

Gregor Taul

PhD candidate, free-lance art and architecture writer

Born in Tallinn, Estonia 31 October 1986

Married, father of two

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EDUCATION

- 2016 - ... Universidade Católica Portuguesa, PhD candidate in Culture Studies
- 2011 St Petersburg Institute of Technology and Design – exchange studies
Art theory, history of Russian art, Russian language
- 2009 - 2012 Estonian Academy of arts, MA in Art History and Visual Studies
*MA Thesis 'Monumental Changes at the Liberty Square 2001-2011.
Monuments and Sculptures'*
- 2005 - 2009 Tartu University, BA in Semiotics and Culture Studies
Minor field of study – Museum Studies
BA thesis 'Museology From The Point Of View Of Semiotics Of Art'
- 1993 - 2005 Tallinn School No 21

MASTER'S THESIS

Tallinn's Liberty Square has been considered the political and ideological centre of Estonia from the 1920s. Throughout the XX century it experienced the coming and going of dozens of public monuments, which represented the nucleus of the ideologies which had erected them. In my work I focus on the years 2001 to 2011 when the square acquired its present form and the highly controversial liberty cross or the War of Independence Victory Column was inaugurated. The methodology of my research is adopted from Tartu-Moscow semiotic school, namely Juri Lotman's semiotics of culture and Peeter Torop's semiotics of translation. Referring to Lotman's seminal concept of text I argue that not only the monuments and sculptures could be 'read' as texts, but equally the Liberty Square as a whole is a text – which in turn is part of a larger text, namely the Estonian culture. I consider Tallinn's Liberty Square to be a highly semiotic text, which operates as a language in relation to which memory and identity related texts are coded. To put it in a nutshell: what ever is constructed – or not allowed to be constructed – in the Liberty Square tells a lot about the general spatial and identity-related issues in Estonia.

Supervisor: MA Ingrid Ruudi; Opponent: PhD Virve Sarapik; Mark: *approbatur*

ACADEMIC INTERESTS

Sculpture, monuments, murals, public art, public sphere, architecture, art and visual culture of Late Soviet societies, Eastern Europe, contemporary art, curating, cultural semiotics.

BOOKS

- 2017 Gregor Taul and Paul Kuimet (photographer), *Notes on Space. Estonian Monumental Painting 1873–2012*, Tallinn: Lagemik, 2017; PDF: <https://goo.gl/rv97TN>
- 2016 Gregor Taul, *Estonian National Museum. Essay on Spatial Culture*, Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2016. Published as a separate book in Estonian: Gregor Taul, *Eesti Rahva Muuseum. Essee ruumikultuurist*, Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2016; PDF: <https://goo.gl/3vdFUt>
- 2016 Gregor Taul (editor and compiler), *Mikoff. Sculptures*, Tartu: Tartu Art Museum, 2016. Bilingual Estonian-English catalogue of the retrospective exhibition of Mare Mikoff curated by me at Tartu Art Museum; PDF: <https://goo.gl/vqC6FZ>
- 2013 Gregor Taul (editor and compiler), *Lost in Space. Art Academies' Galleries*, Tallinn: KUNO, 2013. Catalogue of the jubilee exhibition of association of Nordic and Baltic Art Academies I curated by me at Konstfack Art College Stockholm; PDF: <https://goo.gl/RYR7pa>
- 2013 Gregor Taul (editor and compiler), *TASE'13. EKA lõputööde näituse kataloog*, Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2013. Catalogue (in Estonian) of the final degree show of students of Estonian Academy of Arts curated by me; PDF: <https://goo.gl/ZMFPXG>

ACADEMIC PAPERS

- 2018 Gregor Taul, *Architecture in the memory field: Estonian National Museum's case*, Acta Academiae Artium Vilmensis. Forthcoming peer-reviewed article first presented as a paper in the international conference '(De)Coded History in Architecture' to be published in the proceedings of the conference
- 2018 Gregor Taul, *Eesti kunsti ajalugu. 1940–1991. II osa* (History of Estonian Art. 1940–1991. II part), Studies on Art and Architecture. Forthcoming peer-reviewed review article of the recent publication of History of Estonian Art's fifth volume
- 2017 Gregor Taul, *One Percent for Art. Strategies for Contemporary Public Art in Estonia*, Public Art in the Digital Creativity Era. Paper published in the proceedings

of the conference 'Public Art in the Digital Creativity Era' which took place at School of Arts, Catholic University of Portugal, Porto

- 2016 Gregor Taul, *Monumentaalmaal* (Monumental painting), Eesti kunsti ajalugu. 1940– 1991. II osa (History of Estonian Art. 1940–1991. II part). Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, pp. 231–239. Article about Estonian mural painting published in the sixth volume of Estonian Art History

