

Alan Proosa armastuse, õitsengu, hurma ja kaduviku lood

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Vajaks lähemat analüüsi, miks, kuid võib väita, et on kunstnikke, kelle loomingule kirjutatakse arvustusi, ja on kunstnikke, kellele kriitikud eelistavad ise kõnelda lasta. Proosa võib olla sattunud teiste sekka osaliselt seetõttu, et tal ei ole isikunäitusi just sageli, kuid samavõrd ka seetõttu, et olles oma elu viimased viis aastat jaganud Eesti ja Kagu-Aasia vahel, kütkestatuna sealsete transsooliste inimeste kogukonnast, on ta kogemus Eesti kontekstis võrdlemisi unikaalne ja väärtuslik, kuid kriitikule kättesaamatu.

Intervjuud, mis Alan Proosaga viimastel aastatel tehtud on, algavad arusaadaval põhjusel küsimusest, miks ta Taisse läks.¹ Proosa selgitab oma huvi Tai vastu sealse transsooliste inimeste kogukonna suuruse ja nähtavusega. „Ma tahtsin näha ja tunda sellist ühiskonda, kus transsoolised inimesed on

The Stories of Love, Gloom, Lust and Loss of Alan Proosa

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The reasons should be analysed, but it can be said that there are artists whose works are reviewed and there are artists whom critics prefer to speak for themselves. Proosa might partially be in the second category since they don't often have solo exhibitions but also since they have shared their life between Estonia and South-East Asia for the last five years, captivated by the local transgendered communities, and therefore their experience in the context of Estonia is quite unique and valuable but unattainable to critics.

Interviews conducted with Alan Proosa in recent years understandably begin with the question of why they went to Thailand.¹ Proosa explains their interest in Thailand by the size and visibility of the local transgender community. "I wanted to see and experience a society where transgendered people are accepted and visible. They don't have to go underground but are always on the streets and part of the society. It seemed very alluring to me, I wanted to see and

aktsepteeritud ja nähtavad. Nad ei ole kusagil pöranda all, vaid igapäevases linnapildis ja osa ühiskonnast. Mulle tundus see väga ihaldusväärne, ma tahtsin seda kogeda ja näha."² Eestis on Proosal mõned üksikud sõbrannad, Euroopas laiemalt on pilt nатуке mitmekesisem, kuid Kagu-Aasia transsooliste inimeste kogukonnast on kuulnud igaüks, kes Kagu-Aasiast üldse midagi teab.

Juhan Rauale Postimehes antud intervjuus meenutab Proosa, et paradoksaalsel kombel oli tal just Eesti transsooliste inimeste kogukonnaga algul keeruline kontakti saada: „Kui olin noorem ja otsisin kontakte sellel skeenel, siis väga tihti nad ei võtnud mind omaks – sest nii mõnedki neist arvasid, et ma teen endast lihtsalt kunsti. Ma mäletan, et olin isegi haavunud sellest."³ Ning kuigi Proosa ütleb, et Euroopa ja ka Tai transsooliste inimestega kontakti leidmine kulges märksa lihtsamalt, on portreesid saatvates lühilugudes korduvalt juttu sellest, kuidas transsoolistest naistest hurmatud Proosale tekitab probleeme soov ka ennast trans-naisena identifitseerida. Istudes taksos piitilusa Filipiini kaunitariga, keda Proosa kirjeldab kui jumalannat, küsib too, miks Proosale trans-tüdrukud meeldivad? Proosa meenutuses mõjub vastus kurva, lootusetult armunud kangelase teadvusevooluna:

„Vastata pole lihtne, kuid ütlen talle, et selles, kui poiss muutub ilusaks tüdrukuks, on minu jaoks midagi imelist ja maagilist. See on

experience this."² In Estonia, Proosa has some girlfriends, in Europe as a whole the picture is somewhat more diverse, but everybody who knows anything about South-East Asia has heard about its transgender community.

