



L'Atlas invites

Roots to Routes (Tallinn)

For the exhibiton

Breathing through the eyes

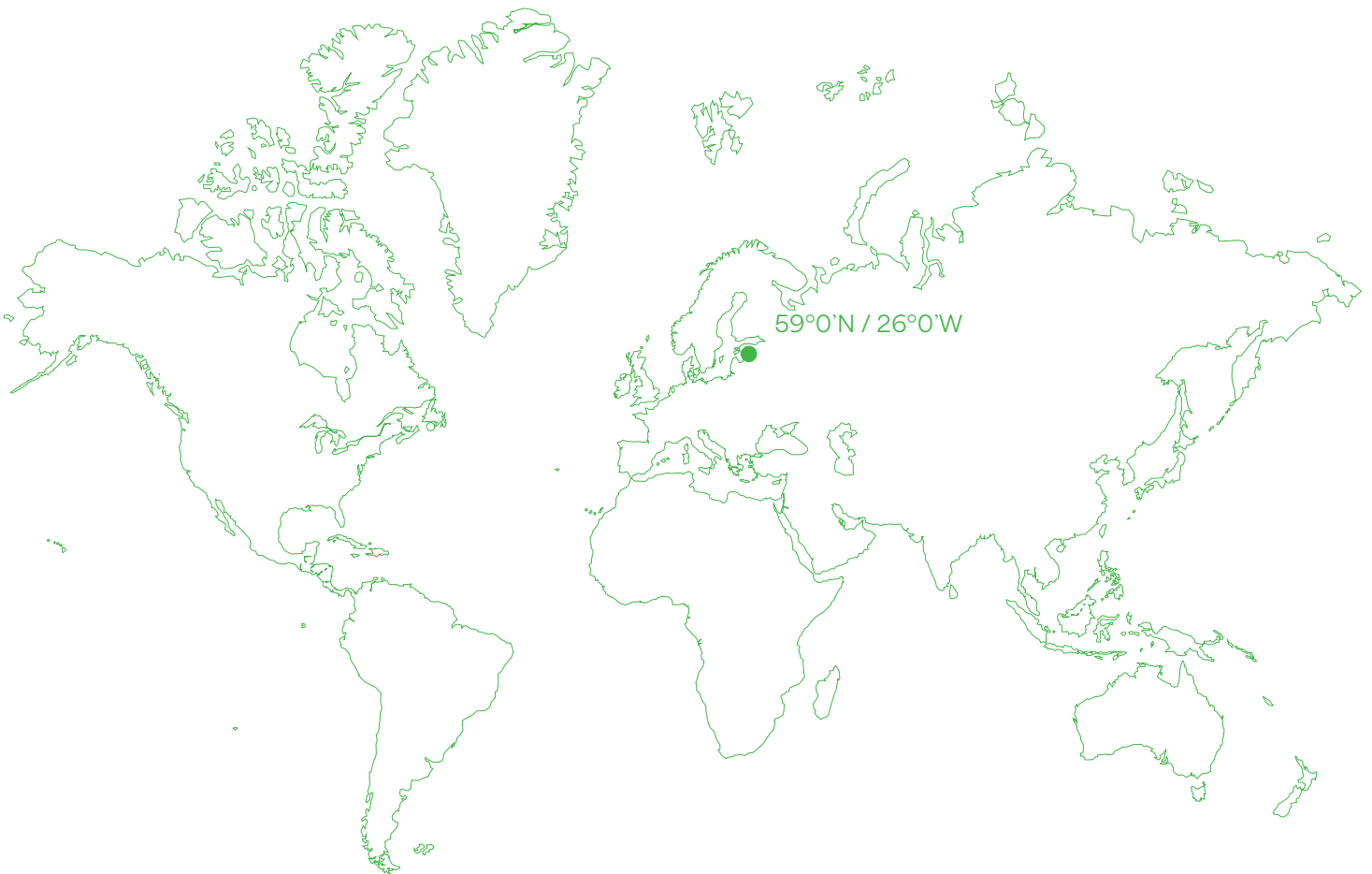
07.11.23—22.12.23

with

Aili Vint, Kristel Saan, Monika Varšavskaja, Kristina
Õllek, Daria Melnikova, Morta Jonynaitė and Viktorija
Daniliauskaitė

Curator Merilin Talumaa

Opening Tuesday 7th November from 6 to 9pm



Patrons and supporters of Roots to Routes : Baltic Culture Fund, Estonian Embassy in Paris, Cultural Endowment of Estonia, Estonian Ministry of Culture, Lithuanian Culture Institute, Latvian State Culture Capital Foundation.

