

The XXVI Mänttä Art Festival rings, tinkles and bangs like a surreal film. Here, fascinating spaces and encounters are formed through soundscapes, performances and visual art.

A jukebox that plays melancholic cello music, a performance without an actor, a 12-metre sculpture-like textile wall and a Finnish longboat (Kirkkovene) that spurts water like a fountain: are some examples of the artwork in the XXVI Mänttä Art Festival that opens this Sunday, on June 12th.

The artwork in this summer's Mänttä Art Festival can be described with the words, surprising, fascinating and multi-sensorial. For this summer exhibition, the curator, **Markus Kähre**, has chosen 25 artists/groups of artists. The exhibition does not have any particular theme, because the curator hopes to allow each and every exhibition visitor the possibility of experiencing the artwork in their own way, and from the artwork, form their own personal story.

– The result is an exhibition which is more auspicious than we had expected. The artwork reflect the general state of the world and things that affect us all.

Most of the 25 artworks are new. They were planned and created for this year's Art Festival in this specific venue. Another exception is that along side the names of well known visual artists there are also the names of some of the most interesting musicians, composers, poets, playwrights and performance artists. Combining multidisciplinary art and music in space fascinates Markus Kähre, and so the solution was natural.

– I chose artists whose work would be perceptively active and would communicate together in different ways, Markus Kähre clarifies his choice of artists.

For example, the work by artists Jussi Niva and Henna Aho, converse in the form of colour, the radiating sounds of guitarist Petri Kumela and composer, contrabassist Antti Lötjönen link spaces together in the large exhibition hall, and the prose poems of poet, playwright Laura Ruohonen comment on the essence and artistry of Pekilo. Photography artist Elina Brotherus' new pieces take Pekilo and the surrounding, commonplace environment to a whole new level.

Some of the artists have never been part of an art exhibition. Musicians and composers enthusiastically joined the exhibition concept with experimental states of mind. Even though there are a few performance pieces, all of the artwork can be seen and experienced for the whole duration of the exhibition.

– One of the main criterion in the choice of artists, was also that the artists be ready to take a step out of their comfort zones and to challenge themselves. Failure is acceptable if, at the same time something new is found and learned.

The result is a multifaceted and curiosity evoking exhibition in which video, animation, soundscapes and multiple kinds of spaces reside. Inside a spring fragranced willow nest, cello music rings. The structure was designed and constructed by architecture student Siiri Hänninen and music student Tara Valkonen. The installation by the group of artists Nio Rautiainen Toikka, that takes elements from both the architecture of Pekilo and the artwork of their colleagues, will

surprise the viewer. Violinist Eriikka Maalismaa's laconic central radio announcements, echo in all corners of Pekilo. In this current global state, it is a relief and comforting to hear the speakers echo "You are safe".

Markus Kåhre hopes that the Mänttä Art Festival visitors might be left with a feeling of surprised enthusiasm and wonder: can things be shown in this way too!?!

– It would be great if each visitor would get something out of the exhibition, something that would touch them personally and leave them thirsty for more art.

The Mänttä Art Festival is the largest annual overview of contemporary art in Finland, and has received, for example, the Finland Award (*Suomi-palkinto*). The XXVI Mänttä Art Festival is open everyday from June 12th until the end of August.

Outside the Pekilo exhibition hall, there are additional artworks in the Mänttä Church and on the Taavetinsaari island, on the grounds of the Serlachius Museums' Göstä Museum.

The Artists:

Henna Aho

Artemisia Vulgaris (Taavetinsaari Island)

(Niina Lehtonen Braun, Mi Duncker, Anne Hiekkaranta, Mimosa Pale and Ilona Valkonen)

Lauri Astala

Antti Auvinen

Elina Brotherus

Radoslaw Gryta (Mänttä Church)

Emma Helle (Taavetinsaari Island)

Emil Holmström

Siiri Hänninen and Tara Valkonen

Mikko Innanen

Lasse Juuti

Petri Kumela and Antti Lötjönen

Eriikka Maalismaa

Kalle Nio

Nio Rautiainen Toikka (Leena Nio, Taneli Rautiainen and Jenni Toikka)

Jussi Niva

Eeva Park and Emma Harkaemper

Post Theatre Collective (David Kozma, Saku Kämäräinen, Pietu Pietiäinen and Bitu Razavi)

Kati Raitinen and Christian Lindblad

Vesa-Pekka Rannikko (Mänttä Church)

Pasi Rauhala and Lauri Wuolio

Laura Ruohonen

Päivi Takala

Pauliina Turakka Purhonen

Man Yau

For more information:

Images for the press can be obtained from the Communications Specialist.

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