

GALERIE FORSBLOM

Saimi Suikkanen: Let's not think about tomorrow

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Saimi Suikkanen's paintings capture freeze-frame moments from her day-to-day existence, forming a visual diary reflecting on themes such as intimacy, human touch and friendship – things disrupted by the pandemic. Two years of COVID-imposed social isolation have changed our relationship with things we previously regarded as normal. Being deprived of social contact has been challenging for Suikkanen, for whom isolation has triggered occasional anxiety. This sense of unease finds reflection in her recent paintings.

Her new paintings also express how she longs to get out, have fun, and resume an active social life. She captures the tingle of excitement one feels before going to a party in depictions of herself applying makeup or choosing an outfit or letting her hair down on the dance floor or during a night out on the town. Sometimes the artist's pining for her old life is so overwhelming that she feels virtually suffocated. Everyone needs occasional respite from the calamities overshadowing the contemporary world, from the global eco-crisis to the pandemic – we all need a momentary utopian escape from reality.

Suikkanen bases many of her paintings on self-taken photographs documenting an ordinary, everyday scene in her life. As she fills the canvas, the image takes on a new life, pushed in new directions by the colors, forms and brushstrokes. The process itself is important in shaping the final outcome as she refines the tonal spectrum, plays with degrees of sheen using different types of paint, and paces her brushstrokes to match the rhythm of the painting.

Saimi Suikkanen (b.1994) graduated in painting from the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences in 2017 and is currently completing her master's degree at the Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts Helsinki. She is based in Helsinki.