



Pavilion of Estonia
at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

The Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia, is proud to present the Estonian Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition — La Biennale di Venezia, with a new project from Estonian artist Kris Lemsalu, Birth V

11 May – 24 November 2017

OPENING: 10th of May, 2019

PRE-OPENING: 8 – 10 May

The Estonian Pavilion

c/o Legno & Legno, Giudecca 211, 30133 Venezia

www.birthv.com

www.krislemsalu.com

www.cca.ee

Our wet myths and sticky fairytales were never just stories. And in the work of Kris Lemsalu, fantasy tentacles into reality until art and life majestically snarl into a singularly glorious mess. And not just dreams and fictions tangle in her work but also the lives of others: friends and musicians, writers and curators, workers and strangers and all together, catalyzed by the artist, we make something more meaningful than anyone could alone.

For the Estonian Pavilion, Lemsalu gathers all these sculptural phantasms and disparate collaborators into an installation that gives birth to a world of shamanic force, visionary weirdness, and collective revival. While Lemsalu in earlier works engaged with the topic of death, for this exhibition, “Birth V”, she’s more concerned with life - although death wears a carnival mask in Venice anyway.

A punk pagan trickster feminist sci-fi shaman, Kris Lemsalu gathers together both collected and crafted objects into totemic sculptures and hallucinatory environments, animated with performances by the artist and her coterie of collaborators. Wrought with humor and pathos, entrancing and repulsive, her work is a shuddering laugh squeezed with bravery from vulnerability, broken but jubilant, mournful without forgetting its heart in solemnity.

In the world summoned by Lemsalu, song drapes polychrome porcelain, bones dance and fountains seethe, and the line between action and object blurs; bodies easily act as things and vice versa. For the Biennale Arte 2019, Lemsalu channels the city of Venice as a living creature, perpetually decadent and yet regularly revived.

Kris Lemsalu was born in 1985 in Tallinn, Estonia, and lives and works between Vienna and Tallinn. She creates mixed-media sculptures, installations and performances with unexpected materials. Lemsalu's pieces evoke the bestial side of human beings and civilizations and are often underscored by feminist themes. Lemsalu has shown at Goldsmiths' CCA (2018), Secession Vienna (2018), Tramway Glasgow (2019), as part of Performa 17 (2017), DRAF performance night (2017), Bunshitu Gallery, Tokyo (2015), Ferdinand Bauman Gallery, Prague (2015) and is represented by Koppe Astner, Glasgow and Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn.

Lemsalu invited a team of writers, artists, curators and friends to collaborate with her on the exhibition, among others Andrew Berardini (1982, Los Angeles) a writer of quasi-essayistic prose poems about permeability between fiction and reality; Sarah Lucas (1962, London) – artist, friend and a mentor of Kris Lemsalu; Irene Campolmi (1987, Copenhagen) whose curatorial research focuses on various performative endeavours that think through postcolonial, queer and feminist theories, and Tamara Luuk (1952, Tallinn) who has been Kris' companion in art and life for a long time, currently working as the contemporary art curator at Tallinn Art Hall.

Participating since 1997, this is the twelfth time Estonia is exhibiting at the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. The Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia, is the official representative of the Estonian exposition and supported by Estonian Ministry of Culture.

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