# **Exhibition “Vynice national birdman-barn-swallow from E-stonia” at Võru Town Gallery**

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# **Press release**

Kuupäev

Valuing, investigating, maintaining, reflecting upon and changing (national) identity in the context of multifaceted influences of the surrounding world – that is how the exhibition „Vynice national birdman-barn-swallow from E-stonia“ of Aleksandr Osvald August von Turro-Lebardov can be introduced. It will open on 13 June 2016 at 5 p.m. at Võru Town Gallery, Estonia.

The exhibition „Vynice national birdman-barn-swallow from E-stonia“ analyses and interprets the (re)construction, sustainability and resilience of Estonian phenomenon, Estonian world and Estonian idenitity. The national birdman-barn-swallow, which is conceptually the central piece of art of the exhibition, represents a post-mythological creature who in the narrow sense of the concept embodies the openness, impact and susceptibility to external influence of the Estonian world using the example of glocalisation of the culture of ancient Egyptian civilization. More broadly, the creature symbolises the duality of societal processes (i.e. their coherence and interaction with each other) in Estonia (as in other societies).

Depending on the viewpoint of the viewer or any other member of the society, these processes may subjectively seem vynice (= very nice) as they relate to the person's own journey in the context of the Estonian phenomenon. The Estonian phenomenon turns out to be an entity that is both guiding and being guided, determining and being determined, affecting and being affected: we, as an integral part of the Estonian world, are also its (re)constructors.

Works of art, whose principal common features are the use of Estonian national colours and / or the aspects connected to Estonian culture (such as "National Berry"), history (for example, "14 June 1941 – 10000 ") and / or nature (e.g. "Tree of Life of Estonia"), are divided into four main categories: oil paintings, the world of words (i.e. printed words-texts), copies (copy machine printed lightly processed "photos"), and installations. One peculiarity of the exhibition lies in its purposeful conceptual use of Estonian national colours (the combination of blue-black-white is not used on any other national flag in the world) in the creation of art works: for example, abstract paintings (e.g. "1900–2015") and other contemporary works that contain and highlight those colours.

As the word E-Estonia (https://e-estonia.com/) refers to enabling e-services in Estonia through various IT-systems (e.g. eSchool, e-voting), the word "E-stonia", which does not exist in the Estonian language, refers to the organic presence of the "e-" phenomenon in the word representing the country's name (i.e. "Estonia"), which had been waiting to be discovered. Thus, "E-stonia" is a conceptual, philosophical notion, which embraces the process of technologisation of Estonian society, aspiration of Estonian state to enhance its reputation on the world stage, and alternatively-speculatively refers to the natural predetermination of easy adoption of possibilities of information technology by Estonian society. The concept is presented in the exhibition as a conceptual phenomenon (i.e. as a field of action of the national birdman-barn-swallow), which has been materialised in non-technological works of art.

There are also present works of art that are not directly related to the Estonian phenomenon (such as "Elizabeth I of England", "Finland" and "The City"). However, they bind other works of art, which introduce and analyse the Estonian phenomenon, with a wider context and further highlight other topics being discussed by the exhibition (such as nationalism, environmental sustainability, the role of the body in the production of identity).

Aleksandr Osvald August von Turro-Lebardov was born in 1985 in Tallinn, which is still his home town. He has no formal art education (though a doctoral degree in another field, and he has completed a course in oil painting at Tallinn Folk University). Since 2010, he began actively visiting art museums and their temporary exhibitions in Estonia (especially the Kumu Art Museum and art galleries in Tallinn), and in Europe (including the National Gallery (London), the Tate Modern (London), MMK (Frankfurt), MACBA (Barcelona), the Museumsinsel (Berlin), the Louvre (Paris), the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg), etc.), and since 2015 he has been systematically creating works of art. This is the first exhibition in which his works are exhibited to the general public (in 2015 some works of art presented at the exhibition were made available on the Internet).

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