

STEN ELTERMAA

GLASSWORKS, 2014-2021

The selection of works here can be seen as object- and material based artistic research. I have gathered here the projects made in recent years related to glass and/or windows. I have photographed the windows, I have written on them. I have made sculptures out of glass and I have also written about glass and windows.

I am fascinated by the metaphor of the window. Window is a painting. The photo is a window. Film is the window. The window is the screen. The window has two ontological statuses at the same time: it is an object and it is a virtuality.

Glass, which is part of the window, interests me in its binary: on the one hand, it is transparent and on the other, it's a reflection. Glass disjoins the space and connects it at the same time. The glass is liminal, it does not belong neither here nor there. Glass is the virtual and the real.

In the architectural context, a window and/or glass can mean both inclusion (if it is transparent) and exclusion (if it is reflecting). And the space is open or closed, respectively.

The virtual aspect of the window in the context of power and governance institutions can be seen as a self-portrait in the environment surrounding the architectural object, as a spectacle in the space or as a mixture of them – depending on whether the window is transparent or reflective, or both at the same time.

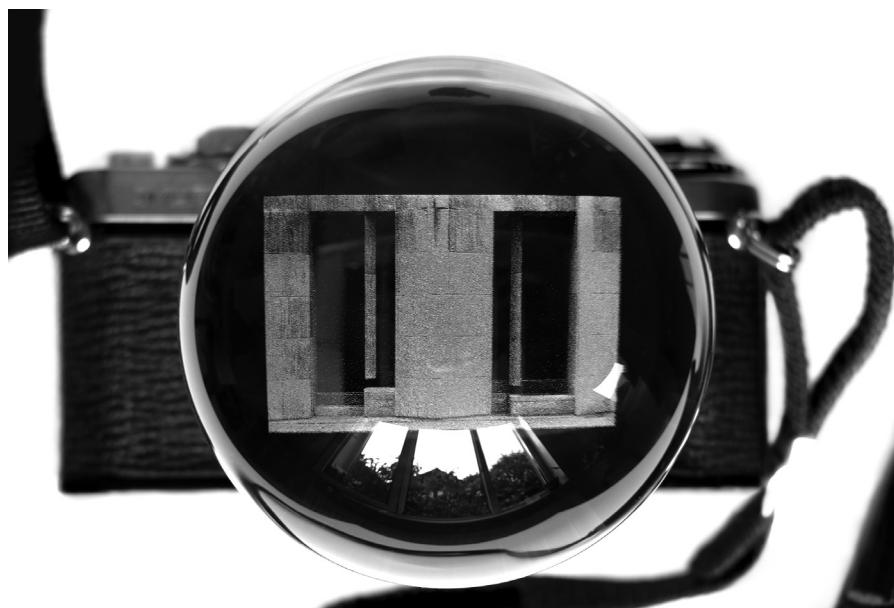
THE BUBBLE

Kai Art Center, 2021

Photographic installation

The Bubble series is part of an ongoing artistic research, Glass Struggle, which deals with glass as a material – paradoxically fragile yet extremely resilient. Glass and/or window/screen can suggest both inclusion (if it is transparent) and exclusion (if it is reflecting). With two ontological statuses, glass is both an object and a virtuality, pure liminality, belonging neither here nor there. The virtual aspect of the window – in the context of institutions of power, governance and finance – can be seen as a self-portrait in the environment surrounding the architectural object and/or as a spectacle in the space.

The Bubble is based on photographs of the facade and windows of BNP Paribas located in Brussels and on an iconic photograph of an astronaut found from Google (painter: Krista Loooris; appropriation, post-production: Sten Eltermaa).



ON THE DRAFT LEGISLATION OF THE HATE SPEECH

Streets of Tallinn, 2021

20 burned photographs (ca 80 × 52 cm);

"On the Draft Legislation of the Hate Speech" is a street art project located in different parts of Tallinn (Tondi, Mustamäe, Kopli, Kalamaja, Kristiine, Old City of Tallinn etc).

