

### *The Pribalts*

The subject of Kristina Norman's film is the ethnic group or cultural community known as the *Pribalts*. This Russian word is used to indicate the Russian-speaking population of the Baltic states. Norman interviews several young members of this community, whose ancestors moved their families to Estonia during the Soviet era.

The film begins with an animated sequence of black and white photographs moving across the screen that introduces the four main protagonists: Aleksey Günter, Seryozha Postnikov, Dimitri Tsaryov and Seryozha Schtschedrin. Günter and Postnikov are examples of successful Russian-Estonian integration whereas Tsaryov and Schtschedrin struggle with memories of their homeland. We are made aware that all of them, including the filmmaker herself, have experienced difficulty forming a cultural identity because of state policy that requires each applicant to pass an Estonian language exam in order to attain citizenship. Those who have not taken the exam challenge this law, and we hear a variety of ways in which they justify their decision.

*The Pribalts* is a moving study of the gap between policy and what integration means for those people affected. It is a personal attempt to come to terms with the complex reality of the Pribalt community in modern Estonia. Norman takes up a case with which she is intimately familiar. By interviewing a group of childhood friends she tries to make sense of her values and ideas. The artist places a framework around this fragment of life in Estonia but is careful not to produce her film in a technically perfect way. She presents the material as simply and as accurately as possible, allowing the viewer to explore its implications.

Like other contemporary artists Norman appropriates the production methods used by the world's media. The shaky hand-held quality, fluctuating contrast and volume of the footage is familiar to us. It is a technique similar to that of news channels providing live footage as part of their broadcasts. It also upholds the more traditional artistic pursuit of articulating something through visual means which otherwise may go unobserved. Her incisive use of this documentary style reflects her commitment to an art that engages with wider publics as she presses the viewer to rethink the boundaries between the social and the political in Estonia.

The Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth famously pointed out that while population can flow across ethnic boundaries over time, these boundaries tend to remain remarkably resilient.<sup>1</sup> At a time when issues around multiculturalism and integration are at the forefront of debates in Britain, Norman's film raises searching questions around how cultural minorities are valued within an expanding EU.

Born in 1979 Kristina Norman lives and works in Tallinn, Estonia.

<sup>1</sup> Barth, F. ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969), pp. 20–25.

## ARRIVALS>EVENTS

### Artist in Conversation Thursday 2 November, 5.30pm

Kristina Norman will be in conversation with Hanno Soans, Curator, Kumu Art Museum, Estonia. Introduced by Sarah Mossop, Community & Education Manager. Free. Booking essential on 01865 813 800.

### Gallery Talk Saturday 18 November, 3pm

Gavin Delahunty, Assistant Curator Modern Art Oxford talks about the **ARRIVALS>ESTONIA** exhibition and considers the question: How are form and content to be measured? Free. All welcome.

## ARRIVALS>FURTHER INFORMATION

**ARRIVALS>MODERN ART OXFORD**  
Kristina Norman  
*The Pribalts*  
Modern Art Oxford  
3 November 2006 – 7 January 2007  
[www.modernartoxford.org.uk](http://www.modernartoxford.org.uk)

Opening Times  
Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 5pm  
Sunday 12pm – 5pm

For further information  
E [info@modernartoxford.org.uk](mailto:info@modernartoxford.org.uk)  
T +44 (0)1865 722733

### Performance led by Raul Keller Wednesday 29 November, 6.30pm

Experimental sound art by Estonian artist Raul Keller in collaboration with students from the Department of Arts at Oxford Brookes University. The performance is the result of a short residency at the University by Keller, supported by the Estonian Cultural Endowment Foundation. Free. To book call 01865 813800.

**ARRIVALS>ESTONIA, MODERN ART OXFORD**  
Sarah Mossop, Community and Education Manager  
Gavin Delahunty, Assistant Curator

Text by Gavin Delahunty  
Design by APFEL (A Practice for Everyday Life)

In researching and developing **ARRIVALS>ESTONIA**, we are grateful for the advice and assistance of Rael Artel, Suzanne Cotter, Johanna Empson, Andres Harm, Pille Jüriso, Elin Kard, Neeme Kõlm, Karin Laansoo, Marco Lamire, Andres Loo, Marco Mäetamm, Tanja Muravskaja, Villu Plink, Mark Raidpere, Reet Remmel, Silja Saarepuu, Johannes Saar, Jannus Samma, Sarah Sharples, Hanno Soans and Tiit Sökk.

**A LARGE PRINT VERSION OF THIS LEAFLET IS AVAILABLE. PLEASE ASK A GALLERY ATTENDANT.**



Kristina Norman, film still, *The Pribalts*, 2006, courtesy the artist.

## <8> Kristina Norman

# ARRIVALS > ESTONIA

3 NOVEMBER 2006 – 7 JANUARY 2007

ARRIVALS > ESTONIA is part of ARRIVALS > NEW ART FROM THE EU, a series of exhibitions over two years at Modern Art Oxford and Turner Contemporary, Margate introducing the work of artists from the expanded European Union.

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