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Annual Report

PUBLICS

2023

PUBLICS

PUBLICS is a curatorial agency with a dedicated library, event space and reading room in Vallila. The organisation explores a 'work together' institutional model with multiple overlapping objectives, thematic strands and collaborations. The space functions as the main office, as well as a public space, with a library of over 8000+ publications. PUBLICS hosts talks, events, exhibitions and performances in collaboration with other partners in the city, nationally and internationally. PUBLICS is an educational platform and a critical agency where artists, students and communities are invited to engage with social issues, as well as gain and share knowledge through various discourses. These initiatives develop in parallel with longer-term curatorial projects.

PUBLICS is a producer of new artistic projects driven by social concerns, and creates connections between diverse groups, as an open, ethically-led platform for critical debate and collaboration. PUBLICS operates under the Artistic Direction of Paul O'Neill together with team members, Program Manager Annabelle Antas, PUBLICS Youth coordinator Micol Curatolo and Library assistant Valentina Černiauskaitė.

PUBLICS YOUTH Advisory Board is a group of young adults working within our organisation. The project is a platform to engage with professional opportunities and learning experiences as part of a year-long paid position for 18-21 year olds. The members actively support both decision-making and implementation of PUBLICS annual program. In 2023, PUBLICS worked with its second YOUTH Advisory Board.

PUBLICS collaborative methodology aims to create an ecology and diversity of thoughts and experiences. In order to function as a multidimensional and multi-purposed organisation, PUBLICS prioritises working with collaborators whose practice supports intersectional dialogue. PUBLICS fills a middle area in-between the small (artist-led) initiatives and bigger institutions, by providing an important link, support and consultation. PUBLICS is dedicated to support dialogue between the local and the international artistic landscapes. PUBLICS pays an equal standard fee for every artist/curator/collaborator in four different categories. Annually, an elected board of professionals approves the mission, vision, and oversees the program policy.

PUBLICS is a constellation of practices which:

- Commissions, produces and curates exemplary public art and events;
- Supports new collaborative models within the art world locally and internationally;
- Identifies, promotes and advances new local and international networks;
- Collaborates with artists and curators emerging from various different socio-cultural backgrounds;
- Offers educational, civic and public resource;
- Increases intersectional participation and debate urgent issues;
- Activates and actualizes diverse publics for art;
- Sustains small, flexible, content driven and discursive platforms;

ACTIVITIES

In 2023 the core activities of PUBLICS were: the final year of the four-year Open Up network and program, connecting Helsinki-based professionals with international institutions and communities; the festival Today Is Our Tomorrow: The Voice that Remains which in 2023 took place in Nicosia as part of the Open Up project, presenting alter-futures being enacted and presentness of the Voice; SHAPE platform as a means of supporting other local organisations and initiatives; PUBLICS events such as Parahosting and Coupling; the Reading

Group, part of our library events, a monthly session for meeting informally, reading and collectively discussing topics arising from the selected texts; and PUBLICS YOUTH, an Advisory Board part of network with PRAKSIS (Oslo) and Index (Stockholm) - three small-scale organisations dedicated to collaborating with young people to curate new models, formats and modalities for future publics.

In 2023, PUBLICS began the development of the three year Action Plan supported by Saastamoinen Foundation. Alongside its PUBLICS Commissions, PUBLICS evolves around Six Key Program Strands and develops:

PUBLICS Center for Curatorial Thinking;
 PUBLICS Library;
 PUBLICS Events;
 PUBLICS Youth Advisory Board, and Learning from its EU Networks;
 Open Up Helsinki;
 SHAPE Art Map and Online Platform.

TIMELINE

PUBLICS Commissions:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 8 Jun | Coupling event, Helsinki based artist Maarit Mustonen and London based artist Vlatka Horvat |
| 31 Aug | Window Commission, Marge Monko |
| 1 Oct | Coupling event, Australian based artist Eugenia Lim & Finnish based artist Anu Pennanen |
| 20 Oct | KMRU Stupor, Record Release commissioned by PUBLICS |
| 19-22 Oct | OPEN UP Today is Our Tomorrow: The Voice that Remains Festival, Nicosia, Cyprus |
| 16 Nov | SONIC TONIC ASSEMBLY event, Pioneer Works, NYC with Performa |

PUBLICS Events & Parahosting:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 15 Feb | CyberFeminism Index x Sonic Cyberfeminism Book Launch and performance |
| 22 Feb | Sara Raza, Book launch Punk Orientalism: The Art of Rebellion |
| 22 Feb | Publics reading room, In Character: Publication & Podcast Launch |
| 17 Mar | Jo Hislop, Publics Youth reading group |
| 29 Mar | Sasha Huber, You Name It, book launch |
| 18-19 Apr | The Voice as Practice workshop led by Harold Offeh, Noor Abed and Moe Mustafa |
| 24-25 May | Sloganeering Printing making workshop led by Kathrin Böhm and Robin Ellis |
| 25 May | Kathrin Böhm, Art on the Scale of Life, Book Launch with the artist and co-editors Gerrie van Noord, Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson |
| 31 Aug - 30 Nov | Festival of Books and Voices with Lugemik Publishing and other invited guests |
| 08 Sept | Helsinki Design Week, Open Spaces |
| 12 Oct | Julia Fidler, Grieve with Me, Book Launch |
| 15 Nov | Forecast and Fantasy Architecture without Borders. 1960's to 1980's, Book Launch |
| 25 Nov | Festival of Book and Voices Closing event with invited guests |
| 1 Dec | Visual Aids 'Everyone I know is Sick' Film screening |
| 8 Dec | Minna Tarkka, M Cult remembering Potluck event |
| 9 Dec | Nyokabi Kariuki & Moe Mustafa, Live performance with NCP |



The Festival of Books and Voices, photo by Aman Askarizad



CyberFeminism Index x Sonic Cyberfeminism Book Launch and performance, photo by Noora Lehtovuori

PUBLICS Reading Group:

| | |
|--------|---|
| 15 Mar | Jo Hislop, <i>Intertitles</i> |
| 12 Apr | Jo Hislop, <i>Quantum Listening</i> |
| 10 May | Brandon LaBelle & Jo Hislop, <i>The Third Ear</i> |
| 1 Nov | Yue Yu (PUBLICS Youth), <i>A Certain Logic of Expectations</i> |
| 29 Nov | Mireira C. Saladrigues & Irina Mutt, <i>There is No Line of Narration</i> |

PUBLICS PROGRAM

PUBLICS COMMISSIONS

● PUBLICS Coupling: Maarit Mustonen and Vlatka Horvat

Initiated in 2021, Coupling is a series of curatorial projects, collaborations, pairings, initiated by PUBLICS, where two artists/practitioners are introduced to one another for the first time and show together, moving from common concerns within their practices.

