

INTERVIEW WITH KARO SZMIT

I went to the capital of Estonia, Tallinn, within the URBAN INTERVENTIONS project, in 2009, for five months. This time has been extremely productive and inspiring to me. My host, associate of the cooperation partner the European Capital of Culture 2011, introduced me to people that had a great network within the art institutions of Tallinn.

My first artistic input was an invitation to take part of the "Plektrum Festival", a festival for media and develop an artistic project for the public space. The media-art-lab, where my studio was located, has been the co-host of the festival. The media-art-lab again was situated in the "Kulturfabrik Polymer" building, which is a studio house for art institutions.

The head of the media-art-lab, Piibe Piirma, was my main contact in Tallinn. She invited me to a collective exhibition, curated by her, which I produce a new work for. I met Piibe again while she had her residency in the "Atelierhaus Salzamt" in Linz. I also met Marge Paas, head of the "Plektrum Festival" that is connected to the "Ars Electronica" festival, again in Linz.

I got to know the artist Ernes Truely through the local artist platform "Art Container" which was also located in the "Kulturfabrik Polymer". He made it possible, that I could take part of the art event "Global Container", which is held on a regular basis. Therefore I developed a performance. Since "Art Container" is hosting international artists in residence as well, and I was working in the same building, I was involved in its activities. As a guest lecturer at the Academy of Arts Tallinn, Ernest Truely invited me to show my work in front of his students.

I was very close to the former head of the "Kulturfabrik Polymer", Martin Rünk and his assistant, a French diplomat. I visited a language course, at the Academy of Arts, together with her. Everyone I met during my residency gave me a warm welcome and supported me very well.

It was a very positive experience to meet the founder of Skype, because of my project for the "Plektrum Festival" dealing with the communication tool, and he guided me through the office in Tallinn.

A short while ago, a year after my residency, a London based doctorand from Estonia contacted me, after he found one of my Tallinn oriented works on the Internet. He was researching an urban phenomenon that I also used for my work, and he will deal with it within his dissertation.

I can say, without overstatement, that the time I spent in Tallinn was a highlight in my present artistic career. Framed with maximum of inspiring and lasting connections and a lot of artistic output. I am not yet finished with all the collected material and ideas, and I am planning on another residency.

