Art beyond Borders

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The following article will look at the change taking place in artistic practice during the 1970s in Estonia—at that time a republic in the USSR—and more precisely, how this was theorized by Leonhard Lapin, an ambitious leader of the Estonian artistic avant-garde. Since the Khrushchev reforms in the late 1950s, adaptation to the trends of Western contemporary art became a kind of touchstone for unofficial art in opposition to official cultural policies and the doctrine of socialist realism, and evidence of being avant-garde.¹ The decade of the 1970s, following the disillusionment after the suppression of mass demonstrations in Prague in spring 1968, has been described as reactionary. Indeed, direct Western influences disappeared—there is no apparent evidence of adaptation of conceptual art or minimal art as there is of abstract art or Pop art in the 1960s. Instead, the artists, among them Lapin, were invoking the heritage of the avant-garde from the beginning of the century. In general accounts, this change has thus been interpreted as the aban-

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demonstration of progressive ideas and a retreat to cosmic and metaphysical dimensions.

However, in 1975 Lapin gave a speech at a seminar held on the occasion of a noninstitutional exhibition where he demanded from his colleagues that they engage with the new industrial environment and social reality. The two distinct characteristics of that new art were its interdisciplinarity and internationality.

The text of the speech entitled “Objective Art” was distributed in a hectographed booklet called Let a Man Be (compiled by the artist Raul Meel). Although it was not officially published until 1995, it is one of the most important programmatic texts formulating the (new) art practice emerging in the late 1960s. In this contribution I will endeavor to unfold the context and to trace the international network at play in Lapin’s speech and in his concept of objective art. I will then rethink the aforementioned break that took place in Estonian art in the mid-1970s as a constructive turn. I will theorize interdisciplinarity not as a malformation, but as a specific feature of the new art that departed from the field of art in favor of design and architecture.

In the context of restricted cultural politics, travel even to the countries of the Warsaw Pact was possible only for a small group of citizens. The vouchers that enabled one to travel abroad, as well as attend exhibitions, use studios, and have access to cars, were distributed by the board of the Artists’ Union. All foreign contacts were established through Moscow (the USSR Ministry of Culture and the USSR Artists’ Union) and cultural exchange was carried out on the basis of official permission. In the shadow of official exchange programs, unofficial friendships blossomed. However, these personal contacts with primarily Finnish and Russian artists rarely devel-

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3 Here, of course, the virtual network constructed through magazines and books is meant.
4 The dominant approach to the history of Soviet-period art designates these kinds of local developments of art, which differ from the ongoing mainstream discourse on Western art, stressing autonomy and purity as mutation.
6 The founder of the Moscow–Estonian art axis was the Estonian artist Ülo Sooster, who after his release from the Karaganda prison camp had moved to Moscow where he for years shared a studio with Ilya Kabakov. Sooster’s studio on Sretenie Boulevard became the place of pilgrimage for many Estonian artists, but Sooster frequently visited Estonia and introduced his Russian friends to local artists. Yet Lapin’s first visit to Moscow happened after Sooster’s death in 1970.
opped from mutual studio visits into collaborative exhibitions or immediate cooperation.8

The plea for internationality seems rather dubious in a situation where the only possibility to participate in international art life was the printmaking biennials, where works could be sent by post,9 or using foreign tourists as couriers.10 Nevertheless, I want to argue that the claim of Lapin is to be taken seriously and that it was not just a phrase, a mimicry, involving history to find justification for contemporary art practice while working within a repressive political system.11 I will show that it advocated the transformation and redefinition of the art object, leading to a repoliticization of art—even though most of the artists would not consider themselves as political artists. However, in 1970 Lapin declared that “picture-making” had become for the new public of the 1970s an incomprehensible Bohemianism and there was a “latent social need” for a “new kind of relationship to art.”12

On 6 December 1975, the noninstitutional exhibition Event—Harku ’75: Objects, Concepts opened at the Institute for Experimental Biology in Harku near Tallinn. It was later to become known as the last unofficial show and the end of the avant-garde in Estonia.13 The exhibition itself, like all unofficial...
cial shows, was miscellaneous, even eclectic, collection of works representing such diverse trends as Pop Art (which had been the most significant tendency in Estonian alternative art since the late 1960s), kinetic objects, concrete poetry, and geometric abstraction. At the opening of the show, the first Estonian progressive rock band Mess performed.