Our fourth PUBLICS COUPLING with Helsinki-based artist Maarit Mustonen and London-based artist Vlatka Horvat comprised a public event, an exhibition and a series of window installations at PUBLICS for the month of June.

Mustonen's Plural is a new artist's book describing an arranged meeting between nine people called Maarit Mustonen. The leporello form brings together nine voices talking about their own name, the memories and experiences connected to it. Plural was shown alongside, Nudes, a new installation made from dust jackets selected and taken away from PUBLICS Library and reconfigured in emergent sculptural forms. Vlatka Horvat presented a new incarnation of her site-responsive installation Reinforcements, as well as a new work on paper titled Soft Spine (Concertina), placed into a dialogue with both PUBLICS Library and with Maarit Mustonen's concertina publication. Reinforcements continues a strand of Horvat's sculptural works which place objects and materials in a state of precarious balance, temporarily held in place using principles of tension and counterpoise, without the aid of hardware or adhesives.

In addition to presenting their individual works alongside one another, Maarit and Vlatka collaborated on the new edition of the Eurantie Window Publication, an experimental spatial publication which Maarit edits with Arja Karhumaa in the Multipöly Room windows in Vallila. Maarit's strand of short statements reveals the previous purpose of the two spaces, and Vlatka's text summons from memory the view out the window at her five previous places of residence. Speaking to the street and the passersby, the publication is born out of the artists' shared interest in expanded publishing formats.

● PUBLICS Coupling: Eugenia Lim and Anu Pennanen

The fifth PUBLICS COUPLING with Australian-based artist Eugenia Lim and Helsinki-based artist Anu Pennanen took place as a hybrid film screening at PUBLICS and at Composite in Naarm/Melbourne.

Eugenia Lim and Anu Pennanen were joined by Stéphane Querrec — PALO Art Productions, who engaged in a public conversation about their practices, discussing the various points of connection explored in their work, preceding the screening of their short films at PUBLICS.

Anu Pennanen's 5, 10, 100 YEARS FROM NOW is a short experimental video essay about the future in an era of resource-based conflict and global environmental crisis. The work is based on the wild reflections of the customers of a petrol station, on what they imagine the future will look like seen from the station's window in Helsinki.

Metabolism is an artist film by Eugenia Lim that explores the dynamic relationship between living ecosystems and the diverse species they support. It presents the concept of metabolism as a complex process connecting external and internal forces, ranging from the creation of chemical energy within our bodies to the consequences of capitalism's impact on the environment. The film is set in the vicinity of the Western Treatment Plant (WTP) in Werribee, Victoria, Australia, on the land of the Wadawurrung people, its sovereign traditional custodians.

● KMRU Stupor

Nairobi-born Berlin-based sound artist Joseph Kamaru, aka KMRU, shared his new work Stupor on the new Helsinki-based label Other Power. Commissioned by PUBLICS, Stupor comprises three original long form tracks. As an original score to a future festival, Stupor is a sonic imaginarium that traverses spatial and temporal dimensions.

Realised in-between Nairobi and Berlin, field recordings, bodily effects, and place-bound identities are navigated through interstitial spaces to form a veil of profound stillness. The album asks us to listen with our third ear, that is, to enter into an emergent space of extraordinary openness. The album points to a politics of movement and liminality, probing what it means to be Black and diasporic in an anti-black world. The tracks on the album are speculative notes to social architectures and environments the artist has traversed.

Released on October 20 2023, Composed by Joseph Kamaru, Mastered by Stephan Mathieu at Schwenbung Mastering, Original photos & artwork by Joseph Kamaru, Liner Notes by Bavisha Panchia, OBI Design (Publics identity presence) by Valerio Di Lucente, Design by Matti Nives.
Co-produced by Performa / PUBLICS / Other Power

● Window Commission: Marge Monko

As part of PUBLICS Festival of Books and Voices, Estonian visual artist Marge Monko presented the commissioned works Flawless, Seamless III, 2023, which could be seen from Sturenkatu and Kangasalanatie on PUBLICS windows. The two large works feature photographs of US stocking advertisements from the 1930s and of a manicured hand demonstrating the flattering sheerness of the tights, an object of desire and a recurring motif for Monko. Transparency is a key element of the installation – first, that of the tights in the photographs, and second, the transparency of the window that allows the oversized hands to communicate with the architectural environment that forms its backdrop.

Monko's work revolves around gender – emphasising the body and its photographic representation. Many of her works have a link to history and are influenced by psychoanalysis, feminism, and the theory of visual culture. Depending on the subject, Monko has employed methods such as documenting, staging, and appropriating existing images, often through a combination of these different approaches. Furthermore, five books published by Marge Monko and Lagemik, including her first monograph Flawless, Seamless, were available in the exhibition of Lagemik 100 Book during the duration of the Festival.



Shubhangi Singh, Today Is Our Tomorrow: The Voice that Remains Festival – OPEN UP Nicosia



Harold Offeh, Today Is Our Tomorrow: The Voice that Remains Festival – OPEN UP Nicosia

● *Today Is Our Tomorrow: The Voice that Remains Festival* – OPEN UP Nicosia

PUBLICS curated program for OPEN UP Nicosia was called *Today is Our Tomorrow: The Voice That Remains*. The festival is an annual transdisciplinary public gathering, already initiated by PUBLICS in 2019. Every year *Today is Our Tomorrow* supports intersectional ecologies, a diversity of thoughts, practices, identities, and their experiences, taking a different form, emphasis, title and location.

In 2023, *Today is Our Tomorrow: The Voice That Remains* featured entirely new works by Harold Offeh, KMRU, Noor Abed & Mark Lofty, Shubhangi Singh, Sepideh Rahaa, Anu Pennanen, Eugenia Lim, Moe Mustafa (Atheer Soot) and PUBLICS Youth: performances, theatre, soundscapes, symposia, films, lectures, podcasts, a companion publication, a vinyl release, and the premier of a new soundtrack for an imaginary future festival.

The series of nine unique artist commissions were shown in Nicosia, each focusing on the current futurity and presentness of the voice in its many sonic forms, vocal modes and acoustic modalities. The artists each explore acts of world listening, life recording and the voice as a body of cohabitation, and mode of living and being together, each giving form to the political present and to our future.

Today is our Tomorrow: The Voice That Remains framed much of PUBLICS activities over the last year on the recurrent thematic and evolving concept of the voice, and explores the interaction between people, their acoustic worlds and the sounds of the environment that the listener hears and imagines.

