

JANNE LEHTINEN

Persons
Projects

Janne Lehtinen has exercised an extremely personal approach in reflecting upon his life and how he has evolved into the person he is today. Lehtinen uses life as his basic contextual material for his self-reflections and his photographs as a means for projecting his attitudes towards life. He fuses a Fluxus mentality with the Nordic sense of stoicism. His photographs turn the ordinary into poetic moments where we don't know whether to laugh or cry. Most importantly, Lehtinen is a storyteller. His art is a mixture of sculpture and performance and is realized in the studio or in natural surroundings with no audience. His subject matter may vary from his childhood memories to tracing the working patterns of his father. Yet, the common denominator found in all his work is how he uses his notion of the family to interpret the ordinary so as to create the extraordinary.

Janne Lehtinen (*1970 in Karhula, Finland) graduated from the University of Art and Design Helsinki, today's Aalto University in 2002. His work was presented in various solo and group exhibitions, including shows at Centre Photographique (France, 2014); Kunsthalle Rostock (Germany, 2014); The Rhinelander Contemporary Art Center (France, 2008); Arles Festival of Photography (France, 2007); Museum der Stadt Tuttlingen; (Germany, 2006); Nordic center of photography (Finland, 2001) and are part of important collections such as Finnish State art collections; Helsinki City Art Museum; Pentti Kouri collections, New York among others.



PHANTOMS, 2023

In his series *Phantoms*, Lehtinen creates scenes of intense atmosphere that feature a lone suited figure taking centre stage. This figure is continuously obscured by a myriad of either moving or stationary objects, found both at the site or brought to the space by the artist.

With this loss of identity, the repetition of the solitary figure questions the emotional extremities that are connected to human existence, leaving the viewer feeling an array of emotions varying from bemusement and light-heartedness to turmoil and loss.

Janne Lehtinen has, throughout his entire career, exercised an extremely personal approach in reflecting upon his life and the trials and tribulations of how he has evolved into the person he is today. In his Phantom series, we find him as a solitary figure performing for the camera, exemplifying an array of emotions that reconfigure the immediate moment into an act of disappearing. His art is in how he finds the balance within himself

to become both the actor, director and audience. These photographs appear as disconnected reflections of his inner self. Lehtinen transforms from the antagonist into the victim and then back again, using repetitive variations from the same motif to accentuate his intention. His photographs turn the mundane into moments of poetic wonder where we don't know whether to laugh or cry. Most importantly, Lehtinen is a storyteller. His art is a mixture of sculpture and performance, that is then captured using photography, with works being realised either in the studio or in natural surroundings with no audience. It becomes a dance where the head follows the heart, with photographs representing the moment the two converge.

His subject matter varies from childhood memories to tracing the working patterns of his father as he did in his second book, *The Descendants*. Yet the common denominator found in all his work is the way in which he explores

the notion of the family to interpret the ordinary, creating something entirely extraordinary.



Images that Fall from the Sky - The Helsinki School, National Art Gallery, Sopot, Poland



The Power of Red, 2023, archival pigment print, 31 x 24,5 cm

Yellow #10, 2023, archival pigment print, 31 x 24,5 cm



Heavy Thoughts, 2023, archival pigment print, 31 x 24,5 cm





I Can't Hear, 2023, archival pigment print, 31 x 24,5 cm

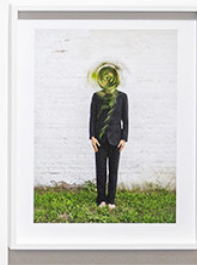
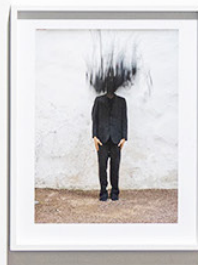
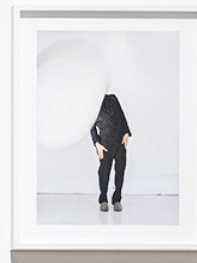
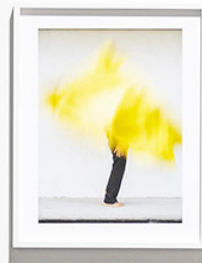


