

MATTI KUJASALO

80th Anniversary Exhibition

5 February – 8 March 2026

galerie anhava

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"A finished painting surprises me in much the same way a composer is surprised when they hear their composition performed for the first time." – Matti Kujasalo

Galerie Anhava is happy to present new paintings by **Matti Kujasalo** in celebration of the renowned artist's 80th anniversary. Kujasalo's previous solo exhibition, in March 2020, was open for only ten days before the gallery was forced to close due to the pandemic. The present exhibition showcases a diverse, inquisitive, sensitive and compelling body of recent work by the Finnish master of lyrical constructivism. Alongside black-and-white works, the paintings glow with the green, yellow, blue and red-yellow hues of spring.

Kujasalo held his first exhibition in 1969 and is today one of Finland's most internationally recognised artists. The creator of a rich and distinctive visual language drawing on geometric forms, Kujasalo continues to work actively both in Finland and internationally. In recent years his works have been shown in exhibitions at LACMA in Los Angeles, Kunstsilo in Kristiansand, and the Busan Museum of Art in South Korea.

Kujasalo's works build upon a premeditated configuration of vertical and horizontal lines on a square or circular canvas. The paintings are produced using a simple 'recipe' consisting of a few calculatory lines on a piece of paper. The works are made fully manually with nothing but a brush, a calculator, tape and a craft knife. Each layer of colour is first taped out and then painted in numerous thin coats, until finally all the tape is removed and the painting is complete. It is interesting to note how the this systematic and precise process is able to accommodate the uncertainty and unexpectedness of the final result. Order and chance are in constant dialogue in the works.

Alongside the sustained work on an individual piece runs a long continuum of practice extending through days, years and decades – each point, line and layer of colour bears witness to the time spent with the works. Deep within the process, slow artistic thinking takes place. In this day and age, the humanity of making things by hand, the simplicity of the 'recipe' and the slowness of the artist's manual method appear almost as radical acts. Working on the pieces and the time spent with are not unlike diary entries. Kujasalo records the completion date of each finished work on its reverse.

Over the years and decades, Kujasalo's visual language of lines, points and squares has become richer and softer. His most recent works are characterised by lyricism and the subtlety of the delineated forms. Viewed up close, the individual structures in the paintings appear to sit beside, on top of and underneath each other. Seen from a distance, the paint almost melts into a soft light and a shimmering, carpet-like surface. The pictorial space shifts from airy lightness to impenetrable density, with routes and layers guiding the eye and mind along paths of intersecting forms and ideas. In front of the works one encounters a deeply human question: how do we perceive a world that is at once orderly and wholly unpredictable?

Matti Kujasalo's (b. 1946) works have been widely shown in solo and group exhibitions in Finnish and European galleries and museums. In recent years his solo exhibitions have been presented at Galerie Friese in Berlin (2023), the Gallery of Central Bohemian Art GASK in Kutná Hora, Hungary (2017), and Galerie Denise René in Paris (2015). Through donations, Kujasalo's works are held in two major US-based art collections: LACMA in Los Angeles and The Phillips Collection in Washington DC. In addition, his works have been acquired by the collections of many museums and foundations, including Albertina, Vienna; Arithmeum, Bonn; EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Espoo; Forum Konkrete Kunst, Erfurt; GASK Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region, Kutná Hora; HAM Helsinki Art Museum, Helsinki; the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation Art Collection, Rovaniemi; Josef Albers Museum, Bottrop; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Pori Art Museum, Pori; Ritter Museum, Waldenbuch; the Saastamoinen Foundation Art Collection, Espoo; and the Sara Hildén Art Museum, Tampere.

Hanna Huitu