● SONIC TONIC ASSEMBLY – PERFORMA NYC

Curated by PUBLICS, co-presented with Performa, and co-produced by PALO Art Productions, SONIC TONIC ASSEMBLY was a listening program of innovative sound artists using location-specific field recording as their starting point to create aural worlds at the intersection of sonic poetry, abstracted music, and experimental black and global feminist technologies. SONIC TONIC ASSEMBLY appeared in two overlapping episodes of an extended unfolding event that sounds out and listens in.

SONIC TONIC ASSEMBLY featured Cucina Povera, Lau Nau, Islaja, AGF, Lamin Fofana, HxH (Lester St. Louis and Chris Williams), Tony Cokes, DeForrest Brown, Jr., Bhavisha Panchia and KMRU.

SONIC TONIC ASSEMBLY

Episode 1: Sonic Wilderness: AGF with Islaja, Lau Nau, and Cucina Povera

Curated by PUBLICS, Performa and Pioneer Works co-present *Sonic Wilderness*, with renowned Finland-based artists AGF, Islaja, Lau Nau, and Cucina Povera. This episode is co-produced by PALO Art Productions, Helsinki.

Gathered in New York for the first time, this assembly performed together in a dedicated event, offering an intense sonic experience: a durational relay of sonic movements, and responsive interconnections across and between each artist's work based on a dialogical process and mingling with field recordings from Finland. In addition, each artist presented their latest works.

The assembly worked through a discursive methodology of gathering. As part of a cooperative workshop, the assembly first brought sampling and field research to acoustic and digital sound making devices. *Sonic Wilderness* takes the particularities of the Finnish landscape and aural locatedness as their starting point. Concepts of wilderness, place-bound life recordings and lived spaces

become the instruments and listening worlds. The assembly invited the audience in NYC to become aware of the myriad of human and non-human agencies and sonic reverberations in which we live, move and interact with. As our being with the world and others are changed by the continued ecocide, we are asked to reconsider the anthropocentric viewpoint of the landscape: 'Are we still Nature?'

Episode 2: Sounding a Black Grammar: KMRU with Bhavisha Panchia + friends

PUBLICS and Performa present *Sounding a Black Grammar*, where Kenyan sound artist KMRU performed the premier of his new work *Stupor* alongside related sounds. *Stupor* is an album which meditates on spatial and temporal passages across cities and spaces. The album was commissioned as a score for an imaginary future festival by PUBLICS, co-published with record label OTHER POWER in Helsinki and co-produced by Performa as a vinyl release. In a conversation between KMRU and curator-writer Bhavisha Panchia, they discussed the lead up to making *Stupor* and pointed to the politics of movement and diaspora, including the relationship between abstraction and ambient music, listening and positionality.

Sounding a Black Grammar was a combined listening panel, exhibition, performance and discursive event. It convened around black audio culture to expand and complicate forms, from minimalism, improvisation, and experimental music, to ambient and techno genres. Through spoken, musical and poetic articulations, Lamin Fofana, Tony Cokes, KMRU, and DeForrest Brown Jr., with Lester St. Louis and Chris Williams (HxH), navigated and negotiated the politics of what it means to be black in the world through different aural grammars and Black sonic formations that link Africa and its diaspora globally.

SONIC TONIC ASSEMBLY was organised and curated by Paul O'Neill, Artistic Director of PUBLICS, and Defne Ayas, Curator-at-Large at Performa. *Sonic Wilderness* is co-produced by Performa and PALO Art Productions, Helsinki.

PUBLICS TALKS,
EVENTS &
PARAHOSTING

PUBLICS Parahosting began in the Autumn of 2018, and has grown into a key method of decentering its own curatorial authorship. Through Parahosting, PUBLICS supports its para-sites, para-institutions, para-guests, and has grown into a flexible, evolving and expanding programme.

● Book Launch: Sara Raza

On 22nd February our Library turned into an open Reading Room, framing two moments to reflect on voices in publishing. The book launch of Sara Raza's *Punk Orientalism: The Art of Rebellion* and the launch of PUBLICS YOUTH's podcast.

Inspired by British punk methodology, *Punk Orientalism: The Art of Rebellion* is an experimental book, entirely culled from Raza's curatorial practice. Taking up fractured and poetic forms, the book includes art and artworks by thirty-one contemporary art practitioners from Central Asia and the Caucasus, the spaces and places associated with the former Soviet Union, and expands to reflect upon the USSR's complex relationship with the Arab world, Iran and Turkey. Focusing on revolutionary artistic practices and artist-led movements, this timely book provides a fresh take on current global events through the cutting, mixing and weaving of art and ideas.



PUBLICS Coupling: Maarit Mustonen and Vlatka Horvat, photo by Maarit Mustonen



SONIC TONIC ASSEMBLY: Sonic Wilderness, photo by Walter Włodarczyk

● Book Launch: Kathrin Böhm

Kathrin Böhm: *Art on the Scale of Life* has been realised through a collaboration between the University of Gothenburg; PUBLICS, Helsinki; and The Showroom, London, and is co-published with Sternberg Press. The book provides a comprehensive overview of Kathrin Böhm's multifaceted, deeply collaborative and durational practice. Combining visual and textual material, it offers an overview of Böhm's exceptional *modus operandi*.

Kathrin Böhm: *Art on the Scale of Life* critically profiles, contextualises, and theoretically elaborates the work of artist Kathrin Böhm, offering an overview of her exceptional practice, which is rooted in a highly original artistic synthesis of a range of concerns and approaches. Since the late 1990s, the artist has expanded the terms of socially engaged work to an unprecedented scale and breadth by producing innovative organisational, spatial, visual, and economic forms, which often entail the production of complex infrastructures.

Offering a significant addition to debates on contemporary art and architecture, social action, and public culture, this artist book-cum-reader-cum-catalogue brings together critical essays across five sections—Exhibiting, Spaces, Economies, Cohabitations, and Compos(i)ting. Alongside Böhm's own reflections, contributors include Dave Beech, Céline Condorelli, Elvira Dyangani Ose, Wapke Feenstra, Katherine Gibson, Joon-Lynn Goh, Lily Hall, Grace Ndiritu, Doina Petrescu, Gregory Sholette and THEMM!!, Kuba Szreder, and Stephen Wright. Texts and image sections are framed and complemented by texts by co-editors Gerrie van Noord, Paul O'Neill, and Mick Wilson. The book is designed by An Endless Supply.

