

## **Art exhibition *Bodyscapes* in the Estonian Museum of Architecture**

**11.3.-7.6.2015**

### **"A tangible space**

Ulla-Maija Alanen's exhibition "Bodyscapes" in the basement gallery of the Museum of Estonian Architecture until 7 June. Sound design by Mikki Noroila and Maija Ruuskanen, music by Maija Ruuskanen.

What sound does a room make? But how does it feel beneath your hand? How does the room smell? And taste? Not very typical questions about a room, but these are exactly the kind that arise when moving around Ulla-Maija Alanen's exhibition "Bodyscapes" in the basement gallery of the museum. Physicality and most of the senses, apart from sight, are usually pushed into a subliminal periphery when sensing a room. We grasp only the information provided by sight and look no further. This has its own historical reasons into which we will not delve. Yet the purpose of an exhibition like this is to bring back a sense of being in the space, with the help of the abundant world of the senses.

This exhibition is as much an exhibition about the heavy basement of the salt storage itself as the works of the artist, which communicate extremely intimately with the vaulted space. The emotions are enhanced by the sound design created for the room by sound artists Maija Ruuskanen and Mikki Noroila. The sounds have been recorded using traditional acoustic instruments amplified by the acoustics of the room itself, which are then edited using computer software. The sounds emanate from eight channels within the room. As a result, suggestive vibrations seem to come from the earth and make your hair stand on end – so strong is their effect.

Ulla-Maija Alanen is a former dancer who has studied architecture and then found herself in the art world. Her relationship with the space is that of a dancer and an artist, and it is bolder and more immediate, and the way she expresses physicality is more colourful than the distanced language of architects. In her works she tackles a very intimate world – the study of the human body in different environments and extreme circumstances. Pain is transformed into beauty. Michelangelo once said, "He who has not made himself master of the human form and especially of anatomy, will understand nothing of architecture." Alanen goes even further and treats the human body itself as architecture, which can be studied under X-ray or CT-scan, and the surface of the body as a landscape which melds with the underwater world becoming one with nature. The outcome is a touching and sensual experience."

KATRIN KOOV (*SIRP 29.5.2015*)