

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

Kerttu Saali: *Reaching*

Galerie Forsblom, 28.4.–28.5.2023

Kerttu Saali's (b. 1994) recent paintings draw inspiration from light and color. Her sensory-driven process is triggered by perceptions of such things as sunlight piercing through a dense forest or the surface of rippling water. The wooden frames of her recent paintings mark a step in a more sculptural direction for Saali. The patterned frames insistently take a more active role in her recent work, thus challenging established conventions related to frames and framing. While the frame is usually treated as a protecting or containing element, in Saali's art, it is as integral to the painting itself. The wooden elements expand the painting's content beyond the edges of the linen canvas, placing the artwork in active contact with the surrounding space.

The title of the exhibition suggests the idea of grappling to attain something beyond the reach of the human sensorium, or perhaps reaching for something that does not yet exist and cannot be described in words. The artist has revealed that she is drawn by the ineffability of painting. In being inherently non-verbal, there is an unconscious side to painting that has always fascinated her as a painter.

Saali works intuitively, never planning her works in advance. Her artistic thinking is best summed up by the idea that a painting is never just a representation of the existing world – beyond that, each canvas also bears an imprint of the image-making process, which in itself constitutes the content of the painting. The work comes into being as a dialogue between the artist and the unfolding traces upon the canvas – the material and the painting itself are thus enlisted as important co-creators in the process. The painting tells the artist which direction she should take, and after choosing one path, another closes. The painting thus becomes a living agent in its own creation process.

Kerttu Saali graduated from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in 2023. She has participated in many group exhibitions, including *Young Artists 2023* at Kunsthalle Helsinki. Her previous exhibition at Galerie Forsblom was in spring 2022. Her work is found in numerous private collections, as well as the public collections of Saastamoinen Foundation, the City of Tampere, and the Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU in Brussels. The artist is based in Helsinki.