



ANTERO KAHILA

Diary of Obscure Sorrows

8.10.2021–31.10.2021

Making art is for me a tool for thinking and is the most intuitive form of manual craft possible. Image-making is a way of processing my relationship with the world. The late Russian film director Andrei Tarkovsky spoke of poetry as an awareness of the world; I find that through the process of painting, metaphors, I myself pursue something similar, a reaction, an essence. I position myself in the world from a perspective of autobiographical stories, making use of the sensitivity, the subtle melancholia, perhaps even the slight eccentricity they give me. My mother died when I was nine. That event continues to define and colour my relationship with the world, and it remains within the form and content of my paintings as a tendency to dwell on existential matters. All paintings in the exhibition were created during the social isolation brought on by the pandemic over the last year and a half.

Most of the works in the exhibition are faces – broken, blurred, hard to make out. They are anti-portraits or self-portraits of sorts. I have entitled the series *Ritual*. The series contrasts with the other themes of the exhibition, such as abandoned kindergarten beds, bumper cars, or works that use the straightjacket as motif. With the exception of the paintings of faces and the straightjacket theme, most of the paintings on show fetch their motifs from a kindergarten and an amusement park in the deserted town of Pripjat near Chernobyl.

Antero Kahila is an award-winning visual artist and painter from Helsinki, known best for figurative paintings that explore alienation, outsidership and identity. A nominee for the Carnegie Art Award, Kahila has work in major Finnish collections, including Kiasma, Sara Hildén Art Museum and the Saastamoinen Foundation. In addition to numerous solo and group exhibitions in Finland, his work has been presented in several international shows in Berlin, Rome, Lisbon, Strasbourg and Reykjavik. In his most recent series of emotionally intense works imbued with a gruesome sensitivity, Kahila examines the development of his own artist identity and his fears and existential issues in a confessional manner. Kahila caught the attention of the general public with a unique project to reconstruct the lost version of Caravaggio's *St Matthew and the Angel*. The research-based project ranged from Helsinki to Rome, Berlin and London. The project with its outcome continues to attract interest internationally.

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