

EEVA KARHU

Persons
Projects

Eeva Karhu is an artist who uses the photographic process of layering one image upon another as her method for collecting the passage of time. Much in the same way as Impressionist painters made repeated studies of the same subject, she takes a photo everyday at the same point of her path home. She compiles her photographs from one month or one season, using layering or collaging techniques to create a unique image. The work reveals a startlingly wide range of changes in nature. Recording both the time of her own movements and the longer cycles of nature, her work intertwines a personal study of perception and fundamental links with space and time. Karhu continues this process throughout the year, creating her own visual calendar of time periods.



EN PLEIN AIR, 2021

“En Plein Air” translates to “outdoors”, which is the focus of Eeva Karhu’s series. She uses conceptual photography and layering techniques to compose complex images. Focused on how nature changes with the seasons, Karhu walks in the same circular path and takes hundreds of photos that show differences in light and color, but in the same location. Sometimes, she photographs using different color masks to enhance this. She “collects the memory of the time on the walk”, reflecting on her feelings and thoughts which affect the atmosphere around her. Karhu uses a collage technique to make her composite images and purposefully does not hide any of the layers, rather, selectively chooses the parts she thinks will enhance the final image. The way she “paints” with light and color gives a similar visual ap-

pearance to brush strokes. As one gets closer, it resembles less of a painting and more of a photograph, as, one can see all the minute photographic details. The final result of her unique process is a timeless vision of nature, pulled together by fragmented pieces that form one harmonious feeling. As she says, “En Plein Air is “compressing time in [one] place”.