● CyberFeminism Index x Sonic Cyberfeminism

Co-hosted by PUBLICS as part of its year-long program focusing on *The Voice as Practice* within the framework of its Open Up Program, CYBERFEMINISM INDEX X SONIC CYBERFEMINISM is the first in the new event series *Cyberfeminism(s) to proto-feminism*. As part of the event, Mindy Seu launched the *Cyberfeminism Index* and Annie Goh hosted a *Sonic Cyberfeminism* listening session.

The *Cyberfeminism Index*, initially an open-access, crowd-sourced spreadsheet, has evolved into a website commissioned by Rhizome and now a printed publication. It catalogues over 700 projects spanning from 1991 to 2020 at the intersection of feminism, media arts, and activism. The publication emphasises citational reading, providing cross-references between text excerpts and images related to hacking, glitching, and decolonizing digital infrastructures. Mindy Seu, the editor, demonstrated an augmented reality-based approach to citational reading from the Index.

Cyberfeminism(s) to proto-feminism is a series of events, taking place at different venues throughout 2023, curated by Helen Kaplinsky. *Cyberfeminism(s)* have too often been understood as a future-facing, ironic stagings of technocracy. Proto-feminism describes approaches before the modern conception of feminism that have been interpreted for feminist projects today. The event paid attention to how artists working within the legacy of cyberfeminism draw on proto-feminist historical temporalities and mythologies. Digital self-hood is diffracted through the lenses of past-facing narratives to inform feminist struggles and imaginaries today.

● Book Launch: Sasha Huber – You Name It

This comprehensive publication focuses on the artwork and activism of

Sasha Huber. A Helsinki-based visual artist and researcher of Swiss and Haitian heritage, Huber's creative practice encompasses performance, photography, film, mixed media, reparative interventions, and collaborations to investigate colonial residues left in the environment. Her projects conceive of natural spaces—mountains, lakes, glaciers, forests, and craters—as contested territories, highlighting the ways in which history is imprinted onto the landscape through acts of remembrance, including memorialization through naming and the erection of monuments.

For over a decade, Huber has produced work in relation to the cultural and political Demounting Louis Agassiz campaign, which seeks to redress the racist legacy of the Swiss-born naturalist and glaciologist. With her artworks, Huber challenges the terms by which we remember, asking not only who and what we memorialise, but also, and more importantly, how we do so.

Made in conjunction with Autograph, London, this publication features installation images of Huber's Winter 2022 exhibition at The Power Plant, YOU NAME IT. These images accompany a co-written foreword by former Director and Artistic Director of The Power Plant Gaëtane Verna and Director of Autograph Mark Sealy, an interview between Huber and YOU NAME IT curator Noor Alé, and texts by Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, Julie Crooks, Hans Fässler, Paul Gilroy, Maria Helena P. T. Machado, Walter D. Mignolo, Temi Odumosu, Christina Sharpe, and Françoise Vergès.

● The Voice as Practice workshop led by Harold Offeh, Noor Abed and Moe Mustafa

The Voice as Practice was one of two laboratories produced for our OPEN UP European project. For this practice-based workshop, PUBLICS converted into a small audiovisual production studio. Artists Moe Mustafa, Noor Abed and Harold Offeh explored sound as voice, image as voice, and body as voice, over two days of workshops and presentations. This workshop lab was attended by our PUBLICS Youth Advisory Board and participants from the 7 countries and institutions involved in our OPEN UP European project.

● Sloganeering Printing workshop led by Kathrin Böhm and Robin Ellis

For the second OPEN UP lab, artist Kathrin Böhm together with Robin Ellis facilitated a workshop on postering and sloganeering as a form of co-production, thinking-with-doing and collective activation. PUBLICS was turned into an ad hoc production space, and the PUBLICS library was used as a source and support system for this process. In this workshop, participants practically explored the poster/slogan as an idea, as a sign, as a message and as a moment of publicness and as material-spatial practice. Some of the collaborative work generated through this workshop was presented within the OPEN UP Festival in Nicosia in October 2023. This workshop lab was attended by our PUBLICS Youth Advisory Board and participants from the 7 countries and institutions involved in our OPEN UP European project.

● Visual Aids film screening: Everyone I know is Sick

In December, PUBLICS parahosted Everyone I Know Is Sick, a showcase curated by Visual Aids and co-hosted by Danai Anagnostou, Head Producer at Kenno Films. Everyone I Know Is Sick is a program of five videos generating connections between HIV and other forms of illness and disability. The program featured new works by Dolissa Medina & Ananias P. Soria, Dorothy Cheung, Beau Gomez, Kurt Weston, and Hiura Fernandes & Lili Nascimento.



KMRU record release STUPOR with Other Power and Performa, 2023



Noor Abed and Mark Lofty, Today Is Our Tomorrow: The Voice that Remains Festival – OPEN UP Nicosia



Brandon LaBelle & Jo Hislop, The Third Ear, Reading Group and public event, photo by Aman Askarizad



PUBLICS Coupling: Eugenia Lim and Anu Pennanen, photo by Aman Askarizad

● Nyokabi Kariūki & Moe Mustafa Live Performance at Nordic Culture Point

PUBLICS were invited to curate and produce one iteration of Nordic Culture Club, the public series of events by Nordic Culture Point in Suomenlinna. Invited guests Nyokabi Kariūki and Atheer Soot performed live on Saturday 9th December. Nyokabi Kariūki presented an intimate solo set where she performed music from her first two records, *peace places: Kenyan memories* and *FEELING BODY*, as well as some unreleased material. The performance closed Kariūki's EU/UK tour and brought the artist back to Suomenlinna after her residency at HIAP Helsinki International Artist Programme.

Sound artist Moe Mustafa, aka Atheer Soot, presented *The Topography Soundscape of My Queer Body*, a sonic research on the artists' existence within a hybrid masculine system and the hierarchy of desire in homosexual contexts. This piece was previously commissioned for our OPEN UP Nicosia.

PUBLICS Festival of Books and Voices

For the final year of our OPEN UP, PUBLICS produced a local festival parahosted and co-curated by Lagemik, an independent publishing initiative based in Tallinn. The Festival spread out through the months of September, October and November, bringing together themes of Publishing and Voice. For the Autumn, our library showcased an exhibition of 100 books published by Lagemik in celebration of the exhibition, the monthly program consisted of book launches, vinyl sound lounge, lectures, screenings, pop-up bookstores, discussions and readings.

Festival of Books and Voices brought together book-related practices and the presence of voice – the two strands of PUBLICS that have been visible and active throughout the years, evolving through our public events and library program. The festival continued the tradition of bringing attention to books and emphasising the context of our library – a crucial and ever growing part of PUBLICS identity. At the beginning of each month, a scheduled event program will be announced.