The goal of the work is to raise questions about the necessity and potential dangers of the draft legislation: Molotov's coctail can be seen here in two ways – it is itself dangerous and vague weapon of the state apparatus and the consequences of adopting and applying the law can have diametrically opposite effects. We are on a slippery road in every meaning of the phrase.

When choosing the bottles, I have taken into account what is happening in the world: Spain and Catalonia, Minsk and Belarus, Russia, Hong Kong etc. The burned photographs of the cocktails were located according to the allusions carried by the bottles: Black Nun and unisex perfume in front of Charles' Church; Soya produced in Hong Kong and vodka produced in Minsk in the close neighborhood of Foreign Ministry and Chinese restaurant; Tõmmu Hiid in the bus station of "Kenya"; Coca-Cola in front of the cinema; etc.











TRANSPARENCY REGISTER

Dragon's gallery, 2020

Showcase table, ca 370 × 35cm;
8 photographs, different sizes (ca 1–1,5 m²);
Transparent-reflective film on gallery's windows;
Book, 27 × 20cm, 50 pages (32 color photographs and an essay).

„Transparency Register“ is a project based on image and language, making the windows and facades of governmental authorities visible to the audience. The project involves various layers: reflective-transparent film on the gallery's window, photographs on the wall and on the showcase table and publication of the artist's research.

The title of the work, Transparency Register, also refers to the US-inspired database introduced in 2011 to shine public light on the communication between lobbyists and the representatives of EU institutions.

Present exhibition displays photographic series taken in The Hague, Brussels and Tallinn in 2016–2019, depicting institutions of power and governance, whereas the focus being on the windows of these buildings. Many landmark buildings should be recognizable to the viewer, for example, the seats of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, Eurojust, Europol, the International Criminal Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. In addition, the sites include several local institutions in The Hague, such as the Supreme Court of the Netherlands, the Hoftoren, the headquarters of the Dutch national police force, The Hague City Hall and a number of ministry and embassy buildings. The buildings photographed in Brussels also include several EU buildings in the European Quarter as well as embassies and local government institutions. The selection in Tallinn includes the “Superministry” building, the IT Agency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Harju County Court and the Tallinn City Government.













DRAAKONI GALLERY





SOME VIEWS ON THE BANK

2020

7 photographs, 165 × 110cm.

This series features views of the ground floor windows of the BNP Paribas Fortis bank building in the center of Brussels. The edifice was built in 1969–1973. The authors of the brutalist architectural object are Marcel Lambrichs, Casimir Grochowski and Daniel de Laveleye.

The building, and especially its windows, fascinated me in its inaccessibility: every window was differently designed and stone elements with opaque black glass constitute sculptural objects that create the first impression of some ancient Greek or Roman public space building rather than a bank office.









FROM THE PERIPHERIES

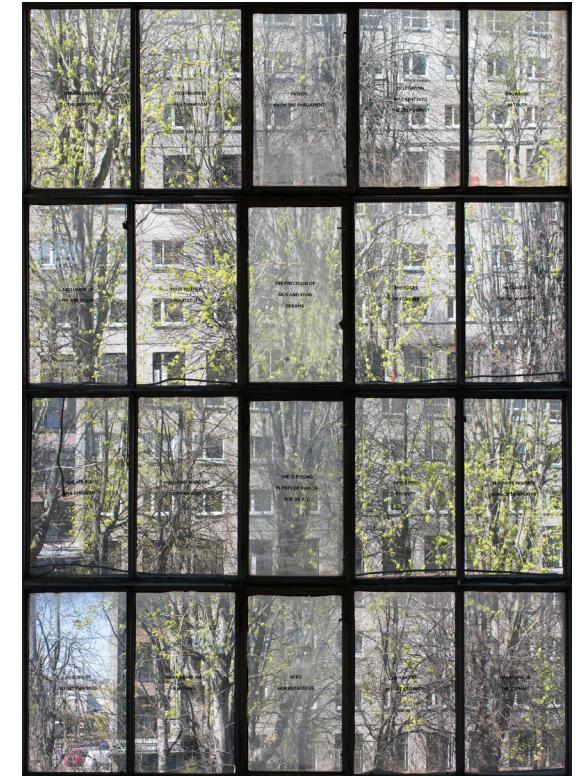
Telliskivi Green Hall, 2018

Vinyl sticker on glass, 167 × 87cm; 23 tk.