In the interview with Juhan Raud for the newspaper Postimees, Proosa recalls that making contacts with the Estonian transgender community was paradoxically difficult: "When I was younger and was looking for contacts in the scene, I was not often accepted: some of them thought that I was merely making art out of myself. I remember that this aggrieved me."³ Although Proosa says that finding contacts with the European and Thai transgender communities was somewhat easier, the short stories that accompany the portraits repeatedly mention how Proosa, who is enchanted by transgender women, has problems because of the desire to also be identified as a trans woman. Sitting in a taxi with a splendid Philippine beauty, whom Proosa describes as a goddess, she inquires why Proosa likes trans girls. The artist's answer seems like the stream of consciousness of a sad hero who is hopelessly in love: "It's difficult to answer, but I tell her that I seem to find something extraordinary and magical in a boy changing into a beautiful girl. I find it so special. I seem to be very interested in and attracted to that. The developed and also socially learned and

niivõrd eriline, niivõrd huvitav ja ahvatlev. Arenev ning sotsiaalselt õpitud ja hangitud naiselikkus, selle eriline sarmikus. Selles on midagi jumalikku. Samuti on mind alati veedelnud, huvitanud ja ligi tõmmanud androgüünsus. Toona ma ei lisanud juurde, et olen alati olnud trans-tüdrukutesse kiindunud ja neist sisse võetud, kuid samas olen ka alati soovinud olla üks nende hulgast."

Põhjus, miks Proosa ei julge KC'le öelda, et ta ka ise trans-tüdruk olla ihkab, on transsooliste inimeste kultuurist eemal seisjale mõnevõrra üllatav. Nimelt on ka transsooliste-naiste seksuaalsus sisuliselt heteroseksuaalne: see on kirk erineva soolise positsiooniga inimeste vastu. Nii näiteks on kahe transsoolise naise vaheline paarisuhe sotsiaalselt vastuvõetamatu. Proosa endagi püsisuhet, mis kujunes Tais, peavad mõned tuttavad kohatuks: „Paljud mu Tai *kathoey*'dest sõbrad on mind veennud, et 99% *ladyboy*'dest ei pea teisi *ladyboy*'sid ahvatlevaks. Samuti ei peeta Tai ühiskonnas normaalseks, sündsaks ega isegi aktsepteeritavaks, kui üks *kathoey* on suhtes teisega, on teise *kathoey* partner. Sest „*kathoey* tahab tõelist meest". Mõned Tai transsoolised elavad siiski koos *tom*'ide ehk poisilike naistega ning seda ei peeta tabuks, vaid see on aktsepteeritav, loogiline." Ja nii



acquired femininity, that special charm, is something divine. Also, I have always been interested in androgyny, drawn to it. I did not add this to my answer to her then, which was 'I have always felt attracted to trans girls a lot, but I have also wanted to be one myself.'"

The reason why Proosa doesn't dare to tell KC about the desire to be a trans girl is somewhat surprising to people who are not close to transgender culture. Namely, the sexuality of trans women is heterosexual: it is a passion for people whose gender position is different than their own. That is why a relationship between two trans women is not socially acceptable. Proosa's own long-term relationship that developed in Thailand was considered inappropriate by some acquaintances: "So many of my Thai *kathoey* friends keep telling me that 99% of ladyboys are not attracted to other ladyboys. And in Thai society it is not considered decent or even acceptable if a *kathoey* is in a relationship with, or is the partner of, another *kathoey*. 'Because *kathoey* want real men'. However, some Thai transgenders live together in a relationship with tomboys, and that is not a taboo; it is considered acceptable, even logical." Therefore, even in Thailand, even in their own home, Proosa

ei jää Proosal üle muud kui isegi Tais, isegi omaenda kodus, ohates tõdeda: „Tunnen, et mu sugu on tõepoolest komplitseeritud. Ja aeg-ajalt on mul kategooriatest ja siltidest niivõrd kõrini, et soovin olla lihtsalt inimene.”

