

Artists:

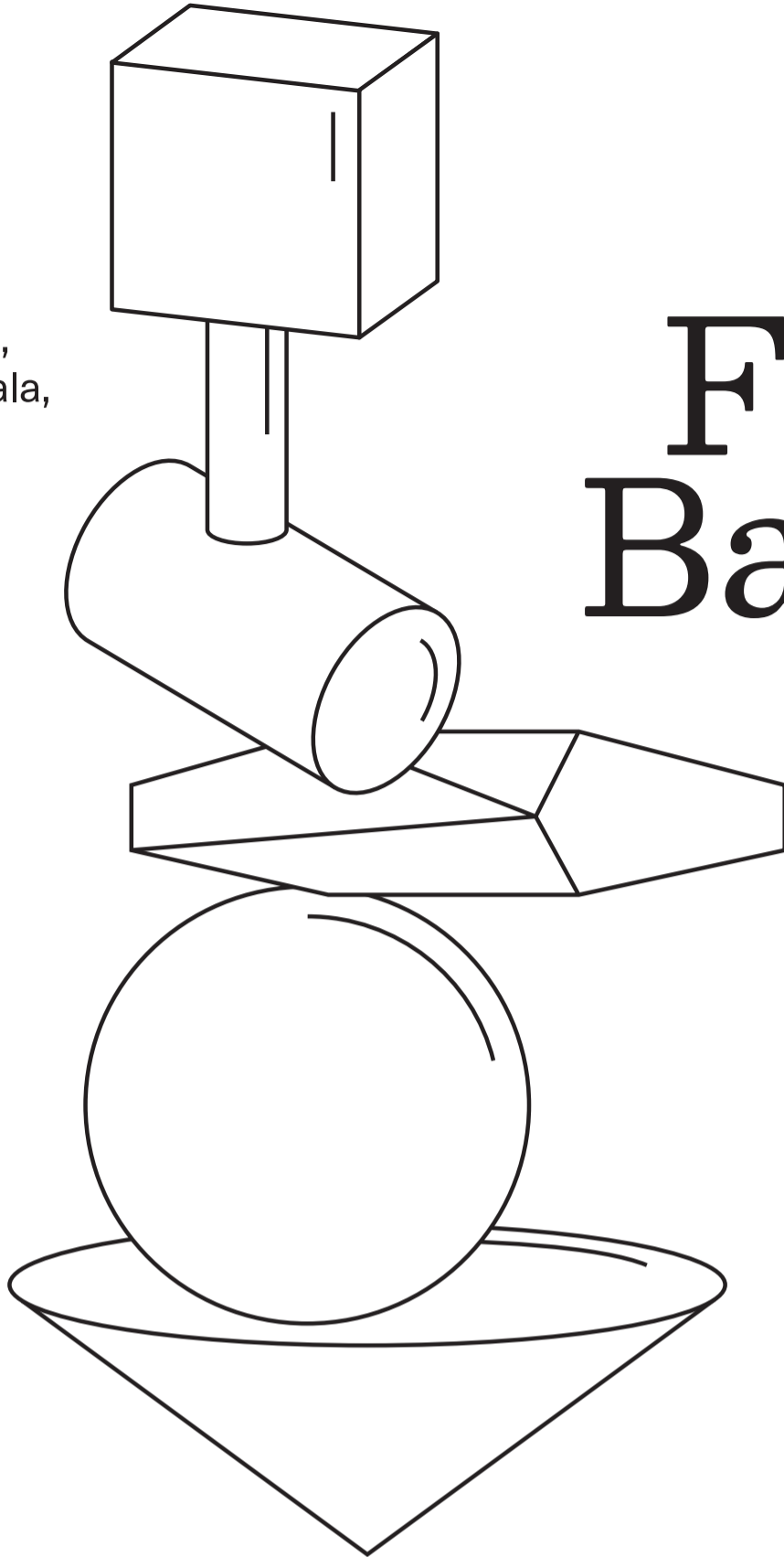
Hedi Jaansoo, Nokukhanya Langa, Anna Mari Liivrand, Emma Luukkala, Mari Männa, Laurynas Skeisgiela, Mark Soosaar

