

# CUT



## **Project “CUT” by Ilona Ruegg \_Salla Tykkä \_Sandra Oehy**

Shortlisted by the International Jury of the

Open Call for the Pavilion of Finland at the Venice Biennale 2019

by Frame Contemporary Finland

Excerpt Project Description, 4th June 2018

### ● **CUT** **AN OPEN-ENDED SPATIAL MONTAGE**

#### The Applicants

CUT is a collaboration of the Finnish artist and film-maker Salla Tykkä (b. 1973) with the Swiss artist Ilona Ruegg (b. 1949), and the Swiss curator Sandra Oehy (b. 1984).

#### Exhibition

CUT consists of two individual projects by the artists, which are intertwined within the exhibition setting. Their works relate to the space of the Finnish Pavilion and the context of the National Pavilions within the Giardini in a mutually supplementing way. Both artists have a strong common interest in the processes of editing and montage, of rhythm and repetition within their artistic work.

Ilona Ruegg is using the Finnish Pavilion designed by Aalto as a given material – both in a physical and spatial sense – to create a site-specific structural intervention. She reflects on the ideas and concepts of time and space related to the pavilion and its history, and poses questions concerning our understanding of spatial temporality in a more general sense. Her installation builds a temporal construct through operations by arranging all re-built constructive elements of the Aalto-Pavilion within its original space. In the resulting chambers – lair, passage and abode at once – the body of the visitor is put in relation to the entirety of the building. As we experience it in memories, imagination or dreams, parts of an entity are fragmented in the beholders mind and consolidated again in a different way. The artist hereby produces a hybrid time that becomes a productive human experience.

Her work follows a structural approach interested in simultaneousness and the concurrency of time, rhythm, repetition and reconstruction. Often used in Tango, «Staccato» comes into play when the same note is taken up in an accentuated way, a shortened note followed by silence. The artist’s spatial intervention in the Finnish Pavilion works with the original sequential arrangement of the spaces (room-room-room), natural light and material of the building itself. She elevates the historical building over its symbolic value, allowing the visitor to fully experiencing the space in space. Something that has rarely been done in exhibitions in the Pavilion during recent year. Such an alternative way of presenting can offer new readings of how a

space of representation changes by being inhabited by itself, offering thus varied dimensions and multiple roles. There is a slow shift of identity between the original parts to the reproduced parts and vice versa. The modernity, inscribed in Alvar Aalto's architecture has transcended its promise, offering a potential between mounting and dismounting. To this notion of openness and maybe progress, she integrates a potential of shelter, the oldest form of human abode.

Salla Tykkä's work consists of projections of a long-term film project referencing wider societal, historical and political issues hereby addressing the context of history of national representation in Venice. Through a very subjective narrative she carries the viewer into a montage of a multilayered Europe.

«Europe – Europa» is an experimental film portrait about Denny Bohn, an American writer and traveller the artist met in 1991 on an Interrail trip in after-wall-Europe. In her youth, in the 1990s, just after the wall broke down, people were generally optimistic and many young people believed in democracy as a system that could overcome problems that had plagued socialist societies. This has changed again in recent years as the economic downturn, the refugee situation, and the rise of the right has transformed Europe on a similar scale as the fall of the Berlin wall did back then. Europe – Europa reflects upon the moments, in which the human mind moves from idealism to suspicion and new walls are built, while at the same time insisting on an idea of Europe as a place where we are all connected somehow.

Both artists are interested in temporal structures. In their work they ask how time and history relate at specific junctions and how to edit time in time through their work. Where Salla Tykkä sees film as a construction, Ilona Ruegg sees her work as an operational thing, one where the artwork is the operation 'with the parts' and not 'of the parts.' Both base their work's temporal structures on the relationship of personal experience to an abstract notion of authentic memory, a collective memory even, which relates to an understanding of history in a broader sense as history of mankind. Salla Tykkä's understanding of junctions are that of deeply personal and subjective incidents where different histories come together, which touch and unfold layers of the history of the past century. Ilona Ruegg on the other hand counts on a general human experience embedded within the personal memory of things – every human has experience with what a building is for example. She is looking for junctions by putting things together and adding more strings than there usually are allowing for a collision, an unusual experience, which confronts the visitor with a sense of temporality that today is important.

