

29.10.–15.12.2024

**ALMA & /**

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Rīgas Dome

## **SARMĪTE MĀLIŅA / AUTOPSY OF THE SELF**

The word AUTOPSY has its etymological origin in the Ancient Greek word **αὐτοψία**, which means «seeing for oneself». The process refers to a detailed medical examination and/or dissection of a deceased body to determine the cause of death for scientific or medical purposes.

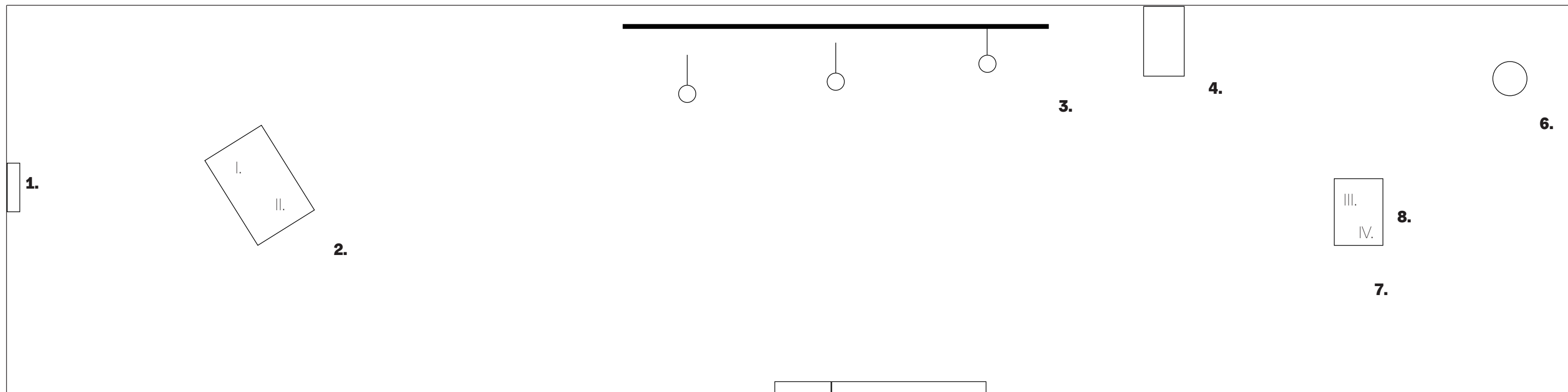
This exhibition has no scientific or medical basis. Rather, it is a personal, egoistic probing of the unique self in an attempt to uncover at least some credible evidence for the meaning of existence. Such struggles, intense reflection, and reasonable concern when analysing your entire life might make you want to lean against something eternal – “a rock warmed by the sun or the moss-covered soil in a glade”. You might even be led to put your thoughts on hold. I feel this way when under the care of medical professionals. The monotonous hum of the infusion pump and the sharp white light as you lie on the operating table create ample space for organized thoughts. The exhibition is a practice for your journey toward the second greatest event in your life – an event to be awaited with the divine smile of Lisa del Giocondo on your lips. Unlike the first event, the second one requires a high level of presence and participation. And here, the room is open for imagination... Art is a companion that helps us befriend life. The exhibition contains several objects, including headrests designed for performing autopsies and medical procedures. They are used as a reference to the times when pharaohs were regularly embalmed so that they could live “long and happily”, i.e., eternally. The ancient Egyptians used headrests to support their necks during sleep. Over time these evolved into the modern headrests used today. The exhibition will feature a marble replica of Pharaoh Khentika's headrest (2323–2150 B.C.). Other objects on display will also tell stories from life, both past and present. As if arching over the intense events on Earth, a delicate wooden sculpture of a dove with outstretched wings hovers above. A symbol of the Holy Spirit and the Soul, a gentle witness to the quiet hope and longing for life after death.



RĪGA



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**1. VOLUNTARY CONFESSIONS.** The confessional, the place for confession, has always fascinated and puzzled people of faith. Thoughts about this process have not led me to any firm conclusions. Is the woman in the white shawl really bowing her head at the confession box too? I don't know yet.

**2. MANIPULATION TABLE WITH MARBLE** No. 1

I. **A MARBLE REPLICA OF PHARAOH KHENTIKA'S HEADREST (2323-2150 B.C.)**

II. **OBJECT OF PHYSIOTHERAPY MANIPULATION**

**3. BLEEDING HEARTH.** I am six years old. I am in Latgale, where I notice a flower called the Bleeding Heart. I dread even looking at it; her bittersweet story is so evident that it makes me uneasy. I think to myself, nature is so shameless. It feels wrong. The stems bow, weighed down by the heart-shaped pendants. The color! The cool scent! It all foretells the inevitable. I turn away.

**4. GIRL WITH A CAT.** The most beautiful object in my childhood was an oval coloured photograph above the bed of a girl with a cat. I could not have known that the time would come when opinion about this beauty would have to be formulated as kitsch. I did it with a light heart. Now it's time to reconsider the true nature of these things.

**5. HOLY SPIRIT.** As if arching over the intense events on Earth, a delicate wooden sculpture of a dove with outstretched wings hovers above. A symbol of the Holy Spirit and the Soul, a gentle witness to the quiet hope and longing for life after death.

**6. THE PILLOW WITH SOUND OF MEOW** (A reference to John Galsworthy's trilogy «The Forsyth Tales» - a misunderstanding with the hat)

**7. MANIPULATION TABLE WITH MARBLE** No. 2

III. **FORCED CONFESSIONS.** Upon becoming unemployed, the state offered me support in the form of free psychotherapy sessions. Such self-manipulation never felt right to me, but I went through with it anyway. The first thing I noticed when I arrived was a box of tissues conveniently placed on the table. That utterly shattered my self-esteem.

IV. **HAMMER**

**8. PETTY TROUBLES**