I Can't See, 2023, archival pigment print, 31 x 24,5 cm



I Can't Speak, 2023, archival pigment print, 31 x 24,5 cm





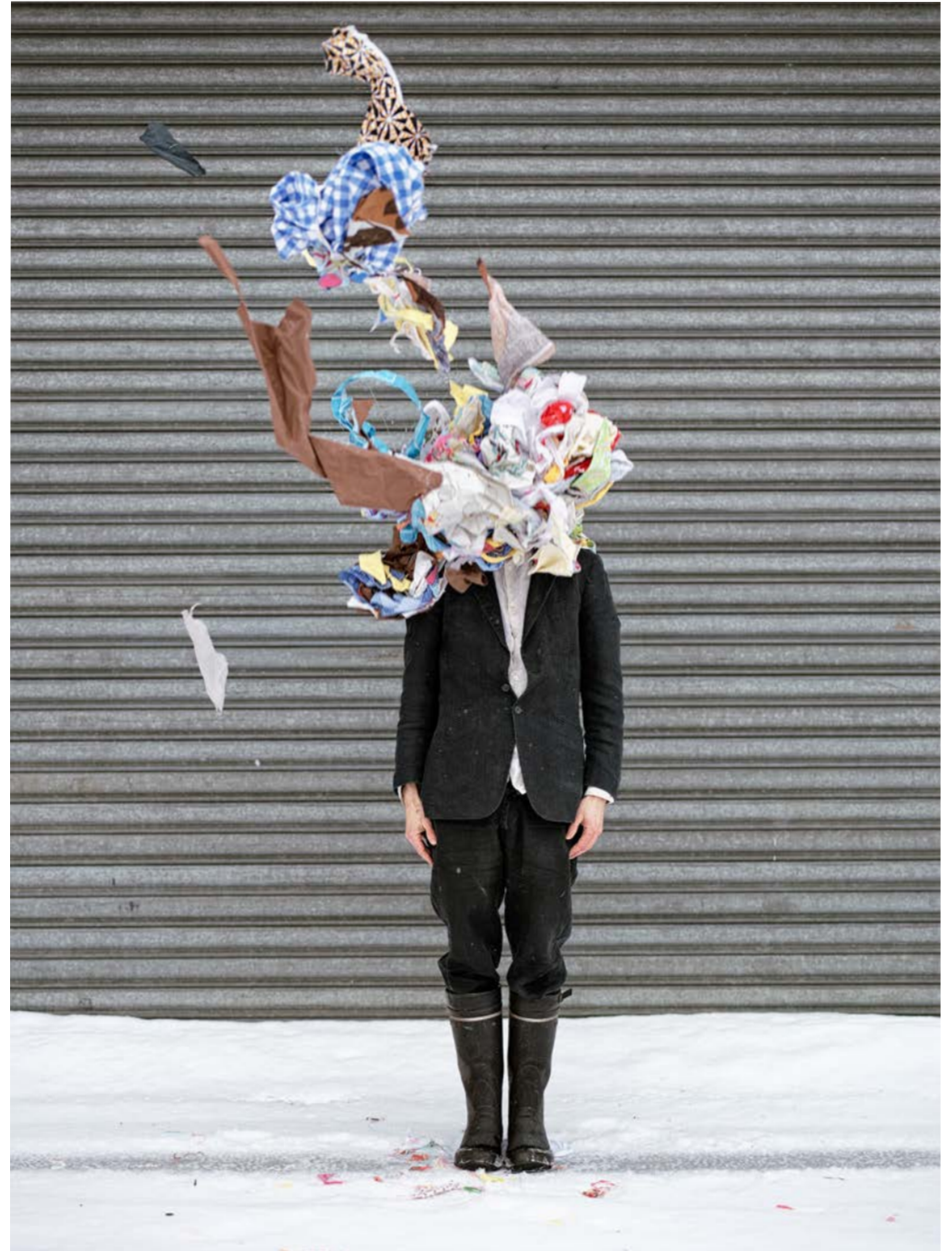
Phantoms, 2023, Paris Photo



House of Plants, 2023, archival pigment print, 31 x 24,5 cm



Fade to White, 2023, archival pigment print, 31 x 24,5 cm



Moment of Happiness, 2023, archival pigment print, 31 x 24,5 cm

UNTITLED, 2015

Janne Lehtinen has, throughout his entire career, exercised an extremely personal approach in reflecting upon his life and the trials and tribulations of how he has evolved into the person he is today. In his most recent series, we find him as a solitary figure balancing himself between bricks, balloons, and his need to disappear. These photographs appear as disconnected reflections from his inner self. Lehtinen transforms the antagonist into the victim and then back again, using repetitive variations from the same motif to accentuate his intention. His photographs turn the ordinary into poetic moments where we don't know whether to laugh or cry. Most importantly, Lehtinen is a storyteller. His art is a mixture of sculpture and performance and is realized in the studio or in natural surroundings with no audience. It's more of a dance where the head follows the heart with the photographs representing the moment the two merge. His subject matter may vary from his child-

hood memories to tracing the working patterns of his father as he did in his second book, *The Descendants*. Yet the common denominator found in all his work is how he uses his notion of the family to interpret the ordinary so as to create the extraordinary.



