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**Telling Absence. National Galleries and construction of knowledge**

My PhD research “Telling Absence. National Galleries and construction of knowledge” deals with absence in the museal field of representation. My understanding of absence is informed by postcolonial theory (Spivak, Derrida, Taylor), phenomenological theory (Merleau-Ponty), gender (Pollock) and memory studies (Huysen, Etkind). I understand absence as an abject and noise, i.e unwanted and unsensible heritage, which is systematically effaced and excluded. Museal absence involves material and immaterial sides that are respectively based on excluded objects and excluded artistic identities. I argue in my thesis that museums consciously create material and immaterial forms of absence and engage in further detail with the techniques of its creation and mediation.

My case studies in the thesis involve four museums of modern and contemporary art: the Kiasma in Helsinki, the Kumu in Tallinn, the Ludwig Museum in Budapest and the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin. I interrogate the creation of absence in and by those museums through looking at their respective archival logics, narrative practices of heroisation and otherness. Furthermore, as all my case study museums touch upon Eastern Europe either through being situated in the region or on its edges I have also negotiated the ways in which narratives of Eastern Europe are absenced in these museums and in Western art history.