#### kogo

Kogo gallery at Liste Art Fair Basel 2022

# Kristi Kongi and Laura Põld (E) Motional Landscapes





At Liste Art Fair Basel 2022, Kogo gallery presents Estonian artists Kristi Kongi and Laura Põld in a joint stand *(E)Motional Landscapes*.

When imagining the landscape of the world today, the image that seems to appear is rather biblical. There is plague, flood, fire, war, migration, isolation and depression. The neuroses of society are growing, creating a fruitful environment for the development of magical thinking, which while helping to broaden our view of the world, can also spread darkness and fear. The stand is envisioned as a magical albeit apocalyptic atlas of the world where artists can show their emotionally felt landscapes, which, rephrasing Björk's song Jóga, have pushed them up to their own state of emergency.



If we follow the biblical theme then the foundation of everything has to be the sky, the source of light and colour, which is also the true playground of artist Kristi Kongi. She brings vibrant landscapes born of the sky and which inhabit most of the wall space, colouring it in the subtle tones used as the background for her painting Afternoon – colours and the world have transformed into shapes. Heart doesn't need sorrow. It needs care. And colours. And distance (2021) and her series of watercolours Is There Any Light And Colour Left? (2020–2022).

During lockdown, Kongi spent a lot of time in her studio in a relatively safe space compared to other people around the world. Almost unconsciously she started to look up at the sky through her studio windows. There she found the space we all share regardless of our geographical location and political, economic or social situation. Kongi started to paint watercolours, which can be seen as diary entries made during the pandemic. These works are like modern versions of *Très Riches Heures*, the famous 15<sup>th</sup> century book of hours, piece by piece revealing the troubled world we now inhabit.



Laura Põld on the other hand is more connected to the earth. For her it is important to know the history of the materials as well as to study traditional handiwork and building techniques as a way to preserve certain experiences and memories. At Liste, she will mostly create the ground level for the landscape, exhibiting her latest textile pieces made from tufted rugs that form paintings, installations and carpets mimicking the forms of earth and plant life.

The floor of the stand will be occupied by small fountains, volcanoes and water basins from Põld's series Wasteland. The Phosphorite War (2021). The Phosphorite War was an environmental campaign in the late 1980s created to fight against plans by the central government of the Soviet Union to open large phosphorite mines in Estonia. Interestingly, this ecological movement triggered a nationalist movement across the Baltic states, which later led to the restoration of the independence of all three countries. Now in times of energy crisis and climate alertness the mining wastelands of the past envisioned by Põld emerge once again.

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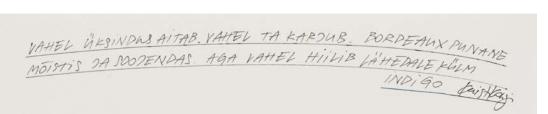
#### Kristi Kongi at Liste

<u>Kristi Kongi</u> (b. 1985) is Kogo gallery represented Estonian painter and installation artist based in Tallinn. Kongi's work focuses on colour, light, and space and her bright coloured paintings often take the form of impressive installations made for specific settings, creating an effect that Estonian art critic Elnara Taidre described as "painting within a painting" or meta-painting. Besides painting on canvas, walls, floors and ceilings, she also uses various coloured materials such as fabric, plywood and acrylic plastic to create her installations. Her works are based on specific or imagined places, and her observations, emotions and memories. Kongi uses thorough research and experiments in painting where she trials various colours, light and shade. Artist refers to these experiments as "Exercises with the moon". Her work is both poetic as well as systematic and analytical.

Kongi studied painting at Tartu Art College (2004–2008) and completed her master's degree in painting at the Estonian Academy of Arts (2008–2011). She has been awarded the Young Artist Prize (2011), Sadolin Art Award (2013), Konrad Mägi Prize (2017), Annual Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia (2021). Kongi is an associate professor in the painting department at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Occasionally she also works as exhibition designer. In addition to the Estonian Art Museum and Tartu Art Museum, Kongi's works can also be found in the collections of the European Central Bank and the European Patent Office. She is a valued artist for private collectors from England, Germany and Italy to the United States and Mexico.



Afternoon - colours and the world have transformed into shapes. Heart doesn't need sorrow. It needs care. And colours. And distance, 2021 Oil on canvas, 220 × 190 cm 15 000 EUR





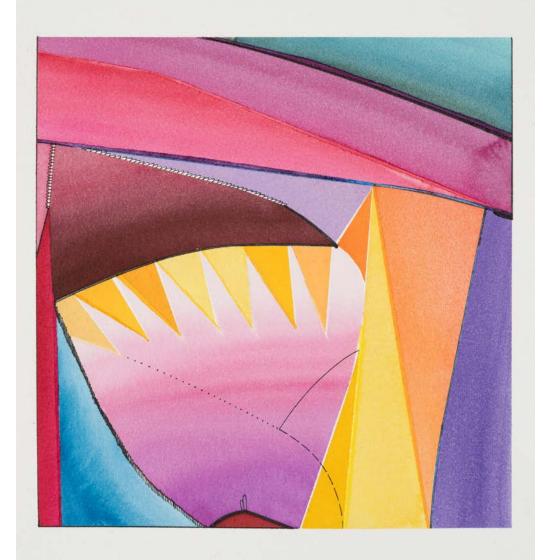
Sometimes solitude helps, sometimes it howls. Burgundy offered compassion and warmth. But sometimes, cold Indigo creeps closer, 2020 Watercolour, gel pen on paper, wooden frame, glass,  $28 \times 24 \times 2.5$  cm 800 EUR

VIIMASED AJAD OLI IGA PÄEV GHESUGUNE. AINUKE. MIS OLI ERINEV. OLI MUUTUV VALGUS AKNA TAGA. TA OLI IGA PÄEV LUG. JA IGA PÄEVAGA AINA SOOJEM. JA EREDAM.



