

Helena Hietanen, Jaakko Niemelä

Chaos & Beauty

Jan 24th – March 8th, 2015

The medium used by **Helena Hietanen** and **Jaakko Niemelä** in their art is exceptional in Finland: light.

This invitational exhibition organised by the Finnish Art Society is a retrospective of the work of the artist couple Helena Hietanen and Jaakko Niemelä from the past 18 years. Hietanen and Niemelä sculpt their works from light, always adapting it to the site in question.

Over the years, Hietanen and Niemelä have worked together, alone and in parallel. They both began their career at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, and both ended up using light and shadow. The title of the show, *Chaos & Beauty*, is a condensation of nearly the entire careers of the two artists. It includes landmark works as well as audience favourites by both artists. Included are shadow works by Niemelä and Hietanen's much-loved *Technolace*. This is the first time in many years that work by either artist is presented at such a scale.

Hietanen and Niemelä find the subjects for their work close by. At the same time, personal issues such as sickness and death, provide a universally identifiable ground. As Hietanen says: "*Many other people have felt what loss and resignation mean.*" For health reasons, Hietanen no longer works actively as an artist.

Chaos & Beauty is curated specifically for the spaces in Helsinki Kunsthalle. A new installation by Niemelä is produced for the sculpture gallery, and a large video animation is projected on the façade of the building at night. Light may be immaterial, but it cannot be totally separated from matter: the sketches, scale models and sample materials included in the show illustrate the processes and technique of art while speaking about the two artists' great professional skill and varied job profile.

One of the spaces in the exhibition is dedicated to public art. Niemelä and Hietanen wish to highlight the genre they have been working with for a long time. They have both created public works of art in Finland and abroad, together and alone, for the past ten years.

Hietanen and Niemelä have received numerous awards and accolades for their work. They have exhibited internationally in public spaces and art museums as well as solo exhibitions. Helena Hietanen's *Technolace* was on show at the 1997 Venice Biennale. She was Ars Fennica candidate in 2001 and she received the State Prize for Visual Arts in 1999 and the William Thuring Prize in 2007. Jaakko Niemelä received the State Prize for Visual Arts in 2005 and was nominated for the Ars Fennica Prize in 2010. Hietanen and Niemelä were awarded the City of Helsinki Cultural Prize in 2009.

The exhibition is produced by the Finnish Art Society.

The exhibition is accompanied by the release of a book, *Helena Hietanen & Jaakko Niemelä: Chaos & Beauty*. It is edited by **Pirkko Tuukkanen**, exhibition secretary at the Finnish Art Society. The essays are by freelance writer **Hannele Jäämeri** and artist **Petri Kaverma**, graphic design is by **Ilona Ilottu**, Dog Design. The publication is in three languages, Finnish, Swedish and English.

Meetings with the artists: Helena Hietanen and Jaakko Niemelä will present their exhibition on Sunday 25 January at 3.00 pm and on Sunday 1 March at 3.00 pm (in Finnish).



KUNSTHALLE HELSINKI
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