

Kris Lemsalu

Kris Lemsalu (b. 1985) is an artist based in New York and Tallinn. She studied at the Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn; Danmarks Designskole, Copenhagen; and the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna.

Working primarily with ceramics, Lemsalu creates multilayered installations that combine fragile porcelain forms cast as body parts or items of clothing with natural materials such as fur, leather, or wool. These assemblages often serve as stages for her performances, in which sculptures become costumes or props. She frequently collaborates with musicians, integrating live music and performance into her practice, with projects presented at Performa Biennial, New York; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Kai Art Center, Tallinn; and High Line Art, New York.

Lemsalu's recent exhibitions include Nirvana, Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn (2025); On the Absurd Drama That is Also Life, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2024); Holly Hell Ooo, Magazin 4, Bregenz (2024); Chará, Belvedere 21, Vienna (2024); Donatella, Tartu Art Museum, Tartu (2024); One Foot in Gravy, Margot Samel, New York (2024); Rinky Dink Babe, Kendall Koppe, Glasgow (2022); Angels Gone Pissing, Temnikova & Kasela Gallery, Tallinn (2022); Love Stories, Meyer Kainer, Vienna (2022); A Snail's Tale, High Line Art, New York (2021); Love Song Sing-Along, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2020); Love Song Sing Along (Once Again With Feeling!), Kai Art Center, Tallinn (2020); the Estonian Pavilion, 58th Venice Biennial (2019); Biker, Bride, Builder, Businesswoman and Baby, Tramway, Glasgow (2019); Keys Open Doors, Secession, Vienna (2018); 4LIFE, Goldsmiths CCA, London (2018); The Wild Ones, Koppe Astner, Glasgow (2017–2018); and Evian Desert, Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin (2012).

Her work has also been presented in major group exhibitions, including Metamorphosis. Art in Europe Now, Fondation Cartier, Paris (2019); Up to and Including Limits, Muzeum Susch, Zürich (2019); There and Back Again, Kiasma, Helsinki (2018); Diversity United, Moscow–Berlin–Paris (2021); and THE PARTY. Between representation and turmoil, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna (2022).

Merike Estna

Merike Estna (b. 1980) lives and works in Tallinn and Mexico City. She is to represent Estonia at 61st Venice Biennale in 2026. A participant in the performance art scene associated with

Academia Non Grata, an alternative art school in Estonia in the early 2000s, Estna later acquired formal art education at the Estonian Academy of Arts, where she graduated with a BA in painting and a MA in interdisciplinary arts. Estna relocated to London in 2007, where she completed an MFA programme in Art Practice at Goldsmiths College in 2009.

Estna's practice is primarily focused on the processes of painting, approaching the artwork as an integral part of life rather than it being about life. Borrowing patterns and colour combinations from applied arts and crafts, vocabularies which traditionally have not been accepted in the visual language of painting, her work challenges the masculine territory of painting and questions the strict separation between the two discourses. Initially applying patterns and treatments to canvases, Estna gradually progressed to cover clothes, objects, and entire spaces as her research into colour and acts of painting expanded. In 2026, Merike Estna will represent Estonia at the 61st Venice Biennale, further solidifying her position in contemporary painting discourse.

Estna's work has been exhibited internationally in solo and group exhibitions including "Ocean", curated by Maria Arusoo, Tartu Art Museum, "Peradam", Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn (2024), "Analog Mountain", Margot Samel Gallery, New York (2023), "Soil Will Not Contain Our Love", Kai Art Center, Tallinn (2022), "Talk to Me Softly, When the World is Fading Away", Karen Huber Gallery, Mexico City (2022), "Memory Shop", curated by Nicolas Bourriaud at Fundación Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido, Mexico (2022), "Bitácoras", at Fundación Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido, Mexico (2022), "The House of the Tragic Poet", Bosse & Baum, London (2021), "Borderlessness", with Jaime Lobato, Hasanlu Armastajad, Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn (2021), "Nightfall / Videvik", Publics, Helsinki (2021), "Ghost of the Future, Filled With Memories of Past", Moderna Museet, Malmö (2019), "Mother of Pearls", Karen Huber, Mexico City (2019), "Dawn of the Swarm", Bosse & Baum, London (2018), "Disposable Gloves Guide", kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga (2018), "Soft Scrub, Hard Body, Liquid Presence", with Maria Metsalu, curated by Maria Arusoo, Art in General, New York (2017–2018), "Fragments from the Shattered Toe", curated by Thomas Cuckle, Kunstraum, London (2017), "Red Herring", Chart Social, Copenhagen (2017), "Doublethink: Double Vision", curated by Alistair Hicks, Pera Museum, Istanbul (2017), "The Seed Can Be Initialized Randomly II", with Ana Cardoso, Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn (2017); "Memorial", Estonian Embassy, London (2016); "The Seed Can Be Initialized Randomly", with Ana Cardoso, Múrias Centeno, Porto (2016); "Domesticmindcraft", Karen Huber gallery, Mexico City (2016); "Genialmythcraft", Palermo Galerie, Stuttgart (2015); "Corporate Jungle", Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn (2015); "Blue Lagoon", KUMU Art Museum, Tallinn (2014).