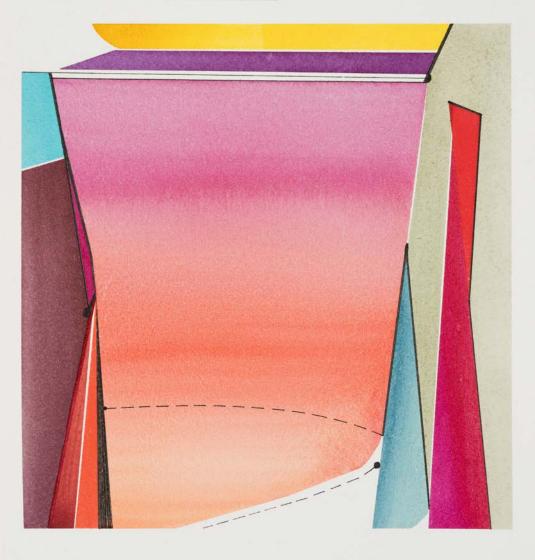
By the end, every day was the same. The only thing that changed was the light behind my window. Each day, it was different. Each day, it was warmer. And brighter, 2021 Watercolour, gel pen on paper, wooden frame, glass,  $28 \times 24 \times 2.5$  cm 800 EUR

KOIK TOOKSIS TUSTKUI EEST ARA. WARKE ON LIIGA PALTU. VATA ON TEGENIKULT AINULT WHITE. TEISED TUNID AGA TOEKS. DA OND.



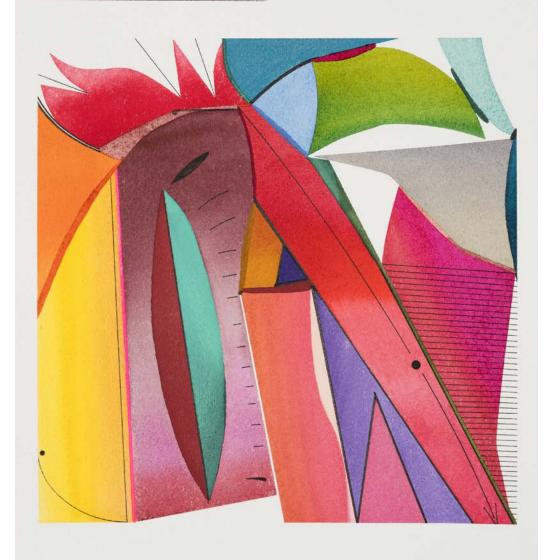
It all seemed to escape me. There were too many colours. While I only needed one. But others came around for support. And stayed, 2022 Watercolour, gel pen on paper, wooden frame, glass,  $28\times24\times2.5$  cm 800 EUR

MA MOTE OU SEUGE VÄRVID OLID KOHAL. DA NAD PROOVISID MIDAGI VÆLV PÄÄSTA. SOE DA KÜLM PUNANE VAHELDUSID. PAKKUSID ILU NATUKE KA MOTLIKKUST DA KURBUST.



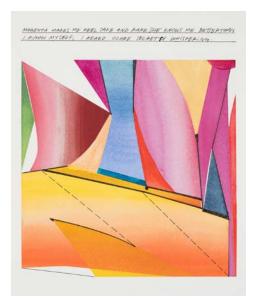
My thoughts were clear. The colours were there. And they tried to make the most of it. Warm and cool reds alternating. Bringing beauty. As well as some reflection and sadness, 2022 Watercolour, gel pen on paper, wooden frame, glass, 28 × 24 × 2.5 cm 800 EUR

ET LACTASIN END VÁRVIDE VAHELE PIDEVALT. DA VÁGA PASTE OLI END TAGS ÜLES LEIDA.



Noon in its brightness was full of colour. There was so much of everything. That I was constantly losing myself in the colours. And I struggled to find myself again, 2022 Watercolour, gel pen on paper, wooden frame, glass,  $28 \times 24 \times 2.5$  cm 800 EUR











Watercolours from series Is There Any Light and Colour Left? 2020-2022 Watercolour, gel pen on paper, wooden frame, glass,  $28\times24\times2.5$  cm Each 800 EUR































Watercolours from series Is There Any Light and Colour Left? 2020-2022 Watercolour, gel pen on paper, wooden frame, glass,  $28\times24\times2.5$  cm Each 800 EUR

#### Laura Põld at Liste

Laura Põld (1984) is Kogo gallery represented Estonian artist whose work deals with situated and subjective sense of territory and place. She seeks to combine specific histories or qualities of a given location with her materially sensitive work. Her practice weaves together natural, context-specific and interdisciplinary elements, often engaging also in various collaborative endeavours. Põld's recent work includes witnessing and participating in the engagement between various material bodies and forces. The installations grow as site-specific co-evolution of edible matter and plants, text, textile and thread, soil, ceramics and clay.

Laura Põld studied ceramics at the Estonian Academy of Arts, painting at the University of Tartu and sculptural conceptions and ceramics at the University of Art and Design Linz. She has been awarded with a number of prizes and scholarships like the Eduard Wiiralt scholarship (2008), Ado Vabbe scholarship (2013), annual prize of The Cultural Endowment of Estonia (2014), Köler Prize grand prix (2016) and grand prize of The Cultural Endowment of Estonia (2018). Laura Põld is based in Tallinn and Vienna.