Postimehele antud intervjuus ütleb Proosa, et kui nooremas eas tundus talle, et „*I can do both genders*” (saan hakkama nii mehe kui naisena), siis nüüdseks on ta jõudnud äratundmisele, et „tahan sellel „naiselik-mehelik”-skaalal olla naise poolel. See on õige minu jaoks”. Ma ei kahtle Proosa vastuse aususes, kuid teiste intervjuude taustal kumab siit minu arvates paratamatult läbi poolenisti pealesurrutud ja lõpuni arusaamatuks jääv kohustus valida pool. Nii on ta Piret Karrole vastanud: „Ma tean, kes ma olen, ja ma tean, et olen omal moel ka kaunis ja spets. Aga need naiselikkuse ja mehelikkuse poolused käivad kuidagi lainetena... Oman seksuaalseid kogemusi nii naiste, meeste kui ka transsoolistega. Mulle lihtsalt meeldivad ilusad inimesed.”⁵

Teine

Võimalik, et lähen siinkohal oma tõlgendustes liiga kaugele, aga mulle tundub, et Proosa soov transsoolise inimesi pildistada on iseend võõrana identifitseeriva inimese viis otsida kogukonnaga kontakti. „Mulle meeldib nendega suhelda ja nende maailmast osa saada. Mu hingele mõjub see kuidagi hästi ja inspireerivalt. Ja ma jätkan neist portreede pildistamist, see teema läheb mulle vägagi korda.”⁶ Proosa ei räägi endast, vaid neist,

ja seda mitte ainult *kathoey*’dest rääkides, vaid ka Euroopa transsoolistele inimestele viidates. Nii et kui folklorist Andreas Kalkun küsis näitust arvustades, kuidas kujutada Teist eetilisel ja adekvaatselt,⁷ teeb vastuse sellele küsimusele veelgi keerulisemaks asjaolu, et Proosa ise ei tunne end tingimata ühegi kogukonna pärisosana ja ta fotodel puudub selles tähenduses adressaat, keda autor aduks kui tema enesega samastuvat vaatajat või läbi kelle Proosa oma pilku teadlikult mõtestaks.

Kuid pildistamises on kindlasti ka midagi isiklikumat. Esmast emotsiooni, mis Proosat valdas kohates Akyt, oma tulevast elukaaslast, kelle portreed moodustasid enam kui poole käesoleva raamatuga samanimelisest näitusest „Armastuse, õitsengu, hurma ja kaduviku lood” ning kes on ka siin raamatus olulisel kohal, kirjeldab Proosa läbi soovi võtta üles Aky portree. „Esmalt ja üle kõige tundsin, et tahan temast portree pildistada.”

Kagu-Aasia transsooliste portreed vaadates tekib tunne, et Proosa pilk liigub pildistades korrakahele teljel: ühelt poolt tingimusteta imetus portreeteeritava vastu, teisalt kihk käsitleda kaamerat kui peeglit.

Inimesed Proosa fotodel on väljapeetud poosides ja enesekindla kaamerasse pööratud pilguga. Teadlikud nii iseenesest kui ka sellest, et nad poseerivad. Ent Proosa ise ei jää fotograafina kõrvalseisvaks portretistiks ega dokumentalistiks. Näitusele koondatud inimeste ja suhete kaudu räägib ta ennekõike omaenese lugu. Abstraktse eksootilise ilu jäädvustamise asemel näeb Proosa minu arvates pildistatavaid kui ideaali, mille poole püüelda, millega samastuda. Ning iga ülesvõtte on justkui kinnitus, et pildistaja võetakse omaks.

Portreeteerituist vanima, Adeli portree pildistamisele eelneb Proosa kirjelduses ootusärevus, olenemata sellest, et keeldumist ei ole põhjust karta: „Jalutan taas kord öös ning istun ühes Jakarta pargis mõnede prostituutide ja ööolendite kõrvale... Adel



must sigh and accept: “I feel my gender is somewhat complicated, indeed. And sometimes I get so tired of being categorised and labelled, and just want to be a human being.”