The Festival of Books and Voices included: Lagemik, Indrek Sirkel, Marge Monko, Flo Kasearu, Dear Friend, Page Not Found, OH Radio, EKA GD MA students, Arja Karhumaa, Multipöly / Ikkunajulkaisu Eurantiellä, Tuukka Kaila, Rooftop Press, Khaos Publishing, PUBLICS YOUTH, Julia Fidder, Kaino Kim Vieno and Becky Beasley amongst other guests invited by PUBLICS.

The program launched with a presentation by Indrek Sirkel focusing on Lagemik Publishing & Bookshop. The exhibition *Lagemik 100 Books*, a window installation by Marge Monko, and an audio archive installation *Dear Friend: Tracks as Envelopes* installed in the space.

During the festival, curator and writer Julia Fidder launched her latest book *Grieve with Me*, an invitation to imagine alternative ways of grieving in today's world. In an attempt to oppose normative thought caused by capitalist thinking and the privatisation of grief due to neoliberalism, the publication explores shared grieving rituals and communal mourning in contemporary times.

For the closing event of the Festival of Books and Voices, PUBLICS hosted a day-long programme with multiple book launches, talks, a round table discussion, and live music. Included in this event were book Launches by Aura Saarikoski, Sasha Huber and Petri Saarikko, a presentation by invited guest Becky Beasley, a round table discussion on small scale publishing with Finnish and Estonian publishers Lagemik, Khaos Publishing, Multipöly and Rooftop Press. The event also featured PUBLICS/Lagemik book launch of the anthological publication *The*

Voice that Remains. The day ended with Live music by Kaino Kim Vieno.

The Voice that Remains weaves together many strands of PUBLICS programme such as our co-produced exhibitions, events, commissions, book publications, book launches and co-hosted symposiums into a publication over the last 4 years of PUBLICS.

The Voice that Remains publication, published as part of Open Up, gathers the traces left behind by the last four years of PUBLICS programme: keepsakes of past exhibitions, the interactions between PUBLICS and its many collaborators, the sounds of previous events and our surroundings. The book reflects on what is left behind by artistic work and curatorial research, making the present of our organisation and possibly pointing to its future forms. It explores the keepsakes, the remnants, the traces of exhibitions no longer there, and interaction between people, their acoustic worlds and the sounds of the environment that the listener hears and imagines when no longer there. Here, the voice is explored as material remaining where the agencies of language, sound, silence, noise, music, field recording, as well as the agential qualities of listening, speaking, singing, dancing, and the performative voice as embodied practice.

PUBLICS LIBRARY & LEARNING PROGRAM

PUBLICS is an educational resource where critical learning, knowledge production and discursive programming are integral to its curatorial approach. At PUBLICS, contemporary art production, and discursive practices are in constant dialogue through its multiple learning strands. Taking the form of PUBLICS library, and its public programme of talks, events and commissions, these overlapping strands are organised alongside PUBLICS YOUTH program, placing art education, critical research and publicness at the centre of curatorial practice.

In addition to the material library, PUBLICS hosts events linked to the library, as well as educational and collaboration-based research projects. PUBLICS library is a space dedicated to critical social thinking, learning, education, representing concepts, theories and practices of curating contemporary art, education, history of curating, culture and social theory, public art and activism. The library includes 8000+ books, catalogues and other printed matter. The online catalogue holds information on all titles and makes the library accessible prior to the visit. PUBLICS library is open once a week on a regular basis with consistent opening hours and by appointment. Visitors are provided with a space to read, learn, discuss and research. To keep the library up-to-date, new titles are bought monthly, incorporated into one of sixteen existing categories. Throughout the year, PUBLICS library offered the possibility for student groups, classes, visiting guests, artists and curators and research groups to visit our facilities with an in-depth introduction to the materials of our library collection and PUBLICS program.

PUBLICS has organised a series of events emphasising the importance of publishing, including book launches with publishers, authors and designers; Coupling, a series of collaborations between two or more artists that are deeply linked to the library as a starting point or a source of materials, ideas and possibilities; and a Reading Group with invited guests which highlights selected books from the library.

In December 2023, PUBLICS was invited to take part in One Thousand Books 2023: Bindle festival organised by One Thousand Books that took place at O-Overgaden in Copenhagen. The three day festival focused on book distributing places, featured events and showcased a selection of publications from San Serriffe (Amsterdam, Netherlands) and PUBLICS library. PUBLICS selection highlighted one of the Out of the Library lists – Collaborative Articulations



Window Comission: Marge Monko, photo by Aman Askarizad



Closing event of the Festival of Books and Voices, photo by Myriam Gras

compiled by Gerrie van Noord in spring 2023. PUBLICS library and publishing activity has been presented in an opening discussion of the event. Additionally, PUBLICS most recent co-published titles have been introduced during the festival in Copenhagen.

READING GROUP

Reading Group organised and hosted by PUBLICS under the library program is a monthly chance to meet informally, read and collectively discuss topics that arise from the selected text-based work. Following on from our meetings in the autumn of 2022, the spring's program stemmed from current PUBLICS discourse and brought focus to the voice, complexities of language and listening. Reading Group was co-initiated and led by Jo Hislop in Spring 2023.

In the first session of the year on March 15th, we introduced *Intertitles*, edited by Jess Chandler, Aimee Selby, Hana Nororali & Lynton Talbot. *Intertitles* brought together an eclectic range of works that sit between writing and visual art. We read three poetic works from this collection that all play with the possibilities of artistic voice within the realms of language, sound and writing. Encompassing themes such as: the mother tongue and where sound lives in the body, all three works use voice to summon the attention of the reader in remarkably different ways. The readings included: *Shh* by Fatema Abdoolcarim, *This Voice* by Laure Prouvost and *Blackbirds* by Jasper List Thomsen.

Second session – Quantum Listening – took place on April 12th. During this session we were reading: *Quantum Listening*, Pauline Oliveros (1999) and *From Practice to Theory (To Practise Practice)*. *Quantum Listening* is an essay written by the pioneering American performer and composer, Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016). Drawing upon her life and career, Oliveros describes how her practice evolved and was informed by an expanded idea of the role of listening. At the end of the session the group practised one of Pauline Oliveros' 'recipes' for listening through a sonic meditation.

Third reading group session – *The Third Voice* – took place on May 10th with special guest Brandon LaBelle and Jo Hislop. In Jessica Benjamin's work *Beyond Doer and Done To*, the author and psychoanalyst argues for greater intersubjective methods within the context of therapy. Following Benjamin's theories, the reading session aimed at reflecting upon the concept of the Third. This includes a consideration of intersubjectivity and the importance of supporting recognition across social environments, as well as in what ways ideas of the Third impact onto conceptualizations and enactments of voice.

