

BECCA ABBE (US)

Untitled, 2023 (design for interpretative materials)

Vinyl, paper, paint, dimensions variable

Combining the role of coder and designer, Becca Abbe uses tropes and marketing materials usually intended to contextualize artworks as her tools. Her approach to the design of rtru.org, for instance, reveals the seams and mechanisms of the project while laying bare its coding methodologies. By bringing the inner workings of her indexically-designed, web-based framework to the fore via a grid-based guiding structure, Abbe participates in the same thematic arc explored by exhibition contributors. Designated “windows” for curatorial notes on the artworks carry the same hard-edged aesthetic as her design work, evincing an “under the hood” transparency and visibility crucial to the online exhibition.

BECCA ABBE (b. 1988) is a graphic designer and coder living in New York. Her professional work under the name Cdxs L.L.C. includes projects with Columbia University GSAPP, Buchhandlung Walther König, Laurie Simmons, Maharam, Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and others. A typographic-centric mindset links her output through varied themes and formats. Becca’s thinking on the material mass of the internet has been published in the 2020 *Are.na Annual* and in her book *Jitters* (Gauss PDF, 2021).

UĢIS ALBIŅŠ (LV)

Online store, 2023

Aluminium, copper, found fragment of wood with hole in the middle together with staples and newspaper scraps

60cm x 18cm x 7cm

Counter-Stopper, 2023

Aluminium, matches wrapped in tape (unorganised objects made by a store employee), tpu

20cm x 14cm x 10cm

Roundabout, 2023

Aluminium, found broken key, found anodized aluminium ring

18cm x 8cm x 4cm

Combining influential technologies, artisanal handwork, and an interest in materiality, Albiņš's sculptural objects forge a connection between traditional artistry and contemporary engineering. Inspired by the aesthetics found in domestic and industrial environments, his constructions investigate the principle that "form follows function" while critically evaluating deconstructivist architecture from an abstract perspective. Transforming that principle into a more sustainable variation – "form follows consciousness" – Albiņš invites us to look at design not only as an environment of objects, but also as a model of relationships between people and objects in space. The works displayed in the exhibition were produced as "cuts" made from original 3D prints, or milled with the author's own-constructed CNC machine. Albiņš makes aluminum casting molds for each plastic or aluminum sculpture. These cast forms are combined together with found objects from different locations and sources. By deconstructing these self-made objects, Albiņš frees them from their original forms, extracting new compositions and combining their materials and symbolic meanings.

UĢIS ALBIŅŠ (b. 1988, lives and works in Riga) received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Visual Communication Department of the Latvian Academy of Arts. Since 2016, he has actively participated in contemporary art exhibitions and events, including *Salt on my Asphalt 2.2* at gallery 427, Riga, Latvia, 2022; *Rumolda Parks*, Tu Jau Zini Kur, Riga, Latvia, 2021; *Benetitāles Ziedēšana*, Low Gallery, Riga, Latvia, 2019; *Compromise*, Tu Jau Zini Kur, Riga, Latvia, 2020. And in group exhibitions *Synchronicities*, Vagonu zāle Riga, Latvia, 2022; *Palette. Three legged evidence*. Salon du Salon, Marseille, France, 2020; *Graduation Show*, 2021, KASK, School of Arts Ghent, Ghent (Belgium), 2021; *Pieradušie Zaķusala*, Riga, Latvia, 2020; *56'24 '57'6' 13.56*, RIXC, Riga, Latvia, 2016.

VALDIS CELMS (LV)

In the Space Behind the World I, 1969

Object study (copy of a photo film negative)

15cm x 21cm, (without frame)

In the Space Behind the World III, 1969

Object study (copy of a photo film negative)

15cm x 19cm, (without frame)

Fields of Consciousness I-IV, 2023

Color prints

An Imaging Strategy via Cylindrical Mirrors, 1970/2012

A kinetic device – an object for presenting a dynamic vision, the *Sight Cabinet (in the Space Behind the World)*, Wood, metal, plastic, electric light bulb, motor

24cm x 50cm x 35cm

An Installation-Object for Experimenting and Obtaining the Innovative 'Fields of Consciousness' Spatial Visions

Metal pipe, aluminum U profile, plastic sheet with a mirror surface, miscellaneous graphic materials

70cm x 90cm

Valdis Celms' works, many of which exist only as studies, evoke constructivist imagery while representing an ambition for a "total art" that embraces all aspects of life. The artist's kinetic works abide by a central method: visually perceptible forms are first created, then interpreted through a movement-based process that arises through the interactions of light, color, and form. These works are then arranged to fit a particular, and visible, order and harmony.