Nordic Light, Purdy Hicks Gallery, 2021, London



En plein air, Spring 3, 2021, Archival pigment print, 120 x 180 cm

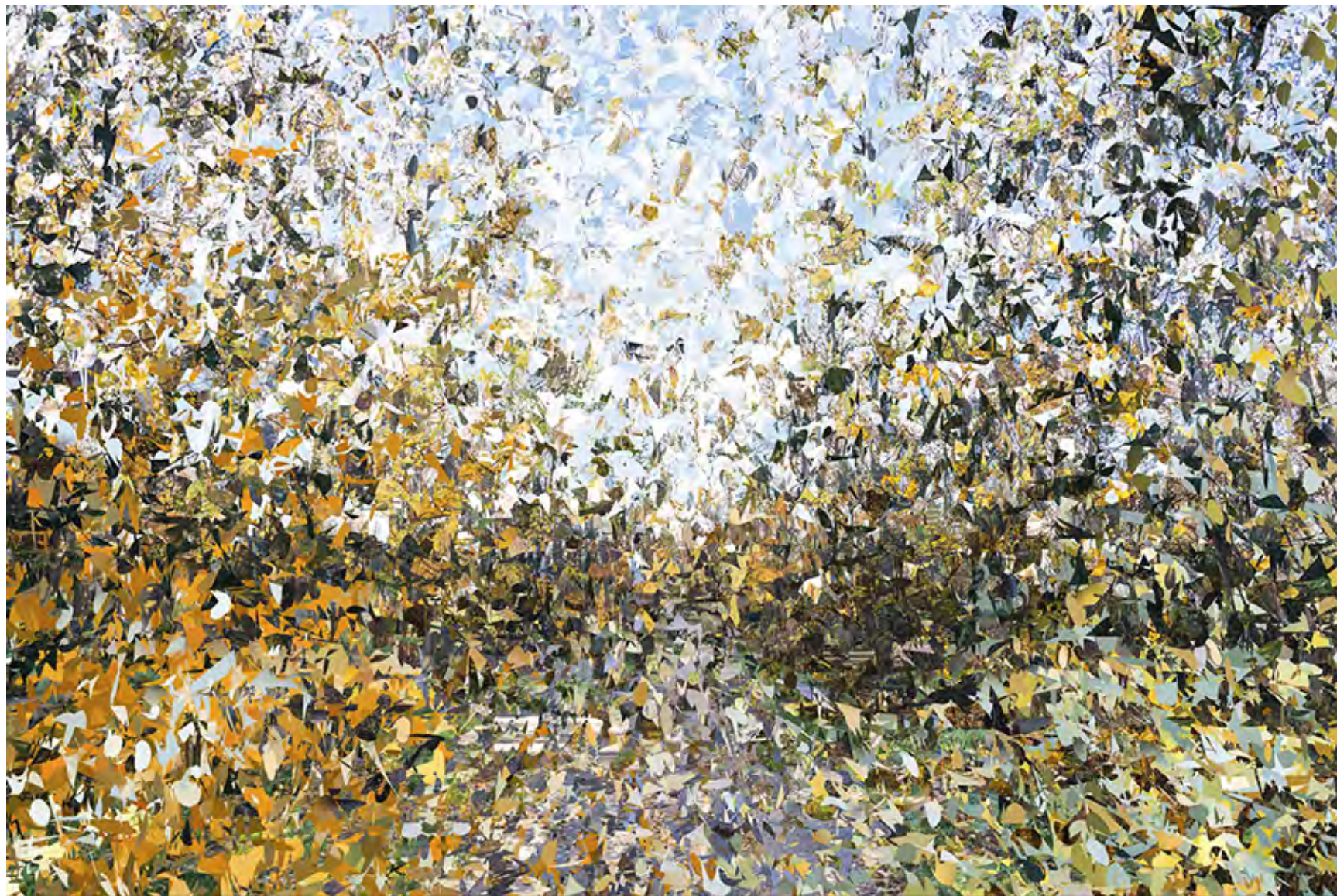


Nordic Light, Purdy Hicks Gallery, 2021, London



En plein air, Summer 2, 2021, Archival pigment print, 120 x 180 cm





En plein air, Autumn 1, 2021, Archival pigment print, 120 x 180 cm



En plein air, Winter 3, 2021, Archival pigment print, 120 x 180 cm

PATH (MOMENTS), 2019 - 2021

In her *Path* series, Karhu expands this composition by colouring the view to form what one season would look like as a single image. Karhu continues this process throughout the year, creating her own visual calendar of time periods. These images become far more abstract, yet still have the feeling and look of an impressionistic painting from another century - It's as if she is painting with light: her spring looks like Monet, her autumn contains the colours of Renoir and her tones are like those of Turner. The work reveals a startlingly wide range of changes in nature. Recording both the time of her own movements and the longer cycles of nature, her work intertwines a personal study of perception and its fundamental links with space and time.

Unlike other artists who utilize photographic layering, occasionally Karhu inserts herself within the act of taking the photo, so that we see her as a blur, almost ghostly, yet the color of her coat and hat establishes her presence within the image. Her photographs become an abstraction into another place, a passage that alters reality by blurring the borders between one moment and the next one.

Light has in fact always played a major role in her images. Her photographs encapsulate the varying degrees of Finland's seasonal light: sometimes soft and iridescent, but more often than not fleeting with a touch of gray and the hope for blue. The artist states: "I have tried to paint with the camera by using

light as paint." Much in the same way that Impressionist painters, especially Monet, made repeated studies of the same subject.



Path (moments) Summer 1, 2019, Archival pigment print, framed, 100 x 160 cm



New Perspectives Through Photography- 25 years of the Helsinki School, Taidehalli, 2021, Helsinki



Path (moments) Autumn 3, 2019, Pigment print, framed, 100 x 160 cm





Path (moments) Spring 4, 2021, Archival pigment print, framed, 100 x 160 cm



THS, Persons Projects, 2020, Berlin



Path (moments) Winter 1, 2019, Pigment print, framed, 100 x 160 cm

PATH (GLOW), 2015-2018

Karhu takes a photograph and heads for the horizon. Her works are full of the horizon, literally some 86 of them laid one on top of the other. Each individual work is the amalgam of 86 different photographs. After a while of looking at her works one starts seeing a single figure in the centre of the picture. It is coming to claim us rather like Omar Sharif in the scene where he appears ever so slowly out of the desert in David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*. Though there is an element of the same purity as in Hiroshi Sugimoto's *Seascapes*, Karhu is not pursuing the near perfect horizontal line of the sea or desert. Her feet are firmly on Finnish soil and the pictures trace her path to the horizon and back. If she lived in a desert or on the sea her method would only require two photographs,

one at the point of departure and other at the point she decreed the horizon, but the trees, houses, hillocks, bushes and other features of the landscape on her doorstep requires her to halt 86 times, and take another picture of another horizon.

Karhu's work comes out of her knowledge of her surroundings, of a path well-trodden. Yet she says she is constantly surprised by the results. She is following many paths. She walks in the Impressionists' footsteps as her pictures rely on the changing light like Monet's *Haystacks* or *Poplars*. She is piecing the world together like the Cubists. One image is not enough for her. She is presenting us with an accumulation of time. She loves the changing seasons as it

offers up young, blooming, fading and dying colours. As she takes her 86 shots per walk she cannot but help imagine the profusion of colour. Colour is an important tool for Karhu, but she uses it like an emotional backdrop. She has an advantage over those ancient designers of monastic walkways in her use of the full range of nature's colours, but she is still working to achieve the same thing: contemplation.