The leaves moved and you faded into the pattern of grass and shadows, and I returned smiling and haunted, to a dark morning, 2022

Burlap, yarn, cord, 200 × 250 cm

13 000 EUR

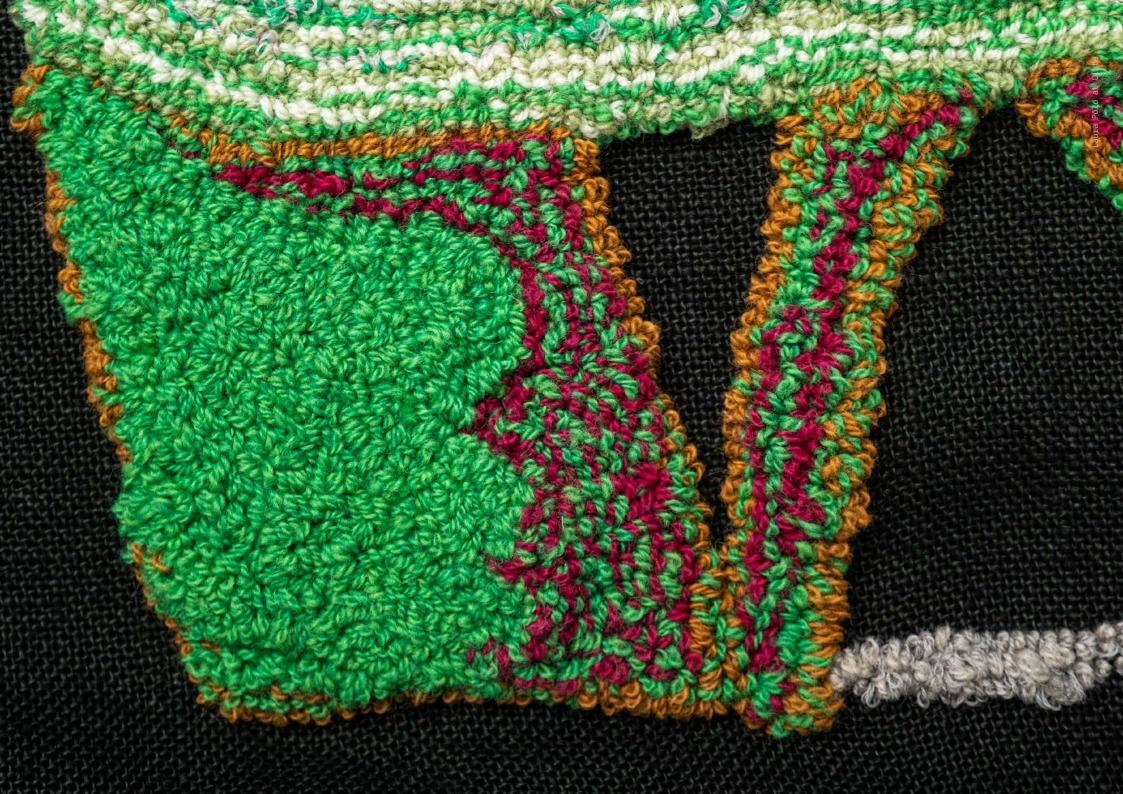




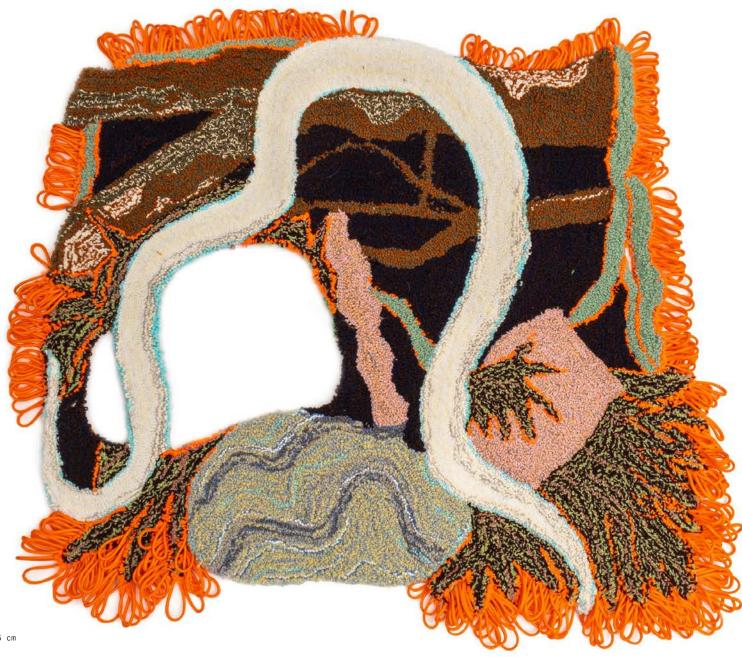
The leaves moved and you faded into the pattern of grass and shadows, and I returned smiling and haunted, to a dark morning, 2022 Burlap, yarn, cord. Together with stand made of steel,  $168\times50\times50$  cm 13~600 EUR











Midsummer, 2022 Burlap, yarn, cord, felt,  $90 \times 95$  cm 3500 EUR





















Wasteland. The Phosphorite War, 1/12, 2021-2022 Ceramics, three ultrasonic misters,  $35\times58\times43$  cm 3500 EUR





Wasteland. The Phosphorite War, 9/12, 2021-2022 Ceramics, one LED lighting,  $43\times43\times25$  cm 3500 EUR