For this exhibition, Celms has shared documentation from the inception of the *In the Space Behind the World* series, which includes archival photos from 1969. The newest works in the series – prints of color photos shot with a smartphone – are also featured. Celms has also set up an improvised studio in which he displays devices he has made himself. These devices reveal the "backstage" to the technical process of taking pictures.

VALDIS CELMS (b. 1943, Vildoga) is a pioneering figure in Latvian kinetic art, a movement based on form, motion, and the organization of space. Alongside his interest in kinetics and the environment, he studies sacred geometry in Latvian culture and has written a comprehensive study entitled *Latvian Ornaments and Signs* (2007). Selected exhibitions include: *Transatlantic Alternative*, Contemporary Art Centre Garage, Moscow, Russia (2018); *Visionary Structures. From Johansons to Johansons*, National Library of Latvia, Riga, Latvia (2015) and *Bozar*, Brussels, Belgium (2015); *Touch. Unique Design, Kinetic Objects, Photo-Montage, Poster*, Museum of Decorative Arts and design, Riga, Latvia (2013); *Sign, Space, Myth*, Open-Air Ethnographic Museum, Riga, Latvia (1990); *Nature, Environment, Man*, St. Peter's Church Exhibition Hall, Riga, Latvia (1984); *Form. Color. Dynamics*, Saint Peter's Church, Riga, Latvia (1978); 4th Design Show, Riga, Latvia (1974); *SVĒTKI*, Biržas ēka, Riga, Latvia (1972).

Fracture Stimulation for Short-lasting Joy, 2023

Extruded foam, dimensions variable

Jānis Dzirnietis' foam sculpture consists of three used sheets of extruded foam, and utilizes the author's own hot-wire cutting method. Each cutting line is a record of an improvised motion in material that is not subsequently processed, corrected, or changed. The entire operation takes place before the cutting process is performed in a defined area. The cut lines inside the objects cross each other and form joints that allow the objects and their elements to be modular and placed in different configurations.

This cutting method does not create any excess material. One of the cheapest synthetic polymers, extruded foam is an insulating material consisting of up to 98% air and is therefore very disadvantageous for recycling. This work combines Dzirnietis' interest in the history of plastic, the material's direct connection with military conflicts, and the degradation of the product's quality; he is also interested in the paradox of how plastic has both improved and degraded people and their living conditions in a relatively short span of history. The use of secondhand foam is due not only to the aesthetic quality of the plates and the contrast between its dented, dusty planes "outside" and its baroque-corrosive "inside," but also because the material serves as a condemnatory gesture towards the plastic and oil industries.

Untiled (from the series Attractors), 2022

Found lamps, epoxy resin, polyester resin

h = 192cm

Attractors are a series of assemblages catalyzed by lamps found on the streets of Rotterdam, which are then altered through the use of synthetic polymers and found objects. The term "attractor" comes from the mathematical field of dynamic systems, referring to a set of numerical values around which a system tends to evolve. System values that get close enough to the attractor values remain close even if slightly disturbed. These values never reach the attractor itself. Humans and animals are biologically programmed to pay attention to light, yet we cannot stare at it directly, or else we get dazzled.

These rejected lamps, which were left abandoned on the streets, are most often fully functional, marred only by little visual defects. The design of each lamp serves as a base structure onto which Dzirnietis adds other found materials, including rollup banners, lightning rods, cattle lids, parts of gas stoves, cables, used buckets, and heat-regulating devices, all held together with synthetic resins. By using resin-encapsulated light to bind and shape the lamps' structures, Dzirnietis' creations are temporal, light-radiating assemblages. After 30,000 working hours (approximately the time it takes for the light bulbs to stop working), the piece will experience another transformation through which only the lamp's structure will remind one of what the object once was.

