

Jyrki Parantainen *Poetic Realities*

Opening: 13 March, 2020, 6 – 9 pm

Exhibition: 14 March – 25 April, 2020



Eternity and a Day from the series *Horizons*, 2008

Persons Projects proudly presents a collection of Jyrki Parantainen's photographs that focus on his fascination with Poetic Realities. These selected works reflect Parantainen's interest in how we define our internal viewpoints in order to understand our emotional horizons. Parantainen states "it's much more than just a sum of shapes, colors, and light. It's the universe with all its manifestations: grief, longing, dreams, beauty, world politics, environmental disasters, and violence. It's about the past, the present and the future. The landscape is a canvas permanently open to interpretation". These works form a collection of perspectives, where words intermingle with each other or rest alone upon the image, ushering in new meanings in how we identify, observe or experience a landscape within his conceptual context.

Parantainen uses his life's journey as a mirror for finding the subjects of his interest. These visual metaphors can evolve out of his own personal relationships or historical ones he uncovers, forming a personal library of dreams and disappointments. The photographs he creates go beyond the horizon of where the land, water and sky meet, rather they draw their breath from the space behind the mind's eye. He says, "the horizon is not just a visual convergence of the three elements, but a mental interface, the beginning of a continuously expanding room of dreams and promises". They pay homage to forgotten places where dreams are born and futures are lost. They are offerings to those spaces we think of as in-betweens. The mysteries of imperfections don't come and go, they are. Parantainen uses them as a pool for his thoughts. He swims into the unknown as another way of sinking into the present. These photographs reflect a poetic undercurrent that can be both beautiful as well as ominous. He writes "everyday life can be unsure, questionable, no less than threatening. On the other hand, disabled life can always contain a lot of beauty, which we are simply not aware of." Therefore, imperfections and their opposites are in his mind the same at the end of the day. "Placed together they are a poem about reality." Parantainen's sense for craftsmanship plays a key role in his creative process. His method is his own design to push the photograph more towards painting in terms of logic and aesthetics.

These photographs serve as stages for thought and for personal reflections. Words and sentences inscribed on the images multiply new levels of meaning. They can politicize or poeticize. "I use the words to create a new identity for the landscape to show the way I have observed and experienced it" – to increase the conceptual content. His works reveal both the horrors and the sublime that reminds all of us of the humor and its absurdities that we as humans, call life.

Jyrki Parantainen, born 1962 in Tampere, Finland, lives and works in Helsinki. He graduated from the University of Art and Design, Helsinki (now Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture) in 1992, where he used to be a Professor of Photographic Art. Among his numerous exhibitions are the notable solo shows *Dreams and Disappointments*, at Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki (2006), *Fire*, at The Finnish National Gallery Ateneum, Helsinki (1998), and the group show *Magnetic North*, The New Art Gallery, Walsall (2001). Other exhibitions include the solo show *Between Heaven and Earth*, at Gallery Heino, Helsinki (2012), and the group shows *Helsinki School*, at Christophe Guye Galerie, Zurich (2011), and *Tru(E)motion: The Helsinki School* at the Daegu Photo Biennale. (2010). Parantainen was awarded the Fotofinlandia Prize in 1989 and the National Arts Council Suomi Prize in 1998.