Wasteland. The Phosphorite War, 12/12, 2021-2022 Ceramics, one ultrasonic mister,  $40\times35\times35$  cm 4000~EUR









Works from project Wasteland. The Phosphorite War, 7/12, 6/12, 8/12, 4/12 2021-2022 500-3000 EUR







### Other works and projects by Kristi Kongi

## Paintings from Sky series

2021

The idea about the Sky series was born from observing the sky and thinking about the meaning of the heaven while world is alerted by climate crises messages, geopolitical instabilities in Europe and Asia and tortured by pandemic. When Kongi started the project, she chose a specific time in a day – twilight, the moment when one can find a whole spectrum of colours in the sky – and created her first paintings. Twilight creates shapes around the sky, the movement of light that can be traced from dusk to darkness. As a result the physical, metaphorical and symbolic sky for Kongi has become the source for colour as well as existential analysis.



15 February 2021. So cold and bright and endless, 2021 Oil on canvas, 75×80 cm 4600 EUR



July 2021. End of warm July, 2021 Oil on canvas, 75×80 cm 4600 EUR



Hot August night, when twilight radiated warmth, but also coldness, 2021 Oil on canvas, 75×80 cm 4600 EUR



December 2021. Darkness, depth, distance, beauty, 2021 Oil on canvas, 75 × 80 cm 4600 EUR





## Works from exhibition ...and Other Shades of Light

Tallinn Art Hall, Tallinn, Estonia 18.12.2021-06.03.2022 Curated by Siim Preiman The exhibition ...and Other Shades of Light at Tallinn Art Hall brought together artists Kristi Kongi and Krista Mölder. Light plays a special role in both artists' works, which was combined in a unique constellation in this exhibition. Both Kristi Kongi (b. 1985) and Krista Mölder (b. 1972) have attracted international attention and earned countless awards, and they are among the brightest ambassadors of Estonian art. Here they were together for the first time in front of their home audience.

"Colours, their flicker, variability and sensual influence play important roles in the work of both artists, with one of them preferring unworldly vibrant colours, while the other favouring subdued Nordic tones," says Siim Preiman, the curator of the exhibition. "The trail of thought of both artists begins with a spatial experience. They both can create immersive art spaces, as well as flat hanging rectangular objects. Each visitor to the exhibition can discover for themselves whether this get-together is pleasantly harmonious or excitingly dissonant."



Morning – the brightest moment of the day. Suddenly, everything became clear and bright. Or was it my mind that became clear? 2021 Oil on canvas, 230×190 cm 15 000 EUR



Night - the darkest of all darknesses, 2021 Oil on canvas, 220×190 cm 15 000 EUR



Twilight - the way light creates darkness. At dusk, the outlines were more blurred. Contours disappeared, but I found myself instead, 2021 Oil on canvas, 145×140 cm 9 000 EUR











## Works from the solo show Shimmering Star Magenta. Was it a Dream or Was it Real?

Kogo gallery, Tartu, Estonia 14.05.2021-19.06.2021 The main theme of the exhibition was colour and the journey of colours. A journey from one place to another. Or for example, a journey home from some place. From the studio to home. Or a journey from Tallinn to Tartu or Tartu to Tallinn. Journeys are endless. Kongi considers the journey inside a person to be the main thing. Which has a beginning and an end, but everything can also be endless. Every moment has its own journey, which is mostly affected by outside forces. We are changed by the moment in which we live.

Magenta. Pure Magenta. The other colours, like chrome green, golden ochre, cadmium red, lilac, orange, indigo, etc. are bystanders. The bystanders are always mixed colours, never pure. When Kongi thinks of colours and about where colours come from, they are usually connected with specific places. Artist has usually experienced these places on the way somewhere or from somewhere.

Magenta. She can be me, but she could be you. In the exhibition, there were descriptions from morning to morning, from day to day, from spring 2020 to spring 2021 and moments from different seasons, days and hours. Kongi is interested in how we notice our surroundings. This is what she work on each day.



Strange shapes glimmered in the forest. And Magenta. She swooped beautifully under the trees. And shone like diamonds, 2020/2021 Oil on canvas, 40×40 cm 2400 EUR



The garden of colours is infinitely deep and distant, 2021 0il on canvas,  $70 \times 95 \text{ cm}$  4900 EUR



Every colour has its meaning and strength. Colours are like people. They acquire meaning through their existence. (Two sad beauties), 2021 Oil on canvas, 100×95 cm 5800 EUR



The truly genuine silence of nature seemed to recede with each day. The colours faded, 2021

Oil on canvas, 40 × 40 cm 2400 EUR





#### Works from group exhibition Let Me Dream Once More

Narva Museum Art Gallery, Narva, Estonia 18.09.2020—10.01.2021 Curated by Kristi Kongi Exhibition was dedicated to dreaming, forgetting, memory and remembering, being together and reflecting on the moment. It brought together five important contemporary Estonian artists – Merike Estna, Kristi Kongi, Kaarel Kurismaa, Holger Loodus and Anna Škodenko. The older works of the artists and the works created specifically for this exhibition were exhibited side by side, which gave the viewer the opportunity to observe the artist's work as a process that continues over time. The first higher education obtained by most artists is a painter's education, so we could essentially label this as a painting exhibition. We see classical painting, its developments in other media as well as a highly playful attitude towards colour and light.