In the interview for Postimees, Proosa states that while as a younger person it seemed that “I can do both genders”, now they have recognised that “on the feminine-masculine scale I want to be more towards the woman end. It is right for me.”⁴ I don’t doubt the honesty of Proosa’s answer but in the context of other interviews, this seems to inevitably reveal the semi-enforced and somewhat incomprehensible obligation to select a side. Proosa told Piret Karro: “I know who I am and I know that, in a way, I am beautiful and special. But the feminine and masculine sides come in waves... I have had sexual experiences with women, men and transgendered people. I just like beautiful people.”⁵

The Other

It is possible that my interpretation goes too far, but it seems that Proosa’s desire to photograph trans people is a way for a person who identifies as a stranger to seek contacts with the community. “I like to communicate with them and be part of their world. It is good and inspiring for my soul. And I will continue making their portraits; it is very important to me.”⁶ Proosa isn’t talking about themselves but about others, and not only about the *kathoey* but also about

trans people in Europe. Therefore, when the folklorist Andreas Kalkun asked in his review of the exhibition how to depict the Other in an ethical and adequate manner,⁷ the answer is made even more complicated by the fact that Proosa doesn’t necessarily feel like an actual member of any community, which means that the photos don’t have a recipient whom the author would endorse as a viewer who can identify or through whom Proosa could consciously define the author’s gaze.

But taking a photo also means something more personal. Proosa described the first emotion that they had when meeting their future life partner Aky, whose portraits constituted more than half of the exhibition *Stories of Love, Bloom, Lust and Loss* and who also plays an important role in the present book, as a desire to take a portrait of Aky. “Mostly, I really wanted to take her photo portrait.”

Looking at the portraits of South-East Asians, one gets a feeling that when taking a photograph Proosa’s gaze moves on two axes at the same time: admiration for the model, and the urge to use the camera as a mirror. The people in Proosa’s photos hold dignified poses and they gaze confidently into the camera. They are conscious of themselves and also of the fact that they are posing. But Proosa themselves doesn’t remain an observing portraitist or a documentarian. The people and relationships in the exhibition are used to mainly tell the story of Proosa themselves. Instead of capturing abstract exotic beauty, to me Proosa seems to view the models as ideals

to strive for, to identify with. And every photo confirms that the photographer is accepted.

Before photographing the oldest of the models, Adel, Proosa’s description contains notes of anxiety, although there was no reason to expect refusal: “I walk the night again and sit down in a park in Jakarta, accompanied by some prostitutes and creatures of the night. [...] Adel is tipsy and almost euphorically happy to see me again. In fifteen minutes I will photograph a few portraits of her. I know she does not have anything against it, but I am still figuring it out in my head how to ask her to stand in front of my camera.” And as a confirmation of the completion of a rite of initiation, after the photo shoot Adel asks when Proosa will be returning to Jakarta, adding: “You will be waited to return. Now you have a family here.”

Thailand

Glamour, the central element in Proosa’s photos, is controversial. On the one hand, it is clear that the author is trying to give power to the models by allowing their desired femininity to shine. By hanging the portraits in the gallery two dozen centimetres above the normal museum standard horizon of 150 centimetres, both the designers and visitors to the exhibition look at them as if they were a gallery of Madonnas. But Proosa’s gaze, which admires glamour, is inevitably also colonialist, since the glamour that they strive for is, by nature, colonial.

on veidi purjakil ja mind uuesti nähes pea eufooriliselt õnnelik. Viieteist minuti pärast teen temast mõned fotod. Tean, et tal pole midagi selle vastu, kuid juurdlen peas ikka veel selle üle, kuidas teda oma kaamera ette paluda." Ning justkui kinnitusena initsiatsiooniriituse läbimisest küsib Adel pärast portree ülesvõtmist, millal Proosa taas Jakartasse tuleb. Ning lisab: „Sinu tagasitulekut jäädakse ootama. Sul on siin nüüd oma pere.“

Tai

Proosa fotode keskne tunnus – glamuur – on vastuoluline. Ühelt poolt on selge, et ta üritab portreeteeritud väestada, lubades modellide eneste poolt ihaldatud naiselikkusel särada. Ning riputades näitusesaalis portreed hea parkümmend sentimeetrit kõrgemale muuseumi standardsest 150 cm peal jooksvast silmapiirist, vaatasime ka meie, näituse kujundajad ja külastajad, neile kõigile alt üles justkui madonnade galeriile. Kuid Proosa glamuuri imetlev pilk on paratamatult ka kolonialistlik, sest glamuur, mille kultusele ta kaasa elab, on olemuslikult koloniaalne.