1001 Degrees, 2015, archival pigment print, 107 x 84 cm



Dust to Dust, 2015, archival pigment print, 107 x 84 cm



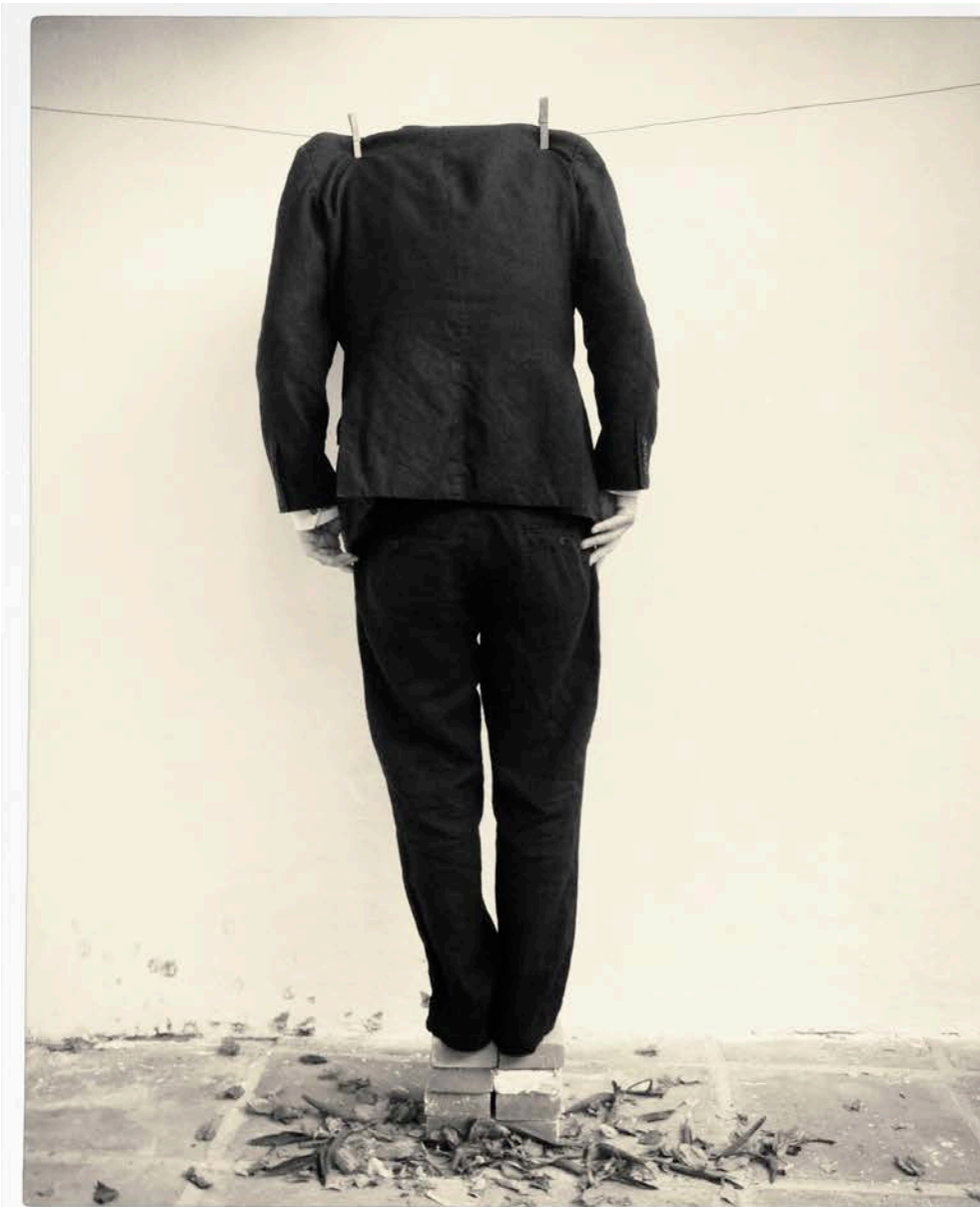
Feet on the Ground, 2015, archival pigment print, 107 x 84 cm



