

# PRESS RELEASE

## POTRETTI



FRANKFURT AM MAIN, OCTOBER 2014

### POTRETTI CONTEMPORARY FINNISH PHOTOGRAPHY

**October 4 – November 30, 2014**

Opening: Friday, October 3rd, 2014, 7 pm

Press preview: October 2nd, 2014, 2 pm

As part of the Finnish Guest of Honour programme Frankfurt Book Fair 2014, the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt continues a long-established exhibition series dedicated to international dialogue. From October 4 to November 30, 2014 the exhibition “Potretti” introduces seven contemporary photographic artists from Finland, who investigate subjects via the genre of portraiture in ways surpassing documentary presentation.

The participating artists are **Elina Brotherus, Ulla Jokisalo, Harri Pälviranta, Nelli Palomäki, Raakel Kuukka, Iiu Susiraja** und **Santeri Tuori**.

Portraiture is the most treasured form of photography. It deals with capturing the existence of identity. At first glance the portrait in our passport is the visual communicator that establishes our acceptance to enter into a foreign environment. In our family albums it gives evidence of our celebrations, achievements and flaunts genetic heritage. Social media codes the portrait to a thumbnail that carries an evolving narrative of what we want the world to know about us.

The exhibited photographers are being shown together for the first time in Germany. And all artists in “Potretti” (Finnish for Portrait) were chosen because the portrait or the self-portrait is a key symbol used to reveal their stories. Through diverse media of photographs, film, video, collage each artist has a unique method of working and an exceptional subject to visualize. Through observation of the world around them they create intimate staged settings of pleasure, self-reflection or irony. Themes of childhood, youth, the body, motherhood, family, aging and violence and photography itself are leitmotifs, which accompany this exhibition.

In the 1980s and 1990s the environmental portrait played an exceptional role in contemporary Finnish photography. The self-taught Eskö Mannikkö's colour portraits of Finnish men who live alone were received with great curiosity, not alone for their self-irony at venues such as art space Portikus in Frankfurt am Main in 1996. After discovering 19th century portraits of the Sámi people, indigenous Laplanders, in a Paris Archive in the artist Jorma Puranen re-staged these images in their original-landscapes in his series “Imaginary Homecoming”. Around this time also Elina Brotherus' colour photographs became internationally recognized for her portrayal of figures often the artist herself in landscapes or interiors, in a singular image narrative. Her references to art history, literature or music embellish loss, love and the absence of love. Through photographic and teaching visits to Finland for the last 30 years, the American Finnish photo-artist Arno Rafael Minkinen has also influenced the genre of experimental self-portraiture. In the 1980s artist Jan Kaila began a long term story of the life of the naturalist and theatrical hermit Elis Sinistö bridging documentary and later performance, influencing the next generation of image-makers.

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“Potretti” includes the youngest generation of Finnish emerging talents such as **Nelli Palomäki**’s soul searching black and white portraits and **Iiu Susiraja**’s staged domestic dramas. Universal motifs such as time and childhood are present in the video works of **Santeri Tuori**; violence and youth in the colour street portraits of **Harri Pälviranta**. **Ulla Jokisalo** also uses historical photography to create mixed media collages that narrate themes of beauty and evil, pain and desire. In “Annonciation” **Elina Brotherus** forms a diary of hope, loss and patience. **Raakel Kuukka**’s self-portraits with changing hats are modern cousins to Renaissance portraiture.

### “Potretti” at Fotografie Forum Frankfurt

The exhibition, curated by Celina Lunsford, artistic director of Fotografie Forum Frankfurt is a cooperation of FILI – Finnish Literature Exchange, Frame Visual Art Finland and Fotografie Forum Frankfurt. “Potretti” is part of the artistic and cultural programme FINNLAND.COOL. Frankfurt Book Fair. Guest of Honour 2014.

For the generous support we would like to thank GONDER Group and Family Pirkko & Josef Ackermann.

### Publication

For the first time, the accompanying publication for our cooperation with the guest of honour of the Frankfurt Book Fair, is a book with photography and literature of the country. “**POTRETTI. Photographs and Literature from Finnish Artists and Writers**” gives insight to the photographic work of the exhibited artists, accompanied by short stories and poetry of 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> centuries Finnish authors. All artists were asked to suggest literature recommendations. The following authors are represented with writings: Elias Lönnrot, Asko Sahlberg, Tove Jansson, Iiu Susiraja, Riikka Ala-Harja, Aki Salmela, Veikko Huovinen and Edith Södergran. The book is edited by Frank Bollinger (dramaturge, Frankfurt/Helsinki), responsible for the literature section and Celina Lunsford (artistic director of FFF) responsible for the photo-editing. It was published with the support of FINNLAND. COOL and FILI – Finnish Literature Exchange; available for 19 EUR at the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt.

