

→ Former building of Estonian Academy of Arts on Tartu road 1 (2009). Photo: Jarmo Kauge.

↘ Demolition of the Tartu road building (2010). Photo: Epp Kubu.

↓ Winning entry for EKA's new building on Tartu road: *Art Plaza* by SEA+EFEKT (2008). Image: SEA+EFEKT.



Winning entry for EKA's new building on Kotzebue Street 1/Põhja Boulevard 7: *Linea* by KUU Architects (2014). Image: KUU.



The bus stop remembers: from 1919-2010, the only public university providing higher education in arts in Estonia stood here. Photo: Andra Aaloe.

WHERE IS THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS?

ANDRA AALOE, KEITI KLJAVIN, *editors of U*

A decade of real estate deals by the Estonian Academy of Arts have led the school to a situation where its departments are scattered across the city, the historical plot where the academy was situated from 1917 to 2010 has been sold, and the state has yet to decide definitively whether it will support the construction of a new building.

For about ten years now, the Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA) – the only public university offering higher education in architecture, design, art and art culture – has been searching for an answer to their perpetual problem – a lack of space. In 2006, the suggested potential locations (including the Patarei sea fortress and the Suva hosiery factory) were discarded and a decision was made to build a completely new building on the academy's historic plot at Tartu Road 1. An international architecture competition was announced and the winning entry, Art Plaza, with its open plan and spiral atrium, was supposed to provide the school with the latest designs in learning environments and to 'ethereally tower above the old building'.¹ EKA was so ready for its new future that it moved its departments out of the building in 2010 and dispersed them across the city, demolishing the old building. However, construction on the new building did not begin; obstacles that at first seemed small led to a situation where brakes were being put on the process on a state – and political – level, which, in turn, led to a loss of major funding schemes. In 2012, the new 'plaza' in the city centre was covered with gravel and the Europark banners were erected. Another parking lot in the middle of the city had been born.

In terms of space, everything is the same today – the departments of the academy are located at six different addresses across the city² and the plot at Tartu Road 1 is full of parked cars. However, the legal processes are actually underway: in the autumn of 2015, the Estonian Academy of Arts sold its historical plot in the city centre and the buildings at Nunne Street, and bought the premises of the Suva hosiery factory in Kalamaja, at Kotzebue Street 1/ Põhja Boulevard 7. An architectural design for the former industrial building has been found via a competition and the planning process is in its final stage. According to current plans, the new Rauaniidi (Iron Thread) building of the Estonian Academy of Arts is supposed to be completed by 2017.

Last August, a report was published by a working group led by Gunnar Okk, a prominent business figure, executive and board member of the Research and Development Coun-

cil of the Government Office. According to this report, the local higher education and research activities need a thorough reform, including merging universities. This led to a postponement of a call for applications that was crucial for the Academy because it hoped to receive aid for financing the construction of its new building. Yet, last December, Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas reiterated³ the government's political will to complete the new building of the Academy of Arts at Kotzebue Street: 'Actually, we have already agreed in the government that this is an important site for us. I don't know if there are some specialists who are supposed to assess its eligibility and I hope I am not influencing them in some illegal way by voicing my support. But I hope I am not doing that when I say that I think the building of the Academy of Arts definitely deserves to be built.'

Great! But. Actually, we are again brandishing, and hopefully for the last time, our EKA-O 'newspaper'^{*}, which marks the beginning of the transitional period of the school that is still underway and reminds us of the circumstances that were strange, yet utterly characteristic of our (still) transitional society, which led to the disappearance of the historical EKA building and why no imposing art plaza was erected in the city centre. (For instance, one can also recall in the paper how former Prime Minister Ansip wholeheartedly supported the completion of Art Plaza, but eventually it was not included in the strategy of the Ministry of Education).

The Academy of Arts is in the air – towering 'ethereally' somewhere between the old and the new building. Having been legally unbound from the Tartu Road plot in the city centre, it is now bound to the pink hosiery factory building in Kalamaja district. In reality, the Academy of Arts is renting a building on Estonia Boulevard, and agreements allow it to stay in the buildings at Nunne Street until 2017. After 6 years the Faculty of Fine Arts was made to move from the Estonian Knighthood House in Toompea Hill for the beginning of this year and is now operating on Lembitu street in Kesklinn. Apparently, EKA finding its true place in the world again is above all up to luck. Good luck, Academy!

1. Ants Juske. *Kunstiakadeemia uus õppehoone kõrgub õhuliselt vana maja kohale*. Eesti Päevaleht, 9.04.2008.

2. The current locations of EKA faculties: www.artun.ee/en/contacts/facilities-and-locations

3. An excerpt from the Riigikogu sitting of 15 December 2015, where Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas outlined the state of research and development activities and the government's policy in the field.



* EKA-0 or EKA-Zero was a project where we outlined from the media frenzy the entire journey of EKA's new building, how it moved from a grand vision of the future to zero, an empty demolished field. The outlet of EKA-0 was a 'newspaper' that consisted of newspaper headlines and article excerpts from the press about EKA's new building in the six years before 2012. Selected from media archives and chronologically aligned, it becomes quite clear why the school went from a building of its own to an empty lot back then. At first we distributed the newspaper during the coffee break of the Tallinn conference of the international urban activists and researchers network INURA in 2012, when we hijacked the parking lot. However, it seems the issue is still relevant today, so it is time to give this curated media archive a digital dimension by posting it on the U website.