Curator:

Kaisa Maasik

10.11. –
16.12.
2023

Fragile Balance



Exhibition hours
Wed-Fri 16.00–19.00
Sat 13.00–17.00

Graphic design:
Laura Grigaliūnaitė

Technician:
Matas Šatūnas

Assistant:
Mia Tohver

ANNA MARI LIIVRAND (EE, 1993) is an installation artist who also works with drawing. She graduated from the Sculpture and Installation department (BA, 2016) and Contemporary Art (MA, 2022) at the Estonian Academy of Arts. In recent years, Liivrand has focused on everyday rituals, ornaments and decoration. She often examines them from the point of self-creation and how they act as anchor points in an ever-changing world filled with uncertainties and anxieties. Her works are combinations of unusual everyday materials (i.e. pieces of her skin, vitamins etc.) and traditional craft practices, which come together in elegant spatial installations. annamariivrand.ee

EMMA LUUKKALA (FI, 1992) is a visual artist living and working in Helsinki. She has graduated (BFA in 2018 and MFA in 2020) from the Academy of Fine Arts of the University of the Arts Helsinki. Although

Luukkala's main medium is painting, her practice frequently expands to sculptural work. For the last few years, Luukkala's main subject has been the domestic environment and everyday life. She has examined details like textile patterns, furniture legs and belongings buried between the sofa cushions. For Luukkala it is characteristic to work in series, where a group of works together create a story or a scene. emmaluukkala.com

HEDI JAANSOO (EE, 1989) is an artist and photographer based in Tallinn. She graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in Contemporary Art (MA, 2018) and Photography (BA, 2014). Jaansoo works with fragilities, weaknesses, tensions and beauties, among other – mainly small – things. Her recent work combines photography, flowers, textiles and vases, non-functional jewellery, unfinished thoughts and uncertain decisions, conflicting desires,

(be)longing and acceptance. She is inspired by grandmothers and tries not to harm the environment too much. hedijaansoo.com

KAISA MAASIK (EE, 1994) is an artist and curator. She has graduated from the Master of Contemporary Art programme (MA, 2021) and the Photography department (BA, 2017) at the Estonian Academy of Arts. In 2019, she was an exchange student in the Praxis curatorial Master's Programme at the University of the Arts Helsinki. Maasik values collaborative practices, often (co-)creating projects that have a spatial outlet. She is inspired from the everyday, mostly working with (artists who use) found material; collected objects, ideas, footage and motifs. She focuses on the feelings and experiences of people whose paths she crosses, trying to introduce them through objects and memories. kaisamaasik.com

LAURYNAS SKEISGIELA (LT, 1994) is an artist, curator, photographer and filmmaker. He studied at the Vilnius Academy of Arts' Photography and Media Art Department, 2013–2017, and at the Stuttgart Academy of Fine Arts. Alongside Milda Dainovskytė, he is part of a curatorial duo and an alternative urban cultural body that encourages us to question, remember and reimagine local identities. While cinema and curating are a place of collaboration, his individual artistic practice most often takes the form of video and light installations, currently with the theme of mimicry in the fields of nature and culture. As to quote John Cage, his aim is "creating work that is less like an object and more like the weather".

