

**Toomas Volkmann** is an Estonian photographer who, over a creative journey lasting more ore than three decades, has cultivated both portrait and fashion photography as well as nature photography.

## **Biography**

Volkmann was born on January 6, 1961, in Kivi-Vigala. After graduating from Pärnu 4th Secondary School, Volkmann, the child of veterinarian parents, enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Tartu. He studied there for three years, at the same time working part-time in emergency medicine. In Tartu, Volkmann also attended Evald Hermaküla's theater studio and, as a hobby, drew in Andrus Kasemaa's art studio.

He never mecame a doctor, instead, he eventually earned his higher education in 1986 at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, under course director Lembit Peterson who significantly influenced Volkmann's further artistic journey. Having become a young actor, he did not join any theatre, since the Estonian theater scene in the late 1980s did not resonate with Volkmann. So, after graduation, he started working as a singer for an Estonian early music ensemble Hortus Musicus, touring with the ensemble in various countries for several years. Early music has also deeply influenced Volkmann's work: patterns, orderliness, precision, and discipline typical of polyphonic choral singing strongly influenced his visual language.

Later, Volkmann studied photography in The London Institute, introduced an innovative fashion photography discourse in Estonia, and became the sole official chronicler for the Vibe party series, which significantly influenced the Estonian club scene since 1998. In the 2010s, he also served as a judge for the TV show "Estonian Top Model".

## **Works**

Volkmann's interest in photography began in his early youth. From the 6th grade, he attended a school photography club. In the early 1990s, he was part of a salon-style gathering in Tallinn, alongside, among others, Peeter Laurits, Herkki-Erich Merila (later founders of DeSstudio), and Tõnu Õnnepalu. Between 1993-1994, Volkmann studied photography in London, after which he returned to Estonia. Since 1995, he has been working as a freelance photographer and also as an interior designer.

Volkmann began his creative career under the pseudonym Tristan Mann, taking self-portraits that introduced auto-performativity and gay sensibility to Estonian art for the first time. He exhibited his early photographs in Estonia and abroad with the group "Igavesti Sinu" ("Forever Yours"), which was formed together with other Estonian photographers.

As a fashion photographer, Volkmann has collaborated with almost all Estonian media outlets, being the author of all cover photos for the magazine "Anne" for 13 years,

among other things. His portrait photography from the 90s and the first decade of this century is also very well known.

Since 1979, Volkmann has participated in exhibitions in Estonia and abroad. The most monumental was his participation in the exhibition consisting of a hundred portraits "Eesti läbi 100 silmapaari" ("Estonia through 100 Pairs of Eyes"), created together with Tõnu Tunnel and Tõnu Runnel and later a book based on the exhibition with Kaire Van Der Toorn-Guthan. The exhibition traveled to 6 countries and 12 cities. In the fall of 2023, Volkmann's largest personal exhibition to date, "täis minevik" ("pastful blast"), was opened at Fotografiska Tallinn.

## **Exhibitions**

### **Personal Exhibitions**

1979 Solo exhibition, Pärnu City History Museum

1994 Portraits, The London Institute

1996 Friends for the Weekend, Dionysia '96, Rütli Gallery, Tartu

1997 Portraits, Dionysia '97, "Illusioon" cinema, Tartu

1998 Selected Portraits, X-Bar, Tallinn; Selected Portraits, Tallinn

2001 Project "Save Our Souls: Portraits from an orphanage, prison, and retirement home"

2004 Bar Portraits, Cafe Angel

2006 Game, permanent exhibition Park Hotel

2008 Permanent exhibition, Hotel Olümpia

2009 Jeunesse Fatale - portraits, Tallinn, Modern Light Gallery

2010 Portraits, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

2016 Portraits. Renaissance, Mon Repos, Tallinn

2018 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes. Portraits of Estonians from 100 to 1 year old, Tartu / ERM

2018 Past Perfect, portraits from a retirement home, Toronto / Tartu College

2018 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Haapsalu / Cultural Center

2018 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Keila-Joa Castle, selection

2018 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Rotterdam / Fenix Flex Factory and Verhalenhuis Belvedere

2018 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Berlin / Kühlhaus Berlin

2018 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Tallinn / History Museum, Maarjamäe Castle

2018 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Tallinn / Hotel Radisson Blue Olümpia, selection

2019 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Stockholm / Viking Line new terminal and Estonian Embassy

2019 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, San Francisco / World Affairs Council

2019 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Kuressaare / Cultural Center

2020 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Kärkla / Cultural Center

2020 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Helsinki / Länsiterminal2

2020 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Narva / Narva Free Stage

