

PÄIVIKKI ALARÄIHÄ

May

3 – 26 May 2019

galerie anhava

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Päivikki Alaräihä has given her exhibition the title *May*. With a similarly fresh and straightforward, though ambiguous, connection that links the exhibition to its month in the calendar, the works place themselves in an active relationship with the exhibition venue and its surrounding urban space.

The artist's subtle and frugal visual idiom is precise and light; her paintings are made of dozens of thin layers of paint. Their simple compositions are based on rectangle motifs and a restrained world of colour. When the contrasts of the light fields of colour are made as small as possible, the boundary between the surfaces is blurred, wavering as if refusing to surrender to the viewer's gaze. Alaräihä is interested in how works of art are viewed when they contain truly little to be seen. Alongside their subtle and reduced form of expression, the works have an active relationship with the exhibition space and the other pieces on show, commenting in numerous ways on the properties of the space and the works there.

The four rooms of the gallery form four entities. As spaces, the rooms are different: the first one is large, the second one is small, the third is like a lobby, and the fourth is passed through. The works in each of the rooms relate in different ways to their setting. The entities refer to the other rooms through some individual works that may depict similar forms or combinations of colour. The rooms are thus juxtaposed in slightly the same way as the paintings.

On show in the entrance space of the gallery is a window faced with tape and with an opening cut into it to crop into view from the streetscape part of a white rendered wall on the opposite side of the street. The title of this piece, *231 x 135 cm*, refers to the dimensions of the wall area. The rectangular motif reoccurs in the other works of the exhibition. Alaräihä's three small wall paintings are smaller versions of her works that have previously been on show in the same space. The pieces are sunk into the wall and it is difficult to say where a work begins or ends as the boundary between it and the wall is blurred. In these works, the artist is fascinated by the idea of their history that is linked to the gallery space on the one hand, and of their boundlessness on the other hand.

The paintings on canvas in the largest room of the gallery repeat the shapes of the space in various ways. A painting next to the window is in juxtaposition with the black window frame and a long, thin form is suspended from the doorway. The largest pieces of the exhibition are in the smallest space of the gallery, close to each other and close to the viewer.

Along with a subtle spatial dialogue of many aspects, Alaräihä introduces to the exhibition an unexpected chronological factor through the logic of naming the works. The titles of the pieces change daily according to Finnish, Swedish, Sami and Greek Orthodox calendars chosen by the artist, in each gallery space and throughout the duration of the whole exhibition. Through this process of continuous change, the days of May become part of the exhibition as if they were appearing in the works, each in turn on each day of the exhibition.

Päivikki Alaräihä (born 1981 Yli-Ii) lives and works in Helsinki. She graduated as Master of Fine Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki in 2015. She has held solo exhibitions at, among other venues, Galleri Sinne in 2015, XL-Art Space in 2013 and the Wäinö Aaltonen Museum in 2010. In recent years, her works have been on show at the Kuopio Art Museum, the Serlachius Museum Gösta and the Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition of the Purnu Art Centre, among other locations, and they have been purchased for the collections of, the Saastamoinen Foundation, HAM Helsinki Art Museum, the Finnish Art Society, and the Finnish state, and others.

Hanna Huitu