MARI MÄNNA (EE, 1991) is a sculptor and installation artist based in Tallinn. She graduated from Tartu Art College in Photography (BA, 2017) and the Estonian Academy of Arts in Contemporary Art (MA, 2020). Her sculptural practice is driven by an urge to explore

diverse materials and create tangible forms as a daily ritual. Embracing trial and error, she maintains a dynamic progression within her practice. Humor functions as a vital coping mechanism for her, enabling the redirection of socially unconventional impulses. Männa consistently engages with current social topics in her artwork, while her fascination lies in unraveling the intricacies of the human condition during moments of crisis. mannamari.com

MARK SOOSAAR (EE, 1946) is an Estonian film director, cinematographer and screenwriter. Soosaar graduated from the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography in 1970 as a cinematographer. In 1992 he moved to Pärnu and founded his own film studio, Weiko Saawa Film. His countless documentary films often look at their wide range of subjects through an anthropological viewpoint. Soosaar became a conscious auteur, only making films based on his

own ideas. He finds his own hero subject, and shoots the film without assistance. He never uses outside interviewers. If needed, he will deliberately create a situation to allow his subjects to reveal their inner life, or to further develop his ideas of the film.

NOKUKHANYA LANGA (USA/NE, 1991) is an artist based in Rotterdam. She has graduated from the Moravian University in Studio Art (BA, 2013) and the Frank Mohr Institute in Painting (MA, 2018). Her art practice reconciles the pluralities of her personal story, mixed cultural heritage, and lived experiences; all coming together to form part of her large-scale paintings, filled with vibrant imagery in a stream-of-consciousness style. Unlearning the rigidity of her training in traditional oil painting, she plays with abstract motifs; colour, swirls, and other fluid shapes, working in unison with more recognisable motifs like text and signs. nokukhanyalanga.com

LIAA activities supported by



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE



Embassy of Finland
Vilnius



EMBASSY OF ESTONIA
IN VILNIUS



NORDIC-BALTIC
MOBILITY
PROGRAMME
Culture

Atletika
Vitebsko 21, Vilnius
atletikaobjects.lt

1. NOKUKHANYA LANGA
Closer to God (2023)
Mixed media and oil on canvas
120 × 110 cm

2. NOKUKHANYA LANGA
Nerve Center (2023)
Mixed media and oil on canvas
120 × 110 cm

Closer to God (2023) and *Nerve Center* (2023) are a short point of departure from Nokukhanya Langa's house series, which dealt with physical spaces and the memories around them. These paintings look at how memories take up a specific form in someone's mind. As time passes, things become more illegible and associate less to anything in particular. Instead of showing mental images of past events, Nokukhanya uses signifiers. For her, it is important for the paintings to be open for interpretation and leaving space for the viewer to focus on the underdrawings and gestures in the work. The overall sense of uneasiness is a feeling she tries to instill with them.

3. LAURYNAS SKEISGIELA
Small Town Murder Songs, excerpt (2020)
Video projection, 2 C-stand light stands,
6 min 40 s

During several years of work, Laurynas Skeisgiela collected various temporal situations in the surroundings of contemporary art events and their organizers. Based on this archive of the gathered material, *Small Town Murder Songs* (2020) was constructed as a slow journey down the storages, lifts, and corridors, listening to the stories that normally would not reflect back from the surfaces. The video is a documentation of the building process of Pylonia by Pablo Wendel.

4. MARI MÄNNA
All Eggs In One Basket (2023)
Jesmonite, fiberglass, polyurethane foam, seashells, shells of oysters
95 × 84 × 35 cm

The work *All Eggs In One Basket* (2023) explores the processes of sedimentation and memory, in which meanings gradually accumulate and crystallize. Much like the hard, calcareous shell of an oyster provides a physical barrier against predators and environmental threats, safeguarding its soft and vulnerable flesh, the shield of the sculpture serves as a guardian for the fragile essence within. Hidden within the core of this shield, one can discover egg-like objects or perhaps precious rocks. Beneath the shell, the observant eye of the visitor could catch a glimpse of the concealed sphere. These petrified objects reveal various narratives that unfold across different temporal contexts, shaped by the interpreter's unique perspective.

