

Camões Institute Lisbon

9 Voices 9 Places - FINLAND

16 April to 09 May 2008

Private View: 15 April 2008

Artist:

Medium:

Adel Abidin

Video, mixed-media installation

Panagiotis Balomenos

drawing, live-performance, sculpture

Päivi Häkkinen

sculpture installation

Minna L. Henriksson

mixed-media (object, painting, text), installation

Petri Huurinainen

sound and mixed-media installation

Kati Immonen

painting, art-book, installation

Jukka Korkeila

painting, site-specific intervention

Harri Palviranta

photography

Roi Vaara

video-installation, live-performance

Curator: Sílvio Salgado

The exhibition *nine Voices nine Places – Finland* presents nine contemporary artists and an impressive body of works from Finland to the Portuguese public. The exhibition runs from 16 April to 9 May 2008 at the Camões Institute in Lisbon.

Why an exhibition of art from Finland in Portugal?

Finland and Portugal could not be more far apart because of their geographical position in Europe. Due to that, very little contact has been established between the two nations. It is time for this scenario to change. Finland has exported to the world Sibelius' music, Aalto's architecture, and Nokia's mobile phones. However, when it comes to the visual arts, very little has happened to allow the new generation of artists an exposure outside Finland. As for the artists chosen for the exhibition "nine Voices nine Places - Finland", all of them have already offered a lot to the international art scene. Now, the Portuguese public has the opportunity to be acquainted with their art.

Voices from Finland and the World

The exhibition does not aim to make a survey of Finnish art from a historical point of view, but to translate to the public what has been more pressing within Finnish contemporary art at present. The idea is to present nine artists who each have their own distinct place from which they engage in their art explorations. Obviously, each of the artists has a strong connection to Finland: whether as a place where they have grown up, studied or worked, it is a location which has strongly influenced their set of experiences and their work. The nine 'voices' of the artists meet in the exhibition creating something more than that of their sum. The artists' position becomes universal, their location global.

Insiders and Outsiders of Art – and of a Nation

All nine artists represent what is the most up-lifting in today's contemporary art. At the same time, the preference has not only been given to the artists whose position easily rests within the Finnish

mainstream contemporary culture. The artists and their works represent different moments in Finnish contemporary art, but share a critical view, to place, to identity, to history. An outsider is one who stays for a period of time within a particular culture – to which he or she moved, or was born into – and during which time he or she takes action to understand and change aspects of this culture.

In the past few decades, a lot has changed in the Finnish culture scene. Finnish artists have been able to break through from a peripheral position to the centre – or rather, become important subjects in the web of inter-cultural exchange. Such self-assertive and bold artists as Roi Vaara and Jukka Korkeila have had an important role in paving the way for the new generation. The choice of artists in the “nine Voices nine Places - Finland“ also reflects a new Finland, more open to the outside world.

The Artists:

Adel Abidin was born in Baghdad. He lives and works in Helsinki since 2000. Abidin earned his Bachelor's degree in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts of Baghdad. In 2003, he started his Master degree of Fine Arts in Helsinki. In his art practice, he focuses on issues such as cultural alienation and marginalization. Sarcasm, humour and irony are central to his language. Abidin's artworks have been exhibited in several venues and art festivals in Finland and abroad. With his fictive travel agency *Abidin Travels* he represented Finland at the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007.

Panagiotis Balomenos was born in Greece. He lives and works in Helsinki and Athens. Balomenos' artworks draw on a wide range of mediums, such as drawing, sculpture, object making, installation, performance, and creation of happenings. The cross-disciplinary nature of Balomenos' artworks subverts the everyday by bringing the language of fashion glamour into the arts arena. The human body plays an important role in Balomenos' artworks; and tailoring becomes for the artist a way to sculpt the human body. The museum, gallery, or any other art space attendant becomes part of the artist's work.

Päivi Häkkinen was born in Finland, and lives and works in Helsinki. Through her sculpture installations, the artist has been able to create new narratives that translate the artist's experiences in her imaginary world and her everyday life.

Minna L. Henriksson was born in Finland. She lives and works in Helsinki and Istanbul. Henriksson's work is conceptual and typically concerned with the social, the political, and the cultural that reflect her experience within her immediate environment.

Petri Huurinainen, born in Finland, is a London-based musician, sound artist, and improviser. He plays electronically processed classical guitar and various effects units. He is able to sonically expand his personal vocabulary, where music is literally constructed from the instruments by scratching and hitting, abusing and stretching their limits. Through sound art, he explores issues around memory, identity, space, and time in a variety of different contexts resulting in site-specific installations, videos, performances, soundtracks, and audio CDs.

Kati Immonen was born in Finland, and lives and works in Turku, Finland. Her main medium is water colour painting. Immonen's paintings reflect the artist's inwardness in her choice of imagery and medium.

Jukka Korkeila, born in Finland, lives and works in Helsinki and Berlin. His main medium is water colour and oil painting. Korkeila's paintings often depict images of intense sexual energy. The immediacy of Korkeila's brush marks translates the artist's desire to communicate in a more physical way with the public.

Harri Pälviranta was born in Finland. He currently lives and works in Helsinki. Pälviranta's main art medium is photography. His photographic imagery explores different histories within the cultural, political, and social constructs in society, whether in Finland or any other location outside his homeland.

Roi Vaara was born in Finland, and lives and works in Helsinki. Vaara began his art practice as a painter - only to discover that what he desired was to work with a medium that would bring him physically closer to the public. Since the mid 1980s, the artist has dedicated his oeuvre to live-performance as well as performance-based video which have brought him international recognition. Vaara won the most prestigious art price in Finland, the Ars Fennica, in 2006.

The Curator of the exhibition, the Portuguese artist **Sílvio Salgado** was born in Mozambique. He lives and works in Helsinki and Brussels. Salgado studied graphic design and communication at Antonio Arroyo School of Applied Arts in Lisbon; as well as sculpture and combined media (Chelsea College of Art & Design) and fine art sculpture (Central Saint Martins School of Art & Design) in London. He worked as printmaker and Head of Photography at the art studio Apart in Lisbon (1989-94). Salgado is the founder of the Vienna International Apartment art association and exhibition venue. Since 2001, he has performed as an independent curator.

The exhibition is generously supported by Finnish Fund for Art Exchange (FRAME) and the Vienna International Apartment Art Association. The Camões Institute kindly offered the space through the Ibero-American Institute of Finland in Madrid. The Institute and the Embassy of Finland in Lisbon have supported the organisation of the exhibition. Special thanks to Ms. Paula Nunes who set the curator in contact with the Ibero-American Institute.

For further information on the artists and the exhibition organisers, please contact the curator of the exhibition on silviosalgado@hotmail.com.