



Young
European
Sculpture

YES MASTERCLASS #3

Art Academy of Latvia, Kuldīga - Latvia

September 23th to September 27th, 2024 (Sept. 22th and Sept 28th are travel days)





«Amplifying Voices and Challenging Power»: props and sculptures for a exhibition.

«All knowledge is local, all truth is partial (...).»

Ursula K. Le Guin (1995), “A Man of the People”, in Four Ways to Forgiveness

«We teach what we know, he thought, and all our knowledge is local.»

Ursula K. Le Guin (1995), “A Man of the People”, in Four Ways to Forgiveness

We are excited to invite you to the upcoming YES MASTERCLASS Art Camp, hosted by the Art Academy of Latvia from September 23 to 27, 2024. This immersive program will feature four hands-on experimental workshops, fieldwork, talks, and assemblies, all led by experts in sculpture, art, curatorial practices, and social activism.

Under the guidance of renowned sculptor and professor Gļebs Panteļejevs, the YES MASTERCLASS will offer a unique opportunity to collaborate with prominent artists including prof. Aigars Bikse, Art.D. Egons Peršēvics, asoc.prof. Kristians Brekte, and sculptor and animation artist Liene Mackus. Together, we will explore new dimensions of artistic creation and critical discourse.

The central aim of the art camp is to create innovative props and sculptures for a exhibition, while collectively shaping a curatorial manifesto that engages with Europe’s evolving values and urgent challenges. At the intersection of diversity, inequality, hope, and fear, we’ll explore new ways of collective action in today’s shifting landscape.

We look forward to your participation and the unique contributions you will bring to this transformative experience.



From 23 to 27 september 2024, the Art Academy of Latvia, will host YES MASTERCLASS third camp, comprised of in person four experimental workshops, field work, talks, and assemblies, led by professionals in the field of sculpture, art, curatorial practices and social activism.

YES MASTERCLASS Art Camp will be conducted by sculptor and professor of sculpture at the Art Academy of Latvia Gļebs Panteļejevs. Creative workshop will be lead by sculptors prof. Aigars Bikse, Art.D. Egons Peršēvics, asoc.prof. Kristians Brekte and sculptor and a animation artist Liene Mackus.

YES MASTERCLASS Art Camp main goal is to create props and sculptures for a exhibition and a collective curatorial manifesto that critically mirrors Europe's core values, pressing issues and modes of existence (2018, Latour).

The “idea of Europe” is in constant flux. Understanding Europe as an intrinsic “coordination of differences”, as Montesquieu reminds us, or “Europe as Borderland”, as Etienne Balibar (2009) emphasizes, how can we act together despite all inequalities, distances, beliefs, hopes and fears?

Methodologically, this art camp will engage with the concepts of reversed flux and situated knowledge (from local to global, periphery to center). We propose to analyze the old town of Kuldīga (resident population 10,448). Located in the west of Latvia at the confluence of the Venta and Alekšupīte rivers in the central part of Kurzeme, approximately 150 kilometers west of Riga. First mentioned in historical documents in 1242, Kuldīga has been part of the Hanseatic League since 1368. Kuldīga can be grateful for its importance in Hanseatic trade mainly to the Venta River, which provided the most convenient transportation of goods from the port of Ventspils to the inland areas at that time. Until recently, land roads were often in very poor condition, and land transport was slow, unsafe and expensive. Therefore, the location by the waterway provided Kuldīga with an opportunity to engage in Hanseatic trade. In addition, the Rumba waterfall was an insurmountable barrier for boats, so goods had to be reloaded in Kuldīga and this “forced” mediation provided the town with an active commercial life.



Local products were brought to the town by land from the surrounding area: corn, flax, hemp, wax, honey, etc., which traders could then transport to Ventspils by river, reload in suitable ships and export to Western Europe. Western European goods destined for the domestic market were transported in the opposite direction: fabrics, salt, salted fish, which were so important in the Middle Ages for their religious beliefs, from the Swedish coast or the North Sea; later also luxury (wines, precious stones) and colonial goods (spices). Since 2023 the old town of Kuldīga is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Based on this context, we want to reflect upon broader challenges facing Europe in relation to the cultural heritage, environment, capitalism, sustainability, social and climate justice, civic engagement, possible threats to liberty, diversity and democracy. To put forward these approaches and drive content and experiences from our YES MASTERCLASS Art Camp we will collaborate with local agents that either represent municipality, digital innovation center manager and a master piano builder whose life's work has redefined the boundaries of acoustic piano design.

The workshop will be held at the Art & Creativity Cluster Adatu Fabrika (Needle Factory). The participants will be gathered through their main subject affinities in smaller work groups, each working in its specific location Adatu Fabrika, Mākslas Nams, Kalku kvartāls and Pils iela, that, in the end, will tend to unstable, plural and incomplete representations of the YES MASTERCLASS Art Camp props and sculptures for an exhibition and a collective curatorial manifesto, which can crossover, defy, reiterate and bend toward each other.

In times of global crises, whether conflicts or disasters, artists play a crucial role in reflecting the experiences of communities. Yet, they often face significant repercussions for their work. In such emergency situations, the cultural and creative sectors emerge as symbols of resilience and hope, with artistic expression becoming an act of courage.



Structure

The workshop consists of talks, walks, fieldwork, individual projects, assemblies, the development of props and sculptures for an exhibition and a provisional manifestos.