5. MARI MÄNNA
Rock (2019)
Papier mache, aluminium net, latex
78 × 44 × 50 cm

Similarly to *All Eggs In One Basket* (2023), the work *Rock* (2019) explores time through layering and sedimentation. The artist was captivated by the deposition process, which involves stacking layers of papier-mâché on top of each other and watching as the final result gradually solidifies over time. Initially, the material is soft and pliable under the hand, but as it dries, it transforms into a hardness

resembling wood. During creating this sculpture, the artist had just lost a close relative. The transformation of material and transformation of a body's physical state had a strong connection for her.

6. ANNA MARI LIIVRAND
Passing Through, Leaving Traces (2023)
Installation, steel
Dimensions variable

7. ANNA MARI LIIVRAND
Carcass for Setting Adornments I & II (2023)
Veneer, steel, black and golden paint, varnish, glass, graphite, colored pencil on paper
Dimensions variable

8. ANNA MARI LIIVRAND
Clotting Moments (2021)
Pronze, steel, coffee, milk, candies,
84 × 25 cm

9. ANNA MARI LIIVRAND
Prick of a Daisy (2021)
Installation, steel

Anna Mari Liivrand leaves an impression of tenderness balancing solid materials with delicate and unstable materials like fur, skin and fluids. The different works gaze at the ever-changing world filled with uncertainties and anxieties. While the thorny vines of the work *Prick of a Daisy* (2021) arose from the anxiety created by the changing nature of the everyday, *Clotting Moments* (2021) connected this nervousness with a lack of everyday rituals that help to guide us through the day. Visitors are able to leave an offering at the altar, resembling a bronze candy box. The works *Carcasses for Setting Adornments* (2023) are reminiscent of ruins with layers of past in the form of ornaments and wallpaper-like drawings. Hanging from the ceiling are plant-like sculptures titled *Passing Through, Leaving Traces* (2023) where fragments of a person can be found – as if someone has walked through a park leaving behind bits and pieces of themselves. Together the exhibited artworks form almost like a garden where we are faced with the delicate notions of uncertainty, loss and ritual.

10. HEDI JAANSOO
Nails and Punctures and a Bit of Support (2023)
Pigment print on aluminium composite, metal frame
120 × 80 cm

Nails, puncture holes and a pink drawn bow. A rock from gravel glued onto the wall. A somewhat tired branch of a butterfly bush resting on a chair, leaning against a wall. During the process of creating the work, Hedi Jaansoo read books by several feminist writers dealing with physical and mental struggles and disorders, support and care, positions of power and abusing them, enabling abuse, solidarity, solitude and caring, embarrassment and help, balancing motherhood and career. The images capture the ambivalent feeling of a delicate looking plant needing support, even though the reality is quite the opposite – in several countries it is considered an invasive species that can be a threat to local ecosystems and native species. It thrives on stony, sun-exposed and rough areas. Together the exhibited artworks form a still life where we are faced with the delicate and uncertain nature of past, present and future.

11. MARK SOOSAAR
The Dugout Canoe (1986)
Video, sound, 15 min 23

The film by Mark Soosaar is shot in Soomaa, a region in Estonia which is said to have five seasons, the fifth overflows the surrounding meadows and forests each springtime. The landscape is transformed into a giant, shallow lake before water soaks back into the ground and the rivers return to their original routes. Because of this phenomenon, locals have become accustomed to using hand-made skiffs made out of a single tree called "haabjas" during this period. One of the former masters of making these specific skiffs, the sculptor Jaan Rahumaa (1929–1999) is the protagonist of the film. The film takes us onto a voyage during which Jaan skillfully makes a skiff. The director built the storyline on concentrating on three objects being made using the same tree: a whistle, a beehive and a skiff.

