



Exhibition of graduate fine artists' artworks opens in the Art Town Mänttä-Vilppula

From 11 June to 29 August 2021, the exhibition titled Kuvataiteen valtakunta (Realm of Fine Arts) in Mänttä-Vilppula brings together 13 newly graduated fine artists from all six universities of applied sciences in Finland. The theme of the exhibition is *All the Time and Everywhere*. The curators are fine artists Krister Gråhn and Riikka Lenkkeri. Admission to the exhibition is free.

What themes and topics have newly graduated fine artists brought up in this exceptional time? The works of recent fine artists emphasize the effort to connect personal experience to a wider context in society and the environment.

- Own body and individual sensations have been either instruments or objects of study for artists. Perspectives are used to play with and, on the other hand, sharpen one's own perception or thinking. The fine artists who are now graduating are not looking for a large size or spectacle to base their work on, but rather the content and presentation of the works are about accuracy, dedication and a strong personal presence. They remind us that something noteworthy can happen all the time and everywhere, curators Gråhn and Lenkkeri describe the exhibition.

The objective of the Realm of Fine Arts exhibition is to improve the visibility and position of newly graduated artists in Finland. The exhibition also highlights the important role of the universities of applied sciences teaching fine arts in the training of fine artists. The famous art centre and interesting attraction Mänttä-Vilppula Art Town can be considered a significant arena for presenting the works of emerging and newly graduated artists.

This summer, for the first time, the exhibition activities have been designed to be implemented in cooperation between all six Finnish universities of applied sciences teaching fine arts. The exhibition is produced by the town of Mänttä-Vilppula's Cultural Services in cooperation with the universities of applied sciences. There are plans to establish the activities in Art Town for future years as well.

The universities of applied sciences participating in the collaboration are the LAB University of Applied Sciences (Institute of Design and Fine Arts, Lappeenranta), Lapland University of Applied Sciences (Visual Arts, Tornio), Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Sciences (Fine Arts), Tampere University of Applied Sciences (D.P. in Media and Arts, Fine Art), Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (Fine Arts Campus, Kankaanpää) and Yrkeshögskolan Novia (Culture and Arts, Fine Arts, Pietarsaari).

The exhibition has been built in an old store building in the town centre of Mänttä (Seppälän puistotie 7), where the exhibition space has been renovated during the spring.

- Many cities currently have empty business premises, the so-called urban wastelands that can serve as new and interesting arenas for art. Here in the Art Town, we have wanted to lower the threshold for the public to come to the exhibition by building an easily accessible destination in the town centre. In the opening year, we also offer free access to the exhibition, says Antti Korkka, the director of culture of the Art Town and the producer of the event.

Further information

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Attached

Curator information
Artist information



Curators

KRISTER GRÅHN works with sculptures and installations. During his career, Gråhn has studied in three different schools of fine arts and is currently completing his post-graduate studies in the Praxis programme of the Academy of Fine Arts of Uniarts Helsinki.

In recent years, Gråhn has collaborated with different artists and worked with his own projects. Working in pairs with other artists has provided new challenges to the production of art – different aesthetic preferences must be brought together and the artists must share constant dialogue about the content of the artwork.

Gråhn has held private exhibitions in different parts of Finland and participated in various curated and juried group and collaboration art exhibitions since 2001. Since the beginning of his career, Gråhn has actively worked in different roles in the artistic field, as a technical executor, producer, publisher and curator.

RIIKKA LENKKERI works as a painter. She graduated from the Accademia Ligustica di Belle Arti in Genoa in 1995. In recent years, Lenkkeri has explored working methods that combine different painting techniques, where the know-how of old painting traditions is linked with contemporary materials and subjects.

Lenkkeri has worked as an artist for nearly three decades and has held several private exhibitions, both in Finland and Italy, and also participated in numerous group exhibitions. Alongside her artistic work, she has worked as a lecturer and a supervisor of final projects in different Finnish schools of fine arts.

Lenkkeri is a member of the association Mäntän kuvataiteen ystävät ry, the association behind the Mänttä Art Festival activities.

Artists

KAISA ANNIKA HALONEN (1996) has painted *Enkelikenttä* (Angelground) in black. The different shades of black and the changing surface structure of the painting impact the way in which we perceive the colour. Kaisa Annika Halonen talks about the long process during which she combined different techniques, substances and surface materials. Black is not only black. Instead, the markings made in black on black form a personal journey in time and a multidimensional range of colours with a title that enables various interpretations.
LAB University of Applied Sciences Institute of Design and Fine Arts (Visual Arts program, Lappeenranta)

SAMUEL INKILÄINEN (1996) has created a background image for the virtual world where even the impossible is possible. Despite the technology, the background image is based on the cooperation of the eye and the hand as well as on marking the line. The drawing separated from the image is produced by computer. But in order for someone to make software or to use it, one must understand drawing. Inkiläinen talks about his dream of being included in creating an artwork – a game that he could love.
Lapland University of Applied Sciences (Visual Arts program, Tornio)

SYLVESTER KIVELÄ (1997) discusses love in his work *#FF69CD linssien läpi* (through #FF69CD glasses). Love is complex and can include hidden and sometimes even nasty or ugly things. Fine arts enables us to discuss these things. According to Kivelä, he looks for a way to connect with others through art without actually taking contact. There is no love between us as love exists in you and me, separately at both ends. What is left in between?

Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Sciences (Visual Arts program)

ALINA LAMPINEN (1998) has made *Viimeinen kimalainen* (The Last Bumblebee) of scrap metal and packaging plastic. It reminds us, in the words of Pliny the Elder, that Nature is nowhere greater than in her smallest works. (Pliny the Elder 79 BC). Hierarchical proportion is a technique used in religious art where unnaturally large proportion or scale is used to depict the relative importance of the figures in the artwork. Lampinen uses her artwork to highlight the importance of insects in our ecosystem.

LAB University of Applied Sciences Institute of Design and Fine Arts (Visual Arts program, Lappeenranta)

SARI MOILALA's (1965) starting point for the *Momentum* paintings is being present in the moment amidst nature. Experientiality and different sensory perceptions as well as our awareness of the continuous movement around us are central elements of the painting process that seeks to describe the bodily sensations caused by the experience of nature instead of painting representational portraits of the nature. Time is an essential part of our experiences, but how is it possible to illustrate time?

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences Fine Arts Campus Kankaanpää

EMILIA NURMIVAARA (1992) has painted the dining room of her childhood home. The everyday and familiar environment is reflected from and repeated by different surfaces and communicates the atmosphere, feelings and memories hidden in the room. Dark corners, the light of the table lamp and the vase with flowering lilies of the valley are repeated in the reflections, but a reflection, painting or even a memory are never true to the original situation.

Yrkeshögskolan Novia (Culture and Arts, Fine Arts, Pietarsaari)

ALEKSANDRA NÄVERI's (1996) *Urban Chaos* examines our relationship with the urban space. The pictorial narration resembling a product catalogue portrays the city as a dark environment constantly under further construction. Despite the slow-motion video footage, the fast pace of the city is retained in the parallel images. Näveri examines our way of taking over and privatising shared spaces. How people seek freedom and security from the surrounding environment and how these might be found from rather surprising sources.

Tampere University of Applied Sciences (D.P. in Media and Arts, Fine Art)

SUSANNA SELIN's (1982) *Nude soft animal* explores our complex and even difficult relationship with nature by contrasting the human physicalness with natural shapes. Susanna Selin uses her viewpoint to provide us with an opportunity for observing ourselves and our lives from the outside as a performance that can seem absurd or even comical. What is our habitual way of observing the nature and its details, are we able to detect the reasons behind our perceptions?

Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Sciences (Visual Arts program)

SAARA-MARIA SIPPONEN's (1984) uses an existing form, an industrially manufactured skipping rope handle, as the starting point for her work. The limited expression form used for the *Toistoja* (Repetitions) series creates sculptures containing expressive bodily references, both by chance and through conscious processing. The sculptures in different types of arrangements create impressions of cavities of the human body, of movement and repetition.

LAB University of Applied Sciences Institute of Design and Fine Arts (Visual Arts program, Lappeenranta)

ALEKSI SYSTÄ (1993) has recorded the feelings experienced amidst the insecurity and isolation by the pandemic in the series of paintings titled *Päiväkirjamista* (Journaling). In his journal, Systä completely abandons using words and finds his expression in the brush strokes. In the works of Systä, the erased parts speak as much as the parts with added colour. The days spent in isolation are reformed again and again through each viewer's experiences.

Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Sciences (Visual Arts program)

ANNIKA TAKKALA (1993) turns around the idea behind information boards as the source of accurate information. The artist asks how the reality transmits information about itself. What does a reflection say about the amount of light, what do waves say about the wind or a piece of birch bark about the life of a birch tree? Do they transmit information like codes, diagrams and infographics? Takkala gravitates towards small details and stops to reflect on the meaning of information found everywhere around us.

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences Fine Arts Campus Kankaanpää

FANNY VARJO's (1995) *Visions* reflects on our way of humanising natural beings. "I find the confluences between human bodies and nature interesting. A sculpture becomes bodily once the folds of its surface create an illusion of a human body or when the surface is covered with hair". The brightly coloured and partly humorous sculptures of Fanny Varjo highlight the question of how and what kind of power we use by defining our perceptions in relation to the human.

Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Sciences (Visual Arts program)

ELLENORE WENTJÄRVI's (1996) comics and small photos of personal history describe the youth of the artist before her time in the fine arts academy. The artist's hometown, Espoo, appears as a place with no future where drugs and alcohol serve a purpose of life. The black and white drawings and the poetic text guide the viewer forward. The mobile photos add in the question about fact and fiction as well as about to whom and why the story is being told.

Yrkeshögskolan Novia (Culture and Arts, Fine Arts, Pietarsaari)



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