy

An old lady is insisting upon relocating the new building

- Enti Piecalda, 26 February 2010

The Foundation of supports the Art 300,000 Kroons

LAST PARTY OF THE OLD - Publiker, THE ACADEMY OF ARTS WILL HAVE ITS LAST PARTY

HE EKA'S LAST PARTY BRO

Demolition of the old Academy of Arts is underway

DEMOLISHING OF THE ART ACADEMY COSTS 2.2 MILLION KROONS

THE OLD A

EKA HOPES TO VALIDATE THE NEW PLAN BEFORE AUTUMN

The Academy holds its welc assembly out: SCOOP USED IN DEMOLISHING THE ART ACADEMY FELL THROUGH THE CEILING

The Academy of Arts is in financial trouble

- Eosi Pisevalske, 18 November 2008

THE WALLS OF THE ACADEMY OF ART'S FALL AN AUCTION FOR THE EKA'S CASTOFFS IS HELD TODAY

THE WALLS OF THE ACADEM THE ACADEMY OF AF

19TH CENTURY FACADE FOUND DURING THE DEMOLISHING OF THE ACADEMY OF ARTS The EKA doe of the propos

— Majandus. 23 July 2010 A BLOCK FALLING OFF THE EKA BUILDING BROKE A BUS STOP PAVILLION

The city gov THE DEMOLITION OF THE ACADEMY OF ARTS WAS STARTED BY THE MUNICIPAL POLICE approved the of the 16 stor Academy of A PIECE OF THE EKA FELL ON THE STREET AGAIN

-Delties

police investigates the demolition of The Estonian Academy of Arts — Ölenleht, 80 Tune 2010

The city governme plan for The Acade EKA plan was as — Boti Porcelolo.

Strange creatures of light appeared on the site of the Academy of Arts

— Delfi.es, 20 April 2011

INSTEAD OF ACADEMY OF ARTS OOD LIGHT-MANKINS APPEARED ON THE PLOT

LIGHT INSTALLATIONS IN THE CENTRE OF TALLINN LIGHT INSTALLATIONS ARE

LIGHT INSTALLATIONS ON SHOW IN THE CENTRE OF TALLINN

Student of EKA: The castration of the architecture of the new Art Academy

Architect Karli Luik: Liberty Statue nr.2.

of Arts

INTERVIEW: AND MARTE OF ARCHITE

FOR IT

- Emi Părva 7 May 2011

Archi

exca

are to on th

of Ac of Ar

— Tallivsapos 24 May 2011

Evaluat



ACADEMY'S ONE KROONS' (€65000) ENTRY

won the competition as it was selected a trees of architectural concept, outer qual-The city contro of Tallina is dominated by lings. Amongst this chaes, the Art Flan the described form and suggests erecting feet shythm.

rt Academy's uilding will be ally towering the old site"



snoulan t be in one basket

— Dalfiera

EXPERTS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EXA CAN BE DANGEROUS TO THE

ALTHOUGH RECTOR SIGNE KIVI IS ON SUMMER VACATION, SHE IS ACTIVELY BUILDING IN HER IMAGINATION

Art's race ag

building perr

to get EU fur

time for the

- Tallismapostimossos 17 Tomory 2012

The Academy of Arts is hoping for the help of the Ministry of Education

TALLINN UNIVERSITY: EKA SH HAVE ITS OWN BUILDING

Ansip re-pledges

support for Art Academy

— Err, 20 January 2012

ACADEMY OF ARTS IS NOT PLANNING TO SELL THE SITE

ACADEMY OF ARTS FINALLY GETS ITS CONDITIONAL

ACADEMY OF ARTS TO MOVE AGAINST

EKA: USING FORCE TO PLACATE THE NEIGHBORS IS NOW UNAVOIDABLE

NO-FUNDING DECISION

ARCHITECTS SENT CONCERN LETTER ABOUT EKA NEW BUILDING TO PRIME MINISTER

ARTIST KIRKE KANGRO: WHERE IS THE HOME OF ESTONIAN ART?

UNION OF ESTONIAN ARTISTS: EKA'S NEW BUILDING HAS TO BE BUILT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

IRL PARTY: EKA SHOULD REDUC THE VOLUME OF THE BUILDING AND STAY IN CITY CENTRE

MINISTRY IS PREPARING EKA NEIGHBORS TO FORCE TO ACC THE CONDITIONS OFFERIND

STUDENTS: EKA NEIGHBOUR M REPRESENT SOMEONE ELSE'S INTERESTS

NEIGHBORS SEEK TO PROVE NEW ART ACADEMY BUILDING HAZARDOUS

EKA: WE ARE NOT SUPPORT-ING THE EXPROPRIATION OF THE NEIGHBORING PREMISES

ACADEMY OF ARTS FAILED AGAIN TO REACH CONSENSUS WITH THE

ART ACADEMY FAILS TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH NEIGHBOR