Do we change lamps more often than lightbulbs?

JĀNIS DZIRNIEKS (b. 1992, Riga, Latvia) is an artist whose practice involves material and processual research, resulting in sculptures, installations, and wall-based objects. He is interested in heavily technologized processes, planned obsolescence, synthetic environments, and the exploitation of vulnerabilities of the human psyche, as well as manipulating images in collaboration with pre-existing algorithms. Solo exhibitions include *Tiled River*, gallery 427, Riga; *Flat Tire*, Robert Fruinstraat 56, Rotterdam; *Waiting for the Next Minute*, Kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga; and *Sharp Horizon*, Nemo, Eckernförde. Duo shows include *Snowlake Blockbuster* with Alise Anna Dzirniece, Extra City, Antwerp. Group exhibitions include *Soap Opera*, City Surfer Office, Prague; *Agents of Perception*, Kai Art Center, Tallinn; and *Midnight Sunburn*, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam and elsewhere.

FLO KASEARU (EE)

Riga Runaway, 2011

video, 13:11 min, loop

Riga Runaway depicts an image of a running white horse as it is projected from the window of a black BMW driving through Riga. The car darts through empty streets in the night, “following” the white horse projection. This dynamic image, at times clear or blurry, depends on dark silhouettes of surrounding buildings, trees, and other objects while the car roars against the howling wind. Another car tries to overtake it, but they both maintain a link with the horse. Evoking the local culture of racing cars at night, the video was shot during one of the lightest and shortest summer nights. Its first frames show the recently demolished and notorious *Monument of Victory* (originally problematically titled as “Monument to the Liberators of Soviet Latvia and Riga from the German Fascist Invaders”).

Unattainability – the dream moment, or the unreality granted to it by its origin – is represented through the illusory horse, which is only a projection. The initial feeling of intangibility is followed by a slight disappointment, as observers begin to understand that the movements of the horse are mechanical – that it is only a moving image in constant repetition which is not alive, as it may have seemed at the beginning.

This work was produced in Riga for the group exhibition After the Socialist Statues, which took place at Kim? (2011, Curator: Rael Artel. Text fragment: Maija Rudovska.)

FLO KASEARU (b.1985) is an artist based in Tallinn and a director of eponymous house museum Flo Kasearu’s House Museum. Her works include videos, drawings, paintings, installations and performances. The artist’s recent exhibitions and performances include *Flo’s Retrospective* at Kunsthalle Recklinghausen (2022); *Cut Out of Life*, solo exhibition at Tallinn Art Hall (2021); *Endangered Species*, solo exhibition at Tartu Art Museum (2020); *Performing the Fringe*, curated by Jussi Koitela and Inga Lāce, Konsthall C, Stockholm (2020); *There and Back Again*, group show curated by Kati Kivinen and Saara Hacklin, Kiasma, Helsinki (2018); *Soon enough*, group show curated by Maria Lind, Tensta Konsthall (2018); *State is Not a Work of Art*, group show curated by Katerina Gregos, Tallinn Art Hall (2018); *Members Only*, Performa 17 Biennial, curated by Esa Nickle and Maaïke Gouwenberg, New York (2017).

OLIVER LARIC (AT/DE)

Betweenness, 2018

HD video, 4min 35sec.

For *Betweenness*, Laric uses existing material and redraws each frame, creating ever-changing configurations of lines that morph into new forms, including animals, plants, fungi, and humanoid figures. In one moment, a teapot transforms into a chicken; in another, a crab held in a person's hand gently becomes a sparkling star. Paired with a musical score composed by musician and producer Ville Haimala, these visuals create an atmosphere that thrives on perpetual movement and change. In the continuous transitions between its fleeting fragments, interpretations of the visible remain in flux. The resulting state of ebb and flow highlights the interconnectedness and ever-changing nature of things, as well as the repetitions and reconfigurable nature of the visual impulses from which they are made. *Betweenness* is part of Laric's ongoing explorations into the different processes and ambiguities that characterize today's visual culture.

