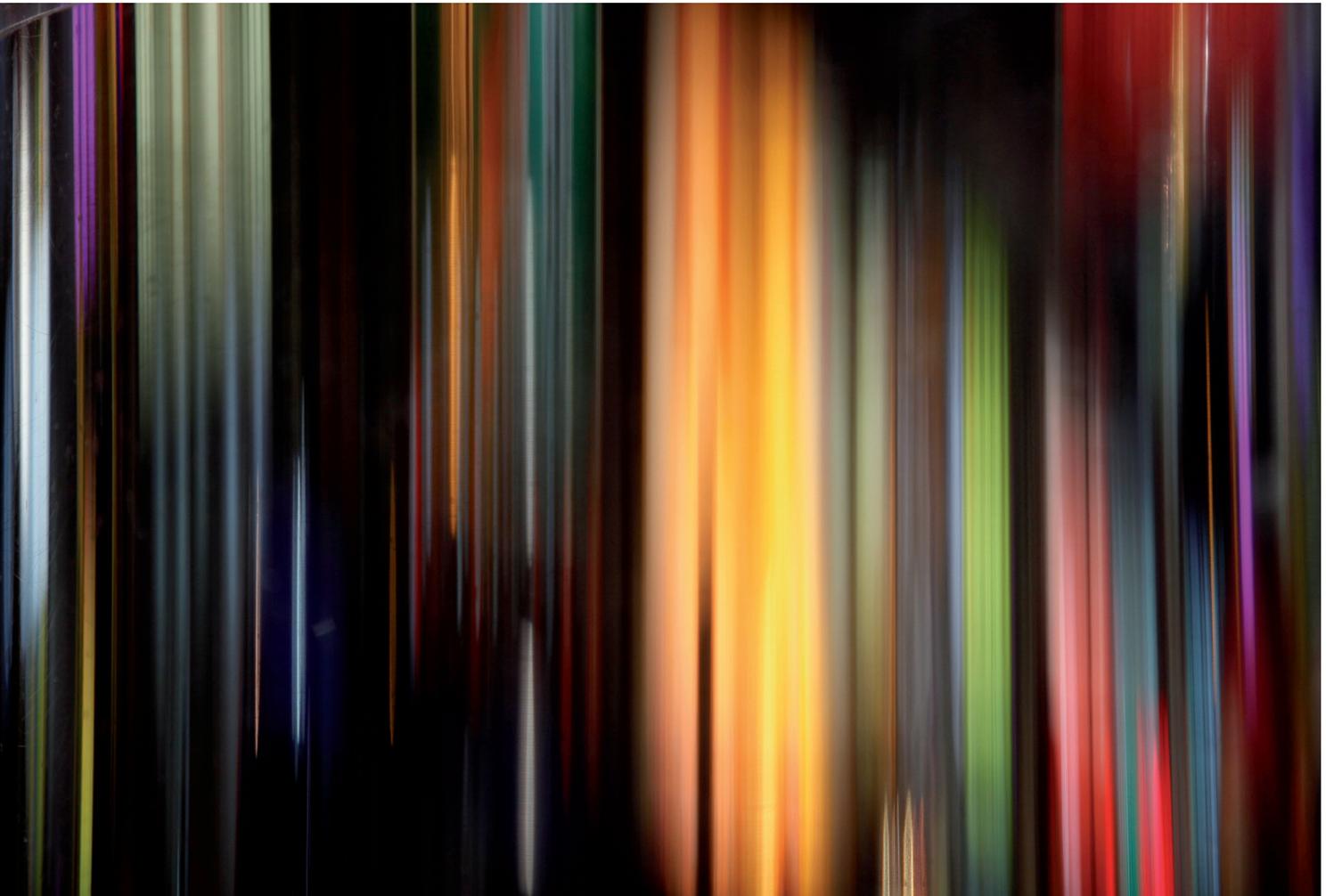


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ABSTRACT!

100 Years of Abstract Photography, 1917–2017

1.11.2017–14.1.2018



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M U S E U M
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P H O T O G R A P H Y

ABSTRACT!

