

Translating Estonian culture

The following provides a brief overview of the linked events held in November and December 2011. The events were part-funded and supported by the AHRC networking project.

Event 1

Estonian art in a changing society, Series of lectures/talks by Estonian artist Marko Mäetamm

Talks at the University of Glasgow, in cooperation with the Glasgow School of Art

The first talk considered Estonian art from the perspective of a society that has undergone rapid political and economic changes since the early 1990s. Marko Mäetamm explored the question of how Estonian art reflects/has reflected such transformations via recourse to a wide range of video and photographic materials.

The second part of the programme involved a talk by Marko Mäetamm about his current work and method. Marko is one of Europe's leading young artists, working with a wide range of media including photography, sculpture, animation, painting and text. In his work, Marko portrays the family as a little society relaying, through dark humour, the petty moments of daily life, and exploring the way society manipulates the family dynamic via the macrocosms of economy, consumerism, and "quality-of-life" standards. Drawing from his own private life and personal experience, Marko's work also explores the 'grey' area where ambiguous feelings of being in control and being controlled merge.

Both sessions involved students from the University of Glasgow. Marko gave personal consultations to two students researching topics connected to Estonian contemporary art and 'transition' societies.

Marko also gave a talk at Edinburgh University (22 November 2011) in cooperation with Edinburgh College of Art. This event was facilitated by Dr Katarzyna Kosmala (University of West of Scotland). The talk was illustrated with a variety of slides and installations. Participants included students and academics from Edinburgh University and Edinburgh College of Art.



MARKO MÄETAMM
ART IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

Estonian society has undergone very rapid political and economic changes since the beginning of the 1990s. How does Estonian art reflect these transformations?

Marko Mäetamm is one of the most fascinating and internationally renowned young Estonian artists who works with a wide range of media – including photography, sculpture, animation, painting and text. Mäetamm portrays the family as a little society, relaying through dark humour the petty moments of daily life and exploring the way our society manipulates family dynamics through the macrocosms of economy, consumerism, and "quality-of-life" standards. Inspired by his own private life and the recurring feeling that he could fail to preserve the balance of his existence, Mäetamm's work explores the grey area where ambiguous feelings of being in control and being controlled merge.

Tuesday 22nd November, 6pm
Lecture Room 1, Minto House, 20 Chambers St

Event 2

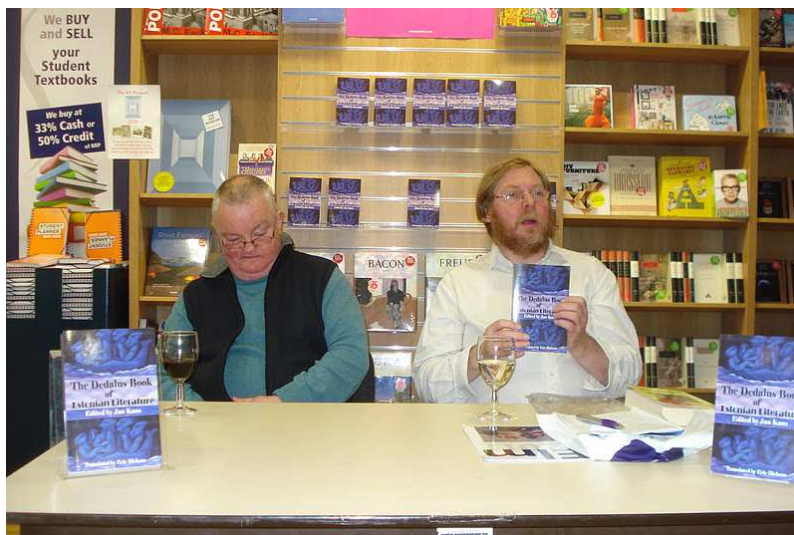
Launch of The Dedalus Book of Estonian Literature

For more information see,

<http://www.dedalusbooks.com/catalog.php?id=00000214&s=1>

This event involved the participation of translator Eric Dickens and publisher Eric Lane and took part at the University of Glasgow Bookshop on 2 December. It attracted approximately 30 participants.

Publisher Eric Lane opened by providing an introduction to the first anthology of Estonian literature in English. This was followed by translator Eric Dickens talking about the selection of stories in the book. The book offers a wide-ranging selection of fiction from the end of the nineteenth century until the present day, including work by Estonia's classic authors in addition to significant contemporary authors. The book launch ended with discussion and a reception.



Associated seminar on literary translation and Estonian literature

This seminar event was held in Central and East European Studies, University of Glasgow. The first part of the seminar provided a brief overview of Estonian literature and its most influential writers. The presentation was facilitated by translator and Estonian contemporary literature expert, Eric Dickens.

The second part of the seminar was a round table discussion concerning online Estonian literature, its use in higher education and possibilities to promote literature using electronic means (e.g. Kindle, smartphones etc.). The participants included: Estonian writer Milvi-Martina Piir, translator Eric Dickens, director of the Estonian e-library and writer Kerli Altmart, Estonian literature researcher and student of Turku University, Anni Välimäki, and lecturer Lea Kreinin.

The final part of the seminar tackled the problems of translating culture. Questions included: How can certain features in literature be translated into a language embedded in a different cultural background? What is more important – to follow closely an original text or to convey the emotions? To what extent can footnotes be used? What is 'culture-specific' and what is 'universal' in the Estonian literature? The seminar concluded with a practical session of translating.

The seminar event involved students from the University of Glasgow and other Scottish HEIs.