Within the exhibition the artwork by the two artists physically overlap in some areas (see scaled images) and change their relation over time, through the dynamic montage of natural light, projections and sound. The two works do not run parallel or confront nor do they just complement each other. They are intertwined in a play, where dominance becomes irrelevant. The two work coming together manifest as a junction in itself.









## ● Europe - Europa / Salla Tykkä

### Artist's Statement

*2010 was the year when I received and read a short story. Printed in A4 size it was 32 pages. It was sent to me by a person I got to know when I was eighteen.*

*I noticed, that what I was reading was a fiction but one which owed a lot to reality. It was a bizarre and inspiring experience. The story tells about three young Finnish women: me, my sister and our friend, who are looking for purpose for their conflictual lives in contemporary Europe, travelling and encountering several men that seem to mirror the author of this story.*

*Arthur C. Clarke's novel '2010: Odyssey two' (1982) tells a story that takes place in the Jovian system, moons that orbit the giant planet Jupiter. Both in science fiction and in science one of its moons, «Europa», is seen the most likely location in our Solar System for potential habitability. Life could exist in its under ice ocean.*

*Denny Bohn, the American writer of the book I've got 2010, is like a shuttle in search of life. He is a vagabond with his own words, writer, musician and a traveller. In 1991, our lives intersected each other. For almost twenty years he kept those memories and used them and scattered pieces of information he had collected for his book he sent to me.*

*I make a film of him and try to depict men in the eternal flux of life.*

*At Europa Moon, ocean-tides are converted to heat by frictional losses in the oceans and their interaction with the solid bottom and with the top ice crust. Tidal flexing kneads Europa's interior and ice shell, which becomes a source of heat.*

*For Denny Europe was an ocean to dive in and with time he saw it changing and becoming homogenous like the country he left when he was a young boy. In 2011 when we finally met he was wondering how to find a place to die in peace in Europe, which is contaminated by the multinational economies.*

*My work in moving image will address themes of experiencing time and place, in both body and mind. Denny's body has been in constant movement around the globe, travelling on buses and trains, Harley Davidson motorcycles, airplanes, skiing down the biggest mountains in high-speed and enjoying all the pleasures of the flesh. I see that his travelling is a never-ending search for life more authentic he imagines to exist beyond the reality he occupies. His writing is an illustration of this search.*

*In the film I ask Denny: «Why can you turn my memories into your fantasies, the reality into fiction?» And I answer myself: «Because I can make your fantasies into memories, your fiction into reality.» ....*

Artist's Statement:

*Passage - Abode - Interior*

*I started from the possibility of disassembling the pavilion which was planned by Alvar Aalto and then was lost. It could be a just operation, to reproduce all the parts and use them in a detached manner to build with them another fragmented structure within the pavilion – a building within a building. This entails generating an experience that is totally different from the usual experience of pavilions. Such an alternative way of presenting can offer new readings of how a space of representation changes by being inhabited by itself, offering thus varied dimensions and multiple roles. I imagine building in-between spaces, where the pavilion and the doubled parts come into a new language, sort of a structured grammar, which engages both. As the parts are detached they can stray off course and realize unforeseen functions.*

*The fragmented setting can be read in relation to the original pavilion as a whole, giving the visitor an inconsistent sense of déjà-vu. He or she possibly experiences a state of in-between: inside and outside are mingled. This creates a situation of radical proximity where sides are hard to distinguish, as we know it from our dreams or imagination. It may disrupt a continuous sense of space, on which we normally count on. But then everything is constructed in a rational way, is countable, is what it is and acts just like a repetition of the same and not quite the same. It is something that could be in fact calculated. – Moving in between these contradictions and differences I believe is where human experience originates and our sense of temporality is gained.*

*The crossing of the two structures adds to the original Pavilion a kind of second nature, in a state of decomposition, offering though places that could protect. I am interested in those deviations, starting from the given and ending up not elsewhere but within the same. It can change everything I knew before and draw new possibilities in the present.*

Main Gate

*The visitor walks immediately on and through the pieces he has experienced consciously or unconsciously before entering the Pavilion - touching with the shoulder, what are the building parts of the Pavilion. - The wall panels are freed of the function to distinguish between inside and outside and are trapping almost the entire roof parts or beams between them.*

*One has different possibilities to take a journey through the space finding himself in various situations, reminding of Dead End, Refuge, Sideway, Shelter, Interior, Cinema, offering experiences in a space that entangles the solid Pavilion structure with the free built repeated elements which may get confused with the original ones.*













