

Camilla Vuorenmaa

February 6–March 1, 2026

Camilla Vuorenmaa's third solo exhibition at Helsinki Contemporary titled *Amuletti* (*amulet* in Finnish) explores the relationship between humans and nature, shared rituals, and the symbolic power of amulets. Working across wood carving and painting, Vuorenmaa creates colourful, richly layered works, some of which extend into the gallery space as immersive installations. This exhibition marks the first occasion on which her wood sculptures are presented publicly.

The artist's new body of work draws inspiration from Vuorenmaa's recent stay in Kobe, Japan. During an artist residency, she engaged closely with Shintoism and the tradition of *omamori* amulets – objects believed to offer protection and bring good fortune. Shintoism embraces a worldview in which deities inhabit natural elements such as trees, rocks, and mountains. Affinities can be identified between Japanese beliefs and ancient Finnish folklore, which likewise regarded nature as sacred. Vuorenmaa's recent works reflect on whether this sense of sacredness still resonates today, while acknowledging that humanity's relationship with nature has long been marked by contradiction and subjugation.

While informed by Japanese tradition, Vuorenmaa's works also address broader questions of coexistence, community, and the pursuit of a meaningful life. She is particularly interested in how an object can acquire the status of an amulet, and how repeated gestures can evolve into private or collective rituals. Human figures play a central role in her practice, which is characterised by a compelling narrative and psychological dimension. In her new works, however, landscapes assume a more prominent presence alongside human figures. Her paintings recall Romantic imagery, where humans are embedded within the landscape and natural phenomena become symbolic reflections of human nature.

Like amulets, works of art signify more than their mere physical form: they are vessels of emotion, carriers of meaning, and sites of heightened presence. In Vuorenmaa's practice, carving and painting alternate in a reciprocal process, each informing the other. The use of wood and rough, three-dimensional surfaces lends the works an artefactual quality, forging an inseparable connection between the material and subject matter.

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