

Nostalgialess

TIIT PÄÄSUKKE

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24.10.2020—25.04.2021

Curator	Joanna Hoffmann	Thanks to	Anu Allas, Lijja Blumenfeld, Darja Jefimova, Kadri Joa, Loit Jõekalda, Mart Kekišev, Signe Kivi, Kadi Kreis, Maris Kunila, Reeli Kõiv, Mart Lepp, Virge Loo, Ra Luhse, Tiina Määrmann, Kristjan Nagla, Toomas Pääsuke, Elnara Taidre, Eda Tuulberg, Kertu Väre
Exhibition design	Mari Kurismaa		
Graphic design	Valter Jakovski		
Co-ordinator	Kristlyn Liier		
Exhibition team	Indrek Aavik, Richard Adang, Nele Ambos, Tanel Asmer, Indrek Grigor, Mare Joonsalu, Margus Joonsalu, Heiti Kulmar, Jaanika Kuznetsova, Annegret Kriisa, Katrín Lööke, Julia Polujanenkova, Anti Saar, Kristel Sibul, Peeter Talvistu, Kristo Tamm, Ago Teedema	Supporter	Cultural Endowment of Estonia
Lenders of the works	Art Museum of Estonia, Tartu Art Museum, Estonian Academy of Arts Museum, Enn Kunila's Art Collection, AkzoNobel Art Collection, Tiit Pääsuke's collection, Peep Aaviksoo, Marju Tammik, Tõnis Arro, Kärt Kukkur, Rene Kuulmann, Vello Liiv, Marje Lohuaru, Siiri Luts, Tamara Luuk, Janek Mäggi, Maarja Nummert, Indrek Orro, Raino Paron, Eve Pedajas, Tiit Pruuli, Kalev Raidjõe Anu Raud, Epp Rebane, Indrek Rohtmets, Maria Mägi-Rohtmets, Ain Tähiste		

The Tartu Art Museum has the honour of hosting Tiit Pääsuke's (b 1941) extensive and definitely colourful retrospective exhibition *Nostalgialess* in the top two floors of our leaning building. For the artist, this marks a return to the location where in 1957 his professional journey began as a student of the Tartu Art School, since back then the classicist mansion from the end of the 18th century was the boys' dormitory of the music school and the art school.

The title *Nostalgialess* reflects the artist's self-irony, since it is hard to imagine anything more nostalgic than a retrospective exhibition in the building where one spent one's youth. This jarring discrepancy clearly shows Pääsuke's own desire to avoid being dramatic or praising himself. Let the paintings speak for themselves and let the location and time of the exhibition reveal the emotions that they contain.

The painter Tiit Pääsuke is one of the most prominent colourists in Estonian art history and his oeuvre conveys classic painting traditions through a contemporary prism. His creative process is based on a gut feeling and he interprets the surrounding world in a poetic and liberal manner without strict constructions. That is why the *Nostalgialess* exhibition is more akin to a meandering journey than a structured chronology. Motifs that sometimes repeat themselves over decades and citations of his own earlier works transform Pääsuke's oeuvre into an intertwined synthesis rather than a linear narrative.

On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that the lower floor mostly contains Pääsuke's newer works up until the present day and the upper floor is used to display his earlier works, mostly made in the 1970s and the 1980s. But both contain thematic exceptions, pairings from different periods and playful compositions.

The exhibition concludes in the last room of the upper floor with a journey through time to the dormitory atmosphere from the time of Pääsuke's studies. Besides a nostalgic installation, this room contains a selection of photos and some of the earliest surviving works of the artist.

In the first room of the upper floor, Pääsuke's *Boy with a Violin* (1980) starts a dialogue with Elmar Kits's *Young Violinist* (1956). The pictures earlier formed a pair at the Kumu Art Museum's permanent exhibition *Conflicts and Adaptations*. For these connected works to be part of the Tartu Art Museum exhibition was one of the first requests of Pääsuke at the beginning of the whole process. We are grateful to the Art Museum of Estonia for accommodating our request and lending out works that are part of its permanent exhibition! The artist has stated that the work is an homage to Elmar Kits, who graduated from the Pallas Art School. This dialogue between the two works displays the connection of both authors with Tartu, reveals a certain continuity in our fragmentary art history and shows a personal layer: although quoting from art history, Pääsuke was depicting his own son Toomas.