"This exhibition is about presence, being, remembering, recalling, memory," painter and curator Kristi Kongi describes the exhibition. "Each artist creates an independent, individual narrative between other stories. At the same time, all of the works together form a complete story, a story about dreaming. When remembering the past, a new truth emerges every time. Perhaps it could be a person's vision of time, constructing their own identity. Are they thinking, being, losing themselves? The connecting link of the exhibition is the phrase used in the title: let me dream once again."

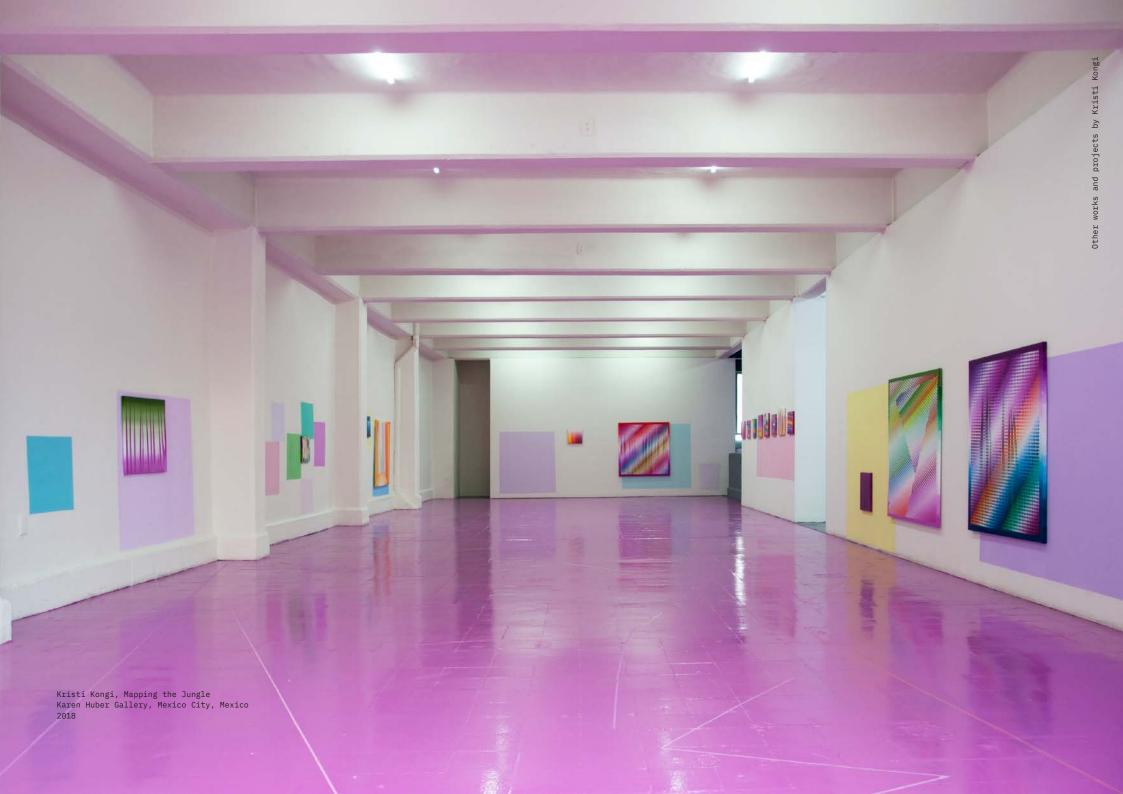


Today for a moment I felt sad that Magenta was gone. But in the evening, when Turquoise appeared, the Magenta was shining so bright again, 2020 Oil on canvas, 90 × 95 5500 EUR





Quiet but warm air in the rising nature. With Lemon Yellow light, 2020 Oil and acrylic on canvas  $100 \times 95$  cm 5800 EUR