The main subject of the seminar, held on the occasion of the exhibition, was conceptualism as the most topical tendency in art, although, more generally, the issues of the role and function of art and artist in the society were raised and discussed.

In his speech, Leonhard Lapin launched the notion of objective art as the future of art practice. Lapin called for a universal language of art, for forms that are based on and developed in accordance with the contemporary industrial reality and technological progress (Plate 18.1). It is indeed the new reality itself that calls upon artists to reconsider their practice. For Lapin, the changes in the environment (industrialization) and the development of technology, introducing completely new production environments and means of production and communication, had fundamentally changed the concept of art. The current crises in art, which Lapin mentions in his speech, have to do with ignorance about these changes and their implications for art and the role of the artist.

The most important goal of this new objective art was the design of new urban surroundings, the creation of an integral aesthetic environment. Therefore, it could not exist as an artifact, as an object, but had to become an “inherent part of the environment.” This art was to overcome the boundaries between different disciplines, such as painting, sculpture, or architecture. It encompassed a variety of techniques, most notably multimedia and electronics. Thus, objective art was not a new style or aesthetic—it was the ideology of a new culture. Objective art does not express the “subjective view of the artist,
his arbitrary fun by playing with the forms taken from reality,” Lapin wrote (he obviously had Pop art, and maybe even hyperrealism in mind), but “turns to universal ideas, objective structures and materials.” An objective artist, he continued, “does not express, but constructs; his or her creative process is not so much emotional and spontaneous, inasmuch intellectual.”

Lapin’s concept of objective art is a mixture of ideas; it contains references to different sources, combining various, even divergent, ideas from different historical periods of art. This kind of patchwork is not unusual in a situation where only fragmented information was available, magazines and books that one got hold of by chance, or some even more rare encounters with foreign art. (I am writing about a generation of artists who had entered art school in the late 1960s and so had no experience of the international exhibitions and festivals that resulted from the Thaw.)

Objectivity and the depersonalization of the creation process had been the catchword of the neo-avant-garde in the West, and in particular of conceptualism. The predefined concept determined the form of the work, liberating it from the authoritative subjectivity of the artist. The demand that the artist must get rid of their personal emotions and abandon the ambition of singularity, might thus refer to conceptualism. Lapin indeed mentioned conceptualism as the most radical current of “objective art,” as art of pure ideas. This will lead to a situation, he wrote, where art that does not need special means and social acceptance can be made by anyone. “Everyone is an artist . . . releasing a chain of spontaneous performances, an avalanche of irrational acts, destroying the myth of art as a product of special human activity.”

As suggested at the beginning, the thesis of objective art cannot be explained only through models relying on the practices of the Western neo-avant-garde. Except the passing mention of conceptualism as the last stage of objective art, there are no other direct references to contemporary Western practitioners (while Lapin introduces prewar tendencies from Cézanne to the futurists as the origins of objective art). We have to look more carefully at the local context and the discussions from which it emerges.

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18 Ibid., 23.
19 Ibid., 23.
21 Ibid., 28. Obviously Lapin is alluding to Joseph Beuys’s sentence, without mentioning Beuys in his text.
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Lapin was trained as an architect, and his friends Andres Tolts and Ando Keskküla as well as his then wife Sirje Runge were graduates in industrial art from one of the most progressive departments at the State Art Institute at that time (Plate 18.2).22 The initiator and head of department, Bruno Tomberg, whose program combined the universalist ideas of the Bauhaus with contemporary design discourses about socially responsible design, insisted on the synthetic nature of design. “Design is a phenomenon of the synthesis of material culture,” wrote Tomberg in 1979, “the social, ideological, cultural and other influences have always been integrated into art.”23 In addition to a traditional art syllabus, the program included information theory, bionics, and sociology. The investigation of everyday life and environments formed part of the work of the designers with the self-image as socially responsible and transformative practitioners. The goal of design was nothing less than the reform of life of which the designer-artist was an agent. Lapin’s understanding of art’s role, seeing art as organizing the environment in its totality rather than adding singular objects to it, originates from contemporary discussions in design.24 And yet, it was different. Lapin’s goal was neither a harmonious and functional environment, nor the control of chaos by means of total design. Instead, Lapin was interested in disrupting rationality and functionality of modern urban space, confronting it with irrational, illogical and even destructive elements as a means of intervening in the means-ends logic of modern technocratic society.