THE NEIGHBORS OF EKA MAY BE LEFT WITHOUT NATURAL LIGHT BY FORCE — Best Parcalols,

Meeting in the Ministry of Education: Minister Aaviksoo demands Signe Kivi withdraw her accusations about

Ministry's lack of interest for the continuation of EKA's existence

The alternatives to EKA academy building are stocking factory and Theatre House - Eest Phreside, 25 Tanuary 2012

— Postinues, 26 January 2012

Battle on the

EKA grounds:

owning real

estate in the

centre of the

city made an

old lady to

heroine

— Aripāct, IS February 2012

be a Kafka's

SOCIETY

ART OR

— Sirp. 26 Towary 2012

CULTURE

DOES NOT VALUE

EDUCATION,

MINISTER OF EDUCATION AAVIKSOO RECEIVED A CRANK LETTER AND LEFT THE CONFERENCE

SEE EKA-0 IN WHOLE ON www.urban.ee/xtra/zero.pdf

Arts to more

City of Tallin

gives green

for Estonian

Academy of

— Delfs, 17 July 2011

DETAIL PLAN OF THE ART AGADEMY PLOT IS READY TO BE VALIDATED RECTOR SIGNE KIVI N KAEVATS, STUDENT CTURE IN EKA. OT TOO BIG

tectural

ations

begin

e plot

ademy

ing Academy according to conomical tainability absurdity

emy of Arts loudy horizon

Besi Pisevalski, 18 June 2011

S

TALLINN'S CITY GOVERNMENT IS SENDING EKA'S PLAN TO THE COUNCIL

The Minister of Education is questioning the existenc the Academy of Arts

Signe Kivi left with nothing — Elspress.ee, 22 Tune 2011

Local businessman
Rein Kilk: At whose
expense the
Academy of Arts will
Of The PROT OF EA WAS

actually be built?

Local businessmen suggest relocating The Academy of

affordable premises The Academ - Postimers, 28 June 2011

— Člimicia, 25 August 2011

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION WOULD SUPPORT RELOCATING EKA

is additional investments to it.

There are raisons around the sum that the EEA and option in that some rail or compares would build the first time being the Anderson would build the first time being the Anderson and EEA.

See print the same to the EEA and the first time being the Anderson and EEA and the first time being the Anderson and EEA and the first time being the Anderson and EEA and the first time being the Anderson and EEA and the first time being the Anderson and EEA and

EXA ALIDIT WE ARE CAMBILE OF MANAGING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BULLDON — Even Translate, 1 through 2011

Our plane are relative to an abadis the Closure?

- Eon Ekspen, 8 September 2011

Gossip: No new building for the Academy of Arts?

BUSINESSMEN HAVE THE PRIOR RIGHTS TO PURCHASE EKA'S SITE Academy of Arts carries a burden of repayment of more than a 4.5 million euros

- Dolfi.or,

BUILDING PERMIT FOR THE NEW ACADEMY BUILDING

Ministry uses legal means to force neighbors of EKA to accept offered compensation and accept nuisances accompanying the construction

- Eori Parvalskt,

in fight for the building funds

Academy of Art | EKA HOPES TO START BUILDING

ACADEMY OF ARTS TO BEGIN BASEMENT-LEVEL CONSTRUCTION

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: EKA'S PLAN IS IRRESPONSIBLE

— Eesti Päevaleks, 15 February 2012

Academy Says that Started Works are Limited to Pit Retaining Wall

— Em, 16 February 2012

— Postinees, 20 February 2012

ARCHIMEDES IS STILL CONSIDERING OF DEPRIVING EKA OF PROMISED 12 **MILLION EUROS**

MINISTER WARNS ART ACADEMY TEETERING ON FINANCIAL BRINK

- Delji.ee I.Massk 2012

COURT REJECTED EXA NEIGH-BOR'S REQUEST FOR LEGAL PRO-TECTION

LARGE SCALE STATE-RUN CON-STRUCTION PROJECTS ARE GET-TING IN TROUBLE ONE BY ONE

Hundreds of

supporters of supporters of the Academy of Arts made a human chain around the EKA site

— Ern.ee, 21 February 2012

— Tallrosapostinus es, 16 February 2012

Art Academy New Building May Cost 15 Million € More

Art Academy must reach an agreement with 41 property

NEIGHBOURS OF THE ACADEMY OF ARTS WILL NOT SURRENDER

RECTOR SIGNE KIVE DEAR NEIGHBOR!

He Neumber 2011.

Benefit the Analysis will not be able to up the word with an plant. In high even will be both these ensures as the plant will be plant the ensure as the plant on the plant down of the plant of th

VENTUROUS RECTOR AN STURDY MINISTER — Fion Plinoskin, 20 June 2011 RECTOR SIGNE KIVI: FOR SOVEREIGN ART AGADEM

- Dolfi.ce, 25 Tune 2011

ON THE PLOT OF EKA VAST ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS HAVE STARTED