100 Years of Abstract Photography, 1917–2017

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Cover: Ea Vasko: #11, from the series *Reflections of the Ever-changing (the Short History of Now)*, 2009

Production: the Finnish Museum of Photography, 2017

1

Keijo Kansonen (born 1952)*Reinogram*, from the series *Metro Ars*

1987

Silver gelatin print, photogram, unique

“*Metro Ars* was a series of five photographs that I created for an exhibition, curated by Ismo Kajander, that was on display at various metro stations in Helsinki. My works were displayed on a hoarding on the wall across the track at the Rautatientori metro station. I exposed the many-metre-long photograms at a screen-printing facility in the basement of the Lepakko cultural centre, where a large glass plate was set up at a height of three metres, and acting as a light source was a small halogen bulb fitted inside a piece of ten-millimetre copper pipe, in which a small hole was cut. A winding flue was soldered in place to let hot air escape, to prevent the bulb from burning out prematurely.

I placed various objects, such as wine glasses, light bulbs, and alarm clock springs on the glass plate. The light source had a diameter of one millimetre. I achieved (found) a continuous depth of field. I developed the exposed photostat papers in our photographic laboratory, in large developing dishes, formerly used by the National Land Survey of Finland to develop maps. I rinsed the images, naked, in the shower of my sauna using my feet.

Here I have used an old hand-blown glass funnel and a 35-mm film frame to build the image. Originally, the eye also had paper eyelashes around it.”

— Keijo Kansonen

2 **Noora Sandgren** (born 1977) *Fluid Being: Dialogue 15.10.2015 (30 min)*

2015

Pigment print

“In spring 2015, I found a box of my father’s photographic papers from the 1960s and 1970s at our summer house in Hiidenvesi. The house has a garden that became my studio. I was interested in the world of corporeal experience, in which the artist is present in an extreme way, being absorbed in the image.

I developed a slow process that I continue to apply from one season to the next: I sit in the garden for half an hour, letting the weight of my head fall on a blank paper. The image emerges from interaction: my breath and the heat from my skin both colour the paper surface, and tears, moisture from my lips, wind, snow and insects leave their traces, as the sun creates outlines. I’m going back to the roots of photography, Fox Talbot’s photogenic drawings, and the fundamental elements: light, time and a reactive material that resembles the skin.

The temporal layers of the work are the age of the paper, the first exposure by the sun, and the second, digital exposure on a scanner, during which the scanner head simultaneously carves out the image and destroys it. The original unfixed image, then, continues its metamorphosis.”

— Noora Sandgren

3

Reijo Porkka (born 1947)

Color Lights

1985

Silver dye-bleach print, unique

“I made abstract photographic experiments, in both black-and-white and colour, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. I put colourless, clear, glass-like plates, and plexiglass cubes on a glass plate, and lit them and the background with colour lights. The glass plate helped me to light the transparent objects from behind, thus clearly outlining the objects. I created abstract photographs under the light of an enlarger by placing transparent objects on top of photographic paper, and sometimes I also photographed the objects using a camera.”

— Reijo Porkka

4

Martti Jämsä (born 1959)

From the series *CTN-7*

2017

Silver gelatin prints, unique

“My work was created on a graphic material that was previously used at printing houses. The packaging read CTN-7. I wanted to see how this material would react to photographic developer and fixer. While in the darkroom, I poured developer on the paper and pressed this against another similar paper. I peeled the papers apart and let the image develop, and sometimes I would even switch on an ordinary ceiling light in the darkroom. This caused the paper to become darker, and various runny traces could appear. I then fixed and rinsed all

the finished images, which totalled 52. Of these, I chose 10 for this series.”

— Martti Jämsä

5 **Timo Kellaranta** (born 1951)

Juego

2009

Pigment print

“The *Juego* series is a kind of tribute to the Mexican photographer Manuel Álvarez Bravo, who, in 1929, created a series of photographs entitled *Juego de papel* (‘Paper Game’), so I even kept part of the name. Bravo used his images to enter into dialogue with the cubists. *Juego* is the first series in which I used paper. I have since created a few more.”