This is a work of conceptual writing. The production method of the texts was following: I practiced automatic writing for 3 consecutive weeks. Then I cut out the words or combinations of words that described or summed up something important to me. Finally, I combined the cutouts with each other.

The result was figurative thoughts that vary from the ideological level to the personal. Some examples:

the prime minister / forgot to breathe
breathing in / the asphalt
pigeon / from the parliament
thinking loves / the demons



RELIED FROM
DEEPEST STRUCTURE

POSSIBILITY
TO GET PUNISHED

THERE NEVER WAS
ANYTHING

NEED
FOR METASTASIS

DIMINISHES
ELEGANTNESS

WANTS
TO GET

MAKING
PLAY SPOT

NOTHING
FOR ALL



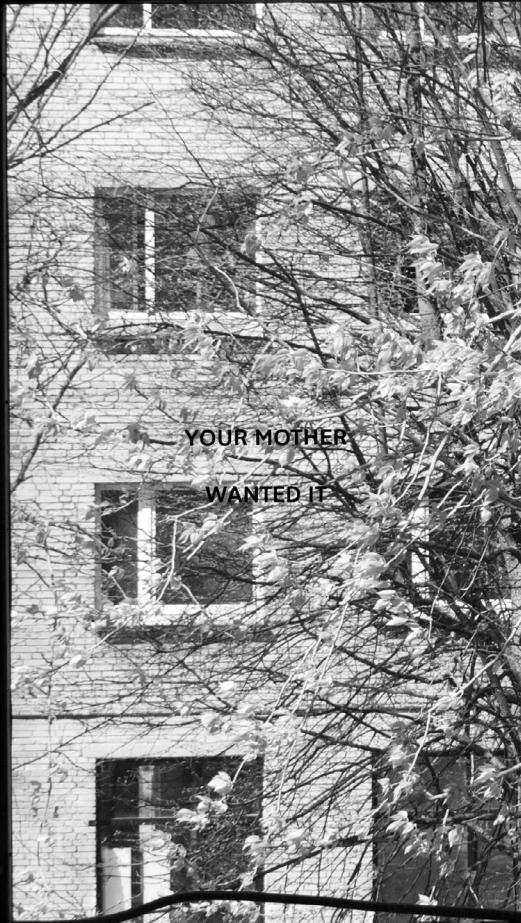
DEAD BODY
IN THE EARLY MORNING



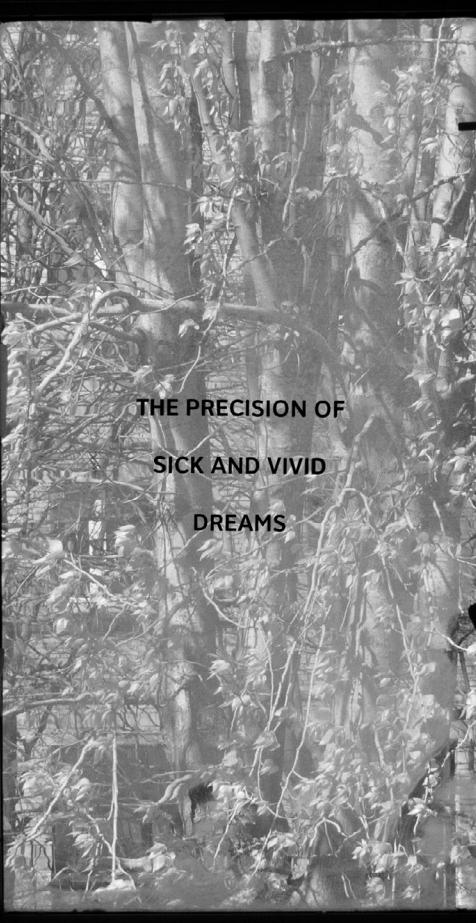
BETWEEN
COLLAPSE AND EUPHORIA



EXCLUSION OF
MR. PRESIDENT



YOUR MOTHER
WANTED IT



THE PRECISION OF
SICK AND VIVID
DREAMS



THE EDGES
OF FOREVER

THINKING LOVES
THE DEMONS

TO OVERWRITE
HER PHANTASM

PIGEON
FROM THE PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION
WAS SENT INTO
THE DEEP FOREST

DROWNING
IN TRUTH.

