

PUBLICS

PUBLICS

PUBLICS

PUBLICS

PUBLICS

PUBLICS

PUBLICS

HELSINKI

PUBLICS

PUBLICS

PUBLICS

PUBLICS

Annual Report

PUBLICS

2017

PUBLICS

PUBLICS (previously known as Checkpoint Helsinki) produces contemporary art of the future. Established in 2013, it is a curatorial agency and an art organisation equipped with a forerunner's attitude, and a breaker of new ground. In co-operation with local and international agents the organization produces projects and events of high artistic quality and resonating content. The foundational pillars of programming are the intrinsic value of art, experimentality, internationality, and making different points of view visible. PUBLICS is an educational, civic and public resource. The organization commissions, produces and curates durational, longer-term contemporary public art.

In December 2017 PUBLICS opened a new event space and a reading room in Vallila, Helsinki. In order to function as a multidimensional and purposed space, artists/curators emerging from various different social backgrounds, and minorities including ethnicities, LGBTQI communities and indigenous peoples are invited to work within and reactivate both the space and the material. As well as enabling a regular rhythm of gathering people together at the space, there is an additional focus on activities to further develop an expansive program through public talks and events aiming to engage with a large and broad general public to build recurring in-depth discussions, connections, and public debates to further foster equality, highlighting issues of discrimination and social tolerance.

Some of the activities are aimed towards the professional fields (artists, curators, researchers and experts from different fields and disciplines) with the aim of supporting critical conversation, debate, and dialogues - both formal and informal - as ways and means of discussing art, politics and its public life, whilst engaging and opening up discourses to wider audiences.

TIMELINE

6/3/2017	Open call for the Program Director is announced
12/5/2017	Open call for Program Manager is announced
14/6/2017	Paul O'Neill appointed Artistic Director
14/8/2017	Eliisa Suvanto appointed Program Manager
9-10/2017	O'Neill and Suvanto start their positions
30/9-22/10/2017	Uncanny Interdependence exhibition, symposium & city walk
9/12/2017	PUBLICS officially launched
20/12/2017	A discussion with Shannon Mattern and Jussi Parikka

ACTIVITIES

In 2017 the most important aim was to create prerequisites for long-term activity. Checkpoint Helsinki was looking for new staff and members of organisational bodies, who continued with both program planning and development of funding base. The new staff was given the space to develop activities in new directions, whilst following Checkpoint Helsinki's core values.

In March 2017 the organization announced that it is looking for a new Director to lead activities, develop networks and foster contacts with collaborative partners. In June curator Paul O'Neill was appointed to the task. This was the first time that a Finnish art organization had appointed a director coming from abroad. O'Neill is widely regarded as one of the foremost research-oriented curators, and leading scholar of curatorial practice, public art and exhibition histories. He is one of the most published authors in the field, most notably with *The Culture of Curating, the Curating of Culture(s)*, published by MIT Press in 2012. He received his doctorate in visual culture from Middlesex University, London in 2007. O'Neill started working for Checkpoint Helsinki in September.

Soon after Eliisa Suvanto was appointed as the new Program Manager of Checkpoint Helsinki and has been in charge of realizing the programming as well as administration. Suvanto had previously worked as the Director of an artist-run space and residency program Titanik. In recent years Suvanto has been involved in launching and realising large-scale site-specific projects such as *Valtio+* (2015) in Turku's former county prison and *Parantola* (2016) at Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium. She is also one of the founding members of Porin kulttuurisäättö, a collective dedicated to questioning the structures of the art world and our society. In 2017 Checkpoint Helsinki continued the long-term collaboration with curator Joanna Warsza. The project *Uncanny Independence* focused on connections between Finnish independence and the October Revolution in Russia. The project was a sequel to the Finnish Landscape exhibition shown at the Seurasaari open-air museum in summer 2016.

In November 2017 it was announced that PUBLICS, a new curatorial agency with an affiliated event space, evolves out of the contemporary-art initiative Checkpoint Helsinki. The opening of PUBLICS in December 2017 coincided with the unveiling of its design identity, by international renowned collective design practice Julia, and with the initiation of its on-going project strands: PUBLICS Library, PUBLICS Talks, PUBLICS Events and PUBLICS Public Art Commissions.

