

Through the Black Gorge of Your Eyes

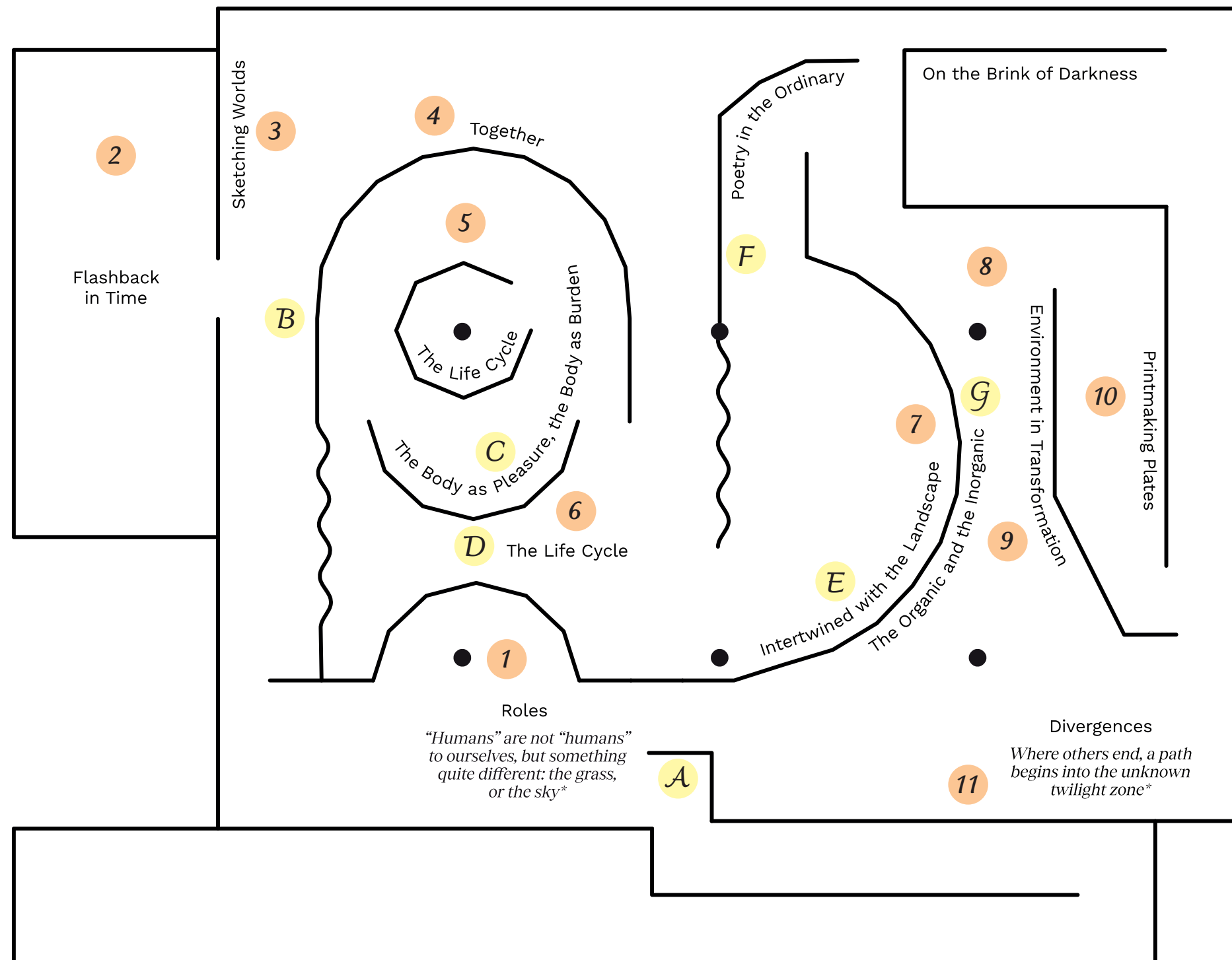
Exhibition at the Kumu Art Museum
16.06.–05.11.2023

ACTIVITY SHEET

Observe the space around you. Why have the different thematic sections been organised the way they have? Find correlations and common denominators. How does space energise the way you view, experience and understand the exhibition?

- 1 What roles are assigned to us at different ages? Do you perceive that the different roles you play are sometimes in conflict? Do you feel that roles are assigned by gender?
- 2 What kind of friendships developed between women graphic artists? What helped to shape it?
- 3 Artists begin a work by making a sketch: here the potential of the work becomes visible and the magic of incompleteness is hidden. What triggers your thought process?
- 4 Find out what friendship means to your friends and/or family. Ask the young as well as the old.
- 5 Each person's body and bodily experiences are unique. What moments, environments and spaces make your body uncomfortable and why? Where and with whom do you feel good? How can you feel good about your body? How can you accept your constantly changing body?
- 6 Consider how the concept of motherhood has changed in your family over the last few decades. How was it talked about, for example, in the 1970s, 1990s and 2010s?
- 7 Do not read the label. Name the work yourself and invent a background story. Then look at the original title of the work. How much did the content of the story/picture change?

KNOW: In Soviet times, it occasionally happened that the title chosen by the artist was not acceptable to censors, so it had to be changed.



*From Concordia Klar's poem written in the 1960s

- 8 Pick two works of art and think about how they might communicate with each other. What would they have to say to one another?
- 9 Art always raises questions and provokes dialogue. Ask three questions about a work. If you are at this exhibition with a companion, take turns asking each other questions.
- 10 Here you can take a closer look at the printing plates that artists have used to create their works. These plates enable them to make several impressions of a print. On the other hand, a work printed on paper and thus reaching larger numbers of viewers is also fragile: paper cannot withstand direct sunlight, for example.