OLIVER LARIC (b. 1981 in Innsbruck, Austria) lives and works in Berlin. He has had one-person exhibitions at S.M.A.K., Ghent; the Saint Louis Art Museum; Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany; Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin; Secession, Vienna; Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland; Austrian Cultural Forum, London; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; and the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has also participated in group exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery, London; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Kunstverein München; and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams. Laric's work was included in the 2015 New Museum Triennial, 2016 Liverpool Biennial, 2018 São Paulo Biennial, and the 2018 Guangzhou Triennial. He participated in the 2021 Seoul Mediacity Biennale.

DEIMANTAS NARKEVIČIUS (LT)

The Fifer, Installation, 2019

Holographic video film, bronze casting, two photographs
Digitized photo, original copy no. P-06371 (Protected in
the Central State Archive of Lithuania)
Soundtrack: Vytautas Oškinis.
Post-production performance: Kostas Radlinskas
Dimensions variable
Edition of 4 plus 1 AP

The Fifer is a realization of several sound states that have been traced from an archival photograph and incorporated into different media. The work is conceived as a multilayered exploration of converging temporalities, modes of existence, and perceptions of reality around us. These include the duration of the melody, the bird and the players' respective vantage points, and the historical moment in which this scene is being played out. By way of the complex, entangled relationship between the natural, the untouched, and the synthetic, *The Fifer* begs the question: by what criteria do we recognize something as factual, significant, or true to us today? In the source black-and-white photo, taken in the 1920s, a young man dressed in military uniform plays flute in a dimly lit room. As he sits on his chair, he looks away from the frosted window, onto a winter garden in a glazed conservatory. This unusual sight allows us to imagine what kind of melodies or sounds are being performed by this young person. The insides of the instrument, where sounds come into being, are materialized in the form of a bronze cast. The interior of the flute is cast in four distinct parts across sound output channels.

On the holographic screen, one sees a volumetric image of a mockingbird flying in and out the frame. The hologram of the little bird, presumably situated within that winter garden among the melodies played by the flutist, reproduces the rhythms and the melodies of mockingbirds in their natural states. In the second, digitally produced photograph, one perceives how the exterior wall, window, and soldier playing music behind it – in an unknown Lithuanian location at the end of the 1920s – might look.

DEIMANTAS NARKEVIČIUS (b. 1964 Utena, Lithuania) lives and works in Vilnius. His films exercise the intricate practice of memory, portraying a contemporary society confronted with the painful processes of history. The disjunctions between words and images in Narkevičius's films manifest the impossibility of an objective documentary. The central characters of Narkevičius's narratives are often absent from the screen, replaced by objects, drawings, and other surrogates. His most recent group exhibitions include *Sad Songs of War / Collection as a Verb*, MSU Muzeum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb (2022); *Into the Unknown*, Salt, Istanbul (2022), Art Basel 2022, gb agency booth, Basel; *The Immeasurable and World's End*, JWD Art Space, Bangkok (2022); *Questionable History*, Wende Museum, Culver City, California (2021); and *Splitting the Atom*, CAC and Energy and Technology Museum, Vilnius (2020). Selected solo exhibitions include *Anachronisms*, Korschthal Esch, Esch-sur-Azette, Luxembourg (2022); *The Fifer*, Base / Progetti per l'arte, Florence (2021); *20 July, 2015*, Prefix ICA, Toronto, Canada (2019); *Stains and Scratches*, National Gallery of Art, Vilnius (2017); and *Archaeology of Memories*, Corner House (former KGB headquarters), Riga (2015).

NORMAN ORRO & JOONAS TIMMI (EE)

Wind as murmur, cypher and enchanted reckoner, 2023

Harp strings, automata, fiberglass, epoxy resin, shrink-wrap, plywood, assorted textiles, satellite speakers, proximity sensors.

30 min musical antiphony.