Hardre Than Hard, 2015, archival pigment print, 107 x 84 cm

How much can you take?, 2015, archival pigment print, 107 x 84 cm





Untitled I & II, 2015, archival pigment print, 16 x 12 cm each

SACRED BIRD, 1998-2002

Telling the story of a young man – the author himself – and his attempts to fly with different kinds of self-made aeroplanes and wings, the photographic series “Sacred bird”, by Finnish photographer Janne Lehtinen (b. 1970), presents a fictional narrative based on autobiographical facts. Lehtinen – the son of a renowned glider pilot – tries to relive the experiences of his father while himself attempting to leave the ground behind. However, his numerous efforts to oppose the force of gravity never come to anything, and the giant leap into infinity never occurs. While the models he conceives are extravagant, surreal and impressive in their constructions, they are nevertheless destined to fail, and they remain purposeless, anachronistic reinventions of the human-powered prototypes, which marked the pioneering days of aviation.

Lehtinen seems Quixotic in his pursuit not only because of his own personal history, but also in relation to the origins

of man’s persistent quest for flight. He depicts himself as the ultimate anti-hero who perseveres in failure, like a tragic-comical slapstick actor.

The absurdity of his attempt is even more striking when set against the romantic and heroic landscapes in which he stages his performances. Reminiscent of eighteenth-century sublime scenery paintings, these harsh, deserted environments seem to draw the character inexorably down to the ground, rather than to inspire take off, as if to stress the earth-bound restraints of human nature. It is as if Lehtinen is performing a comic and short-lived act towards the landscape in an effort to bridge the gap between nature and technology, or even between the pictorial and the photographic discourse.

Lehtinen uses many different commonplace images – derived from art history, photography, cinema and mythology – to place his individual experience unpretentiously in the perspective of great

historical events or stories. In search of the universal heroism of the artist, he creates a photographic world in which Icarus meets Chaplin, Nadar meets Jules Verne and the Wright brothers meet Da Vinci. Through the appropriation of such collective imagery, Lehtinen playfully examines the degree to which visual icons influence our image of the world, our dreams and our desires. The series “Sacred bird” thus poses questions about how our memory functions, about the nature and origins of collective memories and the influence of the media on our historical consciousness and sense of identity.

While blending the commonplace and the personal, fact and fiction, Lehtinen underlines the ambiguous role photography itself is playing in this process. It only offers a staged, yet seemingly authentic reconstruction of history that is never all-embracing or fulfilling, and therefore allows for the creation of a personal poetics: it is like an acknowl-

edgement of the idea that real dreams can only be conceived at the back of the dreamer’s mind. Even the most tragic or burlesque consequences of these desires – in this case a recurring inability to fly – belong only to the dreamer. Regardless of success or failure, it is his belief in the validity of his solitary actions that lends them an undeniable sense of purpose.

- Dominique Somers





Birdman, 2004, Lambda print on aluminium, 100 x 137 cm



Circle, 2006, Lambda print on aluminium, 100 x 137 cm



Falling, 2005, Lambda print on aluminium, 101 x 138 cm



In the Sky Unlike a Bird, 2022, Persons Projects, Berlin



Zeppelin, 2005, Lambda print on aluminium, 101 x 138 cm



Waves, 2003, Lambda print on aluminium, 100 x 137 cm



Fly, 2003, Lambda print on aluminium, 101 x 138 cm

WHERE THE EARTH ENDS, 2010-2013

At the invitation of the Centre d'Art GwinZegal, Janne Lehtinen traveled the territory of Brittany in search of spaces, the theater of his performances. Playing with the elements - wind, light, water - the diversity of landscapes, accessories taken from everyday life, he has constructed a narrative that is both poetic and absurd. He retraces, in nineteen color photographs, the experience thus lived, and makes us share his vision on the crossed landscapes.



The Helsinki School Perspective, 2023, Persons Projects, Berlin



Burden, 2010, Pigment print on aluminum, 90 x 112 cm



Wrapped I, 2011, Pigment print on aluminum, 112 x 90 cm



Wrapped li, 2011, Pigment print on aluminum, 112 x 90 cm



House Behind the Trees, 2011, Pigment print on aluminum, 90 x 112 cm



Flying Objects, 2010, Pigment print on aluminum, 90 x 112 cm



Pipeline, 2011, Pigment print on aluminum, 90 x 112 cm

Persons Projects

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