

Press Release June 12th, 2024

In the XXVIII Mänttä Art Festival's exhibition "The Blast" the air shivers, the atmosphere thickens and the visitors are in for a surprise.

Timo Ahjotuli's M O N O D R O N E rushes along the Pekilo roof top like a hurricane, finally dropping down along the side. Hanna Vihriälä's "blow flower" shimmers in the light and temperature changes of the space, and the sea seems to lap in what looks like a painting by Laura Lilja, but upon closer inspection, Cargo Blue, turns out to be something completely different. The festival's exhibition "The Blast" curated by sculptor Heli Ryhänen, opened to the public on June 16th, 2024. The exhibition is constructed around the themes of light, airiness, perspective and space.

Ryhänen has invited 36 artists / artist groups, or a total of 39 individuals, to the 28th Mänttä Art Festival. The artists are from all around Finland, as far as Kemiönsaari, Siikainen and Ristijärvi. Most of the artists are participating in the Festival for the first time.

– I have a warm and close relationship with the Art Festival. In the past, I have been invited here as an artist several times, most recently in 2013. I hold the festival in high esteem, and to be invited as the curator is a great honour.

The exhibition name "The Blast" tells of the curator's daydream: large, spacious and buoyant installations to the rhythm of the space. Light, darkness, perspective. The artists are from different disciplines, at different stages in their careers, and different parts of Finland. These are the thoughts from which this summer's exhibition is created.

The artwork chosen for the exhibition considers the specific spatial possibilities of the Pekilo building.

– This year we have tried to open up the space to natural light wherever possible. Small scale work are placed next to large spatial installations, natural light enhances the room sized work, and photographs become two dimensional windows into different landscapes.

– In this exhibition the forest, nature and environmental concerns also rise as strong subthemes. The artists observe and experience the environment with great sensitivity, subtly, radically and personally. Here is a great opportunity to listen to what they have to say.

The Mänttä Art Festival is Finland's most extensive summer exhibition of contemporary art, awarded with the Finnish National Prize. The exhibition is an important and popular destination for both professionals and the general public. The XXVIII Mänttä Art Festival is open everyday from June 16th until August 31st, 2024.

The Artists are:

Timo Ahjotuli
Antti Arkoma
Sara Bjarland
Michal Czinege and Maija Laurinen
Erika Erre
Reetta Gröhn-Soininen
Timo Hannunen
Alma Heikkilä
Johannes Heikkilä

Touko Hujanen
Kaisa Huotari
Anna Hyrkkänen
Essi Immonen
Inka-Maaria Jurvanen
Riikka Keränen
Ritva Kovalainen
Juho Könkkölä
Laura Lilja
Hanna Marno
Jussi Matilainen
Anne Meskanen-Barman
Haidi Motola
Salla Myllylä and Laura Vainikka
Reima Nevalainen
Petri Nuutinen
Antti Oikarinen
Katri Paunu
Maria Pääkkönen and Ingeborg Blom Andersskog
Anni Rapinoja
Anne Roininen
Melissa Sammalvaara
Nora Sederlöf
Sanni Seppo
Rosalia Silber
Maria Tani
Hanna Vihriälä

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