

ANNE KOSKINEN

*Am anderen Ende der Leine*

3–27 November 2022

The mastery of versatile techniques in Anne Koskinen's works always merges seamlessly with their conceptual starting points. In her latest exhibition, Koskinen has returned to the origins of her artistic career: painting. Drawing on the history of painting and the German tradition of image studies, the works in *Am anderen Ende der Leine (At the Other End of the Leash)* brings the focus to bear on everyday life and the complex relationships between humans and animals.

The return to brushes and oil paint is a kind of homecoming, not only to the Germany of her student days – where Koskinen 'spent seven years learning how to apply oil paint to canvas' – but also to the childhood freedom to choose her subject matter. She has set out to paint her everyday environment, the views and imageries around her that make up her days. Since last spring, the everyday aesthetics of Anne Koskinen's life have been dominated by *Sefi*, a red pinscher she has raised exclusively in the German language.

*Sefi*, as well as the artist's cats, is seen in the paintings through a gentle, almost idealising gaze. On canvas, the control associated with the training of a dog or some other pet takes the form of a leash; it is not only an instrument of power but also a reminder of the distance between the two ends of the leash – the distance between animal and human. The leash becomes a maze, raises its head nervously and ends up eating its own tail. It tightens up or lies in a bog, strung out and powerless, having lost its grip.

Anne Koskinen approaches the canvas with the same intuitive directness she employs when carving stone: she draws motifs directly onto the ground with sanguine, occasionally completing a startlingly detailed painting in practically one sitting. In other works, she has allowed the first sketch painted on the canvas to develop on its own, adding forms by free association.

Koskinen's times at the academy in Freiburg are present not only in the form of the same brushes and oil paints from her student days but also in the tones of 'bureaucratic brown' and German influences, sprinkled into the flat Finnish landscape in the spirit of romanticism. The romantic aspect of the landscapes stands in contrast to the cool classicism of the New Objectivity with which the animals and their attributes – food bowl, bones, leash – are distanced. The exhibition as a whole can be seen as a series of images in story form, familiar from Koskinen's early work: a kind of pictorial script for a Nordic noir thriller about caring and the fear of loss, and the resulting desire for control.

Both as an image-maker and as a doctoral researcher, Anne Koskinen is interested in the emergence of meaning, the living process in which an image and its meaning are created. How small a gesture can still create meaning – 'what kind of a daub is enough'? In these works, Koskinen continues her investigation of the abbreviation of reality, the discovery of the essential. The titles reveal another of Koskinen's interests: German phraseology. The position of power investigated in the exhibition is also applied to the audience. Anne Koskinen, with her MA in Germanic philology, has named all her works in German.

– Aleksandra Oilinki

*Anne Koskinen (b. 1969) studied in Germany at the Karlsruhe Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Freiburg, and in Finland at the University of Art and Design and the University of Helsinki, where she is currently working on her doctoral thesis in Aesthetics. This autumn, works by Anne Koskinen are on show also at the Salo Art Museum as well as the Hämeenlinna Art Museum, and in recent years she has exhibited in both solo and group exhibitions, including the Axel Pairen gallery in Knokke, Belgium; Galerie Werner Klein in Cologne, and HAM and Kiasma in Helsinki. In addition to private collections, she has work in prestigious public collections both in Finland and internationally.*