

Curator's foreword to the exhibition ALICE, NEEME AND JASS
Kunsthalle Helsinki
1.12.2018–13.1.2019

Alice Kask, Neeme Klm and Jass Kaselaan are three Estonian artists in their most productive years. The corporality of their works states a strong and forceful presence – for thought and for emotion equally. Their extreme simplicity counts for many things: for sound and silence, for movement and statics, for creative genius and for scrupulous handwork. They are quite different from one another; at least so different that the resulting whole is of consequence and feels almost inevitable.

Alice, Neeme and Jass are difficult to market. Vocally modest, almost self-effacing, they stand against any publicity. Nonetheless, or maybe because of it, they are good artists and are recognized as such. Big Jass, Trickster Neeme and Doubtful Alice would be their nicknames; for the comfort of readers...not for theirs. Their work does not need to be converted into whatsoever for it to become accessible. And they know it. Neeme is as much an architect as a sculptor. He takes a room and conquers it by subjecting the intention of its initial purpose, its ideology and its present institutional identity (occasionally its beauty as well) to another, more competitive one, which follows Neeme's own singular logic.

Jass sculpts big things, big universes. He simply can't sculpt small stuff. He keeps it rather well hidden but small is really his love. It is the beginning of all creation, something he works from until it grows big and invincible. There was no other Estonian sculptor who could fill Taidehalli's sculpture room with one single object. Except Jass.

Alice would rather sit still and immovable, denying the liability of her inherited talent. Yet there is always someone or something to pull her back into the game of painting. Once she is in it, Alice starts her endless and hard struggle of capturing the changing movements and moods of a human and his deeds. Her doubt is gone, her mind - albeit slow - is sharp and shrewd.

So, Jass enters the room and firmly poses his artwork where it has to be; Neeme comes and steals the space away, he opens the ceiling, breaks the walls or performs tricky magic to switch the viewer's intention to what it is not meant to be. Alice enters and walks around the object, sneaks along the twisted room and takes detailed notes. Exact and merciless in her precision, she takes all her time to write a two-dimensional chronicle about the multidimensional striving of boys who, stripped bare, have nothing left but acquiesce. If you walk into the hall with Alice's paintings, you might hear strange sounds crossing it. These are messages from Neeme to Jass, and then again from Jass to Neeme, who try to save their integrity when loudly praising Taidehalli's magnificent light.

Tamara Luuk