

## **RIITTA PÄIVÄLÄINEN / Statement**

Riitta Päiväläinen is known for her temporary site-specific installations in nature, consisting of second-hand clothing and flea market fabrics. Her main interest has been “the unwritten history” – the history that you cannot find in library books, official files or archives, but can be felt in the rip of a coat or in the arm worn thin on an armchair.

“For me, a piece of clothing represents, above all, its former wearer. It tells you that somebody has been present. However, the person who wore it is now gone. The faded colors and tears in the fabric show the signs of the time passed. By freezing the garment or letting the wind fill it with air, I am able to create a sculptural space, which reminds me of its former user. This “Imaginary Meeting” represents, for me, the subtle distinction between absence and presence.”

In her series, “River Notes”, Päiväläinen continues to work with the same themes, but she also looks further into our subconscious. Landscape has always had an essential role in Päiväläinen’s work. An isolated landscape, in which she makes the installation, becomes a starting point – a specific feeling, memory, shape, structure, color or element of the surrounding nature functions as inspiration as well as a temporary stage.

“Each of her installations, with “settings” (the landscapes), “actors” (clothing), and “atmospheres” (light), is carefully prepared. However, in working in natural elements, Päiväläinen is also open to the accidental, the unforeseen, and the surprise. By using photographs instead of the installation as the final work of art, Päiväläinen is able to choose the exact frame and moment she is looking for and in so doing, maintains control over the decision as to what she includes and what she leaves out.” - Andrea Holzherr, publicist and curator Magnum Photos, Paris

In “River Notes”, Päiväläinen explores the combination of ribbons and water reflections. Ribbons are cut and sewn together from fabrics and rolled up into one large tight roll to ease the work; making the structures reminiscent of bandages wrapped around limbs in the forest. The reflection in the water changes continuously; it can disappear in a blink of an eye, when the wind starts to blow.

“Wading in the rivers, streams, and flooded areas gives me a totally new perspective of seeing. I am in the world of beavers, fishes, and other water animals. I observe the nature from an angle and perspective that most of the people never do.”

In “River Notes”, the water represents a mirage to our dreams, memories and our subconscious. Combined with the ribbons, the result is a riddle that lures the viewer further into the image.