Kagu-Aasia riikide ajalugu on läbi põimunud kolonialismist ja kas sellele vaatamata või just seetõttu võrdlemisi omanäoline. Kui islamiusulises Indoneesias on *waria*'d järjepideva tagakiusamise ohvrid, siis budistlikus Tais ei ole transsoolise inimesi kunagi riiklikult taga kiusatud. 20. sajandi esimesel poolel kehtis küll seadus, mis keelas seksuaalsuhted samasooliste

vahel, ent ei ole teada ühtegi juhtu, kus seda koloniaalvõimu survele karistusseadustikku lisatud paragrahvi ka rakendatud oleks.⁸

Erinevalt teistest Kagu-Aasia riikidest ei sattunud Tai kunagi otseselt koloniaalvõimu alla. Kuid selle hapra sõltumatuse säilitamiseks pidi Tai kuningriik langetama omajagu enesekolonialistlikke otsuseid. Neist üks puudutas asjaolu, et meeste ja naiste rõivastus peab olema selgelt eristuv. Sest Euroopa võimud ei olnud valmis tsiviliseerituks pidama riiki, kus ei ole võimalik tänaval vahet teha, kas tegemist on mehe või naisega.⁹ Mulle tundub, et siit võib teha – kindlasti mõnevõrra meelevaldse – järelduse, et äraspidisel kombel ei jäänud *kathoey*'del Tais üle muud kui hakata läänelikus tähenduses naisena riietuma, ning sellega kaasas käivad ilustandardid omaks võtta.

Paratamatusena on see tähendanud, et *kathoey*'d töötavad valdavalt ilutööstusega seotud valdkondades nagu kosmeetika, modellindus ning Tais väga populaarne esteetiline kirurgia. Kodune Botoxi süstimine on pea sama tavaline kui sõbranna juuste lõikamine.

Oma meditsiini õppinud elukaaslase Aky kohta kirjutab Proosa: „Kui ta valiti tööle Bangkoki väga prestiižsesse ilukliinikusse, sai ta töötajana ülihea hinnaga feminiseerivaid lõikusi ja muid protseduure. Tema unistuseks olid ka rinnaimplantaadid, kuigi ma ise pole neist tema juures kunagi puudust tundnud. Arvasin, et need pole nii olulised, kuid samas, mida minu arvamus siin loeb. Kui soovid, lase teha.“ Ning nagu

ilmneb minu arvates ühelt parimalt portreelt, mis on pildistatud moefoto trafarettide järgi, said rinnad ostetud.

Armastus ja kaduvik

Proosa ei tee saladust sellest, et ta esimesed retked Kagu-Aasiasse olid võrdlemisi elupõletajalikud. Ta hulkus ringi öistel linnatänavatel, kuid kasutas kontaktide leidmiseks aktiivselt ka Tinderi ja Badoo kohtinguplatvorme. Nii mõnestki neist *sexdate*'idest kujunes tänaseni püsiv tutvus. Ka oma elukaaslase Akyga kohtus Proosa kohtinguäpi vahendusel. Siinjuures on oluline silmas pidada, et prostitutsioon Kagu-Aasia transsooliste inimeste seas on küll sageli tingitud majanduslikest oludest, kuid nagu Terje Toomistu kirjeldab Indoneesia transsooliste naiste, *waria*'de näitel, rõõvib seksitöötajate nägemine pelgalt ohvritena neilt agentsuse. „*Waria*'d kirjeldavad ööelu kui olulist suhtlusplatvormi ja eneseväljenduse võimalust. See on ruum, kus sageli läbi silmapaistva *make-up*'i, ilusate riiete, žestide ja pooside esitatakse oma soolist kuuluvust. Kuivõrd nendesse paikadesse kogunevad ka *waria*'dest kütkestatud mehed, on tegemist olukorraga, kus *waria*'d saavad tunda end ihaldatuna.“¹⁰ Ning vaatamata sellele, et tänavanurgal sõlmitud tutvustest loodetakse sageli salamisi püsisuhte kujunemist, on ka juhuslikud, mänglevad, raha eest loodud kontaktid olulised, pakkudes naudingut ja aidates vaimselt toime tulla transsooliste