— Timo Kellaranta

6 **Nanna Hänninen** (born 1973)

Basel from Sankt Anton Diptych

2006

Digital print on chromogenic colour paper

“The New Landscapes is a series of painterly cityscapes realised by means of photography. For this series, I have taken photographs in Finland, Germany, Switzerland, the Azores and Brooklyn. The shoots took place in cities, factories, churches and airports. In addition to the landscapes, the

images also feature the photographing subject, the passing time, and the photograph as a medium. Each work becomes a series of rhythmic light streaks produced by the long exposure time, and the photographer moving, breathing, laughing, talking, walking, and her heart beating. The photographing subject has a strong presence, while the thing being photographed remains distant, which makes it easier to process, and safer, too.”

— Nanna Hänninen

7 **Mikko Sinervo** (born 1981)

Surface I

2017

Pigment on a pigment print, unique

“My work reaches out into space. I use my work to build my own never-to-be-completed map of the cosmos, which enables me to reflect on the diversity of phenomena in space.

My studio functions as an observatory, which provides me with the framework within which I work, using a variety of material processes. This means that the final work can just as well be a copper plate oxidised over time, a plaster sculpture, or a photographic print touched up using a dry colour pigment.”

— Mikko Sinervo

8

Marko Vuokola (born 1967)

Moon (sharpen)

2014

Pigment print

“I took a photograph of the full moon with a digital camera. In an image-editing program, I zoomed in on the file, and the moon. When zooming, the picture elements, or pixels, become visible, and when the file is then sharpened, the pixels become more colourful. The result is an image of the moon captured in 81 pixels.”

— Marko Vuokola

9

Ulla Paakkunainen (born 1954)

Rain, from the series Grass

1993

Chromogenic colour print, unique

Grass 1993
bent grass blade
between glass plates
the dark darkroom
narrow light
rain of light
Rain

— Ulla Paakkunainen

10

Riitta Säkö (born 1959)

*Story, from the series **Fly, Dream***

1983

Chromogenic colour print, unique

“I experimented with an enlarger in the darkroom, because I wanted to create abstract colour photographs without a camera. I tried a variety of materials, such as plastic I picked out of the rubbish bin, cellophane and burned films – anything I could put in the film holder of an enlarger. It was difficult to bring out the colour red, as the materials I experimented with were predominantly blue in colour.”

— Riitta Säkö

11

Heini Hölttä (born 1960)

Terminus of Tram Route Six

1988

Silver gelatin print, contact sheet

“First, I drew a detailed plan on paper for the contact prints. I then searched the streets for walls, lines and perspectives to suit the plan. I photographed the frames in order: 10 vertically and 16 horizontally, a total of 160. I exposed frames 1–160 on five rolls of film.

I had to get the contact prints right the first time, meaning that each image had to be in place in the negative roll, according to my plan. I had my sister with me to read the plan. She kept track of the number of frames I had photographed and in which direction I had tilted the camera.

After I had developed the rolls of film, I cut the film into strips and removed the perforated edges. I joined the strips together using small pieces of tape to create one large negative, which I then exposed directly on photographic paper under a glass plate.

The finished ‘mega-negative’ is an impressive whole. The size of a film frame in a 35-mm camera is 24 mm × 36 mm. The largest contact print measured 46 cm × 53 cm, equalling 240 film frames. I also created large works from the contact prints by making copies of each frame in the contact print at a size of 10 cm × 15 cm. The size of my work *Tarkk’ampujankatu 10 ja 12* (‘Tarkk’ampujankatu 10 and 12’), which is part of the Finnish Museum of Photography collection, is 170 cm × 200 cm.”

— Heini Hölttä

12 **Annikki Luukela** (born 1944)

New York, nro 5

1995

Transmission hologram

“When looking at this hologram, you want to move around in front of it: get up on your toes, bend down, and move from side to side. When viewed from different angles, the colours of the work change. When moving sideways, you can see a red ‘flicker’ ripple through the centre of the work.

To create the holograms, I first painted each brushstroke individually on A3-size black paper. I used a white coating and a wide brush. I created dots by punching holes in the paper. After this, a lith plastic film was created from each paper in a photographic laboratory, reproducing the black paper as black and the brushstrokes and holes as bright white.

I created the holograms in Rudie Berkhout's private laboratory in New York. First, the lith films were exposed on individual glass plates using a helium-neon laser. Each film was, at this stage, placed on the desktop, depending on how it was going to be located in the final hologram: in the foreground, middle ground or background. Finally, the plates were developed and fixed. This is how the master copy of the hologram was created.

