

GALERIE FORSBLOM

Tapani Kokko: Fortuna

Galerie Forsblom, February 23–March 17, 2024

Tapani Kokko's latest creations draw inspiration from Rococo art, which is characterized by features such as decorativeness, playfulness and spontaneity. Exaggerated ornateness is one of the guiding stylistic tenets of his new exhibition. His sculptures revel in decorative exuberance and a breathtaking abundance of detail, combining traditional wood carving with various fabrics, beads and glitter. Whereas light hues were favored in 18th-century art, Kokko's reliefs are considerably darker in palette. Nor indeed does he show restraint in his treatment of color, which is occasionally reminiscent of the opulence of Baroque art.

Kokko employs a layered approach in his new reliefs: first, he carves an image out of wood and then adds multiple layers of paint, after which he decorates the surface with dented patterns and dots added with a felt-tip pen, filling the picture plane with organic movement and dynamic tension. He then adds a final decoration with multi-colored beads, fabrics, and details in brass and bronze. Adding icing to the cake, the wall reliefs are displayed in rose-patterned decorative frames. The decorative richness is echoed by the subjects of the reliefs, which feature female figures accompanied by birds, frogs, fans, and skeletons. All these elements are presented within a symbolic framework and aesthetic frames that rough out and heighten Kokko's chosen stylistic strategy.

Tapani Kokko (b. 1969) is known for his striking wooden sculptures, typically depicting human figures and other themes related to the human condition. Kokko, who graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in 1999, is also a musician, actor and performance artist. Kokko's works are included e.g. in the collections of Sara Hildén Art Museum, Hämeenlinna Art Museum, Tampere Art Museum, Turku Art Museum and Helsinki City Art Museum. Kokko lives and works in Orimattila.