

Press release

HIDDEN TREASURES, 4 November - 17 December, 2022

We are very pleased to announce the group show HIDDEN TREASURES with works by Lutz Braun, Heidi Lampenius, Iisa Maaranen, Janne Räisänen, Anna Retulainen, Kerttu Saali, Hemmo Siponen, and Aki Turunen at SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY.

In this German-Finnish exhibition, works by six artists based in Helsinki can be seen together with works of their Berlin-based colleagues Lutz Braun and Janne Räisänen. Works by the internationally established artists Lutz Braun, Heidi Lampenius, Janne Räisänen, Anna Retulainen, and Aki Turunen are presented alongside works by the young painters Iisa Maaranen, Kerttu Saali, and Hemmo Siponen. It is thanks to the Finnish curator Mikaela Lstedt that these three young artists, who have never before exhibited in Germany, are part of this exhibition. The 'hidden treasures' were brought to Berlin with the generous support of the Finnland-Institut in Germany and Frame Finland, and we would like to thank both institutions very much indeed.

Lutz Braun (born in 1976) studied from 1998 to 2003 at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main – he and Janne Räisänen met there, and both have valued each other's work for almost 20 years now. In his last solo show with the title 'Die übernatürliche Eigenschaft der Dinge' at Nagel Draxler, Braun showed in both spaces of his Berlin gallery drawings and paintings. Janne Räisänen Anne Schwarz saw this exhibition several times and decided that Lutz Braun's presence in 'Hidden Treasures' was absolutely crucial. We would like to thank Lutz Braun and Galerie Nagel Draxler for making the three works in the exhibition available.

Janne Räisänen (born in 1971) has played an important role at SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY for almost nine years now, and has shown drawings and canvases in six solo shows on Sanderstraße so far. Räisänen starts his working process with a drawing, often on unprimed canvases. At the beginning, the motifs are still unknown to him; they only emerge in the painting process. His subjects may be landscapes in Lapland, reindeers, beleaguered rulers, stories or portraits of presidents, friends, and pop stars. Räisänen's works never leave beholders cold, but sometimes confused, touched, and amused. In Finland, his works can be found in almost every museum collection. Janne Räisänen, Heidi Lampenius, Anna

Retulainen, and Aki Turunen are all represented in Helsinki by HELSINKI CONTEMPORARY. We would like to thank the gallery for our wonderful collaboration.

At the entrance of the gallery, we encounter the large-format canvas *Black Rainbow* by **Heidi Lampenius** (born in 1977). Lampenius speaks of “remembered impressions of nature on an abstract level”, her abstract paintings contain references to nature, ideas, impressions, and atmospheres from nature. Her works play with the perception of the abstract and the figurative. Lampenius’ paintings are full of light, waves, movement, they are really drawings of light on canvas, a way of making invisible reality and movements visible. Research and literature play an important role in her working process, even though the results are abstract, and her goal is not the representation of graspable content. The delicate, lyrical works are made with acrylics and ink on unprimed canvas. Lampenius often paints in nature, exposing her canvases to the wind and all kinds of weather; she washes paint off, colourises, and decolourises, and in this way creates a visual vocabulary that is very much her own.

Hemmo Siponen (born in 1991) is represented with four small canvases in HIDDEN TREASURES. He primes his canvases before building them up in several steps with numerous delicate, thin layers of watercolours. In his last solo show with Sinne in Helsinki in 2021, Siponen showed dreamlike, enigmatic scenes with small figures, dealing with so-called *save points* in computer games, sites where gamers can rest in the virtual world before facing their next mission with their protagonists. Siponen’s paintings presented in this show, however, don’t show any figures at all. Siponen chose watercolours, which are usually used only for works on paper, because they can penetrate the paper’s structure and fibre. Siponen washes the paints off the canvas, applies another layer, and repeats this procedure. In this way, he eliminates the brushstroke and creates an almost graphic surface that one would not expect with a canvas. The motifs are difficult to decipher – perhaps we see lights on a meandering street from a drone’s perspective in *Chain* (2022)? Difficult to grasp in terms of perspective is also the small painting *Precipice* (2022) in the gallery’s first room; here, Siponen printed additional small round motifs onto the canvas with a stamp. Does a river divide the plane, do we see trees and maybe strange animal skeleton? Siponen’s works don’t provide any clear answers.