At the same time, Lapin’s discussion of the future of contemporary art calling to environmentally encompassing work of art draws on Pierre Restany’s book Livre blanc—objet blanc (1969).25 Lapin quoted passages from Restany’s book, where the latter delineated the changes of art and its institutions. Restany attempted to redefine the role of art in the new technological reality of the new entertainment society and encouraged artists to use the new technological means and media to create what he calls total art. He encouraged artists

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22 The study of industrial art was introduced in 1966, and in 1968 it became a separate department.
24 As Andres Kurg has shown recently, the information theories had an impact on concepts of design developed in the late 1960s, and these again were appropriated by alternative art practices. Kurg, “Feedback,” 26–50.
to overcome the distinctions between different fields of art and to experiment with psycho-sensuous perception, so that art could merge into reality, creating a new kind of environment.\textsuperscript{26} The debate was not unknown to Estonian artists. In their manifesto, written in 1971, the Tartu-based artist group Visarid called for a new kind of art appropriate to “tomorrow’s automated recreational society.”\textsuperscript{27} “The aim of the artist is no longer to seek refuge and to turn his back on the world, but to constantly enhance his participation in the facts of life. He leads people to better understand the essence of the new reality.”\textsuperscript{28} To be more successful, new art breaks down walls separating different branches of art, creating a synthesis of all the numerous plastic types of art. “In the future, individual artists will no longer create separate works of art, but groups of artists will reorganize the whole environment, designing not individual commodities, but the whole ambience for everyday activities.”\textsuperscript{29} The artist was to become the “irreplaceable interior designer” of the new society.

In particular, the proposal for art as a kind of public entertainer and guide to new experiences comes close to the ideas of Restany, who saw the function of art experiments among other things in their ability to aid people to develop their perceptual skills and thus to “live better, feel better, communicate our dreams better.”\textsuperscript{30} The manifesto states:

Like in the synthesis of different types of art, . . . it no longer brings about a simple change of our environment, but a change in that environment’s psychological and perceptual scope, as well as in people’s capacity of observation and fantasy. The aim will be absolute art—art for everyone and every place.\textsuperscript{31}

Obviously, Lapin was familiar with the manifesto of Visarid. The leader and founding member of the group, Kaljo Põllu, was the head of the art studio of Tartu State University and the organizer of various exhibitions and

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{26} Restany, \textit{Valkoinen}, 33–34.
\bibitem{27} Kaljo Põllu and Anu Liivak, eds., \textit{The Visarid Artists’ Group, Tartu 1967–1972} (Tallinn: Tallinna Kunstihoeone, 1997), 89.
\bibitem{28} Ibid.
\bibitem{29} Ibid.
\bibitem{30} Restany, \textit{Valkoinen}, 57.
\bibitem{31} Põllu and Liivak, \textit{The Visarid}, 89.
\end{thebibliography}
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talks held in the university café. Lapin and Sirje Runge had an exhibition there in 1973. The studio was founded in 1957 with the purpose of providing future teachers with additional skills. One of its activities, initiated by Põl-
lu, was the translation and publication of art literature. Reviews and articles from the Eastern European art magazines Výtvarné Umění from Czechoslovakia and Projekt from Poland, but also from Art in America and Studio International, were translated by students of languages and made available in copies of self-edited volumes called Visarid.32

In his speech, Lapin quoted Jindřich Chalupecký whose article about avant-garde in art had been translated and published in the third edition of Visarid in 1969.33 Chalupecký’s concern was similar to that of Lapin (and the Visarid group)—to rethink the role of art in the era that apparently does not need art. He was looking for ways for art to function in the new mass media reality that he, like Restany, interpreted as “modern nature,” without turning it into just decoration or making it yield entirely.34 The pathos of Chalupecký’s article, however, was the crises of civilization and the fate of human-kind, which he believed to be threatened with extinction. Indicating that art, impractical in itself, could inspire people to seek practical goals like the renewal of civilization, Chalupecký sought to prove the need for art. Art’s critique of civilization was, according to Chalupecký, its most powerful defense.35

