

## "It's a kind of sunshine"

by [Camilla Egan](#)



*In certain corners of northern Europe, Estonians Enno Hallek, Andres Tolts and Leonhard Lapin loom as large as any Warhol or Lichtenstein you'd care to mention. Curator Harry Liivrand, cultural attaché to the Estonian embassy, has seen fit to celebrate these three artists in a quiet, yet appealing corner of Schöneberg.*

The exhibition is supported interestingly enough by Iaspis, a branch of the Swedish Arts Grants Committee – while the three artists are celebrated as pop art icons in their native Estonia, they are surprisingly even more prominent in Finland and Scandinavia. The refugee Enno Hallek, in particular, developed his style from rigorous academic origins through surrealist collage there, following similar artistic trajectories to Tolts and Lapin and producing some of the first Pop Art in Sweden. All that said – what about the art? 'Bold' is a word fitting each of these artists, from Lapin's multi-formed graphic canvasses, which seem to shimmer before the eyes, to Tolts' oblique imagery, to Hallek's iconic rainbow plywood forms.

Thriving life fills the overwhelmed-looking gallery to capacity (maybe slightly beyond capacity in the case of some of Hallek's hulking pieces.) But po-faced this isn't – there's a delicious, agile sense of the absurd running through the exhibition. Tolts' cryptic and textured semiotics bring a perplexed smile to the face. Lapin's deceptive and dizzying works seem to toy knowingly with the eye.

There's a sense of playfulness present both in the subject matter of Hallek's vibrant pieces (try Open String Theory, his wide-eyed interpretation of the eponymous mathematical concept) and, more actively, in the treatment that he encourages – each hardy plywood segment is held together by simple wing-nuts and can be reshaped according to whim. The exhibition additionally boasts several smaller string-hinged works (Portable Sunset) that visitors can tote around like briefcases. Liivrand declares Hallek's work to be "a kind of sunshine" amid a scene sometimes given to overt darkness and navel-gazing.

**Messages from Reality**, though July 13 | Werkstattgalerie, Eisenacher Str. 6, Schöneberg, U-Bhf Nollendorfplatz. Tue-Fri 12-19, Sat 12-16.