ART AND ARCHITECTURE CRITICISM, WRITINGS ON CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES

Since 2009 I have published more than 150 articles on art, architecture, art education and public space in Estonian, Russian, Latvian and Lithuanian newspapers, journals and art criticism blogs; all of my writings can be found from my homepage gregortaul.ee. Besides criticism I have written essays for various art and architecture exhibition catalogues. A selection of writings in English:

- 2017 Gregor Taul, *A Laboratory for Symbols. Reflections on Today's Europe*, Estonian Art, 2; <https://goo.gl/GTvmVo>
- 2017 Gregor Taul, *Dismantling the Binary Pillars of Knowledge. The Transformation of Interior Architecture Studies by Professor Hannes Praks*, Estonian Art, 1; <https://goo.gl/aiup1o>
- 2015 Gregor Taul, *Art Life Outside the Capital City*, Estonian Art, 2; <https://goo.gl/KjnnKg>
- 2014 Gregor Taul, *Safe periphery*, Maja, 2, 2014; <https://goo.gl/HtUyrh>
- 2014 Gregor Taul, *Unprecedented percentage*, Kunst.ee, 2; <https://goo.gl/MQ6mD4>
- 2013 Gregor Taul, *Võru's Pacifier*, Urbanists Review, 14; <https://goo.gl/AZ9GVq>
- 2013 Gregor Taul, *About Writing to the Air: Tetsuo Kondo Architects*, catalogue text for the public art festival Lift11 publication; <https://goo.gl/wLxWJu>
- 2012 Gregor Taul, *Some paragraphs on Art Allmägi and young sculpture in Estonia*, Artishok, 26.3.2012; <https://goo.gl/Fdj21s>

ACADEMIC WORK

- 2014 - 2017 Fixed-term lecturer at Estonian Academy of Arts spatial design dep.
- 2017 winter semester bachelors' course "Outsider architecture"
 - 2015 and 2016 winter semester bachelors' course "The Horrific Urban"
 - 2015 and 2016 winter semester bachelors' course "Diary, Sense, Hand"
 - 2014 and 2015 winter semester masters' course "Semiotics of Space"

- 2015 - 2016 Fixed-term lecturer at Estonian Academy of Arts design faculty
- 2015 and 2016 winter semester masters' course "*Public Art*"
- 2014 - 2015 Fixed-term lecturer at Tartu University's Viljandi Culture Academy
- 2-semester long bachelors' course "*Spatial Relations of the Performative World*"
- 2014 - 2015 Fixed-term lecturer at Tartu University's Viljandi Culture Academy
- 2-semester long masters course "*Methodology of Performing Arts*"
- 2013 Fixed-term lecturer at Konstfack University College of Arts, Craft and Design, Stockholm
– *One-week workshop "Lost in Space"*
- 2013 Fixed-term lecturer at Estonian Academy of Arts' graphic design dep.
– *Tutor of mid-summer workshop "Isolation"*
- 2013 Fixed-term lecturer at Estonian Academy of Arts'
- 2-semester long masters course "*Art History in Estonia and Beyond*" for foreign students
- 2011 - 2013 Fixed-term lecturer at Estonian Academy of Arts' graphic design department
- 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 2-semester long bachelors course "*Visual Semiotics*"

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

- 2016 - ... Free-lance tour-guide in Lisbon
- 2014 - 2016 Director and curator of Museum of Outsider Art, Viljandi
- 2014 - 2015 Art history teacher at Viljandi High School
- 2014 - 2016 Art history teacher at Viljandi Hobby School
- 2012 Editor and presenter of "Ministry of Art" radio show (Estonian Public Broadcasting)
- 2011 - 2013 Gallerist of Estonian Academy of Arts
- 2011 - 2012 Editor of St Petersburg-based architectural journal Project Baltia
- 2008 - 2009 Programme manager of Tartu Art Factory
- 2007 - 2008 Sales assistant in Oxfam Books and Music, London
- 2003 - ... Free-lance, fully-licensed tour-guide in Tallinn and Northern-Estonia

CURATORIAL WORK

- 2017 *5/5*, A project by the MA and PhD students in Culture Studies at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa and Carpe Diem Arte e Pesquisa (3.3–18.3.2017)
- 2016 *Mikoff. Sculptures*, Mare Mikoff's retrospective at the Tartu Art Museum (6.6–19.9.2016)
- 2015 *Burning Borders* (co-curated Laineli Parrest) International Performance Art Festival in Viljandi (5.-7.6. 2015)
- 2014 - 2016 During the three years as the curator of the outsider art museum I curated 18 exhibitions
- 2013 *Lost in Space. Art Academies' Galleries*, Vita Havet Gallery of Konstfack University College of Arts, Craft and Design, Stockholm (14.-20.10 2013)
- 2013 *Ekadence*, (co-curated by Marten Esko, Siim-Ghert Preiman) 1st of May Gallery (13.-28.4.2014)
- 2013 *Augustas Serapinas "GYM"*, Raja gallery (19.-23.6 2013). Solo show of young Lithuanian artist

CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA (organizer)

- 2018 VII Graduate Conference in Culture Studies *Alterity and the Research Imagination*. Organizing and moderating the conference with Amani Mahoub (25.-26.1.2018); <https://goo.gl/9vAxb3>
- 2017 Annual conference of the Association of Estonian Art Historians and Curators "One Percent for Art: Then, Now and in the Future". Organizing and moderating the conference (21.12.2017)

CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA (presenter)

- 2017 *Monumental painting in Soviet Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*, Humboldt University, Berlin. Presentation of PhD project at the "International Forum for Doctoral Candidates in East European Art History" (28.4.2017)
- 2017 *One Percent For Art. Strategies For Contemporary Public Art In Estonia*, Catholic University of Portugal, Porto. Presentation at international conference "Public Art in the Digital Creativity Era" (27.4.2017)

- 2017 *Art academies' galleries. Examples from the Nordic and Baltic Countries*, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon. International round-table "Making space for arts based research: Considering the relationship between artistic projects and universities" (7.3.2017)
- 2017 *Twentieth-century mural painting from Socialist and Capitalist Peripheries*, Nova University, Lisbon. Presentation at the international seminar "Art in the Periphery", (6.3.2017)
- 2016 *History in the Making: Estonian National Museum's case*, Vilnius Academy of Arts. Presentation at the international conference "(De)Coded History in Architecture" (14.5.2016)
- 2016 *Contemporary artist Johann Köler (1823–1899)*, Tartu University. Presentation at the international conference dedicated to the 190th anniversary of Johann Köler (7.3.2016)
- 2015 *Sculpture in Public Space*, Kilometre of Sculpture Public Art Festival. Moderator of an international roundtable talk (5.7.2015)
- 2015 *EKA, KAKA, BAKA, RÄKA*, Estonian Academy of Arts. Presentation at the conference dedicated to the future of higher art education (11.6.2015)
- 2014 *Public Art Now and Then*, Estonian Ministry of Culture. Presentation at a conference dedicated to the 'One Percent Public Art Law' (23.4.2014)
- 2013 *Do we Speak the Same Language?*, Estonian Parliament. Presentation at the conference dedicated to the 25th year of Estonian independence movement (7.9.2013)
- 2012 *Artist Critic Talk*, Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia. Open talk with photographer Ats Parve (16.10.2012)
- 2011 *A Few Remarks on Urban Photography*, Museum of Estonian Architecture. Presentation at a conference dedicated to the Noorderlicht photography prize (9.12.2011)
- 2011 *Self-published Biography*, Asterisk bookstore. Presentation at a symposium dedicated to independent publishing (29.7.2011)
- 2011 *Art on the Streets of St Petersburg*, Society of Estonian Semioticians. Presentation at a seminar dedicated to urbanism (18.5.2011)

CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA, SUMMER SCHOOLS (participant)

- 2017 "Socialist Internationalism & the Global Contemporary", Leibniz-Institut für Geschichte und Kultur des östlichen Europa (GWZO) (23-25. 11.2017)

- 2017 Nida Doctoral School “Tweezers & Squeezers: Methodological Approaches and Research Methods in Art, Design and Architecture”, Vilnius Academy of Arts Nida Art Colony (21–26.8.2017)
- 2017 VII Lisbon Summer School for the Study of Culture "Global Translations", Universidade Católica Portuguesa (26.6–1.7.2017)
- 2016 Association of Art Historians Annual Conference, Edinburgh (7.–9.4.2016)
- 2016 "Genius Loci: Places and Meanings", The Department of Heritage Science and Techniques at the Faculty of Arts, University of Porto (20.-22.4.2016)
- 2015 "Object Lessons: Sculpture and the Production of Knowledge", Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (3.10.2015)

COMMITTEES

- 2016 Jury member of the art commission for Hiiumaa High School
- 2014 - 2016 Member of the Board of Governors of the Viljandi Hobby School
- 2014 Jury member of Estonian young artist prize
- 2013 Jury member of Estonian young sculpture prize
- 2012 - 2013 Jury member of Estonian Ministry of Culture's committee of non-profit art galleries
- 2015 Jury member of the art commission for Ministry of Agriculture Office

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Art in the Periphery, from 2017

Centro de Estudos de Comunicaço e Cultura, Catholic University of Portugal, from 2017