Fall's Reading Group program reflected the Festival of Books and Voices. Reading sessions were hosted by invited guests, engaging in a dialogue with the ongoing *Lugemik 100* books exhibition and looking into ways, methods and different perspectives of publishing and multitude of voices within the field.

The fourth reading group session of the year, *A Certain Logic of Expectations*, took place on 1st of November and was led by Yue Yu, a member of PUBLICS Youth Advisory Board. The material featured in the session was published or distributed by Jiazazhi, an organisation focusing on Photography and Books in China. *A Certain Logic of Expectations* featured four publications: *Attachment to Memory and Existence* from the photo book *Reborn* by Lahem; *To the Border, Unravel ! Strike Out !* from *Pick Your Poison* by Chen Zhe; *The Fifteenth Day* from photo book *24 Mails from the Railway* by Cheng Xinhao; *A Certain Logic of Expectations* by Arturo Soto.

The final reading group session of the year, *There is No Line of Narration*, was hosted on the 29th November and led by artist-researcher Mireia c. Saladrigues

and curator/writer Irina Mutt. This reading session activated diverse fragments of texts and articles, while addressing the ideas of genius, disappearing vs emerging, rupture and disrupting. Saladrignes and Mutt have been intertwining different materials with history, fiction and personal stories about how to thrive, emerge and endure in the art world. The final reading group featured excerpts from *El Dorado Commission* by Scott Elliot, *The Hologram* by Cassie Thorton, *Huaco retrato* by Gabriela Wiener and an article by art historian and critic, Linda Nochlin 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?'

PUBLICS YOUTH

In 2023, PUBLICS has recruited the second Youth Advisory Board: Vitória Fiorella Freitas, Lucas Jordi, Aliina Kemppainen, Aapo Kivivuori, Stella Massa, Gabriella Presnal, Spencer Strachan, Emmi Surwillo, and Yu Yue. Micol Curatolo was the coordinator of the project.

PUBLICS Youth is a collective of creatives (18-21 year old) working together to implement, question and expand how young people and cultural organisations cooperate in the local and international art scene. The activity of the Youth Advisory Board 2023 is part of the project *Reaching Out (2023-2026)* with PRAKSIS Teen Advisory Boards (Oslo) and Index Teen Advisory Board (Stockholm). *Reaching Out* questions and expands how cultural organisations connect with and address new young audiences. The three Boards constitute the Nordic creative youth network *Future Futures*.

Through the year 2023, the Youth Board engaged in different ways of cohabiting space and communicating through sound, voice and words. Their work culminated in a number of events (The Nordic Youth Conference in Oslo, The 1st Helsinki Youth and Early Career Networking Event, and the TAKEOVER in Helsinki) and a series of publications both in audio and printed format (The Podcast and live radio show produced with Helsinki Open Waves at Caisa Kulttuurikeskus, the alternative audio descriptions for the exhibition 'All the Whisperings of the World' at Fotografihuset Oslo, the Dear Friend Letter for Nine Voices in printed and audio format, and the manual 'Safer Space and Thoughts on It').

● RADIO, PODCAST AND SOUNDS

On the 7th December 2023, the Youth Board were live on radio at Helsinki Open Waves, a community open-source radio station based in Caisa Kulttuurikeskus. The radio show is available as a podcast in three episodes on HOW and on PUBLICS SoundCloud. In the three episodes 'Becoming collective', 'Reaching out', and 'Voice', the Board look back at their experience in the project and discuss what the contemporary art field can and should do for and with young adults.

The Board wrote and published *Dear Friend, Letter for Nine Voices*, a collective message to art institutions, their peer young adults, their younger and future selves, inviting new forms of mutual support, self-expression, engagement and listening. The letter was inspired by Sandra Nuut and Ott Kagovere's project *Dear Friend (2019-2022)*. The letter was performed live in Oslo and in Helsinki. The recording of the letter reading in Oslo is available on PUBLICS SoundCloud, the illustrated version by PY member Spencer Strachan has been printed in 150 copies available in our Library.

In October, PY coordinator Micol Curatolo led a workshop at Fotografihuset, Oslo, during which PUBLICS, Index and PRAKSIS Boards have written and recorded audio descriptions for the exhibition 'All the Whisperings of the World' (22.9.-



PUBLICS Reading Room: Sara Raza and Publics Youth, photo by Aman Askarizad



One Thousand Books Festival, Copenhagen, 2023, photo by Johan Rosenmunthe

22.10.2023) also available online.

● THE NORDIC YOUTH CONFERENCE 2023

Between October 4-8th 2023, the Youth Advisory Board travelled to Oslo to work with their partners PRAKSIS and Index Teen Advisory Boards. During their stay, the Boards have attended workshops led by Marit Sisland, Micol Curatolo, artist duo Samvær under Tilsyn, Fernanda Branco, Mar Reykjavik. They visited PRAKSIS, Nitja Art Centre, Fotografihuset, and KIHO Oslo Art Academy.

On October 6th, the Boards hosted the Nordic Youth Symposium 2023: Sounding Out! Voicing the new institution at Tøyen Bibliotek, with a program of conversations around communication and young agency in the arts across the three countries.

THE FIRST HELSINKI YOUTH AND EARLY CAREER NETWORKING EVENT

On the 13th November 2023, PUBLICS Youth hosted the Youth & Early Career Networking Event at Nordic Culture Point, Suomenlinna, Helsinki. Seven organisations run by and for young people in Finland have come together to share about their work, and discuss how we can implement diversity within and through our activities. The participants were: PUBLICS Youth Advisory Board, Kollektiivi, Helsinki Pride-yhteisö, Nuori Taide, PHOTOfuss, Ubuntu Film Club, and PRO ARTE.

● THE TAKEOVER

The final event on the 9th March 2024 celebrated the year-long work of the nine engaged, caring and silver-quick smart members of our Youth Board 2023. The day started with a silkscreen printing workshop led by Robin Clifford Ellis around a concept developed by PUBLICS Youth that aimed at translating sound into images. The collaborative prints reflected on how sound can inhabit and take over public spaces, and have been performed with the audience as an impromptu choir.

Following, Aapo, Aliina, Emmi, Gaby, Lucas, Spencer, Stella, Yue, and Vitória presented their work in the Board, especially addressing how contemporary arts and culture use collective platforms, public resources, and shared spaces. To close the day, PUBLICS Youth hosted choreographer and filmmaker Ima Iduozee, who performed and screened his short film 'After We're Gone' part of Diaspora Mixtapes.

