

In the Sky Unlike a Bird

Janne Lehtinen | Dominik Lejman | Jyrki Parantainen | Mikko Rikala | Santeri Tuori

Exhibition: 14 September – 12 November 2022

Opening: Friday, 16 September 2022, 6 – 9 pm



Santeri Tuori,
Sky #17, 2011–2014

Persons Projects is proud to present a group exhibition *In the Sky Unlike a Bird* which is a collection of five artists' interpretations of how an individual weighs and ponders upon the different volumes of nothingness. It's an exhibition that creates a space where words float in the air and islands hang by a thread pinned to an infinity of blue on blue. Imagine an image of gravity dangling by its arms or a man in the moon who teases the tides by splashing the ocean one wave at a time. Howard Altmann says it best in his poem used in collaboration with Dominik Lejman's painting, "could it be the sky has changed its colors? The natural order is where I turn now to turn myself around". It's not about what we see but more so how we perceive the place we are in.

Dominik Lejman received the prestigious prize of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin in 2018 for redefining the medium of painting. By combining abstract, geometric painting with a contemporary video projection, Lejman enriches his painting with a narrative – fabric and text, 'fences' of doubt between revelation and rejection, elation and fall. The painting *The Talk*, 2020 was conceived as a part of the wider collaboration between Dominik Lejman and US-American poet Howard Altmann, with the concept of painting providing a 'stage' for the performative unique poems. By combining the poetry of Altmann through a video projection on Lejman's canvas the artist creates a state of being where the meaning of the words merges with their movement forming their own silent mantra.

Janne Lehtinen with his on-going series *Sacred Bird* uses the sky as an inspiration in his poetic search to find different ways to fly. Everything from the myths surrounding Icarus to the flying machines imagined by Leonardo da Vinci are applied in his pursuit to defy gravity. These autobiographical explorations are acted out in a humorous manner and are a beautiful homage to his well-known glider pilot father and the Finnish landscape.

We are accustomed to seeing the sky from the position of looking up from either the ground or floating on the water. The *Sky* series by Santeri Tuori is his reconstruction of rendering the sky as a valuable landscape on its own. The works are a combination of layering numerous photographs taken over various seasons for many years. Tuori's process in creating a final image is to enhance some parts of the combined image while erasing others to heighten the resulting contrasts. By layering both black and white and color photographs together, Tuori creates his own imagined mindscapes that challenge the borders between painting and photography.

Jyrki Parantainen states, "the line where land, water, and sky meet, is where our perspective ends, it is as far as the eye can hope to see. Beyond it lies a space where the imagination reigns. The horizon is not just a visual convergence of the three elements but a conceptual interface, the beginning of an ever expanding continuum of dreams and promises." In Parantainen's works the sky and its vastness represent the universe where the unknown has no beginning or end – it's not a place but a source for imagination and beyond.

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Mikko Rikala's artworks deal with spatiality and temporality as it relates to a philosophical and scientific understanding of nature. The sky can feel vast and empty, but an integral part of Rikala's artistic process is a slowed observation of and an appreciation of nature's cycles rather than treating them as mundane. His piece *Lunar Effect* (2012) focuses on the passage of time, but specifically in relation to the full moon. The lunar effect does not exist, scientifically speaking, but it is still largely reported as causing various behavioral changes in all living beings on Earth, including humans. Rikala doesn't treat this as mundane, and thus, his image shows something scientifically proven as well: How the full moon moves the ocean waters due to gravitational forces. As the ocean moves with the moon, so does the water in us.