2023 "pastful blast", Fotografiska

### **Group Exhibitions**

1989 Youth Photography Exhibition, Tartu City History Museum

1989 Estonian Photography Association Annual Exhibition, Tallinn

1990 Forever Yours, Tallinn

1990 Estonian Youth Photo Annual Exhibition" Illegaard, Tartu (1st prize)

1990 Nude Exhibition in Raevanglas, Tallinn

1990 Estonian Photography Annual Exhibition, Kiek in de Kök, Tallinn (grand prix)

1991 Always Yours Presents, Tallinn

1991 Rosa Eastman Gallery, New York

1991 Nude in Rae prison, Tallinn Photo Museum

1991 Contemporary Soviet Photography, Roy Boyd Gallery, Chicago

1992 Estonian Photography Annual Exhibition, Kiek in de Kök, Tallinn (grand prix)

1992 Forever Yours, Vilnius, Lithuania

1992 Always Yours – Group of Estonian Photographers, Roy Boyd Gallery, Chicago

1992 Saaremaa Photo Festival '92, Saaremaa Museum, Saaremaa

1992 Nude in Rae prison vanglas, Tallinn Photo Museum

1993 Traveling Exhibition "The Memory of Images", Berlin, Rostock, Copenhagen, Stockholm

1993 Nude Exhibition in Rae prison, Tallinn

1996 EstFem, Tallinn City Gallery

2010 Wildlife documentaries: Kiwa, Draakon Gallery, Tallinn

2013 Kaamos, Tallinn Applied Art Museum

2013 Photo Museum, Lee

2014 Project T-shirt Tallinn, Tallinn Dolls

2014 White Tank Top, Tartu Art Museum

2015 Kiwa Solo Exhibition Self-portrait with a Stranger, Tartu Art Museum

2015 Death and Beauty, KUMU

2015 From the Explosion to the Plain. Contemporary Estonian Photography 1991-2015, Tartu Art Museum

2018 Secret Files, KUMU

2020 Estonian Portrait Avant-garde 1980–2000, Photo Museum

2022 Music Garden, Hortus Musicus 50, History Museum (Great Guild Hall)

### **Advertising Campaigns for Companies, Collaborations**

Marat, Sangar, Monton, Everman, Liviko, Saku, Radiolinja, Talleg, A&G, Salon +, Pädaste Manor, Restaurant Noa, Postimees (newspaper), Vanemuise Theater, Drama Theater, City Theater, Reval Cafe, Club Hollywood, Club Angel, Tallinn Department Store, Shishi, Trend Express, Anne, A le Coq (brewery), Welcome to Estonia, Bolefloor, Kiviprojekt, Viru Center, Rocca al Mare Center, Estonian Concert, National Opera Estonia, City Theater, Manna la Rosa, La bioesthetique (for Vogue Russia), Expressions

2017 Maria Faust - In the Beginning, album cover and inner pictures (Stunt Records)

2018 Maria Faust - Machina, album cover and inner pictures (Stunt Records)

2020 Maria Valdmaa/Mikko Perkola - Aberdene1662, album cover and inner pictures (ERP)

2022 Maria Faust - Mass of Mary, album cover (ERP)

## **Contributions to publications (photos, articles)**

Eesti Ekspress (newspaper), Päevaleht (newspaper), Õhtuleht (newspaper), Postimees (newspaper), Magneet, Anne, Stiil, Kroonika, Eesti Naine, Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire, Space, Sofa, Own Taste, Chronicle, ELLE Decoration, Kitchen, KK (Norway) Architectural Digest (USA), Pulse, Anne Stiil, Mood, SÄDE and others.

## **Curatorial Projects**

2011 New Nordic Fashion Illustration, Rottermann Center

2012 New Nordic Fashion Illustration, Helsinki Design Museum

2015 New Nordic Fashion Illustration Vol 2, Tallinn, Museum of Applied Art and Design

2016 New Nordic Fashion Illustration Vol 2, Helsinki, Estonian Consulate

2016 New Nordic Fashion Illustration Vol 2, Pärnu City Museum

2016 New Nordic Fashion Illustration Vol 2, Washington

2016 New Nordic Fashion Illustration Vol 2, Budapest

2017 New Nordic Fashion Illustration Vol.2, Borås Textile Museum (Sweden)

Participants from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, 120 works

## **Books**

2000 Man in a Changing World, Olev Poolamets; cover and 12 photos, Tallinn

2001-2003 First Class Floral Design 1, 2, 3; Tokyo, Japan

2003 Brides in Bloom, Taivo Piller, Toomas Volkmann; Oostkamp/Belgium

2005 About Makeup, Katrin Sangla, Toomas Volkmann, Tallinn

2010 The Joy of Sharing, Sikke Sumari, Angeelika Kang, Toomas Volkmann; Tallinn

2018 Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes, Kaire van der Toorn-Guthan, Toomas Volkmann, Tallinn

2022 Hortus Musicus Fifty, Saale Fischer, Tallinn

## **Interior Design Projects**

Since 1998 freelance interior designer

2009 Estonian Designers Association annual award

2012 Freedom Café

2014 Viru Hotel Red Bar

Various private interior design projects

**Guest Lecturer**

Tartu Art School

Estonian Academy of Arts

Tallinn Teachers' House

Fotografiska (a museum and cultural space)

Photo Museum