

FOREWORD

Dear readers of this themed issue of the Baltic Journal of Art History!

University towns, such as Tartu, Lund, Oxford and Bologna, may contain several cities, with their conceptually definable identities, within the one physical city. In this sense, the selection of Tartu as the venue for the autumn school *This City and the Other...*¹ was very appropriate.

People who approach the university for the first time from the direction of the Tartu City Hall are often surprised that the square in front of the university seems larger in pictures than it is in real life. It's possible that foreigners feel this way because the narrow streets of, for example, Bologna or the Latin Quarter in Paris do not make it possible to grasp the academically and historically significant buildings in one glance.

Perhaps for Estonians the university's main building seems grander and more voluminous due to its role in Estonian history and contemporary society, or perhaps it's because the university is a separate city with its own way of life in Tartu and its fame in the academic world provides most of Tartu's international fame. The town of Tartu knows that you could not pick up the university and move it elsewhere, just like the university knows that Tartu is Tartu because the university is here.

For many connected with the university, there is another important city in the physical vicinity of the university: Supilinn. Although there

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1 The University of Tartu autumn school of art history, *This City and Anther. From the Athens of the Emajõgi to the Suburb of Supilinn*, took place 19–21 October 2012.

are other cosy settlements in Tartu, with their distinctive atmospheres and identities, for example Karlova, the distinctive feature of Supilinn is that it is visible from a flat field on the edge of the city and can almost be grasped in one glance.

The university as an academic state within a state, or city within a city, is not so clearly perceivable. Apparently, an even greater contrast between the conceptual cities hidden in the physical city lies in the perception of its cultural strata, which have developed through the centuries, thanks to the university and the area around the university. In the historical heart of the university, we find monuments that recall the achievements of Gustav II Adolf, Karl Ernst von Baer, Nikolai Pirogov, Friedrich Georg Wilhelm von Struve, Kristjan Jaak Peterson, Jaan Tõnisson and many others, not to mention the fact that the university's own historical buildings signify the life's work of many people. These are only a few of the references to the larger city inside Tartu: the University City. The concentration of academic spirit and people that has taken shape through almost four centuries has made the city on the Emajõgi River the home of the world's only classical Estonian-language university. Here the diversity, cooperation and interaction between various fields of study have created a unique academic environment based on the Estonian language, with a wide-ranging cultural life the likes of which cannot be found elsewhere. I hope that all these cities, both physical and conceptual, continue to feel comfortable together and strongly support each other's development. This assumes a good mutual understanding, to which the autumn school and this special issue will definitely make a contribution.

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