

PRESS RELEASE

MIKA TAANILA

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HUMAN ENGINEERING

APRIL 2 - MAY 22 2005

Press Conference: Friday, April 1 2005, 10.30am

Opening: Friday, April 1 2005, 6pm

The works of Mika Taanila (b. 1965) evolve in the realms of documentary film, experimental music, its visual transformation and the set-up of scientific experiments. Nostalgia and belief in the future collide and mingle in his films, while the exploration of technological developments and artificial intelligence, and their social and philosophical implications run through his creative work like constant threads.

Mika Taanila became known to a wider audience as a result of his participation in the 7th Istanbul Biennale (2001) and Manifesta 4 (2002) in Frankfurt. In *Futuro - A New Stance for Tomorrow* (1998) Taanila looks at a classic story of a rise and fall involving architectural technology. Using 'found footage', the film reconstructs the meteoric success of the Futuro house, which was based on a discovery made by the Finnish architect Matti Suuronen (b. 1933) in the second half of the 1960s. The Futuro house, shaped like a flying saucer and made entirely from plastic, became the object in which the belief in progress and the utopian vision of the 1960s were embodied.

In the film *The Future Is not What It Used To Be* (2002) Taanila portrays and documents Erkki Kurenniemi (b. 1941), one of the pioneers of electronic music. In it, Kurenniemi's wishful notion of associating human beings and machines with one another is fascinatingly combined with his interest in robotics, information technology and music. Erkki Kurenniemi's music has a central role in the film. Music and its visual transformation also play a vital part in *Optical Sound* (2005). In the tradition of Walter Ruttmann and Viktor Eggeling, who created abstract visual transpositions of music at the beginning of the 1920s, Taanila's film is based on the composition *The Symphony #2 For 12 Dot Matrix Printers* by the Canadian duo *[The User]* (Thomas McIntosh and Emmanuel Madan). Here, the dot matrix printer, long since superseded, takes the main role, hypnotising the viewer with its rhythmic monotony. For this exhibition Taanila will present his 1997 film *Thank You For The Music - A Film About Muzak* in a newly created installation entitled *Stimulus Progression* (2005). 'Muzak' is functional and 'easy-to-listen-to' music; it is used in lifts, department stores, hotels and many working environments, with the music generally rearranged to provide a constant background noise. Muzak's purpose is to soothe those hearing it with its 'anaesthetising' and seductive structure, and motivate them into consumer spending or greater productivity. Taanila's film sheds light on the history of muzak and its psycho-acoustic impact.

Anonymous found footage, dating from the 1940s, of a physics experiment the purpose of which has not so far been explained, provides the starting point for the installation *A Physical Ring* (2002). Using a very precise cutting technique and hypnotic music by Mika Vainio of the pioneering Finnish electro-duo Pan sonic, the experiment once again unfolds its mysterious effect. The football-playing robots in the film *Robocup99* (2000) are also disturbing to look at – every year computer engineers and researchers specialising in artificial intelligence meet to play for the *Robocup*. The utopian idea that in 2050 the computer and its artificial intelligence will be superior to human intelligence is implicit in the film. However awkward and comic the machines of the present may appear, it is already conceivable that by 2050 that utopia could have become a reality.

This exhibition presents a comprehensive selection of Mika Taanila's work, including films like *Futuro - A New Stance For Tomorrow* (1998), *The Future Is not What It Used To Be* (2002), *Verbranntes Land*

[Scorched earth] (2002) and *Optical Sound* (2005), as well as his video installations *Physical Ring* (2002), *Stimulus Progression* (2005) and *Nocturne* (2005).

!INFORMATION!

For further information please contact the exhibition curator: Heike Munder.

The exhibition is supported by FRAME - Finnish Fund for Art Exchange.

A comprehensive exhibition catalogue with essays by Heike Munder and Ken Hollings will be published by JRP/Ringier.

Public guided tours: Sundays, 3 & 24 April, 8 & 22 May at 3pm, and Thursday, 14 April at 6pm

Sunday, 8 May: Museum Day – entry to the museum free of charge!

Opening times

Tues. /Wed. / Fri. 12am – 6pm, Thurs. 12am – 8pm, Sat. / Sun. 11am – 5pm

migros museum für gegenwartskunst

Limmatstrasse 270

8005 Zurich

T. +41 44 277 20 50

F. +41 44 277 62 86

info@migrosmuseum.ch

www.migrosmuseum.ch

The migros museum für gegenwartskunst is an institution of the Migros Culture Percentage:
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