

GALERIE FORSBLOM

Stig Baumgartner: *Pyramid and Superego*

Galerie Forsblom, March 28–May 4, 2025

The title of Stig Baumgartner's new exhibition, *Pyramid and Superego*, alludes to hierarchical structures. The vibrantly colorful geometrical structures in his paintings are like monuments placed upon pedestals, some of them proudly balanced, others wobbly and imperfect. The artist describes monuments as images of social order; in his paintings, they embody either stability or turmoil.

Baumgartner's paintings typically possess a human or corporeal presence. Their architectural composition can be interpreted as mirroring the structures of the human mind or the concept of being human. Baumgartner's art characteristically presents dialogues of opposites, combining expressive, calligraphic brushwork with precise, harmonious composition.

In the making of this exhibition, Baumgartner found himself reflecting on artistic expression and career trajectory as a kind of monument in its own right. Work by work, the artist builds an increasingly sophisticated and unique structure of expression. At the apex shines a liberated peak that is built upon earlier works, both artist's own and those of other artists, and also upon the traditions of evolving art discourses. Each painting is always a unique event that combines acquired knowledge with personal experience. Artistic expression is invariably built upon a foregoing legacy, which can be either a burden or a liberation. Leaning towards the latter interpretation, Baumgartner hopes that his paintings will retain their ambiguous character as autonomous artistic creations.

Stig Baumgartner (b.1969) works in the tradition of abstract painting, paying homage to its legacy while at the same time boldly renewing it. Alongside his artistic practice, he is also a long-time lecturer in drawing and perception at the Academy of Fine Arts, the University of the Arts Helsinki. He completed his doctoral degree in 2015. Baumgartner's paintings are held in many of Finland's most prestigious collections, including Saastamoinen Foundation and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma.