

## Arvo Pärt Centre

Laulasmaa near Tallinn, 2014  
Cultural buildings

"I work with very few elements - with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials - with the triad, with one specific tonality."

Arvo Pärt's unassuming yet powerful description of his musical architecture lays the foundation stone for our design approach: to stimulate the three components of this project - nature, architecture and music - to resonate in one and the same key. In our design for the Arvo Pärt Centre, we have reinterpreted the omnipresent triad interval underlying so much of Arvo Pärt's music, to help generate a clear and rigorous organising principle that informs the layout of the plan. What emerges is a clearly defined, closely related set of spaces, each with a particular function, yet all anchored in one specific tonality. In adopting Pärt's musical triad and transfiguring it into a graphic element - a triangle, with the proportions 1: 2: 5 - we have also rotated, shifted and aggregated this single initial entity. Since this particular triangle's geometry may be infinitely subdivided into identical units, or fractals, its inherent structure is analogous to the regular progression of oscillations found in the harmonics of a single pure note. Transposed into three-dimensional space, the same geometry breeds a series of discrete ...

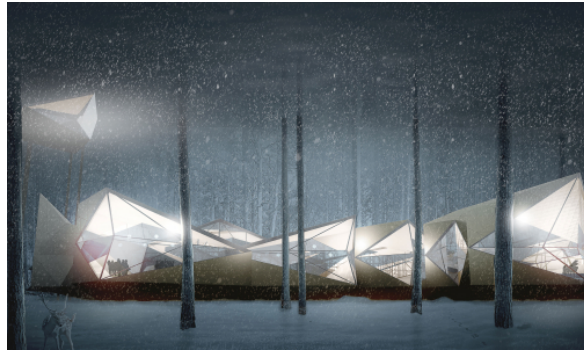


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crystal-like volumes, or tones: the building's 'melody'. The Centre is aligned close to the western boundary to take advantage of the plot's topography, hovering over the edge of a small incline, which offers itself as a natural amphitheatre. Approaching from the car park, the visitor follows a meandering woodland path that joins up with a timber boardwalk: more an architectural promenade than a direct, prescriptive route. The first-time visitor takes this route to reach the main entrance, but regulars will be tempted to pick their own way across the forest to other entrances or to the chapel. Due to the geometry of the building, the visitor's perception of it changes constantly, according to the angle of approach.

Once inside, an orchestrated sequence of spaces sets the visitor off on a journey of discovery: through the open public spaces before arriving at the more private areas, which are dedicated to the archive, creative rooms, and the common room. A further internal route penetrates a more intimate area of the building, reserved for Pärt's family and friends. Here, as a direct counterpoint to the small chapel located opposite, an 'ascending room' awaits. Powered by a ...



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cogwheel mechanism this equivocal, simply furnished chamber silently lifts its occupants from the forest floor up to a height of some 20 metres. From this vantage point, above the tree canopy, the vista opens towards the sea on both sides: a tower for music, stargazing or contemplative solitude.

Technical details:

Typology: Cultural buildings

Procurement documentation: Competition

Service phases (HOAI): 1