

## **Exhibition “March!” by Edith Karlson at Sapieha Palace, Vilnius**

Edith Karlson's solo show “March!”, curated by Maria Arusoo, runs at Sapieha Palace in Vilnius until 14 September.

“March!” is the first comprehensive solo presentation of Edith Karlson's work in Lithuania – a new site specific installation created especially for this occasion.

In Karlson's exhibition, visitors encounter another captivating narrative of her oeuvre – an army of hybrid creatures is marching through the stunning Baroque spaces of Sapieha Palace. Rooms are taken over by ever-transforming figures who are on their way to or escaping somewhere, although the situation is unclear. The exhibition is in many ways influenced by the current state of the world – the chaos of wars and crises – where individual people find themselves in situations they have not chosen and have not consented to, yet they need to adapt to remain sane.

Adapting is one of the keywords of the exhibition. Karlson is fascinated by people's ability to adapt – we often find ourselves in terrifying situations that we just cannot accept, however, as time passes, we see that we have indeed adapted, we move on and do things we never thought we'd be capable of. Here, adapting is seen as a survival mechanism but also as a frightening paradox that makes us accept things that go against everything, we previously held true – hearing the command “March!”, we are unexpectedly on our way in a direction we've been pushed to, holding weapons forced into our hands. This is not an exhibition about inevitability but of constant transformation – because who, in the end, is guiding whom and decides where we are going?

Edith Karlson's world is inhabited by transforming creatures that belong to a metamorphic sphere—one that is at times fragile, at other times inescapable, but always tinged with a glimmer of hope. These creatures shed their skins and leave their shadows on the walls, constantly altering, yet always yearning to escape the inescapable. Her exhibitions are both melancholic and hopeful, infused with a strong sense of playfulness and layered with multiple meanings—much like life itself.

**Edith Karlson** (1983) is one of Estonia's leading sculptors, known for her thought provoking, emotional and technically highly skilled large-scale installations. The figures in Karlson's work evoke the duality encoded within working as an artist and also being a member of society. Frequently creating animal forms and anthropomorphic figures, she approaches humans as animalistic beings whose impulses, wants, and desires are hidden beneath their morals.

Edith Karlson represented Estonia at the 60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia with her exhibition *Hora lupi* (2024). Presented at the church of Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Penitenti, the exhibition explored primitive human urges in their banality and solemnity and questioned the possibility of redemption in a world that is never worthy of it. Her more recent exhibitions include “Return to Innocence”, Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn (2021);

[“Roots and Ruins”](#), Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn (2020); “Sisters”, with Mall Paris, Tallinn Art Hall Gallery (2019-2020); “Do Come in, the Door is Open!”, with Mary Reid Kelley and Eva Mustonen, KUMU Art Museum, Tallinn (2019-2020) among others.

**Maria Arusoo** is a curator and dramaturg who has served as the Director of the Estonian Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) and Commissioner of the Estonian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale since 2013. She has been a visiting lecturer at both the Estonian Academy of Arts and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Arusoo has published widely in Estonian newspapers and cultural publications, and has edited or co-edited numerous books and catalogues for publishers like CCA, Lugemik, Sternberg Press, and Mousse. She is also the co-founder of the magazine A Shade Colder. Her recent projects include commissioning the Estonian Pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale (2024) featuring Edith Karlson’s “Hora Lupi,” and curating “When Body Says Yes” by melanie bonajo at Kumu Art Museum (2024) and “Sequences” in Reykjavik (2024). She is currently working on the Estonian Pavilion at the 61st Venice Biennale (2025), which will feature a solo exhibition by Merike Estna.

Organizer: Sapiuha Palace

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