

Teemu Mäenpää

October 31–November 23, 2025

**Teemu Mäenpää's** expressive paintings brim with raw energy, vibrant colour, and playful openness. His art grows from the very gesture of painting itself: fluttering palm fronds and elongated petals emerge from the natural arc of his hand. He combines media intuitively – from oils to spray paints – creating works that pulse with immediacy. Mäenpää's boldly physical, uninhibited approach to painting is rooted in his background in street art, and his practice embodies an attitude that defies the gravitas of high art.

*Paradise Lost* unveils Mäenpää's latest works – paintings that dance between abstraction and representation, alive with a rich vocabulary of metaphorical plants and animals. The exhibition's title evokes a longing for nature and a yearning for a lost Eden. Yet in Mäenpää's art, plants primarily serve as mirrors of human nature, metaphors for care, connection, society, life, and growth. Each painting, in its own way, is also a vicarious self-portrait.

For Mäenpää, painting plants is also a form of escapism. His canvases conjure comic strip-like adventures, exotic landscapes, and mythical visions of paradise. A recurring motif from his earlier work also makes a reappearance: the humble houseplant. Perched on windowsills, these vegetal figures gaze outward, existing under human care and separated by glass from the world beyond. Mäenpää's paintings seem to ask: on which side of the window is paradise truly found – and on which side does our real nature belong?

*Teemu Mäenpää (b. 1977) is a Tampere-based artist who graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki in 2008. He has exhibited widely in Finland and abroad, at venues including Galleria Halmetoja, Make Your Mark Gallery, ARTag Gallery, and the XXIX Mänttä Art Festival. His works are held in the collections of the Tampere and Turku Art Museums, the Nelimarkka-Foundation, the Saastamoinen Foundation, EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, and the Seppo Fränti Collection deposited at the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma. Mäenpää has also completed several public commissions.*

*Paradise Lost marks his second solo exhibition at Helsinki Contemporary.*

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