Path (glow) 7, 2015, Pigment print, framed, 100 x 100 cm





Path (glow) 3, 2015, Pigment print, DIASEC, 100 x 160 cm





Path (glow) 5, 2015, Pigment print, framed, 100 x 100 cm

PATH (HUE), 2017

In her series Path (hue), Karhu layers all the photos together taken on her walks to form the given moments they were taken in. The ever-present tonal quality of the light in Finland inspired her to use filters on her camera which resulted in the dreamy pastel works which make up the series. Karhu shows how nature transforms itself and basically visualizes what a selected time shift looks like. The series has the feel of Monet, the colors of Renoir, and the tones of Turner. Her photographs become windows into another place, a passage of sorts that alters reality by blurring the borders between one moment and the next one.

‘A spiral lies on its side. It grows by forming counterclockwise moving circles on top of each other, linearly, from left to

right. Years are following one another; winter solstice comes every year at the same time at the highest point of the circle. Years consist of smaller rings, days, spinning inside this line. Curves of this fractal structure have already been specified and the present is a twirling hint of light in this perimeter.

My camera is my eye. It captures moments between what I’m viewing and me. I record the time that I will soon pass through while I experience the timelessness of its passing. I walk a circle which path has neither beginning nor end. I photograph this path where each beginning is the horizon of the last one. By layering all these photographs together they form one image that documents my journey. In a sense I record time and in

so doing, I continue its movement forever.

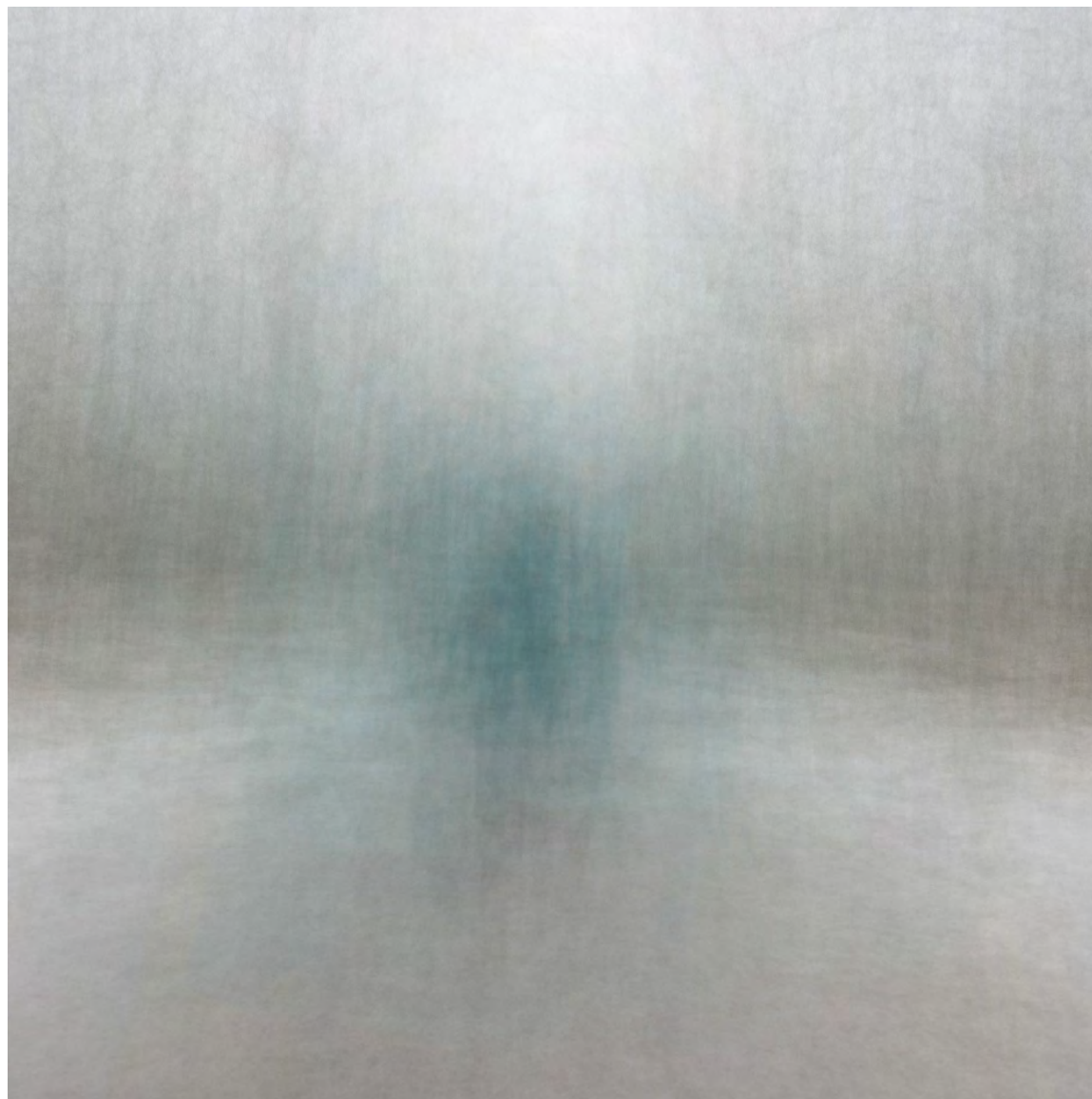
I study this cyclic movement. I take part in it and imitate it, by walking the same circle route during one year. While walking, my feet find the rhythm of the way. A monotonic beat is unleashing my thoughts. Knowledge of the past and the future is dropping onto the path; bit by bit the present reveals its timeless essence’, writes Eeva Karhu.



