

The quintessence of culture and society is what the latest art is all about. The introspective form art has taken draws it into a close connection with subjects related to space: a place, a territory and a home. But as a practitioner of the discourse of conceptual art, however, I have long manifested the simultaneous existence of art and life. This cacophonous parallelism has driven me as a social being, taking me to various extremes; these points may be viewed as something unpleasant when looking at it from the Life point of view, while when looking from the viewpoint of Art (which allows both irony and double game) it might be seen simply as participation in an endless performance.

My high school days coincided with the period when long hair would no longer get you expelled but the cultivation of punk was nonetheless condemned. My desk mate and I found an empty flat in the nostalgic slum of our small town, and it became our first squat – a place to drink beer and just hang out, undisturbed. One day we discovered that, in our absence, someone else had been visiting the room. After a brief discussion we scraped the ashes from the stove into a bucket, heaving it to a ledge above the door. We used a piece of coal to write some satanic threats on the walls, adding: "Who are you? Answer! Use the coal in the pail." Somehow, we managed to get out. The next time we arrived the door was open and the bucket was empty, but alas, there was no reply on the wall... :-)

A bit later I saw a newspaper ad for a cheap flat in the same part of town. I managed to rent the place from a drunken hag doubling as the landlady. As I have never been too diligent about paying rent, I soon found a way to get the place for free. I went to the real estate management company, and the representative agreed to rent the uninhabitable flat with bedbugs and a half-disintegrated outer wall for an amount five times less than amount old woman (whom we later dubbed Jadwiga) was asking. For obvious reasons, the arrangement was not to her liking, and she turned into an irritable wasp. As a first act of vengeance, she caught two stray dogs and imprisoned them in my woodshed. I suppose her plan foresaw the dogs attacking me upon their release. When I in fact did come staggering home and threw the door open, the terrified dogs high-tailed it out of their so fast that I almost tripped on one of the poor guys. My friend and I had a good laugh imagining Jadwiga and what she must have gone through in order to catch and cage those mongrels. Her next step was to send her pale, large-headed kids to stuff matches into my keyhole. I did change the lock a few times, but when the antics wouldn't stop I gave up, nailed the door shut and entered through the window. The flat was situated on the second floor but climbing up the wall was a piece of cake. It wasn't long before the route was familiar to the whole community of scary hairys and punkers; they would stop by, consume colossal quantities of cheap booze and use my juice jug to smuggle gasoline

from a nearby gas station, thereby cultivate psychonautics through sniffing the stuff.

Summoning the police became Jadwiga's new specialty. The cops were somewhat surprised when, having knocked, they were politely asked to step aside while the door was kicked open from the inside. The cops entered the room, scrutinized our faces with their flashlights, and inquired: "Why is there a bench and a trash can from a bus stop in here? And what about this car door, marked POLICE?" They usually didn't want to believe this place was my home, but I just kept waving the contract, explaining: "As you can see officers, that crazy drunk just keeps calling you for no reason!" We always could talk our way out of trouble. Gradually, the flat lost its value. My personal belongings – everything from empty beer bottles to books – were stolen, the furniture was used as firewood, the walls were covered with surrealist graffiti, and I left like a rat off a sinking ship.

I lived on-and-off in different dorms for a few years, always managing to avoid paying rent and often spending the night at my friends' places; I cynically exploited their hospitality and refrigerators.

Once I happened to live in the house of a little old lady who rented me her porch for a symbolic amount: in exchange, I promised to shop for her. No, I didn't keep my end of the deal, and the ending was classic as ever. In order to avoid paying rent I evacuated my stuff bit by bit under the cover of night, until one day the lock was changed and I became separated from several precious belongings.

My next place was formerly a studio belonging to the Union of Artists. It was in the basement of an apartment block, khrushchevka. There I led the life of a social outcast. There was no bed, so I slept under a fur coat on top of a cupboard; there was no toilet, so I made do with the sink. It was cold and damp, and my girlfriend gave me an electric radiator. When I turned it on, it would

blow out the fuses, and when I forced them back in, they simply melted. And I was left without electricity altogether. To state it mildly, it was rough living there in the bleak midwinter.

But luckily the sun was destined to shine even on my back every once in a while. It was one of those rare periods in my life when I actually had a job. It was a weekly cultural publication funded on private capital; as its art editor, I managed to take full advantage of the freedom of speech and ideas. Out of sympathy, the editor-in-chief, who happened to be the widow of a legendary musical historian and a great fan of mine, invited me to move in with her. The Old Town flat belonging to the established Soviet intellectual was enormous, not to mention equipped with all amenities and crammed full of high-brow literature and music. I wore her late husband's clothes, listened to his records, was constantly stoned and let the art institute expel me without any regrets. It was at about the same time that our newspaper went bankrupt; there was nothing to eat in the flat, and in the parlour, a ray of sun danced melancholically on the dust bunnies that had gathered on the grand piano. My landlady seemed to be having mental problems; the phone was disconnected, the hot water was turned off and the bath broke.

One beautiful day I was bidden to go, and I settled down in one my girl friends' flats that was being repaired (in fact the renovations would never be finished). It was here in this place that my paranoia of thieves – a fear that, in my absence, the flat would be invaded by dark forces that would carry away any- and everything worth taking – manifested itself for the first time. Of course, the opposite happened. The girlfriend wasn't able to pay the rent, I was evicted and, as I had nowhere to put my things, I lost them. Among the more or less valuable possessions to go were my relatively perverted self-portrait photos, which I later discovered as having been published in the press. But that's not to say that life came to a standstill. After sharing a row of homes with girlfriends more or less random in nature and leaving a wake of more or less unpaid rent, I came across a place where my so-called crisis of territory would really fuse with art.

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the entrance and the corridor door could be locked. But I had barely managed to move in, when someone already stripped the room bare in my absence. I called the police; they arrived, got lost on the factory's territory and drove off annoyed.

My last home, approximately the twenty-fifth in six years, was in an enormous complex downtown; it used to be a hospital. This is not the time to elaborate on such extreme phenomena as negative energies and poltergeist, but this Stalinist monster of a building was rather eerie, even morbid, indeed. For years, the city government had tried to keep it heated in order to slow amortization. Yet they wouldn't rent it to artists as studio space at cost. I had to sneak by the watchman each night to avoid being detected. Once in the room I had to cover the window with blinds so the light wouldn't betray me. Soon I became overwhelmed by strange and indescribable physical processes each time I entered the building. These psychosomatic symptoms were an expression of my fear of finding my studio robbed. But there were also other phobias at work in this place. Since the few legal residents of the building were scared of being attacked by syringe junkies who might set the building on fire, even the tiniest openings were covered and camouflaged. The phobias faced by building's master of camouflage were made unmistakably clear, given the painted warnings about the place: "If you want to go on living, keep out!" "220 volts – It kills!" And so on. Of course, this atmosphere made me paranoid as well. Still busy making music, I lived in constant fear that the sound might expose me. On the other hand, wearing headphones made me jittery – each twitch conjured fears of an unknown intruder lurking in the building. As I snuck out one night, I was met by a blinding pointed at my eye. The cops! "Maybe he's the one we're looking for," one of them said. They had been called out to investigate the break-in at the translation bureau located in the same building. But it's hard to stay cool and feign indifference day after day, hour after hour. –*Kiwa*

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A friend of mine had some acquaintances whose wholesale toy company had been flooded as a consequence of leaking pipes. They were so annoyed by the event and deserted the underground room. Fortunately, coinciding circumstances landed the keys into my hands. At that time our main goal was creating our own music scene, and we decided to turn the basement into an underground club. Inspired by the pile of sodden and hence useless yo-yo's lying around, we christened the place "Yo-Yo Club." That inevitably led to a record label bearing the name "yO-yO rekords". It wasn't only our illegality and left-wing views that set a precedent. I think some guys still haven't gotten over it. With my art paradigm of the time embodied in the innocence and unabashed irresponsibility of childhood, the characteristics of the space in that underground shop melded with my concept, thus becoming ...well, one big hamburger, so to speak. The fun lasted until the real estate company changed the locks and deprived me of my record library, my collection of valuable art books and other titles, works of art and the room installation "Anti Euro Style Repairs." So far, the red-tape negotiations have been fruitless. I say, "I want my paintings back." They say, "Pay your electric bill." And so on.

Meanwhile, I managed to live in the dorm of the art academy for six months, illegally of course. My accomplice was female, a trait that allowed us to fool the warden into believing we were having an affair. It was fun fleeing from her, sneaking into the building incognito and pretending to be a noble underground revolutionary. Of course the warden disapproved, but when she caught me canoodling with an entirely different chick in her beloved dorm, she snatched the key and proceeded to babble on about something in Russian. When the real owner of the room went to fetch the key, it occurred to us that the warden might have thought I was being unfaithful. So what else could the girl do, other than explain that we had indeed had a spat but now everything was all right again?

My next stop, a little pompous room on the fifth floor of a Soviet-era factory, certainly seemed safe enough. There was a security guard at

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Author's note: „There where paranoias surface...” is a paraphrase from well-known nostalgic estonian song „There where the waves of Western Sea...”