### Opening

“Potretti. Contemporary Finnish Photography” will open on Friday, October 3, 2014, at 7pm. Opening speakers are Celina Lunsford, Artistic Director at Fotografie Forum Frankfurt; Iris Schwanck, Director, Guest of Honour programme FINNLAND. COOL.

### Special Events

Saturday, October 11, 2014, 6 pm

**Lecture** “The Artist and her Model”

**Elina Brotherus**, Photographer, Finland/France

The lecture will be held in English.

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Saturday/Sunday, October 11/12, 2014, 10 am to 6 pm

**Workshop** Portrait Photography “The Artist and her Model”

**Elina Brotherus**, Photographer, Finland/France

The workshop will be held in English.

Wednesday, October 22, 2014, 7 pm

**Lecture** “Collecting and Exhibiting at the Finnish Museum of Photography in Helsinki”

**Elina Heikka**, Director, Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki

The lecture will be held in English.

### Venue

Fotografie Forum Frankfurt

Braubachstraße 30–32, 60311 Frankfurt am Main

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[www.fffrankfurt.org](http://www.fffrankfurt.org)

Opening hours during the exhibition:

Tuesday–Sunday: 11 am–6 pm, Wednesday: 11 am–8 pm, Monday closed.

Admission: 6 € (reduced: 3 €)

**For more information** about the exhibition and press images, please contact Andrea Horvay by telephone +49 (0) 69 29 17 26 or by email at [presse@fffrankfurt.org](mailto:presse@fffrankfurt.org).



**ELINA BROTHERUS** (b. 1972 Helsinki, Finland) works in photography and film. Her early work dealt with subjective experiences; the presence and absence of love. Since the late 1990s she has concentrated on the relationship between the human figure and landscapes, and on the gaze of an artist on his/her model. "Annonciation" retraces Elina Brotherus' work back to photographs stemming from her own personal experience and her willingness to stage a subject still taboo: infertility. During unsuccessful attempts at getting pregnant, while she was staying in New York, Elina Brotherus completed the film "Wrong Face" on 16 mm. Unlike her photographs which state the grim reality of the impossibility of having a child in the form of a diary, the film reveals another face; a resolutely free and creative woman practicing her art. These latest works exemplify Elina Brotherus' wish to continue questioning the issue of the self and the intimate. Her photographs have been widely published in catalogues and magazines; two of her monographs "Elina Brotherus, The Artist and Her Model" (Le Caillou Bleu, 2012) and "Elina Brotherus, The New Painting" (Next Level/Thames and Hudson, 2005) have received international acclaim. Undoubtedly one of the most well-known Finnish artists working today, Brotherus has been exhibited in numerous group and solo shows and her works are owned by many museums throughout the world.

She received her Master of Arts in Photography from the University of Art and Design Helsinki (UIAH) in 2000 and also has a Master of Science in Analytical Chemistry from the University of Helsinki. Elina Brotherus lives and works in Finland and in France.

**ULLA JOKISALO** (b. 1955 Kannus, Finland) creates unique mixed media works made with illustration, photographs, objects, thread, pins and ribbon. She uses references to literature, historical photographs, fairy tales, the theme of the looking glass, nature and mythologies to create narratives of beauty and evil, pain and desires. The introspective alter ego often appears as an innocent child set within life's stage, critically or dream-filled confronting the circumstance. Jokisalo graduated from the University of Arts and Design in Helsinki in 1983. Her works have been presented since the 1980s in numerous solo exhibitions and group exhibitions throughout Europe, Russia, the USA and Japan. In 2011 she had a major solo exhibition titled "Intentions – Under the Guise of Play" at the Finnish Museum of Photography. Her works are included in such collections as Kiasma the Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki and the Hasselblad Foundation in Gothenburg as well as in many private collections in Europe and Asia. Her works have been published in several books and she has two monographs with Musta Taide publishers. In 2002–2004 Jokisalo was a professor at the University of Art and Design and in 2004–2009 she had a State Artist Professorship. In 2011 Jokisalo received the Pro Finland award for lifetime achievements.

**HARRI PÄLVIRANTA** (b. 1971 Tampere, Finland) is a photographic artist and a researcher. He holds a Doctor of Art degree in photography from the Aalto University, School of Art, Design and Architecture, Helsinki, Finland. His works have been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the USA, South Korea, and throughout Europe including MAC International, the MAC, Belfast, Northern Ireland (group) and in Tampere Art Museum TR1, Finland (solo), both in 2014.

Theoretically much of Pälviranta's work can be categorized as documentary. However his documentary style relates to concepts such as constructed verisimilitude and dramatized, narrated realities. His latest bodies of work are concerned with how violence affects society and how it is represented in the media.