Path (hue) citrine, 2016, Pigment print, framed, 100 x 100 cm



Shadows Within, Persons Projects, 2020, Berlin



Path (hue) turquoise, 2016, Archival pigment print, Diasec, framed, 100 x 100 cm



Shadows Within, Persons Projects, 2020, Berlin



Path (hue) Azure, 2016, Pigment print, Diassec, 100 x 100 cm

SURROUNDED BY, 2017

Eeva Karhu's series, "Surrounded by", consists of layered photographs, characteristic to her style, where she records perceptions of her surroundings inside a predetermined area. The series was photographed on an assortment of small islands situated on the Gulf of Finland during 2017 and 2018. However, they also invoke her experiences from a previous journey, to a larger island, where Karhu travelled along the borderlands of Iceland, cycling a total of 1800 km and exclusively sleeping in a tent. Each image records the smaller islands in 64 locations, equally divided onto the circumference of a circle, which are all overlaid onto a digital "multiple exposure". Affectual experiences and powerful memories are transferred onto the images through masks Karhu places

in front of her exposures and sometimes by converting the result into negative form—directly photographed and combined, the composition of the horizon would produce a mainly blueish-grey tone. The resulting photo is a compression of time and space.

One of the inspirations for Karhu has been the work of Romantic-era painter William Turner, whose landscapes were created during a time when artists travelled to remote places in order to attain an experience of the sublime in nature. The sublime could possibly be found when nature manifested its destructive powers: for example during a storm or perhaps when confronted by the vastness of the ocean. Similar experiences of the prodigious force and presence

of nature, intermixed with capricious weather phases, also influence the images recorded in Eeva Karhu's memory, and are reinterpreted within her pictures. Concurrently, the process of photographing the subsequent images slowly and alone, on the much calmer smaller islands, has been a very systematic and meditative process. In this manner, her pieces carry several stratified temporalities.

In addition to nature, another vital point of departure in Karhu's work is the investigation of perception and cognition. Unlike a camera, recording everything in its frame with equal importance, the human eye responds to all manner of affect and sensation which colour the experience, mediated by the optic

nerves, for each individual. For Eeva Karhu, the compound viewpoints gathered from the perimeter of a circle and merged, work better as a representation of both perceptual experience and the relationship between the self and the surrounding world. Life itself could be evidenced as an experience from a personal "island" and also through various masks as observations melt and merge with memories.