In addition to museums, the exhibition also contains numerous works from private collections. It is necessary to understand that a significant and impressive part of Estonian art history is preserved outside of museums and when it comes to such thematic overviews as the present one, it is important to offer the audience as diverse a selection as possible. The Tartu Art Museum is very thankful to all of the private collectors who generously agreed to lend Tiit Pääsuke's works for half a year for the exhibition which will often result in a newly empty wall.

The exhibition is accompanied by a substantial publication in Estonian and in English that contains an assortment of texts, numerous photos and a wide selection of reproductions of Pääsuke's works. An analytical article written by the art historian Tamara Luuk and the painter Tõnis Saadoja contemplates Pääsuke as a teacher and a role model from the point of view of a creator. The catalogue also contains an exhaustive interview, an autobiography of the artist, Joanna Hoffmann's curatorial text and biographic appendices. The book was designed by Valter Jakovski, translated by Peeter Talvistu and edited by Anti Saar and Richard Adang.

We thank Tiit Pääsuke for trusting us with his oeuvre! We are also grateful to the exhibition designer Mari Kurismaa and the graphic designer Valter Jakovski for their wonderful collaboration!



Tiit Pääsuke in his studio  
on Võidu Square. 1980s

**Tiit Pääsuke**

22.12.1941, Põltsamaa

**Education**

1957–1962 Tartu Art School

1962–1963 and 1966–1971 Estonian  
State Art Institute, painting

1974–1975 supplementary studies at  
the Ilya Repin Leningrad Institute  
for Painting, Sculpture and  
Architecture in Leningrad, Russia  
(currently the Saint Petersburg  
Academy of Arts)

1980 supplementary studies at the  
Vilnius Art Academy under  
Professor Kostas Dereškevičius

**Academic career**

1970–2006 teacher of painting and  
drawing at the Estonian State  
Art Institute and the Estonian  
Academy of Arts

1992–1994 teacher at the ROTKO art  
school and at the University of  
Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland

1992–2006 professor at the Painting  
Department of the Tallinn Art  
University (later the Estonian  
Academy of Arts)

2000–2006 head of the Drawing  
Department of the Estonian  
Academy of Arts

2004–2005 liberal arts professor at the  
University of Tartu

Since 2006 professor emeritus at the  
Estonian Academy of Arts

**Awards**

- 1975 and 1981 Kristjan Raud Award
- 1978 Award of the Vilnius Painting Triennial
- 1979 Annual painting award for the work *Vaike*
- 1981 Annual painting award for the work *Wing*
- 1982 Merited artist of the ESSR
- 1984 Annual painting award for the work *Woman in Folk Clothing*
- 1988 Annual painting award for the work *Altar*
- 1992 Konrad Mägi Award
- 1995 Saku brewery sponsor award for the work *Mourning the Fish*
- 1997 Saku brewery award at the annual painting exhibition for the work *Heart of the Hunter*
- 1999 Order of the White Star of the Republic of Estonia, Fourth Class
- 2000 Annual award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia
- 2012 Cultural Award of the Estonian State
- 2018 Award for Life's Work from the Cultural Endowment of Estonia

**Collections**

- Art Museum of Estonia
- Tartu Art Museum
- Estonian Academy of Arts Museum
- Viinistu Art Museum
- Akzo Nobel art collection
- Museum Ludwig, Germany
- Kaleva newspaper art collection in Oulu, Finland
- Bank of Estonia art collection
- Estonian Artists' Association art collection
- Many collections of public institutions and private collections in Estonia and abroad

**Memberships and hobbies**

- Estonian Artists' Association
- Estonian Painters' Association
- Alumni board of the Tartu Art School
- Whiskey Club (UBC)
- Tallinn club of the Estonian Fishermen's Society
- Honorary member of the Estonian Society for Nature Conservation

**TARTMUS**