SOFT-GROUND ETCHING (French *verniss mou*) is an intaglio technique characterised by soft lines. The metal plate is covered with varnish and the drawing is applied through a sheet of paper placed on the plate. The paper is then removed and the plate is ready for printing after it has been exposed to acid.

EAU FORTE is an intaglio technique in which, traditionally, zinc or copper plates have been used, but other metal plates are also sometimes used. The plate is covered with an acid-resistant varnish and the drawing is scraped into it. In order for the drawing to be printable, the plate is corroded. The layer of varnish is removed before printing.

ETCHING is a technique similar to eau forte, but a pre-processed plate is exposed to a metal salt solution instead of an acid and the corrosion happens through the process of electrolysis.

AQUATINT is a technique that allows for various levels of chiaroscuro. A polished zinc or copper plate is covered with rosin or asphalt powder inside a special box. When the plate is heated, particles of the powder melt and stick to the plate. The plate is then exposed to acid several times; the surfaces that need to remain lighter are covered in etching varnish. The printing pigment reaches only the roughened areas of the plate, creating a granular surface when printed.

- 11 Sit or stand in front of a work for five minutes. Do not interpret or look for associations, just try to focus on what is in front of you. Look at the overall picture and also delve into details. What can you discover? What new facets do you notice?



A Silvi Liiva
Fairy. 1977. Etching. Art Museum of Estonia

The woman-fairy depicted by Liiva has been presented as a multi-layered and ambiguous character who self-assertedly scatters a bunch of different (wild) animals out of a bag. Maybe she is setting them free, offering them a non-judgemental and warm-hearted opportunity to move independently into the light, into the expanse. No matter what animal it is, each of them deserves life.



B Marje Üksine
Girls I. 1973. Etching and aquatint. Courtesy of the artist

In Marje Üksine's works *Girls I-III* from 1973 we see women in various contexts going about their business, with their hair intertwining with the sky, the landscape or the interior; in some pictures the women become entangled with their friends. The women depicted by Üksine seem comfortable in each other's company, indicating the importance of friendship between women, but also of being together and engaging in activities together. On the other hand, each seemingly similar figure has been granted self-sufficiency.



C Aili Vint
Variations D VII. 1986. Etching
Art Museum of Estonia

Aili Vint's series *Variations* from the 1970s–1980s was triggered by her observation that the few erotic magazines that spread among male artists in those years mediated intimacy in ways that were perplexing for women. As Vint herself has said, they seemed “out-of-touch” and had “no mysticism” in them. Thus, by playing with photos of herself and a model and with the help of a mirror, she created new, in some cases sensual, even erotic, and in other cases violent body images that were radically different from the established nude tradition.



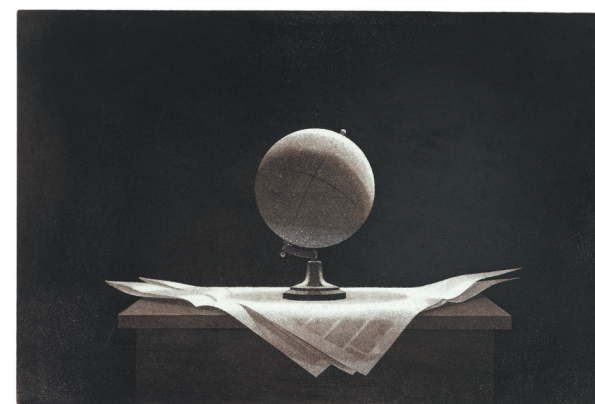
D Naima Neidre
Midday in Topu. 1979. Etching
Art Museum of Estonia

Naima Neidre grew up amid the seaside landscapes of Topu in western Estonia. In the print with the artist's childhood milieu as one of the characters, there are doll-like children growing out of the dense soil. Or are we seeing a child with her dolls? The pastoral scene is dislocated by the pitch-black and slightly scary eyes of the children, emphasising the ambiguous experience of childhood.



E Vive Tolli
Migrating Lake (The Little Lake that Moved)
1967. Etching. Art Museum of Estonia

Tolli's *Migrating Lake* can be associated with folk tales that highlight mankind's careless attitude towards nature and the consequences of such an attitude. As the natural environment and people's living conditions are organically interdependent, the lake can, according to legend, either move, emerge or disappear unexpectedly, as a punishment for people polluting water or for violating some other communal rule.



F Kaisa Puustak
Globe on a Newspaper. 1984. Aquatint and drypoint. Art Museum of Estonia

Kaisa Puustak has said that she feels most at ease in a world of everyday items and still lifes. Her works often centre on mundane objects that are either man-made or used by people to create something. Yet, Puustak never mediates reality and one's relationship with those mundane objects in a neutral manner. The seemingly realistic, photo-like images radiate a poetic, abstract, subtly humorous atmosphere.



G Mare Vint
Mesh Fence. 1977. Coloured pencil and Indian ink.
Art Museum of Estonia

Mare Vint's minimalist work juxtaposes the natural and the artificial in a discreetly cautionary relationship. The strict geometry that dominates the surface of the picture is opposed to the delicate forest landscape that shimmers through it. The mesh fence made and set up by humans turns the barely perceivable lush wilderness on the other side of it into an unattainable mirage for the viewer standing on this side.