2006

New building to replace Old Academy of Arts

— *St. Ühislaul, 7 April 2006*

The Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA) has long been waiting a more recent date to a new building. After a thorough selection, five projects have been shortlisted, including the one by Jüri Kallaste, the architect of the new building. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2007

The architect of the Academy of Arts' new building will be announced next spring

— *Postimees, 19 October 2007*

EKA will announce next spring the architect of the new building, which will be built on the site of the old building. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2007

City Government will fund the competition for a new Art Academy building

— *Postimees, 3 January 2007*

The city government will fund the competition for a new Art Academy building. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2007

The competition for the Art Academy's new building received 100 proposals

— *Postimees, 26 February 2007*

The competition for the Art Academy's new building received 100 proposals. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2009

The division of EU financing is creating rivalry between higher education institutions.

— *Postimees, 26 June 2009*

The division of EU financing is creating rivalry between higher education institutions. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2009

The Academy of Arts is going to be demolished. Long live the new Academy of Arts!

— *Ilpost, 12 August 2009*

The Academy of Arts is going to be demolished. Long live the new Academy of Arts! The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2009

ART STUDENTS WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT FOR THE NEW BUILDING

— *Postimees, 17 July 2009*

Art students will continue the fight for the new building. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2009

The site's community protest against the proposed planning

— *Postimees, 20 September 2009*

The site's community protest against the proposed planning. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2010

Construction of EKA new building is being postponed due to replanning

— *Eesti Päevaleht, 19 February 2010*

Construction of EKA new building is being postponed due to replanning. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2010

Demolition of the old Academy of Arts is underway

— *Postimees, 26 March 2010*

Demolition of the old Academy of Arts is underway. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2010

The city government approves the demolition of the old Academy of Arts

— *Postimees, 27 August 2010*

The city government approves the demolition of the old Academy of Arts. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2011

Students of The Art Academy in fight for better university building

— *Postimees, 15 May 2011*

Students of The Art Academy in fight for better university building. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2010

Demolition of the old Academy of Arts is underway

— *Postimees, 26 March 2010*

Demolition of the old Academy of Arts is underway. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2010

The city government approves the demolition of the old Academy of Arts

— *Postimees, 27 August 2010*

The city government approves the demolition of the old Academy of Arts. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2010

The city government approves the demolition of the old Academy of Arts

— *Postimees, 27 August 2010*

The city government approves the demolition of the old Academy of Arts. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

2011

Architect Karli Luik: Liberty Statue nr.2

— *Postimees, 24 May 2011*

Architect Karli Luik: Liberty Statue nr.2. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991. The new building will be built on the site of the old building, which was demolished in 1991.

8



The Academy of Arts is hoping for the help of the Ministry of Education

2012

EKA BOARD GATHERED TO DISCUSS ARCHIMEDES'S DEMAND FOR REPAIRMENT... TALLINN UNIVERSITY EKA SHOULD HAVE ITS OWN BUILDING... ANSIP RE-PLUGS support for Art Academy

Meeting in the Ministry of Education: Minister Aaviksoo demands Signe Kivi withdraw her accusations about Ministry's lack of interest for the continuation of EKA's existence

2012

NEIGHBORS SEEK TO PROVE NEW ART ACADEMY BUILDING HAZARDOUS... SOCIETY DOES NOT VALUE EDUCATION, ART OR CULTURE... MINISTER OF EDUCATION AAVIKSOO RECEIVED A CRANK LETTER AND LEFT THE CONFERENCE HALL IN ANGER

The alternatives to EKA academy building are stocking factory and Theatre House

2012

ARCHITECT TOOMAS PÄRNER: EKA'S NEW DETAIL PLAN WAS MADE IN THE INTEREST OF NEIGHBORS... MINISTRY IS STARTING TO AUDIT ACADEMY OF ARTS... MINISTER OF EDUCATION AAVIKSOO RECEIVED A CRANK LETTER AND LEFT THE CONFERENCE HALL IN ANGER

Academy's one kroon (€0.006) entry... Art Academy's building will be really towering in the old site

SEE EKA-0 IN WHOLE ON www.urban.ee/xtra/zero.pdf

Academy of Arts carries a burden of repayment of more than a 4.5 million euros

2012

Academy of Arts finally gets its conditional building permit for the new Academy building

Ministry uses legal means to force neighbors of EKA to accept offered compensation and accept nuisances accompanying the construction

2012

Academy of Art in fight for the building funds

Battle on the EKA grounds: owning real estate in the centre of the city made an old lady to be a Kafka's heroine

2012

Archimedes is still considering EKA of promised 12 million euros

Local businessmen suggest relocating The Academy of Arts to more affordable premises

2012

The Minister of Education is questioning the existence of the Academy of Arts

Signe Kivi left with nothing... Local businessman Rein Kivi: At whose expense the Academy of Arts will actually be built?

The Academy of Arts under threat of closure?

2012

Art Academy must reach an agreement with 41 property owners

2012

Minister warns Art Academy teetering on financial brink

2012