The Estonian Society of Art Historians and Curators, from 2014

Tallinn Tour Guide Association, from 2004

ACADEMIC SUPERVISING

- 2018 Anu Soojärv, *Commissioning monumetal-decorative art in late Soviet Estonia*, Estonian Academy of Arts, Department of Cultural Heritage and Conservation, MA thesis
- 2017 Elina Kask, *Memory and Form: Memorial Sites Impact on Contemporary Space. The Past, Present and Future of the Maarjamäe War Memorial in Tallinn*, Estonian Academy of Arts, Department of Urban Studies, MA thesis
- 2017 Karolin Tamm, *Alasti valgus* (Naked Light), Tartu University's Viljandi Culture Academy, Department of Performing Arts, seminar paper
- 2016 Laura Pormeister, *Public Art in Industrial Space*, Tartu University of Applied Sciences, Department of Restauration and Conservation, final degree work (equal to 4 years BA thesis)
- 2014 Kadri Noormets, *Space for Organized Concentration*, Estonian Academy of Arts, Department of Performance Art, MA thesis
- 2011 Jaanika Kolk, *Skulptuurilaev* (Sculpture-Ship), Tartu University of Applied Sciences, Department of Sculpture, final degree work (equal to 4 years BA thesis)

ACADEMIC REVIEWS

- 2017 Member of the Estonian Research Council's jury for the Estonian National Contest for University Students (reviewing three BA and MA theses)
- 2016 Martha Stewart, *Keraamiline linnuskulptuur Kõue mõisa*" (Ceramic bird sculpture for Kõue manor, Estonian Academy of Arts, Department of Ceramics, MA thesis
- 2016 Liisa Liksor, *Theatre technical arts' exhibition "(R)EVOLUTION" from the idea to the realization*, Tartu University's Viljandi Culture Academy, Department of Performing Arts, BA thesis
- 2015 Age Linkmann, *Skulpturaalsus tantsus* (The Sculptural in Dance), Tartu University's Viljandi Culture Academy, Department of Performing Arts, seminar paper
- 2014 Kaie Küünal, *Tantsukriitika tendentsid Eestis oktoobrist 2012 kuni oktoobrini 2013* (Tendencies of Dance Criticism in Estonia from October 2012 to October 2013), Tartu University's Viljandi Culture Academy, Department of Performing Arts, seminar paper

AWARDS and GRANTS

- 2017 EDP Foundation International Grant for the Lisbon Consortium aimed at funding research conducted by an international PhD student in the Culture Studies program
- 2017 Visual and Applied Art Endowment of The Cultural Endowment of Estonia, one year study grant
- 2017 Architecture Endowment of The Cultural Endowment of Estonia, one year study grant
- 2017 The Estonian Society of Art Historians and Curators, research stipend
- 2017 Estonian Ministry of Culture's State Culture Award for PhD studies
- 2016 Visual and Applied Art Endowment of The Cultural Endowment of Estonia, one year study grant
- 2016 Architecture Endowment of The Cultural Endowment of Estonia, one year study grant
- 2016 Architecture Endowment of The Cultural Endowment of Estonia, annual architecture criticism stipend
- 2016 Estonian Ministry of Culture's State Culture Award for PhD studies
- 2015 The Estonian Society of Art Historians and Curators, research stipend
- 2014 Visual and Applied Art Endowment of The Cultural Endowment of Estonia, one-year creative grant
- 2011 Visual and Applied Art Endowment of The Cultural Endowment of Estonia, one year study grant
- 2010 Tallinn City Government's one year study grant

ARTISTIC PROJECTS

- 2015 Performance with Evi Pärn at the Estonian Opinion Festival (11.08.2015)
- 2013 Participation as an artist in the exhibition *Ekadents* in the 1st of May gallery (12–28.04.2013)
- 2014 Participation as an artist in the exhibition *Lima* in Y gallery (7.–18.04.2009)

LANGUAGES

Estonian – mother tongue

English – excellent in speech and writing

Finnish – good in speech, basic in writing

Russian – good in speech, basic in writing

German – satisfactory in speech / I read with the help of dictionary

Portuguese – beginner in speech / I read with the help of dictionary

HOBBIES and INTERESTS

Besides reading and writing – my first novel is to be published later this year – I love co-operating with other people and working for the community. In my homeland I have a bit of a reputation for initiating whole-city flea-markets wherever I move (Tallinn, Tartu, Viljandi). I believe that these Sundays, when the whole city becomes a flea-market is an ideal way for bringing people together and building trust within neighborhoods. Before becoming a father I used to organize concerts and was regularly performing as a DJ around Estonia. From an early age I have been drawn to collecting stuff, I possess an unusual collection of classical and contemporary artworks, rare books, records and manuscripts (an idea, which I lent from Stefan Zweig).

Lisbon,
December 2017