PROGRAM

UNCANNY INTERDEPENDENCE. REMEMBRANCE AND DISREMEMBRANCE OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

Program consisted of Ilya Orlov's exhibition *Museum of the Museum* held in Hakaniemi (30/9–22/10/2017), a symposium in Paasitorni (30/9/2017) and a city walk in Alppiharju (1/10/2017)

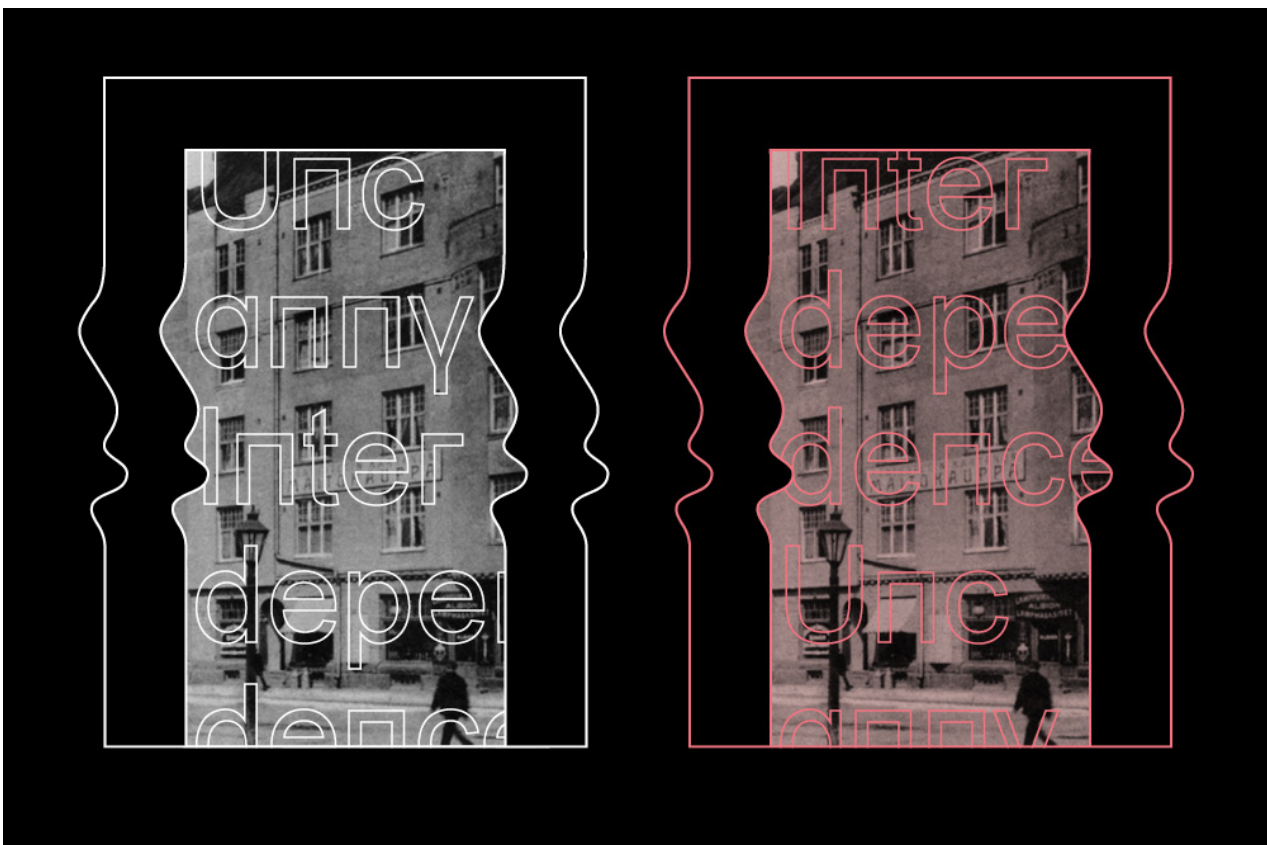
Curator: Joanna Warsza, Associate Curator: Giovanna Esposito Yussif

Uncanny Interdependence was an invitation to think beyond national forms of memorialization in a discussion with individuals engaged in thinking critically and reading widely about this revolutionary time and its traces, claims, and contemporary forms.

Symposium Participants: Bini Adamczak, Elena Agudio, Sezgin Boynik, Esther Leslie, Minna Henriksson, Michele Masucci, Aimo Minkkinen, Paul O'Neill, Ilya Orlov and Nora Sternfeld

City walk participants: Minna Henriksson, Ritva Hartzell and Jyrki Siukonen

Partners: Lenin Museum, The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas (Tampere) and Helsinki City Museum



Museum of the Museum was an exhibition by Helsinki-based artist Ilya Orlov dedicated to the history of the Lenin Memorial Room, a museum that opened in Hakaniemi Square in 1976 and closed in 1993. Shortly before the October Revolution, Chief Kustaa Rovio of the Helsingfors police sheltered Lenin in this room for several weeks so that he could avoid prosecution by the provisional government. Here Lenin worked on his book *State and Revolution* and prepared for the uprising. Upon the museum's closure in 1993, the apartment was sold to a private individual. For this research-based exhibition, Orlov rented another apartment in the same building, where he recreated the museum for three weeks in October 2017 to coincide with the centennial of the revolution.