Lapin’s position—that art should merge with the new reality and become part of the industrially manufactured environment by employing multimedia and electronics as the specific means of expression of the era—was informed by the texts of Restany and Chalupecký. For Lapin, too, the new “integral” culture could only be realized by accepting artificial nature as part of cosmic nature.36 He also stressed the need for new kinds of institutions

32 From 1968 to 1971 altogether five issues were prepared in the art studio. In addition to that several books were translated: Vassily Kandinsky’s Stupeni (1918), Michel Seuphor’s Abstract Art (1964), Pierre Vollboudt’s Kandinsky, 1922–1944 (1961), Herbert Read’s A Concise History of Modern Painting (1964), Lothar Gerich and Klaus Schöne’s Das Phänomen Farbe. Zur Geschichte und Theorie ihrer Anwendung (1970), etc. According to Põllu it was no problem to order printed matter from socialist states to Tartu University, but even Western catalogs were available in the ordering department of the university library. See: “Art Studio of University of Tartu and the ‘Golden Sixties’: Kaljo Põllu Tecalls,” Kunst.ee 4 (2006), 60.
34 Ibid., 14.
35 Ibid., 15.
by ending his speech with the following vision: “In the future, the new objective art will step down on the street. Museums are going to be information and production centers and monuments, designed for eternity, they are going through many formal transformations.” His call for the reconstruction of the surrounding space at the same time goes hand-in-hand with constructivism.

In October 1975, two months before the opening of the exhibition in Harku, where Lapin was due to give his speech, he and his then wife Sirje Runge were traveling to Moscow. The reason for the trip was the Ninth ICSID (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design) Congress where the diploma work of Runge was presented. The congress, with prominent international participants, such as Tomás Maldonado, was visited by a delegation of Estonian designers and artists.

During the stay Lapin also visited the collection of Georgi Costakis—one of the biggest private avant-garde art collections during the Soviet era, displayed in Costakis’s apartment—which made a strong impact on him. In the same year, Lapin became acquainted with the Leningrad artist Pavel Kondratiev, a pupil of Malevich and Pavel Filonov, with whom they were good friends until Kondratiev’s death in 1985. And of course, two members of the Estonian constructivist group Eesti Kunstnikkude Ryhm (Group of Estonian artists) founded in 1923, Arnold Akberg and Märt Laarman, were still alive in the 1970s.

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37 Ibid., 29. The passage is a quote from Restany’s book, which Lapin does not reference.
38 See: Lapin, “Objektiivne,” 27–28. Although it is not entirely clear where the work was shown. The Russian artists Yuri Sobolev (who at the time was working for the magazine Znanije Zhila) and Yuri Reshetnikov compiled a multimedia program for the ICSID, working under the general title “Design for Man and Society,” using the works of different artists and designers. Within the program the work of another Estonian artist, Raul Meel, was presented.
40 Lapin commented on it in a postcard to the art historian Eda Sepp: “We visited the Russian Constructivist private collection of Costakis... Astonishing collection, marvelous experience. Altogether a different impression of Russian art from the 20s and 30s than literature has so far presented.” Eda Sepp, “Leonhard Lapin: Autoportrait as Paradox and Parody,” in Leonhard Lapin. Maal, graafika, skulptuur, arhitektuun (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 1997), 21.
41 Leonhard Lapin, “Pavel Mihhailovitši Kondratjev 1902–1985,” Kunst 68:1 (1986): 55. Lapin was introduced to Kondratiev by the Ukrainian artist Vladimir Makarenko, who had moved to Estonia.
When the program of the synthesis of art and architecture under the guidance of the newest technologies for creating new spaces was influenced by the theories of design and ideas of theorists like Restany, who encouraged artists to extend the artistic field, Lapin developed his constructive notion of art in dialogue with the Soviet avant-garde, in particular constructivism and suprematism.42