The series of six small-format paintings by **Kerttu Saali** (born in 1994), hanging in a row in the show, emanate peace and serenity, something many people long for in these troubled times. The artist starts without any preliminary sketches or an actual goal; the forms and colours emerge almost on their own accord. The most important elements in Saali’s work are form, light, colour. Ever since she started her studies at the art

academy, she has engaged with paintings from past centuries and names as her particular models the impressionists, whose treatment of light fascinates her. Since the beginning of her career as an artist, Saali has been interested in depicting the unconscious in her paintings. Her paintings are beyond any clear unambiguous interpretation – her non-figurative paintings speak for themselves. In 2023, Galerie Forsblom in Helsinki will present new works by Kerttu Saali in an extensive solo exhibition.

On the opposite wall are one medium-format painting and four very small works on wood and canvas by **Anna Retulainen** (born in 1969). In her working process Anna Retulainen contemplates painting conventions and perceptions of painting. The subjects of her works are merely platforms for the application of paint; for finding a balance between movement, the layers of paint, and the vying between colours. Her paintings show details drawn from everyday life, from journeys real and imagined, or from the masterpieces of art history. Her style is expressionistic, and yet in a stylized manner refined. Above all, Retulainen is an exquisite colourist. For Retulainen, drawing is a way of living; it is her way of putting the world in its place. Anna Retulainen is one of the leading figures in Finnish contemporary painting. She has been showing works in solo and group exhibitions since 1995, and her work can be found in numerous Finnish museum collections. Early in 2022, her catalogue *Silence* appeared to accompany the solo exhibition of the same title at the Sara Hildén Museum in Tampere. Retulainen's paintings became the first contemporary artworks to be permanently presented at the Finnish Presidential Palace.

In the second gallery room, four works by **Iisa Maaranen** (born in 1987) are installed. Her paintings often show objects or places of everyday life. Maaranen turns objects rather than people into the protagonists of her paintings: we encounter a machine filled with snacks, a carousel with no people on it, reduced to its three-dimensional basic shape, painted in pastel shades of lilac; on the canvas next to it, on closer examination we can make out a sea of hangers in a clothing shop. The prominent yellow hangers in this work *Annica* (a Buddhist term that stands for the concept of the impermanence and transience of everything that is) become independent and turn into dominant triangles that dance across the picture's plane. The hangers have apparently discovered that they don't want to hold on to anything earthly anymore. This is how Maaranen puts it: "As if the hangers have found out that they don't want to cling to anything anymore."

The works of the Finnish artist **Aki Turunen** (born in 1983) are based on a combination of intuitive, subconscious imagery and a profound knowledge of art history. Turunen's great interest in history and tradition is for him the foundation on which he sees himself as an artist in a historical context: this influences both the choice of his painting materials and supports as well as his imagery. By using traditional tools for his

own purposes, combining a very personal painterly narrative with images taken from history, Turunen explores in his work a shared human experience. In the three works in this exhibition, he uses wooden supports manufactured in Italy, which he covers with delicate, clear layers of tempera. And he also provides the painted frame for these mythologically charged scenes. Therefore *Der gelbe Reiter*, sitting on a dragon, is armed with a flower instead of a lance. The artist, ever curious and ready to reinvent himself from one exhibition to another, has dealt in his work with, for example, signs of spring, jewel-like snakes glimmering in the bottom of a sea, nocturnal rainbows, and monk-like figures, who in their crowns carry fantastical creatures, birds, spiders, dolphins, and flowers. Dragon charmers and saints as well as pretty, delicate flowers and splendid butterflies populate his wooden panels and works on paper.

We are already looking forward to Aki Turunen's solo exhibition at SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY in September 2023!

*

The opening reception of HIDDEN TREASURES will take place on
3 November 2022 from 6 to 8 pm. The artists will be present.

For further information and images, please contact:

mail@schwarz-contemporary.com or +49 – 30 – 612 89 902

The exhibition is generously supported by the Finland-Institut in Germany and Frame Finland.

