

GALERIE FORSBLOM

Emma Helle: Walking Lake, Burning Heart

Galerie Forsblom, 24 November 2023–7 January 2024

Two kinds of metamorphosis take place in Emma Helle's latest sculptures: the human figures stand motionless, perhaps on the verge of turning into trees, while the landscape-like clouds and bushes have sprouted limbs, as if they were attempting to carry the space. The static figures stand watch like gentle sentinels, benevolently protecting and caring for everything around them. The physical contours of the dynamic figures meanwhile melt and fluidly coalesce with their surroundings. The clouds may drift and the landscape may change, but the movements of the mind follow the wanderer. The rippling lake is an emotional landscape with an irresistible pull.

Lush, thriving vegetation entwines itself around human figures in Helle's sculptures. The plants cling to the space and the figures, supporting them and themselves being supported. Humankind and nature coexist in perfect synergy, nurturing each other. The sculptures hark back to prehistoric times before humans upset the balance of nature. Helle's sculptures pose the question: Could a new balance be regained in the post-Anthropocene?

The luxuriant figures in the sculptures serve as reminders of the ongoing flow of life. Referencing art history, their voluptuous corporeality slides from masculine to feminine, while their free flow and abandonment of defined contours anchors them in the contemporary moment. Their entangled symbiosis foregrounds the diversity of human relationships. Is friendship ultimately so very different from a love relationship?

Emma Helle (b. 1979) graduated from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts and her work is found in private collections as well as the collections of HAM Helsinki Art Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, the State Art Deposit Collection, the Sara Hildén Art Museum, Saastamoinen Foundation, Wihuri Foundation and Pro Artibus. She has held numerous solo exhibitions at venues including Turku Art Museum, and she has participated in group exhibitions at the Boston Museum of Fine Art, Stockholm's National Museum, the Mänttä Festival, Kunsthalle Helsinki and EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art.

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