Ilya Orlov: *Museum of the Museum*. Photo: Kasia Miron

Symposium took place in Paasitorni, the historic Helsinki Workers' House building in Hakaniemi. 2017 marked the 100th anniversary of both Finnish independence and the October Revolution. These two events were closely linked, even dependent, on one another, although in both countries these topics are sensitive and painful.

The one-day symposium addressed whether and how these events should be remembered, disremembered, or simply reconfigured within the current political context. It traced the fate of Lenin's museums in Finland and asked whether the October Revolution should have some kind of memorial. What was the legacy of Alexandra Kollontai—a Finnish-Russian revolutionary and advocate of free love? Can some form of communism still provide a working theory for everyone?

Symposium program:

- 11.00–11.15 Welcome by Paul O’Neill; Introduction by Joanna Warsza and Giovanna Esposito Yussif
- 11.15–11.45 *A Conceptual Art Objection to the Politics of Memory*. Ilya Orlov
- 11.45–12.15 *Lenin’s Museum in Helsinki: History and Memory*, Aimo Minkkinen
- 12.15–12.50 Aleksandra Kollontai and Finland, Michele Masucci, moderated by Elena Agudio
- 14.00–14.30 *Relational Politics and the Memory of the Future*, Bini Adamczak and Nora Sternfeld in conversation
- 14.39–15.30 *The Centrifugal Forces of a Revolution*, Esther Leslie and Sezgin Boynik, moderated by Giovanna Esposito Yussif
Shiny Metal Things and Memorializing the Nameless, Esther Leslie
Lenin-disc: Atlases, Herbariums, and Rituals, Sezgin Boynik
- 15:45–16:15 Minna Henriksson in conversation with Joanna Warsza
- 16.15–17.30 Collective Discussion with Guest Speakers, moderated by Paul O’Neill

A Memorial Site for the Working Class, guided tour by Minna Henriksson, with Alppila is among Helsinki’s traditional working class neighborhoods; here, Kulttuuritalo (the House of Culture) was built by volunteers for the People’s Democratic League and inaugurated in 1958. Some years later, in 1970, a nearby park was selected to commemorate Lenin’s legacy and was renamed Lenin Park. However, plans to erect a statue in his memory there were never realized. In the walking tour visual artist Minna Henriksson guided the participants through the Alppiharju district, reviving the neglected histories of those and other memorials located in the area. Along the way, Jyrki Siukonen, who has been pursuing research on Bolshevik monumental propaganda from 1918 to 1920, discussed the gradual decay of historical memories. Civic activist Ritva Hartzell spoke about her on-going campaign to erect a Lenin statue in Lenin Park.

PUBLICS LAUNCH

9/12/2017

Venues: PUBLICS, African Pots restaurant, Club Kaiku

Curators: Paul O'Neill, Eliisa Suvanto

Guests: Adelaide Bannerman, Hannah Quinlan & Rosie Hastings, James Hoff, Kallio Manninen, Kathrin Böhm, Mick Wilson, Valerio Di Lucente



PUBLICS Launch 9/12/2017. Photo: Lauri Hannus

The opening of PUBLICS was held on December 9th in three different locations. The program started in Vallila with a series of artist and curator talks and book launches, including *How Institutions Think*, a MIT Press-published anthology edited by Paul O'Neill, Lucy Steeds and Mick Wilson addressing such questions as whether institutional building is still possible, feasible, or desirable. PUBLICS invited New York based James Hoff to give a lecture on his practice as an artist, publisher and DJ; followed with London based curator Adelaide Bannerman around questions of curatorial autonomy versus interdependency; and a spatial intervention and related talk with artist Kathrin Böhm; and artist-educator Mick Wilson to present his on-going curatorial research project *The Food Thing*, during a shared meal in a local restaurant serving African fusion food.



PUBLICS Launch in Kaiku. Photo: Lauri Hannus

The evening ended in club Kaiku, famous of its combination of open-minded audiences and innovative music programming. In Kaiku, PUBLICS presented live performances by James Hoff; Hannah Quinlan and Rosie Hastings working with unseen footage from the UK Gay Bar Directory, a moving image archive of Gay Bars in the UK made in 2016; and kallio manninen, who reimagine the future of humanity through fantasy and issues regarding gender, alienation and hypersexual disorder, and DJ sets by James Hoff, Paul O'Neill and @Gaybar.