Dimensions variable

Programming: Toomas Savi

Asking the question “If the winds could compute, what would they reckon?” Orro and Timmi probe the role of soft technologies in mythmaking (and, conversely, myths around making technology). *Wind as murmur, cypher and enchanted reckoner* explores the artists’ following proposition:

Let’s say the wind acts as a flow of energy over the landscape, while obstacles in its path operate as logic gates, encoding it with turbulence and information. We could then say the wind, through its vagrancies, hides in plain sight all sorts of complex dynamics, including error and insight. For instance, when the wind blows open doors and windows, lifts water and floods its logic gates – this work produces openings where they do not belong, sorting them out until some form of normality intervenes to take the landscape over. Normality is then experienced in our cultures as disenchantment, the receding of spectacle. In the absence of myth, the jazz of an inorganic Eden runs windward.

*As the veil of myth unfurls,
A reckoner takes its place,
A beacon in the winds,
A guiding light to trace.*

*The tales of old transmute,
A glowing ember in the shadows, a guiding star to chase.
A never-ending cycle, a constant rejoice.*

NORMAN ORRO (b. 1986) is an Estonian artist and musician working at the junction of ecology, technology, and the humanities. His sound art project *Music For Your Plants* offers a sonic exploration of the post-human condition through a world in which objects are given agency to converse via audible frequencies. Using speculative and machine-assisted compositions, the project attempts to bridge an artificial divide between nature and culture, generating an ominous but pleasing tone to the interplay between semantic and atmospheric sounds – the human voice spoken by a machine, becoming a bird call for the rocks. Since 2010, the project has manifested in conceptual albums, visual essays, and installations with notable collaborations, including a soundtrack for the China Pavilion in the 56th Venice Biennale, audiovisual web-installations for *DIS Magazine* and *Ofluxo*, and performances at Creamcake Festival and Creepy Teepee.

JOONAS TIMMI (b. 1996) delves into the modern identity of craftsmanship, seamlessly fusing traditional woodworking methods with contemporary technologies such as VR modeling, 3D printing, and CNC milling. His work is an exploration of the human experience, wherein he seeks to uncover the psychological layers that reside within our material possessions. Through his creations, he aims to evoke a sense of nostalgia and longing, while simultaneously pushing the boundaries of functionality. His work is characterized by its naturalistic forms and an almost human-like presence, inviting the viewer to question the role of objects in our lives and their ability to evoke emotion.

TARWUK (US/HR)

12/18/2021, 2021

Mixed media

Dimensions variable

Every year, TARWUK dedicates time to developing a body of work the sole purpose of which is to further expand their practice. Since 2020, their projects have been timed to the moon cycle, taking different forms that range from meditation journals with extremely detailed drawings to video works. In 2021, their project *Teatar Uzmi Ovo* centered around an imaginary theater for which they made costumes and painted a large canvas as the backdrop. The output of the intimate performances that ensued were photographs, but the project itself generated an entire body of work. For every new and full moon, the artists would make new costumes and repaint the canvas backdrop. After they lost access to their studio space, the project was scaled down to portable canvases and puppet surrogates. The 2021 manifestation of this project generated twenty-four costumes, a 4x4-meter backdrop canvas containing twelve layered paintings, twelve small canvas backdrops, and twelve puppet surrogates.

TARWUK (*2014 founded in New York) is Ivana Vuksic (*1981 Dubrovnik, lives in New York), Bruno Pogacnik Tremow (*1981 Zagreb, lives in New York). Solo: White Cube, London, (2023); Maramotti Collection, Emilia Romagna (2021); Matthew Brown, Los Angeles (2021); Martos Gallery, New York (2020); Lauba, Zagreb (2020); Taito Ryokan, Tokyo (2019); Team Gallery, New York (2018); Museum of Fine Art, Osijek (2017); Ethnographical Museum of Istria, Pazin (2017); Ethnographical Museum of Istria, Pazin (2017); Essex Flowers, New York (2017); Museum of Fine Arts, Split (2017); Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka (2016); Lauba, Zagreb (2015). Group shows: Drava Art Biennale, Lauba Zagreb (2020); MLU, Osijek (2020); Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad (2018); Museum of Modern Art, Dubrovnik (2018); Art-O-Rama Marseille (2018); JTT, New York (2018); Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad (2018); Inside Out Art Museum, Beijing (2014); NARS Foundation Gallery, New York (2014).