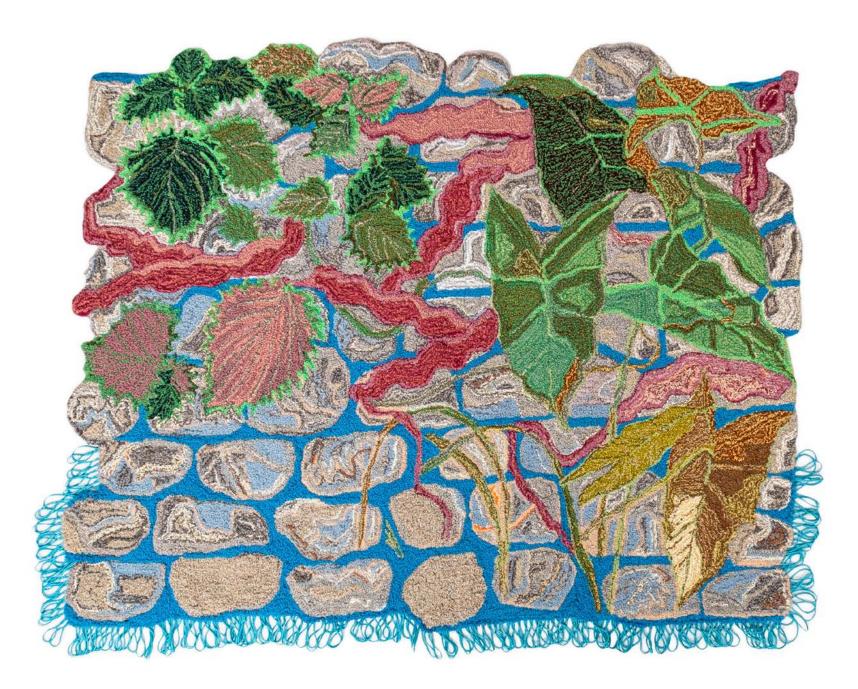


I wish I was a bird, 2012 Oil on canvas, 182×190 cm 14 000 EUR



# Other works and projects by Laura Põld

#### Vegetal Being











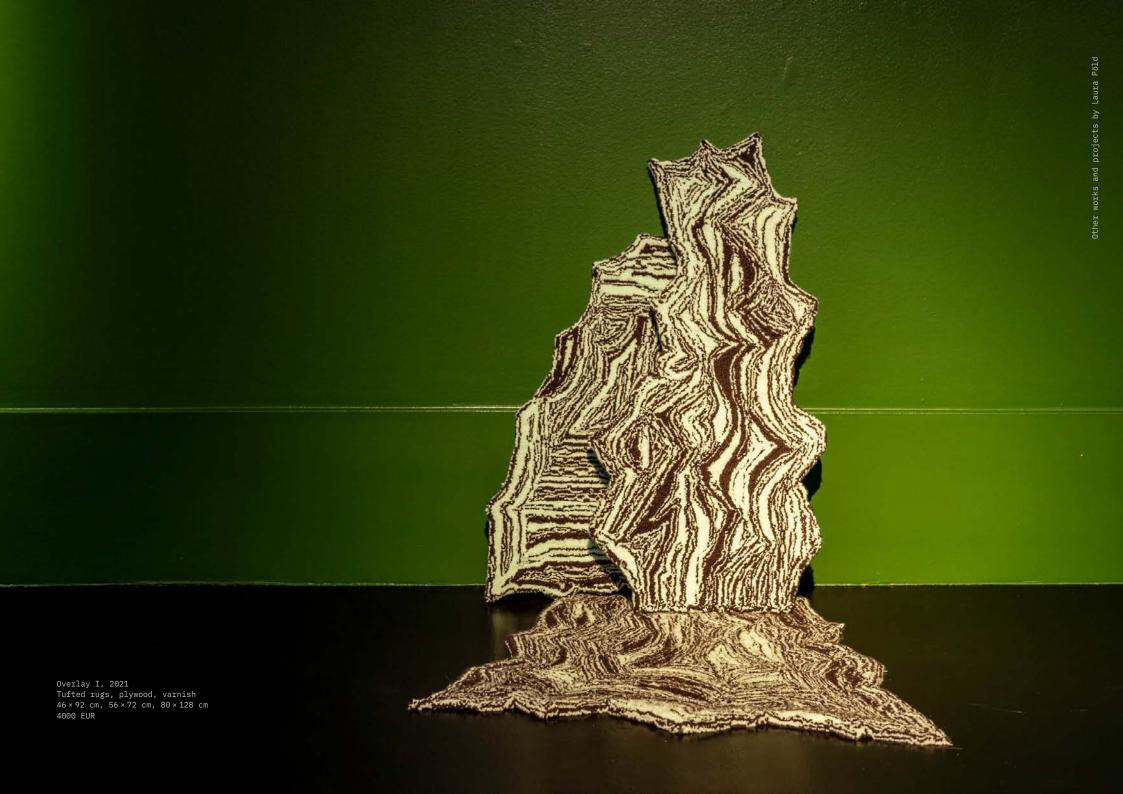


### Works from group exhibition The Bambi Project

Kogo gallery, Tartu, Estonia 27.8.2021—30.10.2021 Curated by Šelda Puķīte Almost a hundred years have passed since Felix Salten's book *Bambi: A Life In The Woods* was introduced to its first readers but the story, albeit with few outdated elements, has not lost its relevance today. Now, when discussions of environmental issues, the anthropocentric world view and climate crises have gained new momentum and online book club culture, a curious side effect of the global pandemic, has become more popular, it seems the right moment to revisit the pages of this forest tale. Together with a selected group of artists from the Baltic region, an online book club was created to read Salten's *Bambi* and contemplate how this story connects with their personal experiences, the environmental issues we are facing today and the reconnection with nature as part of the idea of a post-human world.

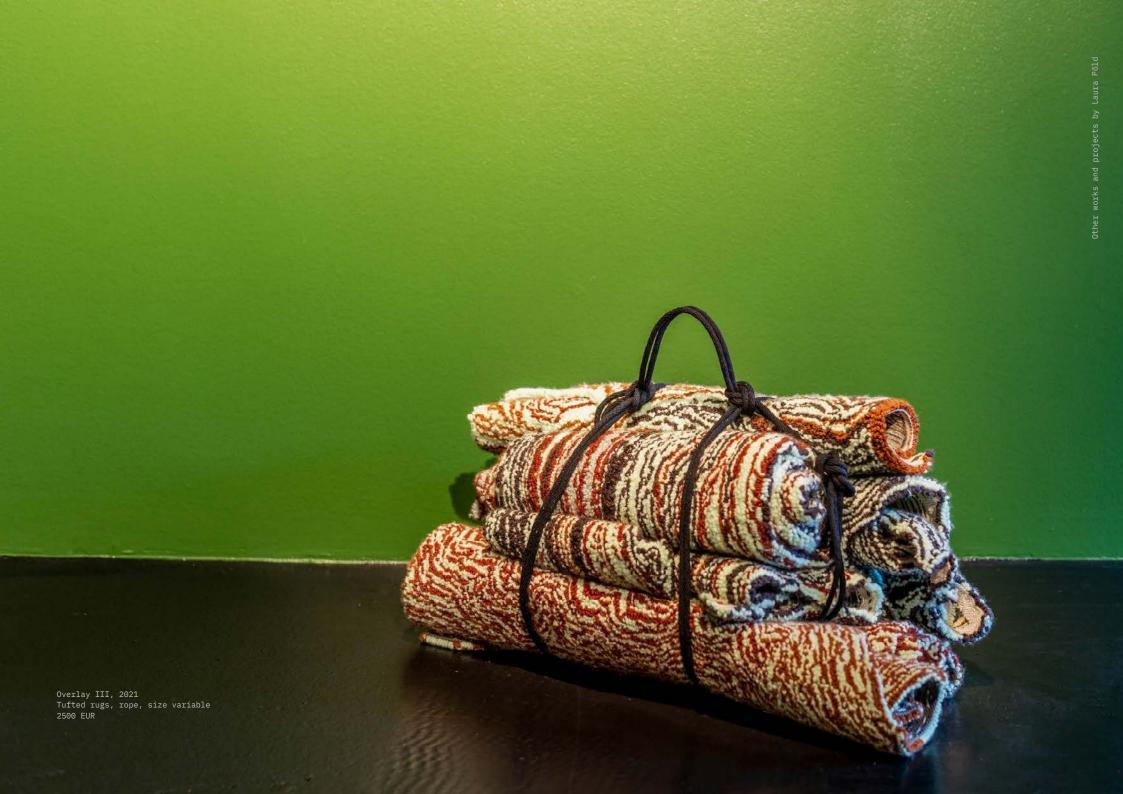
Reading Salten's **Bambi**, Laura Põld was especially moved by the parts describing the life cycle and purpose of the forest leaves. As they fall from the trees, leaves become a soft carpet that embraces the forest animals and warns them with their rustle of any approaching danger. Salten's leaves stand for the inevitability of death and birth that interconnects all the creatures in the story.