BRUSSELS PRELUDE: THE LIMINAL ZONE

Tartu Art Museum, 2017

Object, 250 × 140cm (steel, glass, acrylic painting, silicone, granite);
7 photographs, 140 × 94cm;
Publication with an interview and essay.

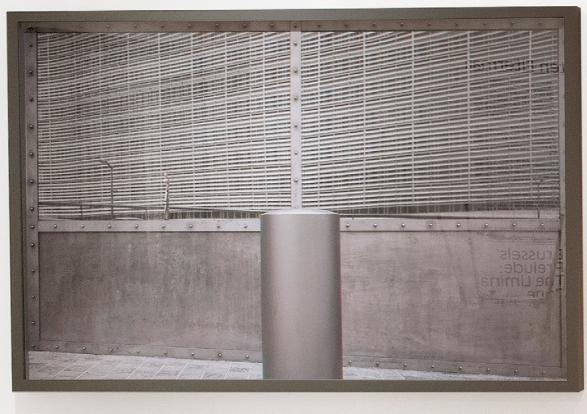
“Brussels prelude: The Liminal Zone” consists of 7 photographs and a sculptural object. The latter can be seen as an extension of photographs based on the materials depicted on the photographs.

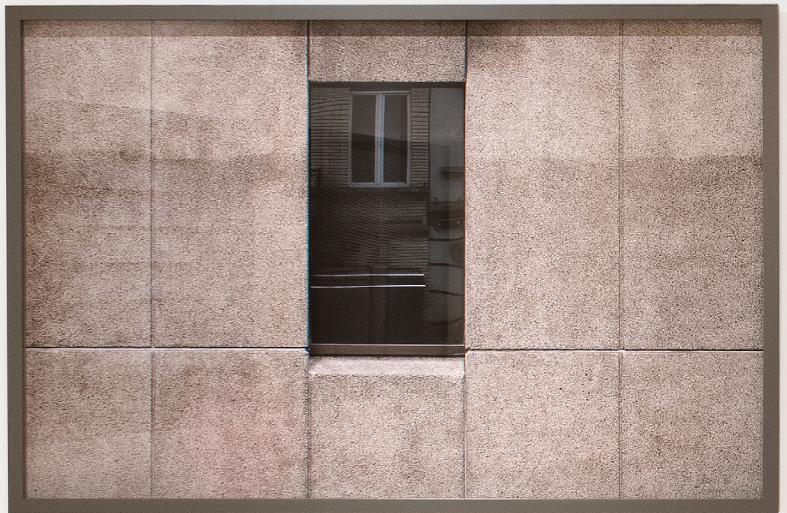
The focus is on the European Union, which is represented through the administrative buildings in the European Quarter. Through reflection and transparency, that kind of architecture can be described quite successfully. Also, reflection and transparency as metaphors are keywords through which the role of the subject in this supranational organization can be quite effectively analyzed.

The project is a spatial study that investigates the impact of institutional space on the subject.











IN LIMBO

KABK gallery; Telliskivi Green Hall, 2016

10 photographs, 750 × 110cm;

12 photographs, 35 × 52,5cm.

“In Limbo” was developed within psychogeographical journeys in The Hague. The Hague is different from the Netherlands as a whole, they form an opposition from a certain perspective – the Dutch open society vs. the closed districts of The Hague.

In general, it can be said that an edifice representing power reflects the environment surrounding the object or appears transparent. I tried to interpret this photographically, picturing objects frontally and eliminating or minimizing the spatial experience, highlighting its optical properties.

The material that characterizes the architecture of power is glass. Glass can be both reflective and/or transparent. The buildings under scrutinization restrict visual access to the interior of the edifice (when reflective) or make it accessible visually (when transparent).

Accordingly, the question arises in this context: whether the power structures and mechanisms represented by the architecture are transparent themselves?





