

## **The XXIV Mänttä Art Festival Opens: *The Human Era* Offers Fresh Approaches to the State of Our Planet**

The Mänttä Art Festival has once again brought together a selection of prominent Finnish contemporary artists. The Mänttä Art Festival exhibition will open to the public on 16 June. The theme of the exhibition is *The Human Era*, presenting a total of 55 artists or artist groups. Invited by curator **Marja Helander**, many of the artists' artworks reflect on the climate crisis and, in a wider perspective, our responsibility for the state of the world.

The artists of the 2019 exhibition offer a variety of approaches to the Anthropocene, the age of human impact. They include 'bioartists' who merge natural sciences and biotechnology in their art, creating artworks with such materials as bacteria and yeasts. These artists representing BioArt in the exhibition include **Teuri Haarla**, **Anu Osva** and **Johanna Rotko**. Some of the artworks at the Mänttä Art Festival, such as **Paavo Paunu's** eight-metre sculpture titled *Invasion of Normalcy*, have been built from recycled or surplus materials. For example, **Sari Koski-Vähälä** has utilized used chewing gum and human hair in her artworks.

Concern over the vulnerability of nature is evident in the artworks of the several Northern artists. Their hot topics include mines, reservoirs, fishing rights and the proposed Arctic Corridor Railway. Indeed, the Sámi artists in the exhibition are often also activists taking a stand for their endangered culture and the nature of the Sámi region. Sámi artists contributing to the exhibition include **Outi Pieski**, **Matti Aikio** and **Sunna Kitti**.

The exhibition also presents well-known young contemporary artists such as the 2018 Young Artist of the Year, **J.A. Juvani**, and **Iiu Susiraja**, whose photography will be seen in Mänttä for the first time. Also included is the 2017 Ars Fennica nominee, painter **Camilla Vuorenmaa**. The exhibition also has artworks from one of the top sculptors of the new generation, **Berit Talpsepp-Jaanisoo**.

The XXIV Mänttä Art Festival exhibition is a thorough review into the multitude of expressive techniques found in the field of contemporary art today. These include painting, installation, sculpture, video installation, printmaking, murals, performance art, environmental art, glass art, light art, activist art, media art, photography, comics...

The events of our revamped side programme, Mänttä Art Festival XTRA, delve deeper into the exhibition's themes. The XTRA programme offers events such as The Climate Change Anxiety Club, performances and special guided tours allowing visitors to see the Pekilo exhibition with guides such as actor **Kati Outinen** or feminist activist **Saara Särmä**.

The Mänttä Art Festival is Finland's largest summer exhibition of contemporary art, having received such accolades as the Ministry of Education and Culture's Finland Prize. The XXIV Mänttä Art Festival will be open daily from 16 June to 1 September 2019. The full list of the 2019 artists with introductions is available on our website: <https://mantankuvataideviikot.fi/en/featured-artists-2019.htm>

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## **Further Details**

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