

Ruumi naasmine / The Revival of Space" by George Steinmann 1992-

Tallinn Art Hall, Estonia

Facts and Figures:

- September 28-30,1992 First visit by George Steinmann in Tallinn.
September 30,1992 Idea for "The Revival of Space", the entire renovation of the then hopelessly dilapidated Art Hall as sustainable Sculpture.
October 1,1992 Introduction of the idea the same day to Chief Curator Anu Liivak.
October 1,1992 First negotiations with the Swiss Government for financial support.
October 1992-
March 1994 Negotiations with the Swiss-and Estonian Governments.
Establishes a transdisciplinary network for the renovation process.
Partners are:
Anu Liivak, Chief Curator, Tallinn Art Hall
Studio Rein Laur, Interior Architect, Tallinn
Liivi Künnapu, Historian of Architecture, Tallinn
Deena Ltd and associated firms, Tallinn
April 1994 -
February 1995 Total Renovation of Tallinn Art Hall.
February 15,1995 Reopening of the Tallinn Art Hall.
Memorable opening with several hundred visitors.
February - March 1995 **Void: Exhibition of the empty spaces as sustainable Sculpture.**

The project was made possible with the financial support and co-operation from the

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Economic Affairs
The Swiss Federal Office of Culture.
The Government of the Estonian Republic
The Ministry of Culture and Education of the Estonian Republic
The Ministry of Finance of the Estonian Republic
The Tallinn Municipality
The Open Estonian Foundation
The Estonian National Foundation
The Estonian Art Foundation
Soros Foundation for Contemporary Art, Estonia.
Total Costs: CHF 455'000.- Contribution by the Swiss Government
CHF 415.000.- Rest by Estonian resources.

Sustainable result of the renovation 1995 -

National and international exhibitions, for example: Tony Cragg, Anthony Gormley, Günther Ueker, Contemporary French – Russian and Polish Art.

Exhibitions of Ruumi naasmine by George Steinmann (Drawings, sketches, architectural studies, correspondences, photographs)

- 2007 Helmhaus Zürich (Curated by Andreas Fiedler)
- 2003 Sydney Art Space, (Curated by Imant Tillers und Marketta Seppälä)
- 2001 Pori Art Museum, Pori (Curated by Marketta Seppälä)
- 1996 Centre for Contemporary Art and Architecture, Stockholm (Curated by Jan Aman)

Printmedia:

- Call & Response" George Steinmann in Dialogue Kunstmuseum Thun 2014
Text by Anu Liivak)

- Kunst ohne Werk. Kunstforum International Bd. 152 (Published by Paolo Bianchi)
- "Art and Sustainability" Publication São Paulo Biennale (Published by Caderno Videobrasil)
- Freedom of Choice, Estonian Art of the 1990's (Published by Anu Liivak)
- Reviews in approximately 30 Culture - and Artmagazines, worldwide.

TV/ Radio:

- Estonian State Television „Ruumi naasmine“ 1995
- YLE Finnish State Radio „The Revival of Space“, first broadcasted 1998
- Swiss Radio DRS1 „Ein Berner rettet die Kunsthalle Tallinn“
First broadcasted Mai 8th, 2007 (Producer: Luzia Stettler)

1996

George Steinmann receives for "Ruumi naasmine" the "Kristijan Raud Award for Art" as first foreign Artist.

Lectures by George Steinmann on „Ruumi naasmine“:

- 2016 Ruumi naasmine. Tallinn Art Hall
- 2012 Kyrgyz National Museum of fine Arts Bishkek, Kyrgistan
Lecture: The artist as an initiator of transdisciplinary processes encompassing aesthetic, social, historical and sustainable dimensions.
- 2009 Lucerne University of Applied Sciences, Arts and Architecture.
Lecture „Ästhetik der Nachhaltigkeit“. On invitation by Hanspeter Bürgi.
- 2008 University Lüneburg
Lecture „Kunst als Gestaltungswissen im Horizont der Nachhaltigkeit“.
In conjunction with „Sustainable University“ at University of Lüneburg.
- 2008 Deutscher Werkbund, Ernst May Society Frankfurt /Main.
Lecture „Von wachsenden Skulpturen“. On invitation by Heike Strelow.
- 2007 ETH Zürich, Modul Art and Science.
Lecture „Art as research“. On invitation by Prof. Peter Ammann
- 2006 University of Falmouth, Cornwall GB.
Lecture „Artful Ecologies“. On invitation by Prof. Dr. Daro Montag.
- 2005 Kunsthalle FRI-Art Freiburg
Lecture „The Revival of Space“, On invitation by Sarah Zürcher.
- 2004 Kunstmuseum Bern
Lecture „Die Rückkehr des Raumes“. On invitation by Nicole Schweizer.
- 2003 Akademie der Künste zu Berlin
Lecture in conjunction with the conference „Art-Culture-Sustainability“
On invitation by Dr. Hildegard Kurt.
- 2003 Krannert Art Museum, Illinois
Lecture „Metalog“. On invitation by Dr. Josef Helfenstein.
- 2003 Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie ZKM Karlsruhe
Lecture „Metalog“. On invitation by Prof. Dr. Hans Diebner.
- 2003 Art Institute of Chicago
Lecture „On growing sculptures“. On invitation by Prof. Drea Howenstein.

