

Baltic Journal
of
ART HISTORY

25

Spring / Summer 2023

Juhan Maiste 70



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Press



BALTIC JOURNAL OF ART HISTORY
No. 25

Published by the University of Tartu Press in cooperation with the Department of Art History,
Institute of History and Archaeology, University of Tartu

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Cover illustration: Detail from the ceiling painting in the House of Estland's Nobility in Tallinn (Estonia).
Photo: Hilkka Hiiop, Alar Läänelaid, Hannes Vinnal

This issue is supported by:

Cultural Endowment of Estonia (Eesti Kultuurkapital); University of Tartu,
Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Tartu Ülikooli humanitaarteaduste ja kunstide valdkond)

Indexed in:

Scopus (Elsevier)
Web of Science

Editorial address:

Baltic Journal of Art History
Institute of History and Archaeology
University of Tartu
Ülikooli 18
Tartu 50090
Estonia

e-mail: kunstiajakiri@ut.ee

webpage: <http://ojs.utlib.ee/index.php/bjah/>

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12697/issn1736-8812>

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ISSN 1736-8812 (print)
ISSN 2346-5581 (online)

Contents

Foreword KADRI ASMER	4
<i>Articles</i>	
HILKKA HIIOP, ALAR LÄÄNELAID, HANNES VINNAL Dating the Newly Discovered Ceiling Painting in the House of Estland's Nobility in Tallinn. From Archival Research to Dendrochronology	9
NELE NUTT The Renaissance Garden and Its Contradictions	43
ROGER BOWDLER Romanticism and Remembering	63
OJÄRS SPÄRĪTIS The World of Vastseliina Estate in 1913: Reinhold Karl von Liphardt as a Photographer	89
KAISA BRONER-BAUER Urban Space and Cultural Archetypes: A View on the Japanese City	129
<i>Miscellanea</i>	
ANU ORMISSON-LAHE An Unfulfilled Dream: The Tartu City and University Church Designed by Johann Wilhelm Krause	163
LILIAN HANSAR On the Development of Heritage Science in Estonia	185

FOREWORD

Professor Juhan Maiste (b. 1952) has shaped art history in Estonia for half a century.¹ He took charge of the Department of Art History at the University of Tartu in 2007, when it became apparent that the tradition of art historical writing must be continued at the university – the *Baltic Journal of Art History* was born under his leadership. As the journal's longtime editor-in-chief, prof. Maiste has strived on the one hand to highlight the idiosyncrasies of the Baltic cultural space, but on the other hand to show that we are all connected with each other – ideas and values that spring from Europe's cultural cradle, i.e. ancient Greece, illuminate us even today.

Prof. Maiste has said that he arrived at art history in the spirit of protest, that is with a wish to stand up to the appalling political and social order in Estonia during the Soviet era, "Art was my weapon, that secret hideout whose symbolic flowers remain unattainable for the uninitiated".² In the centre of his academic activity are the classics and the problems with their reception, from the Renaissance to manor culture. In short, his holy trinity consists of manors, landscapes and heritage protection. All these elements intertwine and find their language in prof. Maiste's research, whether he is the spokesman for heritage protection or interpreting the identity and poetry of parks, or the landscapes of manors and universities. In summary, he always, even in the smaller writings, deals with the big questions of art: where is the source and birthplace of the human spirit and ideas?

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12697/BJAH.2023.25.01>

¹ Juhan Maiste's early academic work is primarily connected with the Institute of Art History at the Estonian Academy of Art, and the Department of Cultural Heritage and Conservation, established by him. In 2007, he commenced work as the head of Department of Art History at the University of Tartu, where he continued his work largely in the spirit of the principles and goals of his predecessors – Sten Karling (1906–1987), Armin Tuulse (1907–1977), etc. One of the outcomes of that has been the birth of the international scientific journal *Baltic Journal of Art History*. As a third line, it is important to note Juhan's role in the shaping of theoretical directions in the Estonian landscape architecture, and his long-term work as a guest professor at the Estonian University of Life Sciences.

² Rein Veidemann, „Juhan Maiste: Maailm on ime, kunst selle armulaud“, *Postimees*, 26/01/2008.

There are traces of both phenomenological and hermeneutical approach in prof. Maiste's work, where the study of historical and archival sources is supplemented by the author's personal experience and empathy. This means the ability to take not only the fact-based and source critical but also perceptive approach to the material at hand. The freshest overview of prof. Maiste's bibliography is published in the collection of his articles and poems *Lõpp on algus* (*The End Is the Beginning*).³

At the end of 2022, prof. Maiste became professor emeritus and a conference "Landscapes of Memory. Juhan Maiste 70" was held in his honour at the University of Tartu, where his former students, colleagues and friends gathered. The conference outlined three broader fields where prof. Maiste has played a significant role as a teacher and a developer: heritage protection and conservation; manor and town architecture; parks and landscape architecture. This issue of the journal is a commemoration of the conference as well as a dedication to prof. Juhan Maiste. His ongoing passion for the history of art and the history of human thought has inspired generations of art students and scholars and it keeps illuminating the journey of the *Baltic Journal of Art History*.

Kadri Asmer, editor-in-chief

³ "Bibliograafia 1977–2021", Juhan Maiste, *Lõpp on algus = The End Is the Beginning = Das Ziel ist Ein Anfang* (Tallinn: Varrak, 2022), 381–424.

Articles