● OTHER ACTIVITIES

Guided by Jo Hislop, the Youth Board started thinking about written language and publishing through the practice of reading together out loud. The workshop was hosted by Nordic Culture Point, and invited two other youth collectives based in Helsinki: Nuori Taide and Photofuss.

PUBLICS Youth have met artist and PUBLICS Board member Pilvi Takala to reflect on what it means to advise an institution, and how they can carry the knowledge stemming from their life experiences and interests into the Advisory Board and their collective work.

In May, the Youth Board worked on intersectional practices and spoken words with writer, poet, and educator Tania Nathan; and participated in Nuori Taide's yearly event in Tiivistämö, Helsinki, which gathered 13-23 year-old creatives from all over Finland. The Youth Board also took part in the workshops part of the European Open Up network.

In June, the Youth Board met artists Maarit Mustonen and Vlatka Horvat who featured in the our Summer COUPLING exhibition. The Board and the artists discussed how working spaces communicate with visitors and the urban surroundings.

As part of the Festival of Books and Voices organised by PUBLICS during the Autumn, the Youth Advisory Board has taken part in a workshop led by Tallinn-based Sandra Nuut and Ott Kagovere, reflecting on accessible communication, peer networking and how to develop a sustainable project with limited resources.

Board members Yu Yue and Stella Massa met The Dock Ireland, to advise on the development of their youth program. Finally, PUBLICS Youth 2023 participated in the outreach and recruitment of the Youth Board 2024.

OPEN UP TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK

Open Up is a four-year long cultural project (2020-2023), co-funded by the Creative Europe program, that aims to bring to the surface and promote under-represented artists and cultural workers. OPEN UP aims to help them establish sustainable practices via training, activities and workshops. Open Up is a partnership between seven distinct organisations from seven cities across Europe. Through its collaborative activities, Open Up aims to establish and support sustainable art practices through the network, and provide participants with training and knowledge based activities and actions, including numerous laboratories, workshops, festivals, exhibitions and publications. Open Up aims to empower creators and artworkers to develop, present and sustain their practices and its contexts.

In the final year of the project, PUBLICS hosted the Festival of Books and Voices during the autumn as well as producing Today is our Tomorrow: The Voice that Remains in Nicosia and publishing Voice The Voice that Remains, an anthological catalogue of our activities over the last four years, launched at our local festival in Helsinki, The Festival of Books and Voices.

Open Up Network:

The consortium consists of the following cultural organisations and academic institutions: Pierides Foundation (Nicosia, Cyprus), PUBLICS (Helsinki, Finland), Université de Picardie Jules Verne (Amiens, France), University of Thessaly (Volos, Greece), New Hand Lab (Covilhã, Portugal), Autonomous University of Barcelona (Barcelona, Spain) and Valand Academy of the Gothenburg University (Gothenburg, Sweden).

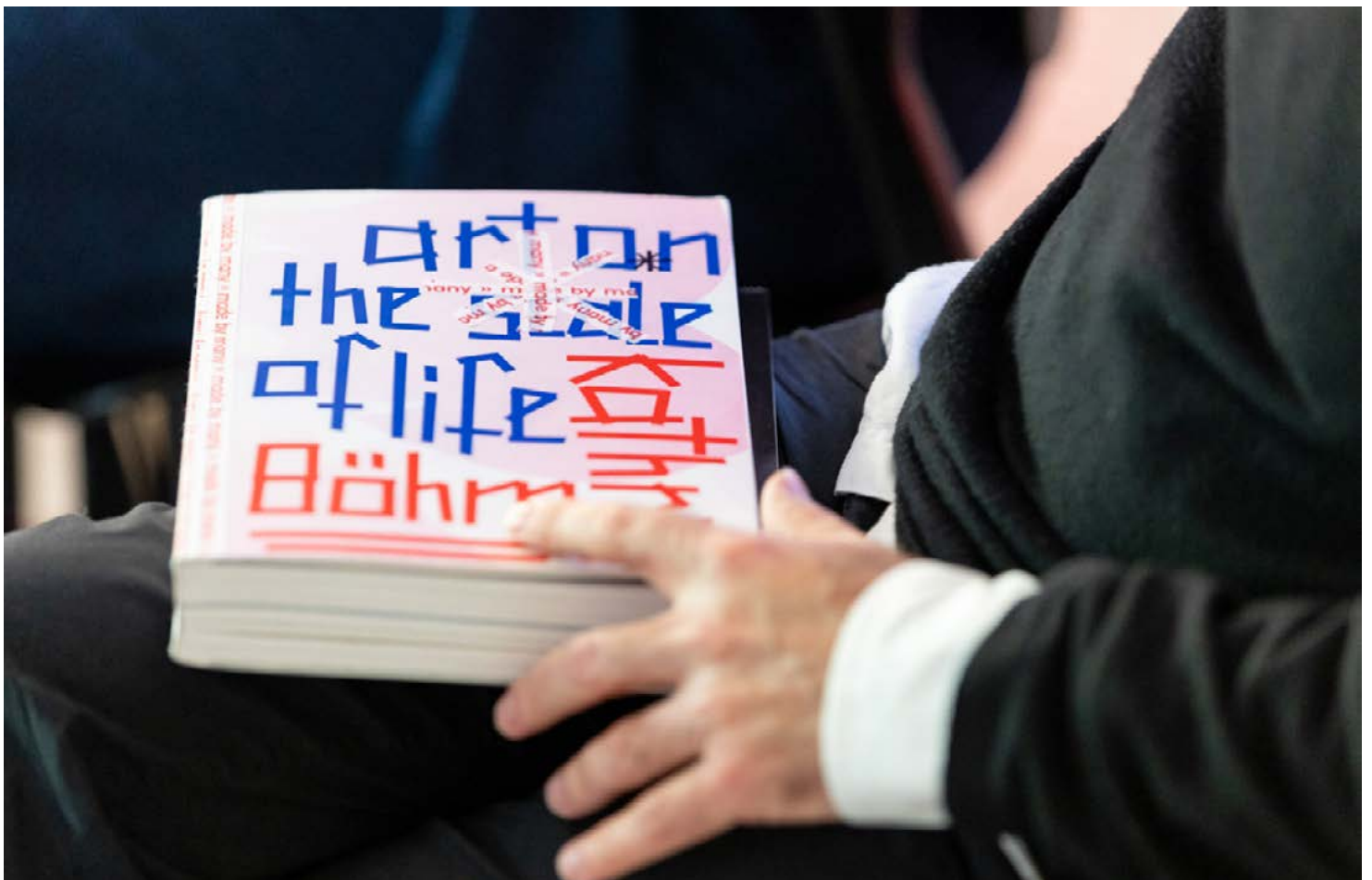
SHAPE Helsinki Art Map

SHAPE Art Map, a website resource for Helsinki's contemporary art landscape, a mapping of art spaces and public events across the city, bringing together established art institutions, commercial galleries, artist-run spaces as well as smaller initiatives and support structures has been run and maintained by PUBLICS throughout the year.