The history of the South-East Asian countries is intertwined with colonialism and despite this or precisely because of it, it is quite peculiar. While the *waria* in Muslim Indonesia are constantly harassed, in Buddhist Thailand trans people have never been persecuted by the state. The laws at the beginning of the 20th century did prohibit sexual relations between people of the same sex but there are no known cases of this law, which was added to the penal code under the coercion of colonial powers, having ever been enforced.⁸

Unlike other South-East Asian countries, Thailand has never directly been under colonial rule. But to maintain this fragile independence, the Kingdom of Thailand had to make numerous self-colonising decisions. One of them maintained that the clothing of men and women had to be clearly distinct. European powers were not ready to accept any country as civilised if it was not possible to ascertain on the streets whether people were men or women.⁹ It seems to me that a somewhat arbitrary conclusion can be drawn that in a roundabout way the *kathoey* of Thailand had no other option than to dress as women in the Western sense and to accept the accompanying standards of beauty.

Inevitably this has meant that *kathoey* mostly work in areas that are associated with the beauty industry, such as cosmetics,

modelling or aesthetic surgery, which is quite popular in Thailand. Injecting Botox at home is almost as ordinary as cutting your girlfriends' hair.

Proosa writes about their partner Aky, who has studied medicine: “Since she was chosen to work at a very prestigious beauty clinic in Bangkok, she, as an insider, got her professional facial feminisation surgeries and procedures done for really good prices. She dreamed of getting her breast implants done as well, even though I personally never missed those. I thought getting them was not that important, but then again, who am I to say. If you want breasts, you should get them.” And as can be seen in one of the best photos of the book, which was shot following the standards of fashion photography, in the end she did get breasts.



Love and Loss

Proosa doesn't hide the fact that their first trips to South-East Asia were quite raucous, roaming the nocturnal streets but also actively using such dating platforms as Tinder and Badoo to find contacts. Many of these sex dates resulted in lasting acquaintances. The meeting with their partner Aky also took place via a dating app. It is important to mention that prostitution amongst South-East Asian trans people is often caused by economic need but, as Terje Toomistu has said, using the transgender women of

Indonesia or *waria* as an example, seeing sex workers as mere victims robs them of their agency. “*Waria* often describe nightlife as an important outlet for social interaction and self-expression. It is a space where a particular gender performance is lived out, often with spectacular make-up, nice outfits, gestures, postures and interaction. Since these locations are surrounded by men who are attracted to *waria*, the *waria* have the chance to feel attractive and desired.”¹⁰ Despite the fact that it is secretly hoped that the acquaintances made on a street corner might turn into long-term relationships, the random, playful and monetary contacts are important, offering pleasure and helping *waria* to spiritually cope with the social stigmatisation of being trans, feelings of abandonment and personal traumas.

inimeste ühiskondliku stigmatiseerimise, hüljatuse ja isiklike traumadega.

Ent kuigi ma usun, et ka Proosa on Kagu-Aasias seksitöö diskursusest kütkestatud sarnastel põhjustel, kaasneb prostitutsiooniga eluline traagika, mis portreesid saatvates lugudes tikub paratamatult esikohale, eriti kui jutustus lõpeb surmaga. Nii sooritab pikalt depressiooni all kannatanud Lyda enesetapu ning Proosat jääb kummitama, kas ja kuidas ta oleks saanud seda vältida. Niisamuti jääb ta igavesti kahetsema, et jättis kasutamata võimaluse Sandrat enne Eestisse sõitmist haiglas veel viimast korda külastada.

Eraldi komplekti moodustab seeria fotosid, mis kujutavad Proosa elukaaslast suitsetamas Tais väga levinud kristallilist metamfetamiini ehk jääd. Olles periooditi ka ise koos Akyga suitsetanud, võtab Proosa oma kogemuse kokku järgmiselt: „Ma ei taha rohkem suitsetada. Soovin, et temagi

lõpetaks. Aeg-ajalt jätab ta kuu või isegi kaks vahele, kuid siis on mõnel sõbral see jälle käepärast või tundub lihtsalt hetk selline. Nii lihtne on uuesti suitsetama hakata, kuigi tead varasemast, kuidas see tervist kahjustab, rahalisi probleeme tekitab ja su sõbrad eemale peletab.“

Näitus „Armastuse, õitsengu, hurma ja kaduviku lood“ Tartu Kunstimuseumis lõppes aga kõigele vaatamata mõnevõrra ootamatus vormis õnnelikult. Proosa ja ta elukaaslane Aky istuvad teleka ees diivanil. Nad vaatavad üksikuid repliike vahetades filmi nagu miljonid paarid üle maailma. Ehk on lõpeks argipäev, mitte surm, see, mis meid kõiki võrdseks teeb ja ühendab.

