

On July 31 – October 3, 2021, the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius is hosting the exhibition *Potentiality for Love* by one of the leading contemporary Finnish artists, Eija-Liisa Ahtila. The exhibition is accompanied by a series of events *Empathy for the Other. Exploring Mental Health through Art*. Eija-Liisa Ahtila's feature film *Love Is a Treasure* (2002) will be screened in three cities in Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas and Šiauliai) and accompanied by other events, including discussions, workshops and an international conference with the participation of professionals from various fields from Lithuania and the Nordic countries.

On Friday, September 24, a conference *Psychosis in Modern Society: an Interdisciplinary Approach* will be held at the National Gallery of Art, Vilnius. It will include a screening of Ahtila's film *Love Is a Treasure* as well as presentations by five professionals working in the mental health sector or on mental health issues in other areas: storyteller, filmmaker and transformational guide Susan Florries (SW), neurobiologist Inga Griškova-Bulanova, PhD (LT), art critic and curator Mathias Kryger (DK), social worker, dance and movement therapist Tanja Pihlaja (FIN) and psychologist-psychotherapist Ieva Povilaitienė, PhD (LT).

The conference is aimed at a wide audience – mental health professionals and students, art lovers, people with mental health problems and their relatives and others. The speakers will give 30 minute presentations each, followed by a joint discussion (moderated by curator and art critic Eglė Mikalajūnė).

It is the ambition of the conference organisers that the involvement of experts from different fields will stimulate a broad discussion on this sensitive issue. Why is psychosis still one of the most stigmatising, but at the same time one of the most exoticised, mystified mental disorders? What does this attitude say about the modern society? Does the idea of a "mad genius" help understand the essence of psychosis or rather hinder it? Is contemporary art capable of helping shape new different perspectives on psychosis? What does the latest neuroscience research reveal about the nature of psychosis? How does a neuroscientist collaborate with a therapist or an art therapist? What are the alternative treatments for psychosis in the Nordic countries (e.g. *Open Dialogue* in Finland) and what challenges do they face? How can people with psychosis contribute to the development of aid-building strategies?

The conference was prepared by curator, art critic Eglė Mikalajūnė and psychologist Juliana Lozovska, PhD.

The conference will be held in English and Lithuanian, with simultaneous translation into both languages.

Psychosis in Modern Society: an Interdisciplinary Approach

International Conference

National Gallery of Art
Konstitucijos ave. 22, Vilnius

To register, please click >> [here](#) <<



National
Gallery
of Art

LNDM

Information:
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www.ndg.lt, www.lndm.lt

24 09 2021

Programme:

Admission is free of charge

11:00
Conference opening
Psychologist Juliana Lozovska, PhD

11:15
Screening of *Love Is a Treasure* by
Eija-Liisa Ahtila (2002, 55 min)

It is a film about the world of women who have developed psychoses. It consists of five episodes each telling the story of one woman. The episodes are based on research and interviews, but the stories and dialogue are fiction, combinations of different elements. The film brings out the similarities between the ordered mind and the disordered mind: the ways in which the mind works and creates solutions in unusual situations.

12:20
Ieva Povilaitienė, PhD
Psychologist-psychotherapist, Lithuania
Psychological Aspects of Psychoses

In her report, Ieva Povilaitienė will raise and try to answer various questions related to the experience of psychosis. What is psychosis and how does it manifest itself? What causes psychosis and what are the options for help and recovery after psychosis? Why is this disorder one of the most stigmatised and mystified? Can the experience of psychosis be of a personality-transforming nature?

13:00
Tanja Pihlaja
Social worker, dance and movement
therapist, Finland
Movement as a Voice in the Open Dialogue

What begins to happen in the Open Dialogue stage when (psychotic) experiences are shared? When people gather together in crises, different stories – verbal and non-verbal – start to emerge. "Breathing, roots, tensions, vertical line, my energy level...", the dance and movement therapist Tanja Pihlaja always focuses on her own body first. What about the bodies of others? How do bodies communicate and synchronise with each other through words and emotions? What about the looks? What is happening in the relationships – distances between people, different directions and, of course, efforts. How does the therapist show with her body that she is here, she's ready to understand the person's unique story, that the person is seen and empathised?

13:30
Lunch break

14:30
Inga Griškova-Bulanova, PhD
Neurobiologist, Lithuania
Psychosis and Art: a Neuroscientific Perspective

In her presentation, Inga Griškova-Bulanova will speak about the perception of the phenomenon of psychosis from the neuroscientific perspective. What happens to the brain under psychosis, how various parameters of brain activity change and how it affects a person's day-to-day functioning. The scholar will discuss the known effects of arts – music, dance, visual arts – on brain activity, as well as review the research on the influence of art as a therapeutic means on brain activity.

15:10
Susan Florries
Storyteller, filmmaker and transformational
guide, Sweden
My Psychosis - An Exhilarating Journey

In 2016-18 Susan Florries had two psychoses, which were journeys into multiple dimensions of consciousness. Taxing and tiresome, but fascinating and life altering. A catharsis that she wouldn't want to live without. She met fairies as well as angels, travelled the universe and experienced various aspects of existence. She fought evil entities, helped lost spirits to the other side. For a period of time, she had spiritual teachers from all around the world coming to her to give her lessons. During another time, the experience was that she re-lived her whole trauma therapy that she had undergone during three years in 2010-2013. So much happened and all in all it was exhilarating, awesome and amazing.

15:50
Mathias Kryger
Curator, art critic, Denmark
Schizo-analytical approaches to curating
and to life in general

In 2017 Mathias Kryger curated an exhibition with works by the Danish so-called outsider-artist Ovartaci (1894–1985). The presentation for the conference is part presentation of the work around what he calls a re-institutionalisation of Ovartaci – from the hospital to the contemporary art institution – and part meditation on the concept of schizo-analysis as it was developed by the French philosophers Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze. The presentation interweaves the concept of schizophrenia and the idea of 'schizo-' as productivity with material aspects of Ovartaci's works and further with the curatorial proposals and assemblages in the exhibition.

Danish artist Ovartaci produced her works during 56 years spent at Risskov Psychiatric Hospital. The exhibition 'Ovartaci and the Art of Madness' was the first to present a substantial overview of Ovartaci's oeuvre outside the sphere of institutional psychiatry and art-brut. In the exhibition, a number of works by contemporary artists were gathered to form perspectives around the themes of madness, psychiatry, spirituality and the issues of corporeality, gender and identity that run through Ovartaci's artistic production.

16:30
Coffee break

16:45
Discussion. Participants: Susan Florries,
Inga Griškova-Bulanova, PhD, Mathias
Kryger, Tanja Pihlaja, Ieva Povilaitienė,
PhD. Moderated by Eglė Mikalajūnė

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