HYDROSTATIC OBJECTS

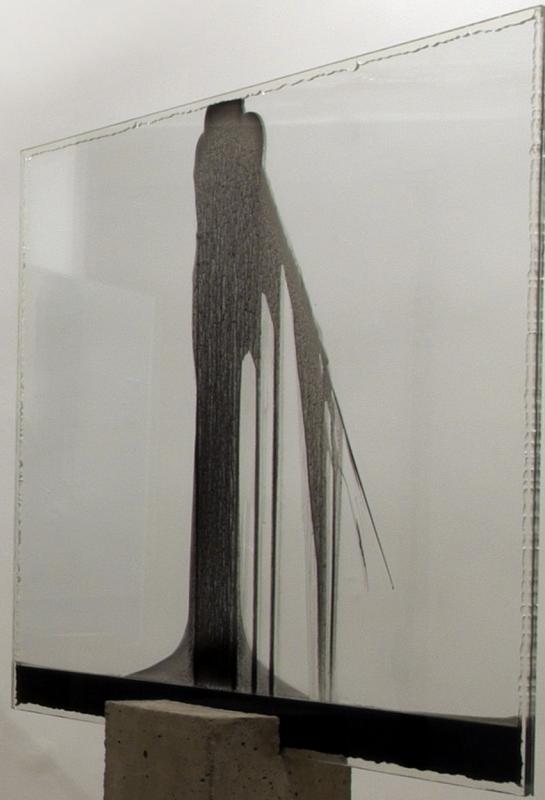
Dragon's gallery cellar, 2014

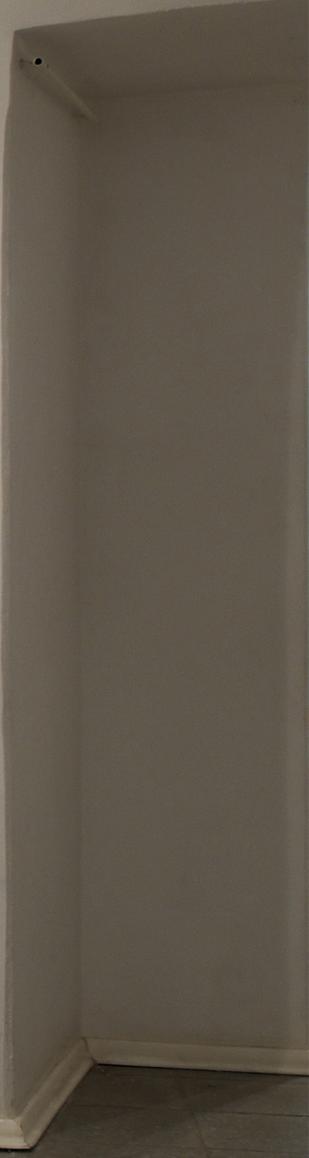
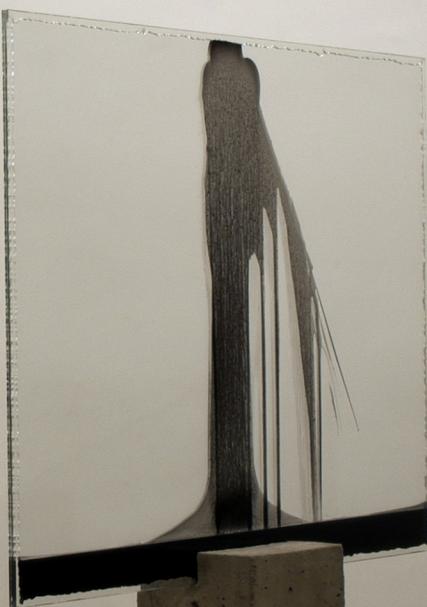
Glass objects, $88 \times 77 \times 1$ cm (glass, silicone, acrylic painting);
Concrete postaments, $20 \times 21 \times 70$ cm.

Hydrostatics is one of the subbranches of physics that studies fluids in their immobility. For example, hydrostatic knowledge is applied in medicine (blood pressure), hydraulics (fluid transport), tectonics (lithosphere movements), astrophysics (gravitational anomalies).

