

BERGAMO FILM MEETING

International Film Festival

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Estonian animators Priit and Olga Pärn are the protagonists of the section dedicated to auteur animation with a showcase of their complete works in world premiere.

Priit and Olga Pärn are the protagonists of the section dedicated to auteur animation of the 40th edition of Bergamo Film Meeting. The complete showcase includes **19 films by the two Estonian filmmakers, including short and medium-length features made in traditional animation.**

Often considered enigmatic, Priit Pärn's early works have the extraordinary ability to be contemporary, despite being embedded in a very specific historical period. Since 2007, the directorial collaboration with Olga Pärn has allowed the duo to experiment with different styles, giving life to memorable films that have made the rounds in many festival circuits.

Priit Pärn (Tallinn, August 26, 1946) studied Biology at the University of Tartu but worked as a caricaturist and illustrator for several newspapers until the early 1980s. Around 1973 he officially entered the world of animation, creating the character design for several films such as, for example, Rein Raamat's *Kilplased (Turtles, 1974)*, the latter being an Estonian director and founder of Joonisfilm, a branch of the Tallinnfilm production company dedicated to animation. In 1977, Priit directed his first short film: *Kas maakera on ümmargune? (Is the Earth Round?)*: one of the most unique voices of Eastern European animation cinema was born. Priit's caricatural style, which soon became his signature, is not merely a way to entertain, especially considering the historical context in which his works came to light. Under the yoke of the totalitarian Soviet regime, Priit Pärn's films are living proof that different facets of reality and different ideologies can co-exist.

Thus, also inspired by Surrealism and Dadaism, Pärn gives life to a graphic style that, despite its apparent simplicity, generates films with such satirical and subversive qualities that are still unparalleled today.

In 1988, with *Eine murul (Breakfast on the Grass)*, Priit Pärn won the Grand Prize at the Zagreb World Festival of Animated Films: inspired by Monet's painting *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, the film openly criticizes the Soviet regime which, shortly thereafter, was bound to collapse. *Hotell E (1992)* marks the beginning of what could be considered the second phase of his production, distinguished by the choice of often provocative subjects portrayed in a humorous, sometimes absurd way, which underline an abrasive vision of life, politics, and sexuality. *1895 (1995)*, *Porgandite öö (Night of the Carrots, 1998)*, and *Karl ja Marilyn (Karl and Marilyn, 2003)* are milestones of Estonian cinema, which in this decade became the mouthpiece of a minimalist animation style more focused on the message.

Ma kuklas tunnen (I Feel an Eternal Bullet in the Back of My Head, 2007) establishes the artistic partnership with art director and animator Olga Marchenko. Born in 1976, she graduated from the Department of Graphic Arts (specialized in carving) of the Belarusian State Academy of Arts; from 1996 to 2003, she worked in the animation department of Belarusfilm Studio, specializing in animation with sand. After completing a film directing course at La Poudriere animation school in France, since 2006 she has lived and worked in Estonia, where she met and married Priit Pärn, directing six films with him. *Elu ilma Gabriella Ferrita (Life without Gabriella Ferri, 2008)* is the longest film made by the couple to date. Still, it's with *Tuukrid vihmas (Divers in the Rain, 2010)* - a combination of freehand drawing and animation with sand - that the two reached the apex of their success, earning several awards at major festivals and the Estonian Cultural Endowment Award for best film.

Since 1990, Priit Pärn has also been teaching animation in Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Spain, France, and the United Kingdom, and has been a member of the European Film Academy since 2008.

In 2017, together with Anna Budanova, Atsushi Wada, and Theodore Ushev, Priit and Olga animated the concert *Summer: a visual performance of Vivaldi's Four Seasons* created using an AI program that synchronizes animation with music.

The two directors are currently working on their next animated film, *Luna Rossa*, of which an excerpt will be shown during the 40th edition of the Bergamo Film Meeting.

Under the patronage of the Estonian Embassy in Rome. In collaboration with Eesti Joonisfilm.

Films included in the retrospective

Priit Pärn

Kas maakera on ümmargune?/Is the Earth Round?, USSR, 1977, 10'

... Ja teeb trikke/... And Plays Tricks, USSR, 1978, 10'

Harjutusi iseseisvaks eluks/Some Exercise in Preparation for Independent Life, USSR, 1980, 10'

Kolmnurk/The Triangle, USSR, 1982, 16'

Aeg maha/Time Out, USSR, 1984, 10'

Eine murul/Breakfast on the Grass, USSR, 1987, 27'

Kustuta valgus/Switch Off the Light, USSR, 1988 49''

Hotell E/Hotel E, Estonia, 1992, 30'

1895, Estonia, 1995, 30'

Porgandite öö/Night of the Carrots, Estonia, 1998, 30'

Remix, Estonia, 1999, 45''

Oiva, Estonia, 2001, 28''

Karl ja Marilyn/Karl and Marilyn, Finland/Estonia, 2003, 23'52''

Priit and Olga Pärn

Ma kuklas tunnen/I Feel a Lifelong Bullet in the Back of My Head, Estonia, 2007, 2'24''

Elu ilma Gabriella Ferrita/Life without Gabriella Ferri, Estonia, 2008, 43'44''

Tuukrid vihmas/Divers in the Rain, Estonia, 2010, 23'20''

Lendurid koduteel/Pilots on the Way Home, Canada/Estonia, 2014, 16'

Silmadeta Jahimees. Handi Lugu/The Eyeless Hunter. A Khanty Story, Estonia, 2016, 4'

Summer, Estonia, 2020, 11'

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