ADRIANA RAMIĆ (US/PL)

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interpretācija), 2023

Laserjet print on cardstock
Dimensions variable

Pursuing her interest in seeing how a computer would interpret an image as a crude sequence of letters, Adriana Ramić wrote a computer program called BUBAMARA-OCR, the name of which combines the Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian word for ladybug with an acronym for “Optical Character Recognition.” Inferring alphabetic symbols from an image using a computer vision algorithm, BUBAMARA-OCR detects text in images even when none is present. Ladybugs, both observed in nature and reimagined by machine learning, serve as the intermediary between input image and alphabet: each letter has its own corresponding ladybug.

The resulting texts became a catalyst for rewriting images across space, with each letter accompanied by a visual representation of something beginning with that letter in Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian. Emulating the manner by which large image recognition data sets gather images, Ramić has sourced directly from Imagenet, a landmark data source in the image recognition field. As part of her process, she also created a parallel image dataset based on the Croatian Wordnet, using images from the vernacular web of former Yugoslavia. These results are mixed among the flashcards with those culled from Imagenet, which draws from the English-speaking web.

This instantiation presents the BUBAMARA-OCR interpretation (792 letters in total) of one photograph documenting the objects within *Memory Without Catastrophic Forgetting*.

Memory Without Catastrophic Forgetting, 2023
Loaf of bread, cup, knife, plunger, tomato
Dimensions variable

In the research paper *Learning Generalizable Visual Representations via Interactive Gameplay*, a robot plays hide-and-seek in order to find five archetypal objects: a loaf of bread, a cup, a knife, a plunger, and a tomato. Each serves as a prop for studying how computers might distinguish presence while playing a game, drawing upon studies in gameplay as practiced by humans, turtles, and ravens. Ramić’s work investigates the choices each of these objects make in relation to their archetypal qualities and the language surrounding them, as well as their potential for parametric manipulation and transformation, whether syntactically correct or unachievable.

Why might an agent hide an object instead of itself?

ADRIANA RAMIĆ (b. 1989, USA/PL, based in Berlin, DE) works with enigmatic vignettes of perception and translation shifting among human, animal, and machinic. Often drawing upon computational and behavioral research, her practice spans installation, video, text, sculpture, drawing, and software. Her work has been exhibited at venues such as the Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; Stroom den Haag, the Hague, NL; Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, MI; Inge and Kimberly-Klark, New York, NY; Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam, NL; LUMA/Westbau, Zürich, CH; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, SE; and Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, AT, and she is currently a participant in Berlin Program for Artists.

EVITA VASIĻJEVA (LV/FR)

Seeds of Light, 2021

2 aluminum casts, wires, each lamp 80 x 50 x 50 cm

Headquarters, 2017

metal, cable ties, latex, carbon paper

38 x 16 x 21 cm

Still Stands (little), 2018

Glazed ceramics, melted steel, fillers

Various dimensions

Having grown up in Latvia during a period of post-Soviet transition, Vasiļjeva often draws on the visual and sonic imagery of crumbling architecture and rough suburban landscapes to evoke conundrums of anxiety and control. Human labor, as well as the processes and conditions of sites of production, surface in the sculptural materiality of these three works by Evita Vasiļjeva. The works appear as if they could have some agency, while some function in the production or building of themselves. Despite this autonomy, however, they remain unfinished or in a state of deterioration from a more advanced state of being. For Vasiļjeva, the state of becoming, or falling apart, is more profound than a finished state or fixated situation.

By manipulating and repurposing a large variety of materials, Vasiļjeva provokes relational dynamics between spaces, buildings, memory, and spectators' bodies. The presentation of these works itself becomes a method for analyzing intellect and solidifying thoughts during short periods of production time. Consequently, these works are attuned to their surroundings, adamantly physical but vulnerable, showing cracks of doubt as well as the potential to grow into something altogether new.