The idea that art rather than just acting as a diversion in the life of ordinary people, must instead be its organizer, was indebted to constructivism. Lapin extensively quoted the Estonian constructivist Märt Laarman, who edited and published Uue kunsti raamat (The book of new art), the manifesto of Estonian constructivists in 1928: “The mission of art is not to copy or imitate existing things, but to create new ones. . . . The artist confines his expression to a set of iron rules and by adopting them joins the collective.”43 Furthermore: “We are proud that we are building not on the foundation of what is distinct and singular in a person, what separates one person from another, but on the foundation of what people have in common. Thus, the new art is international.”44 Laarman also indicated the new role of art: “Art that entertained or diversified life is now in charge of organizing life.”45 Here Laarman in turn referred to El Lissitzky and Ilya Ehrenburg’s preface to the first volume of the trilingual journal Beuys/Objet/Gegenstand (1922) and called for a “constructive art” that “is not intended to alienate people from life, but to summon, to contribute to organizing it.”46 In 1967, the East German publishing house Kunst issued a voluminous monograph, compiled by El Lissitzky’s widow Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, which included Lissitzky’s paint-
ings, photographs, book illustrations, exhibition designs, and architectural projects and texts. The book was one of few compendious monographs of an avant-garde artist that reached Soviet Estonia.

Objective art was the art of the new industrial era; it was art that related to the industrial environment—artistically and morally. Lapin was convinced that art must intervene in and transform the everyday living space. This in the context of real socialism’s highly suspicious (utopian) idea of a social mission of art leads to the constructivist aspect of the Soviet avant-garde and its appropriation by artists and architects in the 1970s. By then the constructivist avant-garde had been rehabilitated and was regarded as the predecessor of Soviet design. Yet the political—utopian—aspect that fascinated Estonian artists and especially Lapin is exceptional. In his speech given at the seminar in Harku, he appealed to the power of art to change the surrounding environment and with that to reform if not society and the system, then the way of life, thus picking up the very utopian aspect that had generally been considered to be of no relevance for postwar art practices.

In the history of Soviet-period art, reconstructed after Estonia gained its independence in 1991, this aspect has been widely left unnoticed, or rather re-framed. Abstract art, like the geometric abstraction emerging in Estonia in the mid-1970s, has been interpreted as the “art of elegant refusal,” which confronted the official demands on art like propaganda and education, with a “silent meaningful neutrality.”47 For the art discourse in the 1990s it was of particular importance: it allowed the autonomy of art to be shown and local art to be connected to the international (Western) discourse on art history. Lapin’s turn to the Russian avant-garde of the 1920s was thus interpreted as a withdrawal from reality in search of “universal truths” and cosmic values.48 Indeed, at the time of the Harku exhibition Lapin’s former comrades-in-arms, Pop artists Ando Keskküla and Andres Tolts, had enjoyed an official breakthrough as painters, adapting hyperrealist techniques, which Lapin saw as a compromise with the system.49 Lapin’s appeal, I would like to argue, was motivated by a particular social situation of the 1970s, and by the demands it presented to the artists.

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The 1970s are described as the period of stagnation, with distinctive characteristics, such as the deadlock of public life and the withdrawal of the citizens into apolitical privacy. The hopes of reforms, of a new “socialism with a human face” had faded with the suppression of the demonstrations in Prague in 1968. Instead of engaging in public life and politics, the citizens started to arrange themselves: owning a car or a summer cottage counterbalanced collaboration with the system. These were the years in which typical Soviet society was taking shape.50 The policy of détente announced at the 1975 Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe held in Helsinki was widely received in Eastern Europe as a legalization of the Soviet occupation and made for disillusionment.51

In the Soviet Union, the integration of the unofficial scene into the official structures had already begun in the late 1960s.52 The question for the artists was how to engage in society without at the same time losing one’s integrity. It was not about finding a safe, “uncontrolled” space outside the official art world, not about inner emigration, but about interfering in the official art world with new ideas in a meaningful and productive way. The potentiality for resistance consisted not in the “elegant refusal,” but in the readiness to engage. Lapin called upon artists to define artistic practice, to give it a new and more constructive content. The position of Pop artists who started to take an interest in Soviet reality is thus complemented by the attempt to make this orientation to reality productive. The attitude of Pop artists, who had been approaching reality with parody, relativizing and ridiculing everything, did not seem relevant in the altered social context.

