

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

Riiko Sakkinen: Turborealist Zoology

Galerie Forsblom, 5.2.–28.2.2021

This year Riiko Sakkinen (b. 1976) celebrates the 25th anniversary of the beginning of his artistic career. He held his first exhibition in February 1996 at the Jangva gallery. Sakkinen has kept a scrapbook copy of his first review published in the paper Helsingin Sanomat. The review includes a quote from the artist, in which he comments on his show with his inimitable brand of irony: “My exhibition is plastic. It is a dead toilet flower.” The critic Tiina Nyrhinen picks up from here: “Superficiality is [here] a virtue and eclecticism is a condition of survival. The artist’s list of the ‘good’ things in life says a great deal about him and the times we are living in.”

In 2021, 25 years later, Sakkinen’s acerbic brand of irony and parody are still very much intact. These days he calls himself a turborealist, meaning that he portrays the world exactly as it is – not things he supports or likes, but things he detests and rejects. His images typically have a subtext of parody and social satire.

To celebrate Sakkinen’s anniversary, our gallery is presenting a selection of works from his exhibition last year at the Finnish Museum of Natural History. Never seen before in the gallery, these animal-themed drawings depict famous food industry mascots and cartoon heroes. Sakkinen adds grotesque features to these normally jolly characters, the most famous example being his MoMA-owned portrait of the Nesquik bunny, whom he depicts drinking his own urine.

After graduating from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in 2002, Sakkinen moved to Spain, where he continues to live and work today. He has exhibited widely both in Finland and internationally, and his drawings are found in significant collections, including New York’s Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki Art Museum HAM, and the Gösta Serlachius Foundation collection.