

Opening: 16 February 2018, 6 – 9 pm
Exhibition: 17 February – 21 April 2018

Gallery Taik Persons is highly pleased to present Riitta Päiväläinen with her solo exhibition *River Notes*. Over the past two decades, Päiväläinen's unique works have become internationally renowned through their idiosyncratic language and style based upon her deep sense for story-telling. Essentially, the visual imagery of Päiväläinen's compositions can be boiled down to two elements: nature, and textiles. Combining nature and a poetic use of textiles, she creates a stage on which to reenact memories of their passing. The artist's strongly process-oriented method of weaving together natural landscapes and manmade fabrics reflects an approach both literal and narrative. In the deserted atmospheric vistas she creates, there are lodged intimate stories, told in a language that feels oddly foreign and familiar at once. They evoke a complex range of resonances within the beholder, subtly changing between comfort and protection, and unease and alienation.

For the exhibited works, water sanctuaries surrounded by forests have been intertwined with long, broad ribbons previously cut and sewn together by the artist. In these temporary installations, special emphasis lies on site-specificity. Each location was chosen carefully by Päiväläinen, who traveled through Finland's woodlands seeking to capture the essence of different places, their characteristic dispositions, and particular moods. Drawing into the given landscape by means of ribbon bands, she enters into a dialogue with the place, aiming to unfurl and expand, and ultimately reveal the inherent natural qualities residing in it.

Päiväläinen's landscapes animate and make present the fabrics as carriers of human traces; the fabrics in turn achieve to unveil and enhance the landscapes in their essential condition. The intricate, labyrinthine ribbon formations reminiscent of cobwebs and nests appear as if they had grown out of their environment naturally, they seem organically interwoven with it, sometimes even camouflaged. In these works, exterior and interior landscapes are bound together; the title *River Notes* thus conceivable as diary-like notations taken while traveling in nature: "Landscape is not only a topographical, objective phenomenon. For me, it is personal and subjective. Working with a landscape means going into it: experiencing and sensing the place, finally being one, equal part of it. By bringing the landscape and ribbons together, I create a dialogue—an interaction. My aim is to suggest and bring forth potential stories, mental images and associations." (Päiväläinen)

The installations however provide only one part of Päiväläinen's creative process: their arrangements serve as preconceived settings for the photographs then taken to physically frame specific moments and atmospheres in time and space. The works' titles, often ambiguous, give hints at their underlying themes and meanings, inviting the beholder to access the depicted scenes and open up possible interpretations.

The bipartite work process combining installation and photography reflects double layers of capturing and narrating reality. Indeed, the very theme of reflection—including aspects of echoing and mirroring, illusion and mirage; further, of presence and absence, and the transience and transformation of images—questions the truth of what we see, or believe to see, and the ways in which we do so, whether consciously or subconsciously. In this context, the element of water, and particularly the form reflected on its surface, holds special significance in Päiväläinen's *River Notes*. As mirrored images, natural landscape and ribbon mold into a visual unity, seemingly made of the same substance, and yet always at risk of dissolving and vanishing with the slightest ripple of water. The artist's act, then, of framing the scene through a photograph, further seals together different perspectives of the landscape, both objective and subjective. The resulting picture thus not merely presents a documentation of the temporary site-specific installation, it is moreover a creative translation thereof: "What is real? When wind blows, the view changes continuously. Reflection can disappear in a blink of an eye." (Päiväläinen)

Shao-Lan Hertel

Riitta Päiväläinen was born in Maaninka, Finland, in 1969. She lives and works in Helsinki. Her work was presented in several solo and group exhibitions, among others at Yumiko Chiba Associates (Tokyo, 2015) and Andersson Sandström Gallery (Umeå and Stockholm, 2014). In 2017 she was partaking in the traveling exhibition of the Backlight Festival.