The work here presents a liquid paint between two glasses. The appearance of the object depends on how the work has been transported. Colour between the glass dries within a few years, i.e. the painting is finished within that period of time.









THE PIGEON

Raja galerii, 2014

Foto, 90 × 67,5cm

The photo presents a display window that caught my attention due to its symbolic nature. A human-like and human-sized white pigeon floated there, which together with the background colors formed the tricolor of the Estonian flag. This view offered both religious, patriotic and ironic thrills.

The white dove is a very popular figure in art history, artists have interpreted the symbol over the centuries. White pigeon is mainly associated with peace, love and innocence, carrying a divine message in a religious context. White pigeon can also be seen as the Holy Spirit itself.





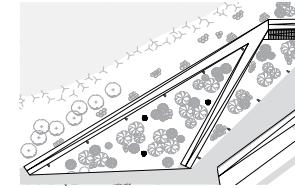
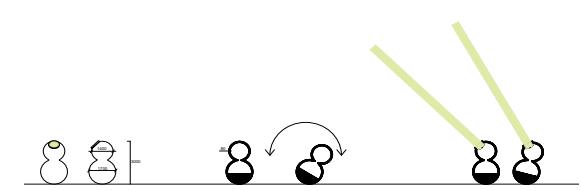
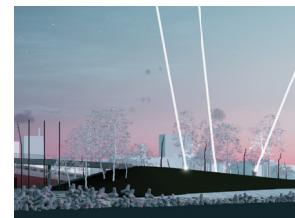
KINESIS OF LIGHT (with Arvi Anderson)

Old Harbor Art Competition, 2021

Project

“Kinesis of Light” is a work with several layers of meaning: references can be found with diving and astronaut suits, ship windows, also with air, land and water signs. Kinesis is based on the direction and speed of wind, i.e. the sculptures also function as measuring instruments and the light beam as a sensitive marker. The principle is based on the tumbler-model: gravitation does not allow them to fall over. Stronger winds temporarily affect the statics, but their geometry and construction restores their balance. Inside the sculptures, a pillar of light about 150 meters is emitted into the sky. The beam of light can therefore be seen from different directions, therefore they serve as a landmark in the dark. Material connections can be found with the architectural environment of the Old Port and its objects. As the works are made out of concrete, they do not require much maintenance.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION: The objects are made of durable reinforced 80 mm reinforced concrete. The lower sphere of the sculptures is partially filled with concrete and forms the object's center of gravity. Therefore the sculptures always stand up. The range of motion is limited by the hole around the lower sphere of the objects in the ground – the sculpture are thereby safe in the context of the light beam and its range of motion. Powerful LED spotlights are placed inside the works.



THE LURE (with Arvi Anderson)

Tapa Military Campus Art Competition, 2021

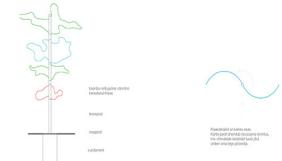
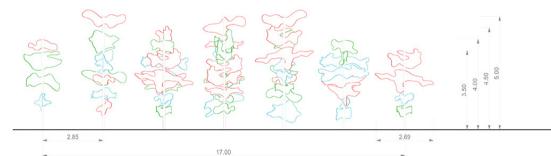
Project

Some of the keywords on which “The Lure” is based: deception, mimicry, transparency/reflection binarity, camouflage, warfare and stratagems. As a material, glass dominates: kinetic glass panels rotate according to the direction of the wind, each one of them separately.

Parallels can be drawn, for example, with wind generators. Visual similarities with glass panels can also be found by the conflated flag colors of NATO’s Allies.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

The panels are made of durable bent, tempered and laminated glass which rotate around their axis. Colored film is between the two panels, glasses are attached to black double-layered steel posts. The mechanism of action is similar to the working principle of door hinges. The glass panels are sinusoidally bent to take advantage of the wind energy which makes them rotate. The panels are attached to the outer layer of the post. The names of the authors are engraved on one of the glass panels.



