

# G A L E R I E F O R S B L O M

## **Veikko Hirvimäki: Dream and Reality**

Galerie Forsblom 5.2.-28.2.2021

In his new exhibition, Veikko Hirvimäki (b. 1941) transports us back to the landscapes and memories of his childhood, to a time when people lived in closer touch with nature than we do today. Hirvimäki is a passionate conservationist who laments how contemporary society has estranged itself from the natural world. Our bond with the bucolic past might feel remote and dream-like, but Hirvimäki calls upon us to cherish our nature-loving legacy, if only to gain insight into contemporary reality. With his latest works, he appears to ask the question: How did we get here?

Hirvimäki grew up in Petäjävesi, a rural municipality in central Finland, where his love of nature began. His sculptures express not only his passion for conservation but also his accompanying interest in folk tradition and shamanism. Despite their serious theme, his sculptures exude warmth and whimsical humor. He portrays animals busily engaged in a variety of pursuits, often endowed with anthropomorphic qualities, as if voicing a mute critique of human folly. His creatures are nevertheless endearing, each with its own unique inner world.

Hirvimäki's sculptures are intentionally rough-hewn. Their unfinished look is a nod to the beauty of wood, which he strives to keep as close as possible to its original form. He carves his sculptures with a deep respect for his material and its historical legacy, keeping the knots, bumps, and grainy textures visible, as if giving the wood a second life through sculpture.

Originally a painter, Hirvimäki achieved acclaim in the 1980s for his abstract stone monuments. He exchanged abstract content for animal figures around 2000. His work is represented in many of Finland's prestigious public

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collections, including the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma and the Saastamoinen Foundation Collection. The artist lives and works in Ballaigues, Switzerland with his sculptor wife Françoise Jaquet.