Artistic Director Paul O'Neill
in PUBLICS Launch
Photo: Lauri Hannus

DEEP AND MATTERING CITIES: A DISCUSSION WITH SHANNON MATTERN AND JUSSI PARIKKA

20/12/2017

Co-hosted with Finnish Cultural Institute in New York (FCINY)

The discussion brought two international media and art theorists, Shannon Mattern and Jussi Parikka, into a dialogue about their recent work, which has addressed such crucial questions and elaborated issues that are important both for media studies and contemporary arts, but also for the wider public debate about what technological cities mean. The event also acted as the launch of Mattern's book *Code and Clay, Data and Dirt: Five Thousand Years of Urban Media* (University of Minnesota Press). Shannon Mattern is an Associate Professor of Media Studies at The New School. Her writing and teaching focus on archives, libraries, and other media spaces; media infrastructures; spatial epistemologies; and mediated sensation and exhibition. Jussi Parikka is Professor at University of Southampton and Winchester School of Art. Docent at University of Turku, his wide range of publications have been instrumental in defining the international field of media archaeology. They are both current participants of FCINY's MOBIUS Fellowship Program.

VISITORS

Uncanny Independence:

Museum of the Museum: 179

Symposium: 60

City walk: 34

PUBLICS launch: 287

Deep and Mattering Cities: 73

Total: 633

ADMINISTRATION

The supporting organisation behind PUBLICS is the Checkpoint Helsingin Tukiyhdistys association, whose board develops and approves the mission and vision, monitors the strategy, as well as oversees and supports the programming policy. In 2017 the board members of the association were Satu Herrala, Kaija Kaitavuori (Chair), Toni Ledentsa, Suvi Lehtinen, Satu Oksanen, Nestori Syrjälä (Vice-chair). Deputy members: Noora Geagea, Tellervo Kalleinen, Inkeri Suutari.

The organisation also included an advisory board, which was in charge of choosing curators, and project-based personnel to work with the productions. In 2017 the advisory board consisted of Giovanna Esposito Yussif, Diego Bruno, Maaretta Jaukkuri and Jenni Nurmenniemi.

During 2017 the board met 17 times.

In 2017 Publics' employers were part time Coordinator Saara Karhunen (1/1–30/10/2017), Artistic Director Paul O'Neill (1/10–31/12/2017), Program Manager Eliisa Suvanto (11/9–31/12/2017) and assistant Mariliis Rebane (22/11–31/12/2017), an internship through Finnish Academy of Fine Arts.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Media hits according to the months:

June	4
September	1
November	4
December	1

Checkpoint Helsinki Appoints Paul O'Neill as New Artistic Director, Art News, 15.6.2017 – <http://www.artnews.com/2017/06/15/checkpoint-helsinki-appoints-paul-oneill-as-new-artistic-director/>

Paul O'Neill Checkpoint Helsingin johtoon, Taiteilijalehti, 15.6.2017 – <http://taiteilijalehti.fi/paul-oneill-checkpoint-helsingin-johtoon/>

Irlantilainen Paul O'Neill Checkpoint Helsingin johtoon, Helsingin Sanomat, 15.6.2017 – <https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000005255890.html>

Paul O'Neill to Join Checkpoint Helsinki as Artistic Director, Artforum, 16.6.2017 – <https://www.artforum.com/news/paul-o-neill-to-join-checkpoint-helsinki-as-artistic-director-68986>

When Lenin came to Helsinki/När Lenin kom till Helsinki, Kunstkrityk 15.9.2017 – <http://www.kunstkrityk.com/nyheter/when-lenin-came-to-helsinki/>

Lenin revisited, Ny Tid, 17.11.2017 – <http://www.nytid.fi/2017/11/lenin-revisited/>

Publics, a New Curatorial Project and Event Space, Debuts in Helsinki, Art News, 27.11.2017 – <http://www.artnews.com/2017/11/27/publics-new-curatorial-project-event-space-debuts-helsinki/>

New Curatorial Project Space Launches in Helsinki, Artforum, 28.11.2017 – <https://www.artforum.com/news/new-curatorial-project-space-launches-in-helsinki-72558>

Checkpoint Helsinki uudistuu – organisaation nimi on jatkossa PUBLICS, Taiteilijalehti, 30.11.2017 – <http://taiteilijalehti.fi/checkpoint-helsinki-uudistuu-organisaation-nimi-on-jatkossa-publics/>

Nykytaideorganisaatio Checkpoint Helsinki herää eloon uudella nimellä ja avaa Vallilaan 8 000 kirjan taidekirjaston, Helsingin Sanomat: 9.12.2017 – <https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000005484037.html>

FUNDING

In 2017 PUBLICS was funded by the Kone Foundation, which is an independent and unaffiliated organization awarding grants to promote academic research, culture and art.



PUBLICS Launch 9/12/2017. Photo: Lauri Hannus

Sturenkatu 37-41 4b
00550 Helsinki

publics.fi
@publicsfi

Annual Report

PUBLICS

2017