

LACRIMAL LAKE HOUSE

EETU SIHVONEN

AUGUST 30 - NOVEMBER 2, 2024

GAA COLOGNE

Gaa is pleased to present *Lacrimal Lake House*, Eetu Sihvonen's first solo exhibition with the gallery. *Lacrimal Lake House* is an exploration into themes and motifs that are recognizable from Eetu Sihvonen's previous work. Their work, as a whole, is an exercise in world-building, or perhaps more pertinently, exploration. As such, it opens a vast landscape, a topography if you will, of somewhere that is at once familiar and estranging. Certain topoi, such as the egg and the burnt ornamental furniture, are recurrent in Sihvonen's work, yet the world that opens up is of a distant nature, as if covered by a soft veil that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to locate yourself in it, hence the estrangement.

This estranging quality can be connected to melancholy, a state in which the subject continues living in surroundings that are at once familiar but somehow altered, as if in ruins. Melancholy and ruination permeate the exhibition's works, from the pale bluish purple/violet of the resin works to black char of the carved wood. Accordingly, this is the situation the viewer then finds themselves in, exploring an emotional landscape imbued with melancholy and pebbled with ruins.

However, there is also a sense of regeneration, present most germanely in the figure of the egg as well as the "salient dew drops", tears, which ties into the name of the exhibition. In human anatomy, the lacrimal lake is where tears gather, and it is located in-between the eye and the eyelid. Both the egg and the lacrimal lake thus refer to resting, gestating, gathering strength, a state before hatching. Clarice Lispector writes: "The egg is a suspended thing. It has never landed. When it lands, it is not what has landed." In a similar fashion, a tear is a suspended thing.

According to Gilles Deleuze the artwork presents to the viewer sensation which is experienced only by entering the artwork, and it is then felt in the body produced by the artwork. In this sense, the exhibition can be seen as a sort of a role-playing game wherein the viewer traverses the emotional landscape as a wanderer on a journey upon an unknown path, encountering different objects and characters.

One of these objects in the exhibition is a renginkaappi, a farmhand's cabinet, which underscores the transient nature of this journey. Historically this cabinet was intended to hold all of the farmhand's personal belongings for they knew not when they would be assigned to a new farm and would then have to uproot and locate to their new lodgings, carrying the cabinet on their back. A situation somewhat relatable to most, as explicated in the title of the 2002 album of the Finnish psychedelic folk artist Kuusumun Profeetta: *Kukin kaappiaan selässään kantaa*, directly translated as *Each Carries a Cabinet on Their Back*.

- Jaakko Rintal