

Press release

Marja Kanervo

# NO NAME

PORI ART MUSEUM | HALL 3 September – 23 November 2003

Marja Kanervo (born 1958) is one of the pioneers of Finnish installation art. She is known of her installations dealing with time and memory. Kanervo, originally trained as a painter, gave up already in the beginning of her career the surface and the technique of painting and moved to marking buildings and exhibition spaces by scraping off the visible and unveiling the invisible.

In her interviews Kanervo has drawn a parallel between scraping and painting. Like the painters of abstract art, who remove the illusion of space, thus approaching the surface of painting, Kanervo works on the painted surface, but by destroying it: excavating hidden surfaces and layers. The work is of extreme reduction, a logical continuation of modernistic thinking, a continuation in which "the painting" is destroyed in the process of drilling through architecture. Kanervo's works reveal the building's memory and the different layers of time become simultaneously present.

In the last few years Kanervo has made several site-specific works in abandoned buildings or buildings under a threat of demolition. By commenting architecture and by moulding the structures of buildings loaded with history Kanervo takes out traces of past life and opens up new perspectives. The works radiate a feeling of incompleteness. They reveal a hidden past contained in the walls but, at the same time, they themselves become a part of the wall's history as they in their turn become covered with new layers of paint and mortar. This happens at Pori Art Museum, too: after the exhibition the work will permanently become a (hidden) part of museum's exhibition history.

The feeling of danger familiar from Kanervo's earlier work – of buildings that seem to be about to collapse and especially the laser beams and whip like lashes on the walls in her exhibition in Gallery Forum Box in 2002 – have transformed in her latest works into feelings of aggression. The installation NEED, presented in this year's Venice Biennale in a former chapel is a relative to NO NAME that will be presented in Pori. The artist works on the built surface violently, but at the same time the work is about caring about humans and the environment.

Art is always in interaction with its environment. Kanervo, who has worked before by gently scraping or grinding, has now at the Pori Art Museum, in a public space for presentation of art, drilled a permanent wall and transformed aggressively the public space's integrity. In many of her works Kanervo's approach to the subject settles between sculpture and architecture: monumental NO NAME sculpts the space. The exhibition leads thoughts into spaces, into a void, and to a world without a name. She also confronts the need of naming with the anonymity of the process. The artist discusses the power of signs: the anonymous subject may possess a voice, but not the power or capability to name a public or even his or her private domain. Neither the author is present anymore. On view are the traces of the violent process, dust of the cutting and particles detached from their original context that usually is cleaned out of sight.

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For more information on the exhibition please contact curator Hannele Kolsio, tel +358 2 621 1083, fax +358 2 621 1091, email [hannele.kolsio@pori.fi](mailto:hannele.kolsio@pori.fi). A documentary publication of the exhibition will be published on week 38.