**RAAKEL KUUKKA** (b. 1955 Anjala, Finland) graduated from the University of Art and Design, Helsinki in 1979 and in 1988. Her themes include traces of auto-biographical narratives, be it as an on-going diary of self-portraits or various studies of family members or family heritage. She combines poignancy and irony in much her work, be it photographs or video. As a teacher she influenced many students through her environmental self-portraits. Since 1982 she has had numerous exhibitions in Finland and abroad. She was awarded the State Prize in Photography in Finland in 2013 and the Kouvola Fine Arts prize in the same year. She lives and works in Helsinki.

**NELLI PALOMÄKI** (b. 1981 Forssa, Finland) creates black and white portraits that reveal the fragility of the moment shared with her subject. She focuses on children and youth, and the subjects of growth, memory and our problematic way of seeing ourselves. One of her crucial themes is our own mortality.

She has had solo shows at Les Rencontres d'Arles, the Ordrupgaard Art Museum in Copenhagen, The Finnish Museum of Photography in Helsinki and Kulturhuset in Stockholm and has been included in several international group shows including the Hasselblad Foundation in Gothenburg, Daegu Photo Biennale in South Korea, The National Museum of Photography in Copenhagen and Aperture Gallery in New York. Her work has been featured in several 110 Artists' Biographies 111 publications such as TIME magazine, the British Journal of Photography, Independent Magazine, New York Magazine, Zoom and Exit. Her book "Breathing the Same Air" was published 2013 by Hatje Cantz.

Palomäki is a graduate of the Aalto University School of Art, Design and Architecture in Helsinki. Her work is in the permanent collections of Moderna Museet in Stockholm, The Hague Museum of Photography, the Hasselblad Foundation in Gothenburg and the Helsinki Art Museum.

Palomäki is represented by Gallery Taik Persons (Berlin).

**IJU SUSIRAJA** (b. 1975 Turku, Finland) graduated from Turku Art Academy, Finland in 2012. She uses photography and video and also does installations. In 2011, the Finnish Museum of Photography exhibited her in their project room, creating the first public awareness of her work. Her unique self-portraiture evolves around dramatic domestic interludes involving femininity, the body, traditions, social stereotypes and love. She was included in the international group exhibition, "Alice in Wonderland", which was seen in Finland and Spain and marked a crucial step in her career. Her large-scale photographs and videos are included in several Finnish museum collections.

**SANTERI TUORI** (b. 1970 Espoo, Finland) studied at the Hochschule der Künste Berlin 1999 – 2000 and received his Master of Arts at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki. He works with photography and video often combining the two mediums in one presentation. His work consistently deals with concepts of time and change. In the slow movements of images, the viewer is invited to question how one is seeing and what one is seeing. Minute changes propel emotions of anticipation, joy and melancholy. Tuori has been included in numerous exhibitions since 1997 and his works can be found in major museum collections in Finland, Denmark and Sweden.

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### Iiu Susiraja

*Luuta/Broom, 2010*

From the series “*Hyvä käytös*”/“*Good Behavior*” (2008–2010)

© Iiu Susiraja



### Raakel Kuuka

*Triptyche/ Woman and Berets, 2004, detail*

© Raakel Kuuka/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2014

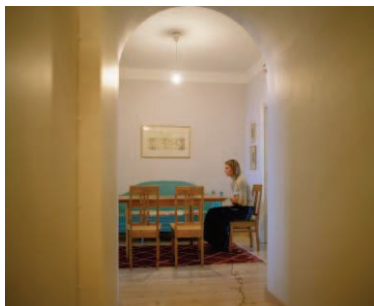


### Harri Pälviranta

*In a park, 22.35*

From the series „*Battered*“ (2006–2007)

© Harri Pälviranta



### Elina Brotherus

*Annonciation, 2009*

© Elina Brotherus/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2014



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## **Ulla Jokisalo**

*Noema (Me and My Mother This Year 2013)*, 2013  
© Ulla Jokisalo/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2014



## **Santeri Tuori**

*Karlotta*, 2003  
Duration 2 min 30 sec  
Video Still\_09  
© Santeri Tuori/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2014



## **Nelli Palomäki**

*At Twenty-six #3*, 2008  
© Nelli Palomäki/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2014

**The offered photos may be published exclusively in connection with the exhibition “Potretti. Contemporary Finnish Photography”, Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (October 4–November 30, 2014).**

### **Press material**

For press images and more information about the exhibition, please contact Andrea Horvay by telephone +49 (0) 69 29 17 26 or by email at [presse@fffrankfurt.org](mailto:presse@fffrankfurt.org).