The primary pedagogical theme of this year's Masterclass #3 is the intersection of innovation and tradition. Throughout the week, participants will engage in a series of reflective and experimental activities designed to explore new perspectives and methodologies in sculpture training. This exploration will assess the possibilities, advantages, and potential limitations of innovative approaches, offering a balanced view of the evolving practices in the field of sculpture. During the camp, each group will build collective and/or individual projects that will inhabit a common ground, formed by the interventions of all the participants at Adatu Fabrika.

Each project, whether individual or collective, will reflect the exploratory themes that emerge from our fieldwork in Kuldīga. The outcomes will be shaped by your active participation in this thought-provoking and creative process.

Workshop procedures and results

1. Participants will be divided into four working groups supported by different teachers.
2. Each working group will be assigned a workspace, a package of raw materials, and a set of tools.
3. The work of each working group will be developed according to the major axes already defined in the YES project (materials, space, society, and social practices).
4. The masterclass spans seven days, with five days dedicated to intensive teaching and learning activities tailored for sculpture students. These sessions will provide a mix of theoretical and hands-on experiences, fostering a deep understanding of the subject matter. The remaining two days are reserved for travel, ensuring participants can fully immerse themselves in the experience from start to finish.

The work of the four main workshops will be developed in the close relationship between the Kuldīga Digital Innovation Hub, Kaļķu street quarter, Studija Space, Kafejnīca Didro and Kuldīga Artists residence.



Workshop #1 Onion of identity Led by prof. Aigars Bikse, workshop aims to dive into the dynamic interplay between place, identity, and the human form as you explore the ever-evolving tapestry of society and the individual. Workshop offers a comprehensive investigation into the contexts of place and the multifaceted aspects of identity. You'll engage in research that examines the human figure not only as a physical entity but also as a profound metaphysical subject. Participants will partake in life model studies, exploring the intricate layers of identity through the "*onion of identity*" concept. This hands-on approach culminates in a captivating photo session titled "*Stories Told by Young People*," where you'll capture the models you've crafted against the vibrant backdrop of the city. The cityscape and the models will merge to become your canvas, creating powerful visual narratives that reflect on identity and cultural differences.

Workshop #2 Working Class Hero Discover the power of art in activism led by Associate Professor Kristians Brekte. This workshop invites you to create impactful banners focused on rural activism, crafting site-responsive and site-specific objects that capture the spirit of the moment and place. Immerse yourself in the realm of agit-prop protest banners and traditional socialist art, delving into themes of realism, heroism, and collective ideals. Engage with the art of resistance through street symbols, signs, and urban counterculture, all of which reflect political and cultural struggles. Participants will also explore monuments commemorating the events of 1905 and 1919 in Kuldīga, gaining insight into how these historical moments have shaped modern sculpture in Eastern Europe and Latvia. This is your chance to connect with the heritage of socialist art and its contemporary relevance, transforming historical influences into powerful, functional artistic expressions. Join us to create iconic agitprop posters using simple materials like paint, paper, stencils, and photocopying, picket signs, flapping flags and craft banners and installations that resonate with today's cultural and political landscapes. Make your mark with art that speaks volumes.



Workshop #3 Eastern border Led by Liene Mackus. An immersive woodworking workshop that delves into the profound connection between us and nature. Focusing on the local and personal, this workshop transforms trees from living organisms into meaningful creations of wood. Rediscover the beauty and significance of woodworking as matter, metaphor, and philosophy. In Latvia, forestry is a cornerstone of the economy, with primary commercial species including pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), birch (*Betula pendula*), spruce (*Picea abies*), white alder (*Alnus incana*), aspen (*Populus tremula*), and black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). This 'hands on' workshop will explore a variety of effective construction techniques using easily available tools, materials and processes. Basic tools and material will be provided to complete one project.

Workshop #4 Historical memory led by Egons Peršēvics. Dive deep into the dynamics of public monuments and their evolving societal functions. This workshop will explore how shared and official interpretations of the past shape societal cohesion, focusing on the intricate histories of post-Soviet Eastern European countries and the broader European integration process. Through a comparative lens, participants will investigate how Latvia navigates its historical memory, contrasting these approaches with broader European practices. Discover the narratives and social representations that bridge the past, present, and future, and uncover the factors that influence the adherence to specific historical narratives. Examine the regulations of collective memory in public spaces (monuments, street names etc.). In this hands-on workshop, you'll create objects that capture historical memory and transform spaces—whether in your home, community, or public areas. Basic tools and materials will be provided for you to complete one project. Embark on an enriching journey through memory, monuments, and identity.



What's Included

All materials and tools (students may bring their own wood modeling tools)

40 hours Instruction in English

Individual critiques

Guided museum visit

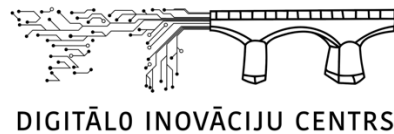
Accommodation and food

Public presentation

Project partners



YES MASTERCLASS #3 partners



Bibliographic References

BALIBAR, Etienne (2009). Europe as borderland. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space.

<https://eclass.uoa.gr/modules/document/file.php/PHS498/4.1%20Europe%20as%20B%20orderland%20Balibar.pdf>

LE GUIN, Ursula K. (1995), A Man of the People. Four Ways to Forgiveness. Harper Prism.