



Heidi Elisabeth Hänninen: Picnic for the Sad

Galleria Huuto, Uudenmaankatu 35

30 December 2015 – 17 January 2016

Picnic for the Sad at Galleria Huuto will be the final exhibition on sculptor Heidi Elisabeth Hänninen's Southern and Central Finland tour. The exhibition has previously visited Gallery Rajatila in Tampere (November 2014), Gallery Becker in Jyväskylä (February 2015) and the Raasepori Photography Center in Karjaa (July 2015). The first time something slightly related to this exhibition took place was in 2009 when Hänninen had her *Mortus non multus* exhibition (Latin for "Living Dead") in Petrozavodsk, Russia, displaying videos and an online performance.

Hänninen wants to explore the themes she has been investigating thoroughly and devotedly and she has been working on this combination of works since 2008. It originates from Russia, from a Murmansk fell cemetery which has been reproduced in the form of the exhibition and its installations. The artist combines photography, video and other light materials with heavy concrete.

The exhibition has taken many forms during the tour. The artist has spent time in *The Death Office* to discuss death and grief as well as Russia and art in general with the visitors. *Death and art*-workshops have given the participants an opportunity to reflect on their views of death through works of art and the processes of creating art. The guests in the Death seminars have included local "death specialists", including priests, a grief researcher, a poem reciter, a nurse who specializes in palliative care, undertakers and shamans. The guests at Galleria Huuto's open seminar on 12 January will be researchers who have explored death as part of their work, media anthropologist Johanna Sumiala and the Ritual Museum's researcher and anthropologist Maija Butters, linguist Janne Saarikivi as well as artist Teemu Mäki who has explored death in his art.

Through the exhibition tour the artist, together with all the visitors, has told a complex story about death which has always taken a new and different form in each city and gallery. According to Hänninen, the social events included in the exhibitions have taken shape surprisingly spontaneously – when death is being discussed and reflected on, the right people seem to show up almost automatically. Hänninen will also hold workshops at Galleria Huuto and she will receive visitors on weekends during the gallery's opening hours.

During the tour, the exhibition has accumulated many new levels that can be seen both as the artist's social, esthetic and materialistic attempts to reach out to the afterlife and as an artistic exploration of the final journey. *Picnic for the Sad* is a place where you are allowed to feel sad but it is also a place where you can rejoice over change and new beginnings. *Picnic for the Sad* challenges one to face time and the meanings or symbols that someone else has given to the ending of life. Is it even possible for us to understand how someone else grieves or feels about death?

For more information on the exhibition events, visit the artist's website:

<https://heidielisabethhanninen.wordpress.com/post/>

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