Põld has created a series of rugs with abstract shapes resembling both animal skins as well as dried leaves. The patterns of the carpets are layered and striped, turning and returning to the same place, recalling the layers of matter accumulating on the surface of the earth, a sign of the passing of time and the recurrence of the seasons. Like leaves fallen from a tree, elements from this installation were scattered here and there in the gallery, meeting other artists' works. Some of the rugs were attached to a plywood board and thus became a supporting or covering element in their own right. Some of the small rugs, however, were soft and flexible, allowing visitors to sit on them and move them around the space.













Overlay II, 2021 Tufted rugs, plywood, varnish,  $53 \times 203~\text{cm}$  4000 EUR



# Works from the exhibition Doing What They Do Best

Kunstraum Memphis, Linz, Austria 1.05.2021—1.07.2021 From a bird's eye view, the man-made landscape resembles a patchwork carpet. Traces of agricultural activities cover the earth like a huge digital pattern. Human activities to cultivate, speed up cultivation and increase yields leave behind unnatural nature. The more cultivated a region, the more geometric the patterns become; irregularities and wild growth reveal abandoned places, clutter, poverty and anarchy.

In the exhibition *Doing What They Do Best*, Laura Põld explored land use, agricultural economy and the visible consequences of human activity on the Earth's surface. One of the starting points of the exhibition was research by the first German-Baltic agricultural chemist Margarete von Wrangell (1877-1932) on plant nutrition, fertilisation and phosphate in the soil. Thoughts on terraforming, ecology and economy are combined in Põld's works to form sculptures and landscape-models. She combines a variety of materials such as clay, yarn, wood, steel and found objects, using traditional craft techniques – from carpentry to carpet making.



Foodways, 2021 Steel, plywood, wood stain, tufted rug ca 150 × 120 × 80 cm 5000 EUR









# Works from the exhibition Shedding Skin

Vaal gallery, Tallinn, Estonia 27.08.2020-10.10.2020 The exhibition **Shedding Skin** at Gallery Vaal juxtaposed Laura Põld's site-specific installation and Piret Karro's texts.

The title *Shedding Skin* refers to changing, hardening, and the need for self-creation. The dialogue between Põld and Karro took place in the context of the movement restrictions established in the course of global pandemic. Particular focus was set on the practical issues of living arrangements and cohabitation constellations as well as the survival strategies of cultural workers.

Shedding Skin focuses on the precarious life of cultural workers, and elaborates on how professional structures that provide temporary employment, education, stipends or residency positions also direct the nature of our intimate surroundings. With whom do we share our home spaces and morning coffee routines, and who bumps into us on our way to the bathroom? Often, this person is not our life partner, but a random housemate, one in the line of many. Institutional precarity creates the precarity of intimacy. One can experience their close relationships in a new place only temporarily, until they need to catch a new job opportunity in a new place. At the exhibition, this condition was elaborated on from the perspective of artists and cultural workers.







## Works from the group exhibition Premonition

Le Lieu unique, Nantes, France 21.10.2018-6.01.2019 Curated by Kati Ilves **Premonition** was commissioned for the exhibition "Descending from the liquid horizon" at Le Lieu unique, Nantes, curated by Kati Ilves.