The platform has been updated manually once per week, gathering data on events and exhibitions from various websites and platforms and inputting it. Alongside the website, selected entries of SHAPE have been featured weekly on Instagram and Facebook platforms. A city wide poster and sticker campaign has been organised in spring and summer 2023 in correlation to the Helsinki Biennial. An e-flux announcement introducing the platform to international audiences was published in May 2023.



The Voice that Remains, published by Lugemik and PUBLICS, 2023



Kathrin-Böhm: Art on the Scale of Life, published by Sternberg Press, PUBLICS, The Showroom & HDK Valand, photo by Aman Askarizad

From January 2024, SHAPE moves to an annual subscription-based platform with varying subscription plans, depending on the type and capacity of the institutions listed in the directory. The shift to an annual subscription model began in October 2023 and continued until early spring 2024. Annual subscription plans have been adjusted according to the scale of each organisation, starting with museums and large scale institutions and following with commercial galleries, non-commercial galleries and middle-scale institutions and artist-run spaces. Each plan offers features such as weekly updating events and exhibitions to the platform, featuring and profiling of each institution on social media channels, receiving ongoing promotion of SHAPE Art Map visible through other platforms, including paid and sponsored advertisements nationally and internationally. PUBLICS continues to maintain the platform and manage subscriptions case by case in 2024.

Shape Art Map directory consistently features more than 100 organisations and is updated monthly by offering a possibility for new spaces to join the platform.

STATISTICS

Throughout 2023 PUBLICS developed and commissioned in total 11 large scale new commissioned works, films or performances, held 21 events and 5 Reading Groups. PUBLICS collaborated and supported over 101 individual cultural workers, artists and professionals. In 2023 PUBLICS employed 5 salaried members of staff, 10 Youth Board Members who met 12 times over the year and 7 Board Members who met up to 6 times. We had consistently between 60-100 people attend our events including the parahosting events, commissioned opening events and library events. Our library opened its doors every Wednesday and attracted visitors on average between 5-15 per session. 8 groups of students booked to visit the Library from local universities, art academies and art schools as well as groups from abroad. In such cases the numbers were 15-20 per session. The reading group's attendance was between 10-20 people per session. During months when PUBLICS was open for commissions and exhibitions events and the festival the Month of Books we had on average 10 people per day visit.

Our social media channels are steadily growing with our PUBLICS Instagram followers 6300 by the end of 2022 and by the end of 2023 over 7100. Our Instagram channel on average reaches 6364 and engages 1107 accounts quarterly. On Facebook PUBLICS has 5700 followers and 985 reached via each post and post engagement is 105. We sent a monthly newsletter in 2023 to over 1500 subscribers and our mailing list has over 3000 active subscribers in total.

SHAPE Google analytics have an average of 1000 page views per 30 days. On average, we have 80% of new and 20% percent of returning visitors. We also have 2000+ followers on SHAPE Instagram currently, with a reach of 1400 accounts monthly and 250 accounts engaged monthly. Shape Art Map Helsinki has close to double followers from 2022 to 2023. We are posting once per week, on average being 4 times monthly and sharing stories of various events and exhibitions multiple times per week. Shape is mostly used by people in Finland, yet we have a growing number of international visitors with the top countries being the United States, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, France and Estonia.

PARTNERSHIPS

Aalto University, Academy of Fine Arts, Academy of Moving People and Images, Artists at Risk, CCA Estonia, Finnish Culture Institute in New York, The Finnish Institute in London, Flock Network, Frame Finland, Globe Art Point, Index Foundation, Institute of Modern Art (IMA), Keep It Complex, Kiasma, Kohta

Kunsthalle, Latitudes, Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, Lujemik, MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Narva Residency, NCP, Nida Art Colony, NO NIIN, Other Power, PALO art productions, Performa, PRAKSIS, Rab-Rab Press, Rooftop Press, Saastamoinen Foundation, Shimmer, The Showroom, Studio Julia, TAXISPALAIS Kunsthalle Tirol, Third Space, Uniarts Helsinki, University of Valand, We Jazz.

ADMINISTRATION

The supporting association behind PUBLICS is Checkpoint Helsingin Tukiyhdistys, born in 2013 in a moment where the political imagination was open to envisioning the economic and cultural benefits of making a grand investment in the arts. Instead of putting the energy into criticising, the association has taken this momentum seriously and worked towards the most interesting roadmap enabling the local cultural field to develop in dialogue with the international scene. In 2023 board members were Pilvi Kalhama (chair), Adelaide Bannerman, Taru Elfving, Bassam El Baroni (vice chair), Kati Laakso, Axel Straschnoy and Pilvi Takala.

In 2023 the board met 5 times. The Spring meeting was held on May 31st in Publics and online. The Annual General meeting was held on 13th December, the board met at PUBLICS. The board met in person at PUBLICS. PUBLICS had two full-time employees, artistic director Paul O'Neill (1/1–31/12/2023), program manager Annabelle (31/1–31/12/2023). The organisation employed Valentina Černiauskaitė part time from January until December 2023 as coordinator of the library and SHAPE Helsinki Art Map. Micol Curatolo was employed 2 days a week as coordinator of the PUBLICS Youth advisory board from January until December 2023. Valerio Di Lucente has been our design consultant ongoing since PUBLICS began.

In 2023 PUBLICS partnered with the Saastamoinen Foundation for 2023-2025. Support also came from Creative Europe Program (Open Up developed in partnership with 7 institutions across Europe) for the final year of our OPEN UP project (2020-2023), Erasmus+ Youth in Action program of European Union (Future Futures project developed in partnership with Index and PRAKSIS 2023-2026), the Finnish National Agency for Education (between 2021–23 to support the Open Up), Arts Promotion Centre Finland, the City of Helsinki, and Nordic Culture Point.



Sloganeering Printing making workshop led by Kathrin Böhm and Robin Ellis, photo by Aman Askarizad



Nyokabi Kariuki & Moe Mustafa Live Performance at Nordic Culture Point, photo by Myriam Gras

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