TRANSWORLDS (with Urmo Mets)

Konrad Mägi Monument Competition, 2021

Project

Jaan Undusk: "In order to discover the divine geometry of nature, one must have seen something else first: the imperfect aspirations of human architecture, smoky factory chimneys, a metropolis full of people."

"Transworlds" is a binarity-based permanent installation. The first of them, in Town Hall Square, is located in front of the facade of the building and the other behind the house in the chaotic backyard, behind the window of the atelier of Konrad Mägi. The goal of the duality is to draw attention to the Town Hall Square, imbued with information, to the unnoticed, isolated and distant studio of the artist Konrad Mägi, which is located in the attic of the building.

The monument acts as an inverted expression of meaning: the prestigious and festive part of the facade speaks of the beginning of the 20th century difficulties and downsides of the artist's life and the second part of the artist's fruits of hard labor. Konrad Mägi cannot be considered an urban character: nature views often offered him even mystical experiences. The part imagined in the industrial spirit refers to the problems of the urban environment, while the other part to the aspects that can only be experienced in nature.

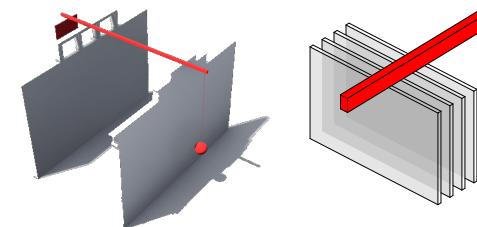
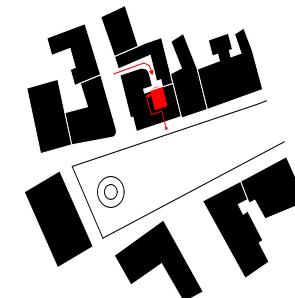
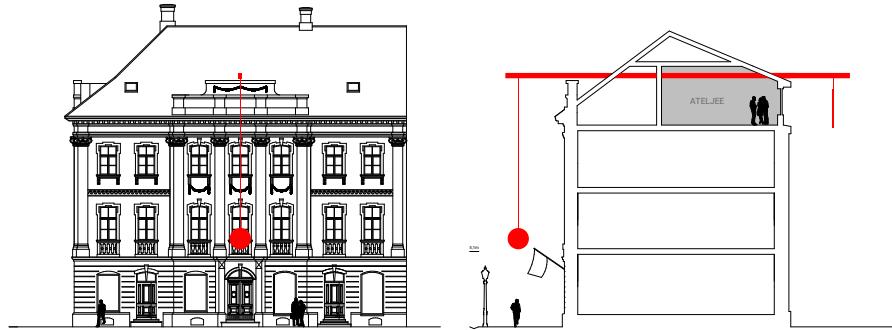


The part on the façade side refers to an old-fashioned winch device, a clock bomb, a globe model or an iron bomb hanging on a chain used to demolish buildings. The reflective surface of the steel beam leaves the concrete sphere visually “hanging in the air”. The object in the backyard is inspired by the stained glass tradition, which refers mainly to religious narratives and images related to respective institutions and buildings. The works of Konrad Mägi can also be seen in a religious context; true – rather in its mystical sense. Ecstasy, merging with nature, altered states of mind. Window is also a metaphor for a personal/original point of view: the latter is especially characteristic of Mägi's position as an artist.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

Steel beam passes through the interior of the attic and continues behind the house. The structures and the façade are not damaged. On the façade side hangs a “heavy” concrete sphere with a diameter of 1.4 m. The interior of the sphere is made of 80 mm reinforced concrete. The sphere hangs with a stainless steel rope. The load of the beam and the sphere is taken into account with a large force reserve, and the permissible wind motion of the sphere is calculated during further design.

Behind the backyard hangs a four-part glass–window on a steel beam, which can be seen in a studio or museum. An artwork fusing stained glass and hologram techniques is also visible from the backyard. Each glass panel is in turn divided into sections, which show fragments of Mägi's paintings. The four adhesive glass panels in turn form an alloy of different pieces of paint. Reproductions are printed directly on the glass. A grid is placed in front of the first glass panel, the dimensions of the panel are 2 x 3 m.



TALLINN 2021