The subject was further formulated in a text entitled “Art against Art” that Lapin wrote the following year, in 1977.53 He wrote: “Art is no longer happy

52 Although one cannot speak of the endorsement abstract art was enjoying in Yugoslavia or Poland, from 1966 onward, abstract art was accepted in official exhibitions in Estonia. The border between official and unofficial was becoming blurred; it had more to do with particular works and artists than with the style.
53 The text was published in a typewritten manuscript collection of articles in the same year. It has never been reprinted or published officially; for example, it is missing in the collection of his writings on art and architecture with the significant title “Two arts,” which Lapin published in 1997. It means that these ideas have possibly lost their relevance for Lapin. However, this does not mean that it was not important in 1977 when...
onanism in the bathroom with Finnish [i.e., foreign—M. L.] furniture.”
He compared the contemporary artist with a philistine who is entertaining himself “in the morgue of material prosperity and intellectual conformity” and whose awareness of reality is limited to “apartment, pub and office.” The text reads like a critique of the hedonistic strategies of Pop art (although Lapin does not mention it directly). Pop art was mimicking Soviet reality and its absurd rituals, but it did not transform it. The artist discussed here had given up the idealistic idea that one could exist outside society, that there could be an independent unofficial realm parallel to the official one, as the first generation of unofficial artists believed; they were looking for a more self-critical position in the system. With inner emigration, neutrality is confronted with an approach that has its origins in constructivism, in the belief that art can and must change society.

For this, the field of artistic practice was to be extended to the whole environment, at the same time overcoming the boundaries of different disciplines. The exhibition of new monumental art in 1976 could be an example where architecture and design discourses were introduced to redefine (monumental) art.

In “Art against Art,” Lapin argued against the hierarchical differentiation of arts and called upon his colleagues to “protest against their profession.” He wrote: “artists must view visual culture as a whole, a search for means which would eliminate boundaries between single fields: creative artists must not limit themselves to one art, but aspire toward all the techniques available.” He criticized the lack of unity in contemporary (modernist) art practice: its bureaucratic and hierarchical organization as it was made manifest in the structure of subassociations of the Artists’ Union. He confronted it with an extensive artistic practice that would integrate all fields of life. Interdisciplinarity, the widening of artistic activity, was again a rhetori-

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55 Ibid., 77, 79.
56 The idea had already appeared in 1971, when Lapin gave a presentation with the programmatic title “Art Designing the Environment,” where he proposed the creation of a new living environment involving every branch of art, from design to happenings. Lapin, Leonhard. "Taie kujundamas keskkonda," in Lapin, Kaiks, 16–18.
57 Lapin “Kunst,” 81.
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cal means to address the institutions from which one was excluded. It had to do with the self-positioning, with the uncertainty about one’s function as an artist. It was a strategy about how to leave the normative, hierarchical institutional structure of art. At the same time, this step out of the predetermined frame was a redefinition of one’s artistic position. With that, a new framework and criteria were established as grounds for the reevaluation of artistic practice. To give a new sense to art meant, among other things, defining a new field of artistic activity. In this case, the expansion of art, declaring the designing of new environments as the authentic goal of art, aimed to overcome the marginalization of one’s art as merely private.

Objective art was the art of the new industrial reality and the technological era. Following the experiments of Pop art, its critique of the everyday and its interest in the new industrial and artificial environment gave it a constructive turn. It intended to engage with reality in the avant-garde (or constructivist) sense of the word.

Isolation was compensated by friendships, viewing and analyzing each other’s work in the studio or reading foreign publications. The lack of information brought together creative people, regardless of their work that often developed in a different direction. Although Lapin had many friends in Moscow whom he visited frequently, his concept of objective art did not meet with a significant response or understanding in Moscow artistic circles. (At the same time Lapin himself was more fascinated by the Russian avant-garde.) One artist to whom the artistic concept of Lapin might have offered a more direct artistic point of reference was Vyatcheslav Koleichuk.


60 In a text composed for *Artforum*, the Russian artists Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid recall the Moscow readings of Western art magazines: “Ivan Chuikov was the only one of us who knew English, and we would gather and listen as he translated for us. . . . We pored over those glossy pages with reverence, scrutinizing the colored splashes of the reproductions, the self-expression of distant and unknown American souls, until our eyes blurred.” Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, “The Barren Flowers of Evil (1980),” in *Primary Documents: A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s*, ed. L. Hoptman and T. Pospiszyl (New York, Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 2002), 258.
Koleichuk, who in the 1960s briefly participated in the Moscow group Dvizhenie, was interested in kinetic and constructivist art and found in Estonia the intellectual and artistic space that appeared to be closer to his own ideas, whereas “the artistic life of Moscow during the 1970s, its orientations and trends seemed to be very distant from my own interests which could be defined as the tasks of avant-garde art.”