Finally, the separate glass plates were grouped together and arranged by depth in the final configuration. The work's undulating, warm-red 'flicker' was created by placing a relief-surface glass plate in front of the master copy. The entire work was then laser-exposed on a new glass plate, which was developed and fixed. The result was the final hologram. The 'rippling flicker' is the unique feature of the work – a rarity in holography.”

— Annikki Luukela

13

Annikki Luukela (born 1944)

From the series *Laser Light Shapes*

1984–1986

Silver dye-bleach print

“In the series *Laservalon muotoja* ('Laser Light Shapes'), I used a helium-neon laser and a variety of prisms. I projected the laser light onto the background surface and took photographs using slide film. These were made into Cibachrome colour photographs.”

— Annikki Luukela

14

Sami Luukkanen (born 1967)

Pizza Puke

1996

Chromogenic colour prints

“I use traditional methods of photography in my work: light, film, chemicals and photographic paper. Developing photographs is a disciplined, technical process, which you can strictly follow to create images that correspond to reality. When, however, you mix up the process, come up with your own rules, and are open-minded and experimental, the result is an unexpected and surprising adventure. What you see in the image then is a riot and chaos of light and chemicals on the surface of photo-sensitive material. It is this process of chance that I have been trying to seize.”

— Sami Luukkanen

15

Jaana Maijala (born 1984)

Grünwald

2011

Pigment print

“I made pencil drawings in different places and situations. The drawings were attempts to capture and preserve experiences using the rhythm of the pencil. Later, I photographed those lightweight, light-grey sheets of paper, which had stretched and blistered with all the pencil marks. Once photographed, the drawings became two-dimensional again, while at the same time managing to look like objects with mass, which is something they were not while on paper.”

— Jaana Maijala

16

Timo Kellaranta (born 1951)

From the series *Silent Lake*

1980/1986

Silver gelatin print

“In 1980, I took some photographs of the surface of a tranquil lake. In 1986, I intentionally damaged the negatives photographed one by one. The idea was to introduce black spots in the images. The result better matched the idea that I had of the landscape. Contrary to what you might think, I was aiming for specific, not too random, shapes – and I succeeded. However, it is a marginal, unpredictable, and almost unfeasible method. I continued to manipulate negatives later, too, but I never again had the same success, so in this sense the series is an exception.”

— Timo Kellaranta

17

Pekka Niittyvirta (born 1974)

Unexpected End-of-file Was Encountered,
from the series *Corrupted*

2007

Digital print on chromogenic colour paper

“The work is a form of anatomy of the digital image, as well as a follow-up to my images that I presented in code form, as mere numbers. The diptych is composed of two images that originally showed pages of a map. An error in the image file information has destroyed the representativeness of the images. In this case, the ‘deliberate error’ is an image file that was left unfinished when the negative was being scanned. The

files have subsequently been ‘fixed’, so it has become possible to open the images. The outcome of processes like these is predictable but with an element of chance thrown in.”

— Pekka Niittyvirta

18

Joonas Ahlava (born 1975)

8 6 4 1 1, from the series *Thought Patterns*

2007

Digital print on chromogenic colour paper

“The work *Thought Pattern 8 6 4 1 1* examines our thinking processes, and how we learn things through repetition. The habits we learn guide us in our daily lives and everyday decision-making, meaning that we act based on learned thought patterns. I’m interested in growth and continuous learning, instead of repeating the same familiar thought patterns. The work started with a simple pattern, formed by black spheres, that I exposed in the darkroom. The final work emerged from the repetition of the original pattern – the interaction of hundreds of overlapping layers.”

— Joonas Ahlava

19

Hannu Karjalainen (born 1978)

Wave I

2017

Pigment print

“My latest series of photographic works goes back a few years to when I accidentally came across colour separation

filters at a flea market. I tried photographing through them and became interested in what they did to the image – any subject seemed to come out as a monochromatic surface. When using multiple exposures on photographic film to create images, the colour surfaces combine to form a polychromatic network.

My images straddle the borderline between the abstract and the representational. The combined fields of colour seem somehow sculptural, as they encounter each other in space. On the other hand, the images represent the subjects in front of the camera, and I'm not even trying to hide their materiality. The end result is always to some extent a surprise.”