Roots to Routes *Breathing through the eyes*

For the last exhibition of the year, L'Atlas is thrilled to invite Roots to Routes. Under curating of Merilin Talumaa, *Breathing through the eyes* revisits cultural influence of Lithuanian-American archeologist and anthropologist Marija Gimbutas's (1921 - 1994) theories on art and culture. The exhibition gathers together different generations of artists from the Baltic countries, most of them presenting their work in Paris for the first time : Aili Vint (EE), Kristel Saan (EE), Monika Varšavskaja (EE/FR), Kristina Õllek (EE), Daria Melnikova (LV), Morta Jonynaitė (LT) et Viktorija Daniliauskaitė (LT).



Viktorija Daniliauskaitė, *Black Night IV*, 1992, linocut, 24,5 × 17,5 cm MO Museum collection.

About L'Atlas

Supported by the Emerige Group, L'Atlas invites foreign galleries, foundations or non-profit organizations to exhibit one or more artists from contemporary scenes that are not well represented in France. L'Atlas proposes an original model: the artistic direction of its 5 annual exhibitions is ensured jointly by Emerige's artistic projects department and the invited partner. These exhibitions are coupled with a cultural programme (conferences, talks, readings, screenings or concerts) and with visits or workshops aimed at a wide audience. L'Atlas participates in the Emerige Group's ambitious programme of support for the contemporary art scene, with a programme focused mainly on international artists.

Marija Gimbutas posited the thesis that prehistoric European culture was female-centred and worshipped a Mother Goddess as the giver of all life. A spiritual sense of connectedness was artfully expressed through a sophisticated symbol system and an abundance of ritual objects. Nature and body (especially the female body) were honoured in Europe for tens of thousands of years, and Gimbutas postulated that women had an especially strong position in societies across Eastern and Central Europe – a tendency no longer necessarily evident today.

The exhibition *Breathing through the eyes* poetically comments on the fragile materiality of our being, multiple identities, the process of change and new environmental sensibility. Gimbutas, who having opened the treasure trove of prehistory, inspired a belief in a peaceful existence in our time – to bring back to life suppressed vital elements, such as the earth, the body (health), the feminine, and the subconscious. Participating artists, through imaginative and fictitious narratives, share personal stories and beliefs that also reflect the influence of Gimbutas' theories on ancient symbolism. Their works echo these concepts through a contemporary lens, incorporating elements and symbols rooted in ancient European matriarchal cultures that continue to resonate in Baltic art and culture.

The exhibition directs us to consider how we might reimagine a world centred around goddess worship, with its emphasis on preserving nature, nurturing existence, and forsaking warfare. Could this theoretical concept transcend into the tangible reality of our future society? *Breathing through the eyes* seamlessly intertwines historical narratives, cultural myths, and potential scenarios, immersing us in the themes that Marija Gimbutas ignited: the celebration of life's cycles, the sanctity of the female body and labour, and the spirituality inherent in these concepts. Gimbutas' exploration of the spiritual dimensions of a harmonious Old Europe and her vision for a New Europe free from dominance and warfare feels remarkably pertinent in our contemporary world.

About Roots to Routes

Roots to Routes is an initiative gathering a community of artists, curators and cultural producers whose trajectories are connected to the Baltic states region. Acting as a nomadic agency, its goal is to support and make visible artistic practices beyond cultural and (geo)political borders. An important part of the collaboration is to create and develop possible joint projects, aiming to build sustainable networks and forms of cooperation between various art scenes. Roots to Routes manifests itself through exhibitions, performances, screenings, publications and commissioning. Their first collaboration started in Marseille as part of the Manifesta 13 Biennial programme *Les Parallèles du Sud* in 2020.



(1)



(2)



(3)

(1) KRISTEL SAAN
*I only think of you, but always
turn away*, 2015-2022,
archival pigment print on
aluminium, museum acrylic,
130 x 145 cm, 1/5 + 2AP

(2) AILI VINT
Variations D V, 1986, etching,
paper, 50,5 x 63,5 cm

(3) MONIKA VARSAVSKAJA
Work from personal archives



(1)



(2)



(3)

(1) MORTA JONYNAITĖ
Never-Drying Towels K+R,
2023, wood structure, hand-
weaving and embroidery, 70 x
150 x 50 cm

(2) DARIA MELNIKOVA
Signs, 2014, ashes, alumi-
nium-zinc paint, 42 x 60cm

(3) KRISTINA ÕLLEK
Mother of MicroPearlStic (détail),
2021, Pigment ink print with
grown sea salt crystals, showcase
frame (birch) covered with sea
salt, 66 x 48 cm, edition : unique,
1/3 + 2 AP