

GALERIE FORSBLOM

Kim Simonsson: Grower

Galerie Forsblom, April 26–June 2, 2024

Kim Simonsson's (b. 1974) latest exhibition returns to the golden age of ceramic art at the turn of the 19th century, when a radical transformation in the French ceramic industry saw pottery recognized as an autonomous art form. Ceramicists began celebrating the simplicity and sincerity of their medium following the tenets of the Art Nouveau and Art Deco movements sweeping Europe. The same visual language can also be seen in Simonsson's new works.

Arriving in Galerie Forsblom's main exhibition space is like stepping into a sculpture gallery of yesteryear. The colossal centerpiece is the imposing *Waking Dream* sculpture. Scale is a theme that has preoccupied Simonsson for some years now, and his latest pieces are striking in their vast variations in size. By playing with different scales, Simonsson poses the question: how do dimensions affect the essence of the sculpture? The larger-than-life-size adds special resonance to his giant sculptures of children's building blocks. Simonsson created the oversized blocks during the pandemic when he spent extended periods at home looking after his young twins, prompting him to wonder: who ultimately parents and raises us? Oversized dimensions similarly dialed up the impact of Simonsson's signature *Moss People* presented at France's 2022 Lille3000 Utopia Festival. The giant, 4.5-meter-tall moss figures were a striking spectacle lining the streets of the downtown. This summer, the same mossy giants will invade the center of Helsinki, taking over the courtyard of Amos Rex.

Kim Simonsson graduated with a major in ceramics from the University of Arts and Design in 2000. Today, he is an internationally noted artist found in foreign and Finnish museums, including the Victoria and Albert, the Museum of Contemporary Kiasma Art, and the EMMA Espoo Museum of Modern Art. Ten of his 4.5-meter moss figures were displayed prominently as a townscape installation at the Lille3000 Utopia Festival, and he also contributed an installation of 28 *Moss People* to the 16th Lyon Biennale in 2022.