- 2003 Universität Bern, Institut für Kunstgeschichte
Lecture „Ruumi naasmine“. On invitation by Prof. Dr. Peter J.Schneemann.

The installation “Ruumi naasmine/ The Revival of Space” (documents drawings, maps, photographs and correspondences of the entire workprocess are in the collection of Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland.

Comments and critics on "The Revival of Space" Tallinn Art Hall, Tallinn, Estonia
(Selection)

„When, after his first 24-hours long visit to Tallinn in the fall of 1992, George Steinmann told me, that if we agreed to it, he would like to create a sustainable mind-sculpture, which would mean the entire renovation of the (then hopelessly dilapidated) exhibition halls of the Art Hall, I politely replied that I thought the idea to be a great one, yet, proceeded to stow it away in my conscience with so many other unrealisable bright ideas. However, George Steinmann’s enormous creative energy and dedication to his positive vision made this incredible project possible.

Today, five years have passed since the successful completion of the "Revival of Space", but its actuality is not diminished. The qualities that make the "Revival of Space" unique and valuable, are the holism of the whole conception and the endurance of its outcome.

This is in contrast to many temporary art-works, which are becoming increasingly expensive and ambitious and whose message reaches only a fraction of the whole society to whom it is directed and upon whose monetary resources it relies.

If it were possible, I would work solely upon such projects, those perpetuating enduring, positive values. Within George Steinmann's sensitively ethical and aesthetically unifying holistic creative conception, I see a positive model for future art.”

Anu Liivak, Chief Curator, Tallinn Art Hall_April 17, 2000

Beauty as a conscious aim

The dissolution of the author’s own signature into the whole, the definite secondariness of expression and medium, makes one think of the ancient Chinese legend of the Master of Archery who no longer needed bow nor arrows and who finally did not even remember the name of his instrument.

Architekt Mikko Heikkinen on „The Revival of Space“ Kunsthalle Tallinn in Architecture Magazin Arkkitehti, Finnland 1994.

"This collaborative project is wonderful and I congratulate you on it's completion and success. Would that many more artists might make this kind of cultural effort!"

Jean-Edith Weiffenbach Director of Exhibitions, San Francisco Art Institute

"Today, an artist who chooses not to create a clearly individual body of work but rather wishes to emphasize the various interrelationships of communication with the aim of strengthening the awareness of space and environment, will not only express creativity but also a new way of thinking which - simply stated - sees art in its entire responsibility."

Fred Zaugg, critic, "Der Bund", 21.3.1995

"I remember thinking, when I attended the opening of your Tallinn project, that it will probably be difficult for the Art Hall to come up with a more interesting exhibition than this display of the revived interior itself."

Anders Kreuger, Director of the Nordic Arts Institute

"George Steinmann has made the Renovation of Tallinn Art Hall a sample for art of the 21st century." *Timo Valjakka, Director of Kunsthalle Helsinki, Finland*

"An inventive mind might manage to create more from less."

Prof. Markku Komonen, Architect, Helsinki

"George Steinmann has questioned himself about the role of an artist in the modern world. In the present context, with the significance of art and artists seemingly decreased, it is quite a serious question. When George Steinmann asked himself about the possible role of an artist, he came to a fantastic idea in Tallinn: to organize the renovation of the Art Hall as a performance. But what is even more fantastic is that he succeeded in carrying his idea out."

Heie Treier, Hommikuleht, Tallinn 18.2.1995

"It is difficult to imagine what would have become of the Art Hall Tallinn if Swiss artist George Steinmann had not arrived in Tallinn for a short 24-hour visit in the fall of 1992. The Estonian community owes a lot to this project. For practically the first time ever information from Estonia reached a very elite international art level making them aware of an extremely progressive idea."

Book Freedom of Choice, Estonian Art of the 1990's, published 1999

"George Steinmann's art functions to serve cognition. It looks for stoppages and strives to restore them to a steady state. Most famously and long lastingly so far, this has been done in the Tallinn Art Hall. Its building, erected in 1934 in the "Neues Bauen" tradition, but badly bombed in 1945, was in urgent need of renovation. George Steinmann took this renovation upon himself.

Refurbishing the building in the subsequent period took the place of work on objects, the act of restoration became an exemplary intervention, intended to sharpen and change perceptions of the situation. Many contributions by artists have concerned themselves with interdisciplinary approaches for some time now - whether illustratively by representation, or suggesting models by imitation, or ironically by creating analogies. The specific processual character of his work, his active contribution to making social paralysis fluid again, is not the least of the factors that gives a profile to George Steinmann's position among them. "

Dr. Gerhard Mack, art critic, NZZ, Zurich 2002