"The artist and theorist Hito Steyerl has found data to be the new tool for survival, which, considering the choice of vocabulary, will place us at the dawn of a new epoch. Terms like data "farming" and "harvesting", "mining" and "extraction" are all rather pastoral, allowing the current era to be defined as Data Neolithic and place us - the current inhabitants - in a state of transformation. The recent dystopian sci-fi trilogy Hunger Games created a post-apocalyptic high tech realm, where people of the lower classes hunted and gathered for survival while using developed platforms for communication. Mixtures of the archaic and contemporary are symptomatic of the current day: we are farming, harvesting, mining and excavating again for new material, partially out of fear and uncertainty, but also because these activities were built into our genetic survival kits millennia ago. "Excavating" the past describes Laura Põld's practice as well. She used archaic materials, such as clay, reeds and wool, in a pottery-based installation. Her site-specific work takes architecture into consideration: the former LU biscuit factory building is rich in architectural layers and Põld works from its red brick wall. Blending this specific aesthetics with ancient warrior masks and warfare-related objects, Põld's created zone blends the dichotomies of the archaic and contemporary, domestic and public, and war and peace. Her works could serve as a monument of the in between, pregnant with speculations, references and prophecies." - Kati Ilves



Transverse (Mask). From the installation Premonition, 2018 Ceramics,  $85\times50\times20$  cm Photo by Kristina Õllek 4000 EUR





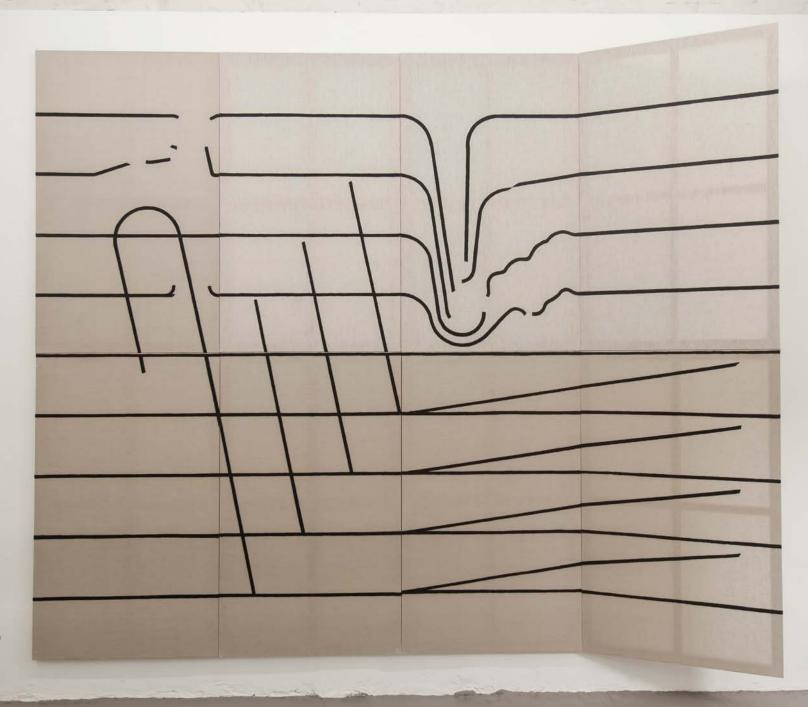
The Saucer-Eyed Mask. From the installation Premonition, 2018 Ceramics, 60 × 30 × 20 cm Photo by Kristina Õllek 4300 EUR



#### Works from the group exhibition How to: Live. Virtual Biographies

Estonian Contemporary Art Museum (EKKM), Tallinn, Estonia 29.09.2018-4.11.2018 Curated by Marika Agu **How to: Live. Virtual Biographies** was an exhibition and collaboration between artists Ingrid Allik, Dre Britton and Laura Põld.

"How to live? Three artists - Ingrid Allik (b. 1958), Dre Britton (b. 1991) and Laura Põld (b. 1984) - answer this question by presenting objects inspired from domestic spaces and their personal lives. The artists propose a room which is suitable for sustaining and supporting an individual, and what such a space might consist of. It's precisely the objects contained within the room (even if they are artworks themselves) that help us reconstruct ways of living and imaginary or specific activities, and bring to light details from their biographies. In part, the objects on display at this group exhibition pretend to proceed from a utilitarian function, but they fail in this. As they are exhibited in a museum, they are an amplified reference point to something virtual - potential, imagined - and thus, as objects, anything but practical. In the exhibition, which takes up two rooms on the ground floor of the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (EKKM), the work of each artist is derived from an incremental scale of measurement, thus entering into a symbiotic relationship with their formal composition." - Marika Agu



Layout of the Year, 2018 Embroidery, linen, wooden stretcher (8 modules) 300 × 360 cm Photo by Alan Proosa 8000 EUR





Object of Attachment, 2018 Ceramics, 60×20×20 cm Photo by Alan Proosa 2000 EUR



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Location:

The Widget Factory
(Aparaaditehas)
Kastani 42, 50410 Tartu,
Estonia

Open:

Wed-Fri, 13:00-19:00 Sat, 13:00-18:00 And by appointment

### About Kogo gallery

Kogo is a contemporary art gallery that opened at The Widget Factory in Tartu, Estonia in the spring of 2018, and is aimed at improving the international visibility of artists and introducing their art practice more broadly.

The name of Kogo gallery comes from the Võru language and means "all of", "together" or "collection". For us, Kogo means collecting, experiencing and coming together as a community.

At the centre of Kogo's diverse exhibition programme are artists' solo projects and exhibitions created in collaboration with artists and curators. Kogo is committed to supporting free creative expression, interdisciplinarity, imagination and innovative ideas in art, as well as initiating and maintaining creative relationships and uniting the community of artists and art enthusiasts.

We consider it important to encourage dialogue through contemporary art in order to promote discussion on issues that are relevant in society. We have organised various events to accompany the exhibitions held at Kogo gallery, including artist talks, lectures, guided tours, screenings, concerts, book presentations and art performances, involving physicists, philosophers, environmental activists, legal experts, ethnologists, writers, musicians, performers etc.

The programme is mainly created by making direct proposals to artists and curators, but also through open calls, which allow us to find international collaborative projects and include young artists. The gallery is also open to proposals that are conceptually and technically well considered and site-specific.