12. EMMA LUUKKALA
Picnic 1–3 (2023)
Oil on linen
93 × 83 cm

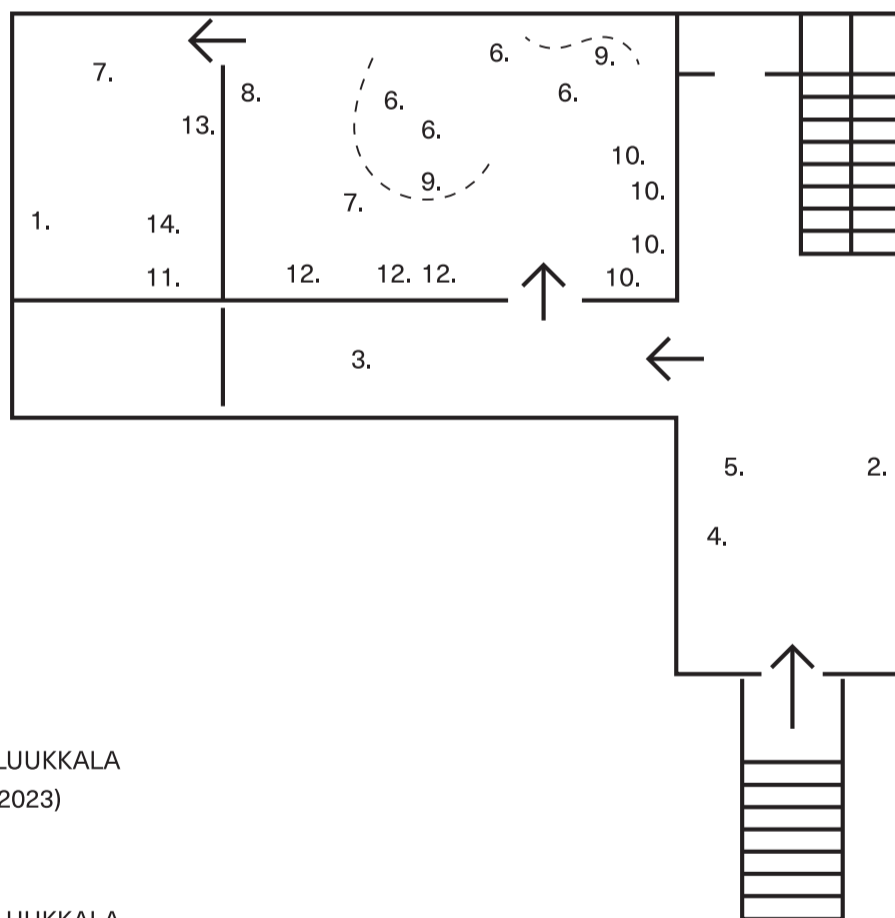
13. EMMA LUUKKALA
Backpack Treasures (2023)
Oil on linen
30,5 × 25,5 cm

14. EMMA LUUKKALA
A Short Break (2023)
Oak, steel, household items, epoxy, alkyd
120 × 43 × 32 cm
2023

The works presented in Atletika continue the themes Luukkala started in her solo exhibition earlier this year, in which she switched the subject of home environment to outdoor scenes. Luukkala is looking for small, seemingly

The exhibition *Fragile Balance* focuses on the relation between I can and I cannot - the collision of the frail and the sturdy. Something that artists deal with daily, but voice ever so less. Each of the participating artists has created a practice out of their relationship to the material. The chosen matter becomes an extension of the creator themselves and their capabilities. The struggle is kept in motion even after the work has been put out on display.

Seemingly effortless, practicing fragility demands the same conviction. Balancing between two states - gentleness on the one side, being tough on the other – is key as it affects the final form and outcome. The fragility of the material and the process connects to the person and their vulnerability and invincibility as a human.



ordinary moments where life seems to become denser: for example tearing off a plaster, waiting for guests at a picnic party or writing a message on a park bench. In a gentle and playful way, Luukkala wants to depict how embarrassing dirt, abrasions and mosquito bites always decorate life even in the most festive moments. The painted imagery refers to the materials and objects around us, while the tangible blobs of thick paint lead us to look at the painting itself as a pile of matter.