

Emma Ainala, Ida Koitila & Berit Talpsepp-Jaanisoo

*TIME THAT REMAINS*

8–31.8.2014

Helsinki Contemporary's autumn season begins with a group exhibition by three young artists, *Time that Remains*. Its theme is time and the concept of time. The artists approach their theme from several different viewpoints: subjectively and objectively, using the means of images and language, within the worlds of fairy tale and science. Their works contemplate myths, memories and truths that have a life in time. We cannot halt the passage of time, but can we preserve a moment?

Ida Koitila's works often deal with the passage of time. In her sculptures she combines the meanings linked to different materials and objects with linguistic and cultural concepts. In the *Time that Remains* exhibition the unifying theme of Koitila's works is human biological, intellectual and cultural evolution: the way that time shapes and develops us. Vocabulary and symbols from classical Greece recur in the titles of her works, and provide a key for interpreting their meanings.

A snake eating its own tail, *Ouroboros*, is a symbol of the universe and cyclicity, in which life and death are one. Koitila's *Ouroboros* is made up of parts reminiscent of vertebrae. A straight spine has been bent into a circle, contrary to its own nature, and attained a new one. In *Oxymoron* extinguished matches form a source of fire, the sun. The work is a visual and linguistic game, which also deals with the human relationship with controlling the powers of nature. In *Evolution*, a work that borrows the shape of a church window, the clams and bits of bone refer to the strata of time. In the *stained glass window* the biological evolution of humankind and the world has replaced the creation story of the church.

Berit Talpsepp-Jaanisoo works with sculpture, photography and video. In her art she has dealt with people's subjective memories and the notion of history. She also considers the nostalgia that is associated with them in relation to the potential objectivity of art. For the exhibition Talpsepp-Jaanisoo has created three sculptures of people, all twice their natural size. As a starting point of these objects, she sees her earlier photographic work – the nude photographs of artists. This time, the artist uses photography as a tool to sculpt life into the surfaces of her sculptures, which combine the three-dimensional objects and the fragments cut from the photographs.

The sculptures are three-dimensional objects that act as physical manifestations of memory. In the two-dimensional surface of a painting the physical experience is left more open to interpretation. The photograph, meanwhile, was long seen as representing an objective rendering of reality, and as more accurate than immediate human experience. Talpsepp-Jaanisoo's photograph-covered print sculptures are an interesting synthesis of these elements.

Paraphrasing the film theorist André Bazin, the artist compares her works to mummies. In ancient Egypt mummies were a way of preserving a person's physical being, of exempting it from the passage of time. A mummy was the preservation of life via a representation of life.

In her works Emma Ainala interprets the stratified nature of time refracted through her own world of imagination. Ainala's works often contain references to popular culture and, at the same time, to the various periods and mythologies of art history. They look at history, but also powerfully dissect the present day.

Ainala describes the mood of her paintings as film stills, as moments suspended from time, which have something strangely familiar and yet unidentified about them. In *Farewell to the mermaids (hen night)* she juxtaposes figures recognisable as female icons with the imagery of her childhood. Priscilla Presley, Brigitte Bardot and Chloë Sevigny are mixed with My Little Pony and Disney's Ariel. H.C. Andersen's tragic little mermaid and her story remind us of childhood and of the renunciation of girlhood. Of the moment when you have to take a step into the inexorable reality of adulthood and human relationships.

In Ainala's large-format paintings real, mythical and dreamlike figures and motifs merge to form their own reality, which can be interpreted in many different ways. In Ainala's works time appears in pictorial, narrative and stylistic layers, which are tinged with sentimentality and with the nostalgia that Talpsepp-Jaanisoo, too, deals with.

Emma Ainala (b. 1989 Helsinki) lives and works in Savonlinna. She graduated from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in 2013. Ainala's solo exhibitions have been seen for example at Galleria Huuto on Jätkäsaari in 2014, at Hasan & Partners in 2013. Ainala has also taken part in numerous group exhibitions, the latest being Kunsthalle Helsinki's Young Artists 2013 exhibition.

Ida Koitila (b. 1983 Borås, Sweden) lives and works in Berlin. She graduated from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in 2011 and has subsequently actively taken part in group exhibitions in Finland, Sweden and Germany. Koitila's two solo exhibitions were seen at Galleria Sinne and Galleri Bergman in Helsinki in 2012 and after this she has also exhibited solo in Borås, Sweden and in Berlin.

Berit Talpsepp-Jaanisoo (b. 1984 Tartu, Viro) lives and works in Finland. She has studied at the Estonian Academy of Arts and Glasgow School of Art. She has taken part in group exhibitions in Finland, Estonia, Britain and elsewhere.