— Hannu Karjalainen

20

Kira Leskinen (born 1987)

Amante

2016

Pigment print

“In my work, I combine traditional paper-collage technique with the digital expression of a flatbed scanner. As raw material for my images, I use paper and cardboard of different colours, cut or torn into different shapes, from which I then sketch the images on the scanner's glass platen. During scanning, I pull, lift, and turn these image elements. As my movements are combined with movement of the scanner head, various digital distortions and deviations appear in the image. It is these deviations that give my images their final form.”

— Kira Leskinen

21

Ea Vasko (born 1980)

*#11, from the series **Reflections of the Ever-changing (the Short History of Now)***

2009

Digital print on chromogenic colour paper

“My works are based on wandering around the city and making observations. When I find an interesting corner, gateway, reflection or shadow, I photograph it straight away or come back later. I may also build a scale model of something I have seen and photograph that. I often take my photographs in the evening or at night, so the light in my images is almost always artificial.

The exhibited work is part of a series for which I have taken photographs of reflections in urban landscapes at close range. The perceivable urban space is cropped out of the image. The images show a surface that reflects the lights of its environment. The name of the series suggests that reflections are momentary images in an environment that is perpetually in motion – they capture a small moment in an image, and then they change again.”

— Ea Vasko

22

Appu Jasu (born 1987)

*Looking at Four Seasons in the Abyss (Winter)
by Timo Marila for 1 Minute and 55 Seconds*

2013/2016

Pigment print

“The work draws on the idea of trying to view a certain period of time as a visual mass, in the same way as the small se-

quential images of a cinema film, when spread out, turn into an abstract colour surface, when viewed from a distance. In the work, the frames of the video made of a selected moment (viewing a painting) are not shown one by one, sequentially, but they are all shown at once as one motionless collage. The work is, on the one hand, an interpretation of the painting next to it, as filtered through the experience of one viewer, and the viewer's memory of it. On the other hand, it is a presentation of time and memory as something that gathers the moments experienced, plotting them on a line, which is then coiled up and packed away, to be neatly arranged next to other moments or just heaped in a pile."

— Appu Jasu

23

Niko Luoma (born 1970)

Self-titled Adaptation of Guernica (1937)

2015

Pigment print

"My work is an adaptation of Picasso's *Guernica* (1937). The main theme is not the inner meanings of the painting but its spatial solutions: geometry, rhythm, direction and weight.

I created my photographic work using an analogue process, with dozens of exposures on two sheet films, and with every resulting shape in the photograph being its own exposure. My sole material is light, which is coloured using a variety of filters, and shaped in the studio using a variety of materials.

The resulting work is a dialogue between me and Picasso's painting, between the photograph and the memory image, based on repetition, layeredness, colour, and chance, intro-

duced by the analogue process. My working process is performative and based on intuition, resembling composing, and involving deconstruction and rebuilding.”

— Niko Luoma

24

Noomi Ljungdell (born 1979)

One Thousand Steps on a Square, from the series *One Thousand Steps*

2004

Chromogenic colour print

“The works in the *One Thousand Steps* series are time-exposure photographs, in which a long exposure is combined with movement in space. I walked a thousand steps holding my camera, and everything I came across in space was captured in one film frame. In the end, there was so much visual information that the image became translucent, and almost disappeared. The work is a record of presence, a journey, and light.”

— Noomi Ljungdell

25

Renja Leino (born 1958)

Sattumasfääri

1980s/1995

Silver gelatin prints

“*Sattumasfääri* (‘Chancesphere’) was triggered by the trauma caused by the sinking of the cruise ferry Estonia on my

birthday, 28 September 1994. I had photographed these images with traces of light earlier, when I was studying at the Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, and I could not find a theme for them. When a familiar cruise ferry then sank into the depths of the sea in our waters, taking a huge number of people down with her, these old negatives came to life. *Sattumasfääri* is an installation dealing with existential questions that I created in early 1995 for the Poriginal Gallery. The original work included more photographs than the one presented in this exhibition, which is a new edition that I put together from the parts I found in my study. Chance – that significant word in a person’s life and death.”

— Renja Leino

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