EVITA VASIĻJEVA (b. Riga, 1985) works with sculpture, installation, and sound. Recently, she participated at the Lyon Biennial (2022, curated by Till Fellrath and Sam Bardaouil); Baltic Triennial 14: The Endless Frontier, Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius (2021, curated by Valentinas Klimašauskas and João Laia); Blue Lagoon, Cēsis Contemporary Art Centre, in a duo exhibition with Kaspars Groševs, (2022, curated by Daiga Rudzāte and Žanete Skarule); Publiek Park, in collaboration with SMAK, Ghent (2021); the Salon de Normandy by the Community, Paris (2020, curated by the Community); Survival Kit 11, Riga (2020, curated by Ekaterina Krupennikova); Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz (2020, curated by Inga Lāce); Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga (2019); Tallinn City Gallery, Tallinn (2018, curated by Kim?); Foundation Ricard, Paris (2018, curated by Barbara Sirieix, Maija Rudovska and Joachim Hamou); P/////AKT, Amsterdam (2017). Her works are included in the collection of the Latvian National Museum of Art and private collections.

STATE ELECTROTECHNICAL FACTORY (VEF)

Promotional and instructional archive materials from 1930s-1994

Languages used:

Latvian, English, French, German, Spanish, Russian

Vitrines:

Latvian National Museum of Art, 1960s

Dimensions Variable

Text by: Dace Kaprāne, Culture Association of Northern Riga, Chief Archivist at VEF Museum

VEF, or the State Electrotechnical Factory, was Latvia's largest electronics manufacturer in the interbellum and during the Soviet era. It provided consumers with a steady supply of radios, phones, hardware for telephone exchanges and computing, as well as produced unconventional wonders of engineering, the most prominent of which were the VEF Minox photo camera made in the 1930s and the medical electronic devices of the 1980s.

During its long life, the company took part in events of national importance, joined school events in support of schools, and reacted to the newest social and industrial trends in Latvia and abroad. The factory management maintained an active correspondence with foreign companies and Latvia's consulships. Diplomats of the Republic of Latvia took VEF advertisements as well as products with them when visiting neighboring countries. From 1937 to 1941, the company's Advertising Office was headed by Ādolfs Irbīte, a talented artist who designed the entire line of VEF's radio technology products. The unique graphic artist Zelma Baboliņa likewise worked at this office. The Advertising Office had a carpenter's shop working under them, and it carried out all the necessary window dressing at VEF stores and created stands for exhibitions. It had a varnishing room, an offset duplicator and a photo lab. The Advertising Office managed the brand of all of VEF's products, ran extensive and modern ad campaigns, and oversaw window dressing at VEF stores in Rīga and Liepāja according to the newest trends and public demand. Advertising booklets and manuals accompanied VEF goods that were exported abroad. These were printed in Russian, English, German and French. The Advertising Office likewise prepared exhibitions for international shows.

During the Soviet era, VEF products were exported to about 25-30 countries and its domestic radio appliances to 40. The factory was a frequent participant in international exhibitions and fairs. This amounted to at least 15-18 fairs and exhibitions each year, such as Связь in Moscow, Telekom in Geneva, as well as events in Leipzig, Budapest, Sofia, Baghdad, Casablanca, Plovdiv, Zagreb, Brno and elsewhere. Delegations from all across the world came to VEF to compare notes, including Sweden, Norway and other Western countries as well as Japan and Korea among others. VEF engineers likewise frequently went abroad on business trips. Booklets and ad posters on VEF products were taken to industrial shows in Japan, Germany, France and elsewhere; these also served as extra advertising for the products that had already been made.

Back then, the company's public appearance was controlled by the Latvian SSR branch of the All-Union Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where Ādolfs Irbīte, the chief artist at VEF and the Rīga Radio Factory, was employed for some time. Advertising leaflets, pins for sports associations, diplomas, commemorative certificates, sheets for sports competitions and posters for the Jelgava and Liepāja engineering plants, the Rīga Machine Plant, the A. Popovs Rīga Radio Factory and VEF were made under Irbīte's supervision.