

Watch a fragment from the RIBOCA2 film:  
[https://bit.ly/RIBOCALAB\\_Inclusion](https://bit.ly/RIBOCALAB_Inclusion)



Kultūras ministrija



**AIM:** To find out about RIBOCA and artist Oliver Beer. To strengthen the understanding of ethical behaviors to encourage positive relationships in society, and to form an understanding of the differences between individuals and mutual tolerance.

**AGE GROUP:** 9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grades

**LESSON DURATION:** 40 min

**WHAT YOU NEED:** an object (if the lesson takes place remotely, then a computer with internet connection)

**INTER-SUBJECT LINKS:** social science, English, music, philosophy, literature

## ACTIVITY PLAN

- PART 1:** Introduce students to the Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA), why it was founded and why a film was made of the second biennial. Afterwards, students read the film text, watch an excerpt of the film, and read the accompanying text about the artist and the artwork shown in the excerpt.
- PART 2:** Once the students have read the text, a task follows: in the classroom or at home, depending where the students are, students need to find an object they use often. Any everyday object will do, such as a hairbrush, spoon, etc. Once this has been done, the students must think about this object, trying to “bring it to life”, and write down five characteristics or emotions that describe this object (colour, size, material, sadness, joy, etc.). Afterwards, students must select one of these characteristics or emotions and redesign the object so that this characteristic becomes more prominent. What does this change about our understanding of the object? Does it lose its function? Or the opposite, does it become more interesting? This activity will encourage the development of imagination, and just like the artist’s work, will allow students to bring objects to life and think about them outside of their usual environment.
- PART 3:** The students split into pairs and discuss their experience and choices regarding the object, explaining to their partner why they chose one particular characteristic, what the selection process was, what they were thinking about, etc.

The aim of this task is to practice active listening, allowing their partner to express themselves, not interrupting the speaker’s flow, and not thinking about what they themselves want to say.

Once the pairs have listened to what each other has to say, they must reflect on what they have heard in their own words, comparing experiences and coming to conclusions.

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## **OLIVER BEER**

The work created by Oliver Beer for RIBOCA2 collects objects linked with Latvian poet Aspazija. Contrary to the usual practice of museums, here the objects were selected not for their aesthetic appeal or cultural significance, but for their acoustic quality, which is complemented by their intimate nature and their link to a locally-known historical figure's private life.

Western modernity organised the world into rigid categories, whether in artistic disciplines or for the classification of things. As seen on a formal level, Oliver Beer tries to avoid this in his work, as it fits comfortably into the fields of both music and art: looking is not more important than listening. Beer's approach to materials continues this idea, unleashing the 'voiced' vessels from the constructed dualities of soul/no soul, subject/object, living/non-living. This approach allows us to view Beer's works in the context of animism, a belief which recognises the vital power behind absolutely everything, from manufactured artifacts to elements of nature.

Oliver Beer works with concepts around sound and music, using various processes of amplification to produce sonic environments that map an otherwise imperceptible realm. He takes specific locations or meticulously selected objects, and with the aid of audio equipment, exposes their inner vibrations. These objects and places hold a story, be it cultural, political or biographical, and by presenting their innate sound, an untold narrative of hidden properties and musical soul are unveiled. His work with singers takes this inquisitive approach into the realm of the individual, where voices and bodily vibrations articulate an intimate human chorus that goes beyond language. Having studied music, fine art, and theory of cinema, Oliver Beer combines this disciplinary knowledge to present projects in performance and installation, sculpture and film. His dedicated focus on the underappreciated or unnoticed aspects of our environment serves to elaborate the human experience and the life of objects. Considered in unison, his work begins to describe an ever-present stratum of the contemporary world, and confronts us with the incompleteness of human perception.

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## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- **Oliver Beer:**

<https://riboca.digital/en/participants/beer-oliver>

- **Simple rights/ Unattained goals:**

<https://riboca.digital/en/artworks/17>

- Material from the **RIBOCA Talks** that can be used for an in-depth understanding of the topic:

<https://www.rigabiennial.com/en/education/riboca-talks/event-voices>

- **Additional questions** taken from the RIBOCA2 public programme to reflect on the topic:

- How might forms of practice that meld perceiving, sensing, feeling and knowing support world-building narratives?

- What role might artists and artistic research play in this process?

- What are the conditions of possibility for a politics of commons, community and communion?

- How does attuning to voices silenced and practices erased by capitalist modernity forge new alliances, forms of resilience and transformation?

**A**