1 Vt nt Piret Karro intervjuu Alan Proosaga „Vabadusvõitleja sugude rindel“. *Müürileht*, märts 2017; Katrin Roots'i intervjuu Alan Proosaga „Dada, punk ja kõrgmood“. *Noir*, mai 2017; Juhana Raua intervjuu Alan Proosaga „Ma olen alati tundnud, et teen Eesti ühiskonda paremaks“. *Postimees*, 02.11.2020.

2 Juhana Raua intervjuu Alan Proosaga „Ma olen alati tundnud, et teen Eesti ühiskonda paremaks“. *Postimees*, 02.11.2020.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 Piret Karro intervjuu Alan Proosaga „Vabadusvõitleja sugude rindel“. *Müürileht*. Märts 2017.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Andreas Kalkun „Kuidas kujutada Teist?“. *Postimees*, 3.11.2020.

8 Peter Jackson. „Performative Genders, Perverse Desires: A Bio-History of Thailand's Same-Sex and Transgender Cultures“. *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*. Nr 9, august 2003.

9 *Ibid.*

10 Terje Toomistu. „Playground Love: Sex Work, Pleasure, and Selfaffirmation in the Urban Nightlife of Indonesian Waria“. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, vol. 21, nr 2/2019.

However, even though I believe that Proosa has been captivated by the discourse of South-East Asian sex work for these very reasons, prostitution is accompanied by real tragedy, which is clearly revealed in the stories that accompany the portraits, especially when the stories end with death. For example, Lyda, who has long suffered from depression, committed suicide and Proosa is haunted by the questions of whether and how they could have prevented it. Proosa also regrets forever that they didn't visit Sandra for the last time in hospital before returning to Estonia.

A separate series is formed by photos that show Proosa's partner smoking crystal methamphetamine ("ice"), which is widely used in Thailand. Having periodically smoked together with her, Proosa sums up the experience: "I don't want to use it. I want her to stop as well. Sometimes she has been clean for a month or even two, and then some

friend has it, or the moment overwhelms her. It is so easy to smoke it again, despite the damage to your health, getting in trouble financially, and creating distance from many of your friends."

Despite everything, the exhibition *Stories of Love, Bloom, Lust and Loss* in the Tartu Art Museum had a somewhat unexpected happy ending: Proosa and their partner sitting on a sofa in front of a TV. They exchange short phrases as they watch a film, like millions of other couples all over the world. Maybe in the end it is the everyday and not death that makes us all equal and unites us.

1 See Piret Karro's interview with Alan Proosa „Vabadusvõitleja sugude rindel“. *Müürileht*, March 2017; Katrin Roots's interview with Alan Proosa „Dada, punk ja kõrgmood“. *Noir*, May 2017; Juhana Raud's interview with Alan Proosa „Ma olen alati tundnud, et teen Eesti ühiskonda paremaks“. *Postimees*, 02.11.2020.

2 Juhana Raud's interview with Alan Proosa „Ma olen alati tundnud, et teen Eesti ühiskonda paremaks“. *Postimees*, 02.11.2020.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 Piret Karro's interview with Alan Proosa „Vabadusvõitleja sugude rindel“. *Müürileht*. March 2017.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Andreas Kalkun „Kuidas kujutada Teist?“. *Postimees*, 3.11.2020.

8 Peter Jackson. „Performative Genders, Perverse Desires: A Bio-History of Thailand's Same-Sex and Transgender Cultures“. *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*. Nr 9, August 2003.

9 *Ibid.*

10 Terje Toomistu. „Playground Love: Sex Work, Pleasure, and Selfaffirmation in the Urban Nightlife of Indonesian Waria“. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, vol. 21, No. 2/2019.

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