

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

Eemil Karila: They Become Trees

Galerie Forsblom, May 9–June 1, 2025

Eemil Karila's paintings are emotional spaces that breathe in the rhythm of nature. They depict natural landscapes on an experiential level, foregrounding nature as an active protagonist. Invoking intense experientiality, Karila's landscapes are wild, sensual, memory-saturated spaces inhabited solely by nature, basking in sunlight and dancing in the breeze, untouched by human hands. Combining expressive brushwork and abstraction, Karila revisits the landscapes of his ancestors, returning to a time when ecology and historic identity were inseparably intertwined.

The artist compares his practice to gardening; painting an unprimed linen canvas is like watering the soil, the canvas darkening like wet earth as it absorbs the pigment, which bleeds and trickles in rivulets like nature's organic processes. Karila paints both with his brush and fingers, reveling in the childlike joy of unbridled expressivity. His brushstrokes create three-dimensional tapestries of undulating grass, meadows of flowers, expanses of botanical pigment, and rippling forms that evoke the soft breath of the wind.

Karila draws inspiration from the poetry of Eeva Kilpi, particularly the poetic anthology *Animalia*, which resonates the mystery, majesty and power of nature. Kilpi's poems speak of interspecies entanglement, empathy, and the ethics of care, invoking a world in which nature is allowed to exist on its own terms.

The moral and philosophical core of Karila's painted oeuvre is a heightened ecological consciousness that stems from real, lived experiences of nature: the warmth of a summer meadow, the fragrance of moss, and the melancholy sight of Finland's vanishing peatlands. Art becomes a conduit for harkening to primordial energies far older and wilder than ourselves. There is a quiet radicalism to Karila's artistic philosophy – his art unleashes the unspoken power of nature's primeval forces. His paintings invite us to relinquish hedonism and embrace *eudaimonia*: a holistic happiness built upon the greater good.

Eemil Karila (b. 1978) studied art in Tallinn and Helsinki and spent many years in Berlin before recently returning to his native Rovaniemi. He has exhibited all over the world, from Germany, Sweden, Norway, Estonia and Russia to Brazil and Venezuela. His works are held in numerous respected collections in Finland and abroad.