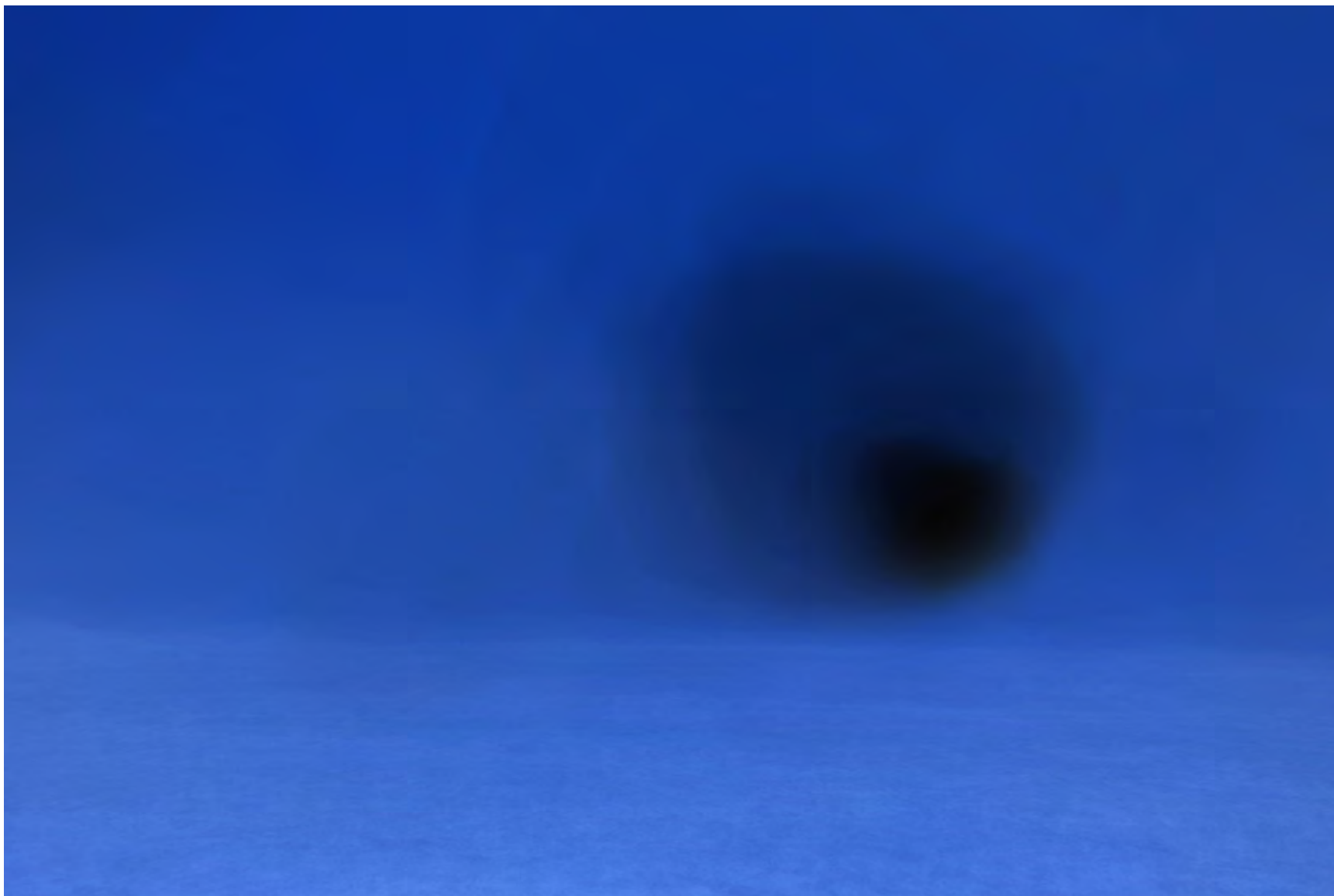


Dyrhólaey, 2017, Archival pigment print, Diasac, 25,4 x 37 cm





Sólheimajökull, 2018, Archival pigment print, Diasac, 25,4 x 37 cm



Háls, 2018, Archival pigment print, Diasec, 25,4 x 37 cm



Surrounded By, Turun Taidehalli, 2020 Turku



Akureyri, 2018, Archival pigment print, Diassec, 25,4 x 37 cm

IMPRESSIO-PATH, 2009-2011

In her series Impressio-Path, she compiles the photographs from her walks together using a layering technique. The result is one cohesive image that forms the given moments each photo was taken in. Karhu shows how nature transforms itself and basically visualizes what a selected time shift looks like. Sometimes Karhu inserts herself within the act of taking the photo, so that we see her as an abstract blur, almost ghostly, yet the color of her coat and hat establish her presence within the image. Her photographs become windows into another place, a passage of sorts that alters reality by blurring the borders between one moment and the next one.



Impressio, Photographic Gallery Hippolyte, 2011, Espoo



Impressio-Path #12, 2011, C-Print, Diasec, 100 x 160 cm



Impressio-Path #7, 2011, Archival pigment print, 100 x 160 cm



Impressio, Photographic Gallery Hippolyte, 2011, Espoo



Impressio-Path #3, 2011, Archival pigment print, frame, 100 x 160 cm

